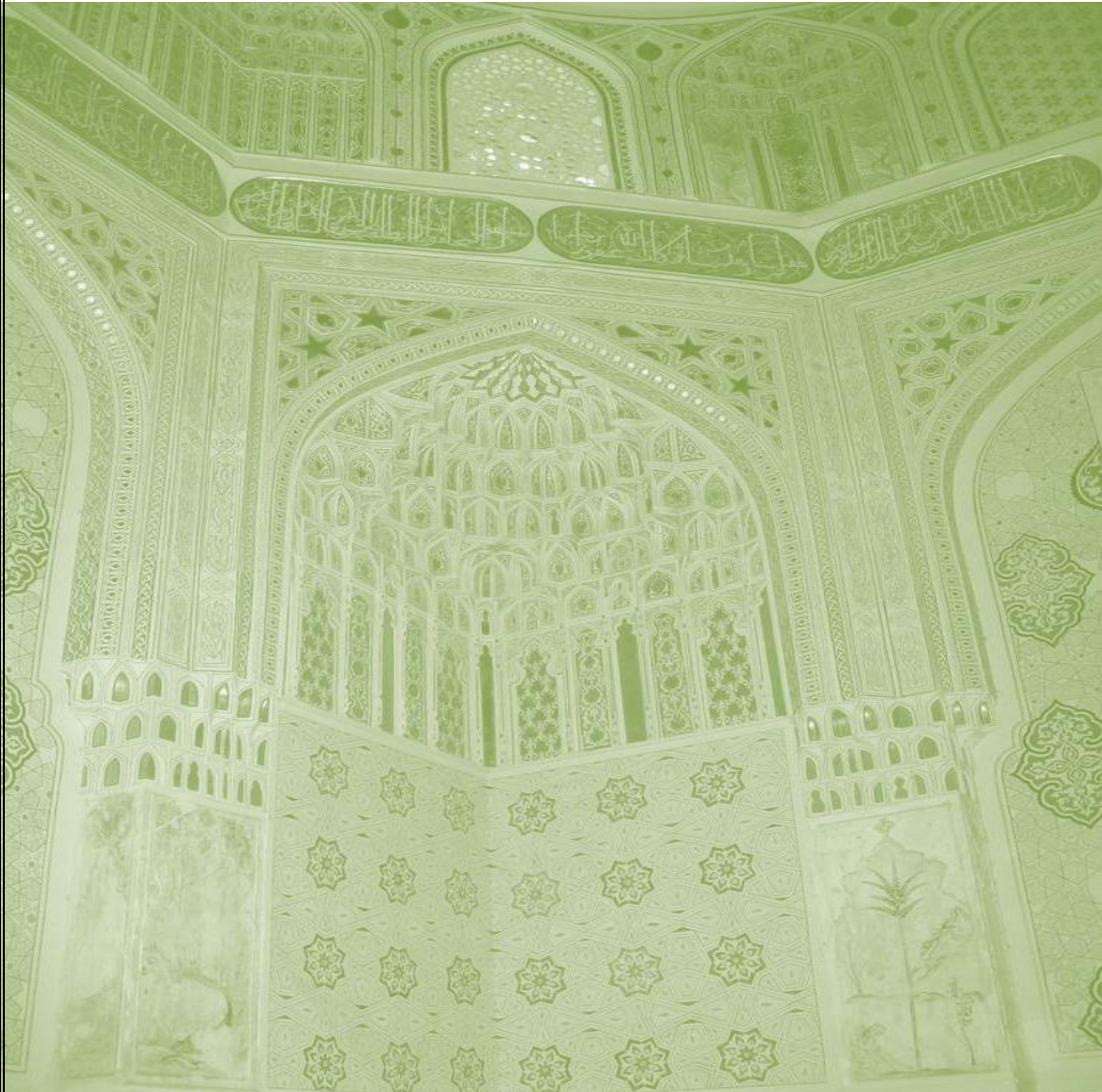


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The Waikato Islamic Studies Review aims to attract new researchers and established scholars interested in the subject of Islam as an academic discipline and to provide an opportunity to discuss and exchange information and knowledge on new research in the form of a 'working paper' publication.

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Preface:

The date March 15, 2019 will henceforth be remembered as the time in which a unique faith community in New Zealand was systematically attacked and subjected to terror.

For well over a century, Muslims have been part of the complex socio-cultural mosaic of New Zealand society as well as the wider South Pacific. However, the term “New Zealand Muslim” is ambiguous and has often been utilized to include several differing ethnic, class and cultural groups. The ethnonym has been used as a label for Indians, South East Asians, Africans and indeed some European peoples. Newer immigrants and refugees tend to speak a myriad of international languages; older generations and those raised in the South Pacific speak the local dialect as good as Barry Crump did. The Muslims of these islands practise a form of Islam that has been closely adapted to the Christian, Pakeha or secular environment in which they reside (depending on the observer’s viewpoint). Even so, the Muslim community – possessing certain shared characteristics drawn from the Islamic religion in particular – can be treated as a kind of unity; albeit with complex, diverse social structures.

Yet, due to the minority status of the community, and its relative isolation, public impression remains, for the most part, bleak, grim and somewhat misleading, including the irrational fear of the Muslim ‘other’, in some cases. This has been particularly compounded in the post-9/11 era following an intensification in religious and political extremism(s) and counter-extremism activities globally, as well as concerns over large-scale migration patterns of Muslims following a myriad of conflicts in Muslim majority regions of the world especially. Although not exclusive, it is within these contexts that anti-Islamic sentiment and Islamophobia generally has

accelerated, consequently, fuelling ‘reactive’ currents of extremism, including the Christchurch Mosque attacks.

This special edition of the Waikato Islamic Review provides scholarly insights into these and broader societal and ideological dynamics of the Christchurch terror attack and wider anti-Muslim, far-right extremism which it was a particular manifestation of; an evolving extremist current that demands greater attention and understanding by all.

This timely edition therefore brings together a group of scholars from across New Zealand and in the Muslim world, with various disciplinary backgrounds, who were invited to contribute following a modest conference entitled ‘Aotearoa New Zealand After the March 15 Terror Attack’, held by the University of Waikato Islamic Studies Group on May 1, 2019.

On Behalf of the University of Waikato Islamic Studies Group and the Waikato Islamic Studies Review, I would like to express our gratitude and thanks to all who participated in the conference and contributed to this special edition of the Review, and also to colleagues who have supported and critically reviewed our efforts to publish this compendium.

Abdullah Drury

Editor

Threads of Terror and Signs of Hope

Douglas Pratt

Professor Douglas Pratt was Convenor of the Studies in Religion Programme at the University of Waikato where he taught for over thirty years until mid-2018. He currently holds appointments as Honorary Professor in the Theological and Religious Studies Programme of the University of Auckland; Adjunct Professor (Theology and Interreligious Relations) in the Faculty of Theology, University of Bern; and Associate Researcher with the Centre for the Study of Religion and Politics, University of St Andrews.

Abstract: *A very particular form of terrorism struck New Zealand on Friday 15 March. It was an act of evil born of a number of threads of terror. Yet in its aftermath it has given rise to an evocation of hope. For bubbling up through the magnificent outpouring of love – aroha – compassion and support for the New Zealand Muslim community, critical questions about where this act came from remain to be answered – what motivated it? What lies behind it? What allowed it to happen? And, importantly, what can we do about it? In this paper I will outline the five ‘lenses of terrorism’ (Schmid) and focus particularly on the fifth: religion. For if religion, qua religious extremism, is part of the problem then religion, qua the high values most often found in common, is surely part of the solution. But what does that mean, and how can it be made effective?*

Introduction

A very particular form of terrorism struck New Zealand on March 15: an act of evil born of a number of motivating ideological threads. A white supremacist, motivated by a mix of racist hatred, anti-immigration sentiment and palpable hostility toward Islam and Muslims, callously executed 50 persons at two mosques, injuring a further 48. This is an unspeakable atrocity about which we must yet speak. For a recurrent theme bubbling up through the magnificent outpouring of love, of aroha, compassion and support for the New Zealand Muslim community, is the question about where this act came from – what prompted it? What lies behind it? What allowed it to happen? And, importantly, what can we do about it? How can we be the society we wish to be? How do we develop as a society of diversity and inclusivity, of acceptance and valuation of the differences of otherness? The Prime Minister’s arresting slogan

“They are Us” is but a first step. We need to be able to say, as a nation: “We are together, as one, in and with our diversity and differences”.

The context and causes of the Christchurch attack are complex. It is tempting to simplify, to pin it on one or other dominant element, such as racism. Among many things to consider, it is the complex ideology which drove and justified the action – identifying it accurately and discerning ways of countering it – that is of particular concern, as well as addressing the question of how, as a nation we may move on; what we might be able to draw out of the evil event and turn to a useful good?

Terrorism and Religion

Although there is a long history of association between terrorism and religion, including Hindu Thugees from some 2500 years ago; Jewish Zealot-Sicarii some 2000 years ago; Christian Crusaders and Inquisitors; and medieval Islamic assassins of 900 or so years ago, it is only in recent times that religion has been directly addressed by scholars concerned with investigating terrorism and political violence. For much of the modern era, and still the case in some quarters, religion and its values and sensibilities have been regarded as principally, if not purely, a private matter and not a legitimate part of the public sphere. This is particularly so in societies, such as ours, which manifest strident secularity and secularism. Alternatively, religion is regarded as but an epiphenomenon, not itself something of any real import. The real drivers of politics and violence seen as lying elsewhere. But from the late twentieth century the role of religion in driving violent acts and empowering terrorism, where divine judgement is meted out according to the imagined notion of ‘rightness’ that inheres to an extreme religious ideology, has become increasingly recognized.

Accordingly, scholarly interest has intensified with now many investigations into extremist movements that have engaged in terrorist behaviors, including religious

groups.¹ There is no time to delve into these here today. But what we can say is this: Religion and terrorism are a powerful mix. As James Veitch as noted: “When religion empowers political terrorism then the terrorism apparently has no limits and acknowledges no boundaries”.²

Definitions of terrorism are legion.³ Intimidating the innocent as a modality of action is perhaps one general characteristic, as is the fact that, for the most part, terrorism involves violent behaviours undertaken for political and/or ideological purposes.⁴ Terrorism may be regarded as comprising a complex of criminality, psychology and ideology: there is no single or simple definition or analysis.⁵ And in commenting that “there is no one psychology of religious terrorists”, James Jones notes that, as with religion itself, “religiously motivated terrorism is a multidimensional, multi-determined phenomenon ... no one unitary explanation for religious behaviour can ever be sufficient”.⁶

The violent behaviours in which extremists indulge are by no means random or arbitrary. There is a very particular logic and rationale that applies. “The groups and individuals engaged in violence construct and maintain a social and theological reality in which killing and mayhem are legitimated”.⁷ They generally take action against

¹ See, e.g., Eric Hoffer, *The True Believer* (New York, NY: Harper & Row, 1951).

² James Veitch, Terrorism and Religion, *Stimulus*, Vol. 10, No 1, (February 2002): 26-37; p. 30.

³ Alex P. Schmid, ‘Frameworks for conceptualizing terrorism’, *Terrorism and Political Violence* 16, no. 2 (Summer 2004): 197-221.

⁴ See, for example, Maxwell Taylor, *The Fanatics: A Behavioural Approach to Political Violence* (London: Brassey’s, 1991).

⁵ See, for example, Arie W. Kruglanski and Shira Fishman, ‘The psychology of terrorism: “Syndrome” versus “Tool” perspectives’, *Terrorism and Political Violence* 18, no 2 (Summer 2006): 193-215; Max Taylor and John Horgan, ‘A Conceptual Framework for Addressing Psychological Process in the Development of the Terrorist’, *Terrorism and Political Violence* 18, no 4 (Winter 2006): 585-601.

⁶ James W. Jones, ‘Sacred Terror: The Psychology of Contemporary Religious Terrorism’, in Andrew R. Murphy (ed), *The Blackwell Companion to Religion and Violence* (Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell, 2011), 293.

⁷ Charles Selengut, ‘The Sociology of Religious Violence’, in Andrew Murphy (ed), *The Blackwell Companion to Religion and Violence*, (Malden: Wiley-Blackwell, 2011), 89-98; p. 89.

that which is perceived to be a threat or danger and regard any responsive measure as “an ethical and moral act”.⁸ And this has deep religious roots.

Terrorism expert and former Head of United Nations’ security, Alex Schmid, makes use of five conceptual lenses in discussing terrorism.⁹ These provide a multi-perspectival framework to understand the drivers and context of terrorism, and they include crime, politics, warfare, communication, and religion, or religious fundamentalism. Not all acts of terror involve all five. Warfare is often absent; it is its own particular context. Criminality is almost always a factor, as also politics. Communication is to be particularly noted for it is central to the act of terror that a message is given in and through the act. This was dramatically the case in Christchurch on March 15. A religious framework can only provide a partial perspective on the nature of terrorism. But where there is any reference to religion, even ideologically and obliquely, it is part of the explanation of the terrorist event. In short, terrorism has many root causes as well as differing frameworks of self-understanding.¹⁰ Among them is religion, the relative significance of which, as a factor to be considered in its own right has only recently been recognised in any relatively significant way. It was not absent on March 15 for, on that day, religion was a central element.

March 15: Act and Ideology

The 50 killed in the Christchurch mosques on March 15 represent about 0.1% of the total Muslim community in New Zealand. As a percentage of the total population of the country, the massacre of 50 approximates the proportion of those killed in the 9/11 attack in the United States. Does this mean March 15 is New Zealand’s 9/11? Some

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ See Schmid, ‘Frameworks’.

¹⁰ Cf. Walter Reich, (ed), *Origins of Terrorism: Psychologies, Ideologies, Theologies, States of Mind* (Washington: Woodrow Wilson Centre Press, 1998).

have certainly suggested so. But despite cursory similarities, there are massive differences. On New Zealand's darkest day, the targets were Muslim immigrant others, not a non-Muslim immigrant population, let alone the general population, such as occurred with the infamous attack on New York. The New Zealand target was Muslim, defined as an "invading other", and so needing to be repelled. *While in some ways Christchurch 3/15 seems like New Zealand's 9/11, it reads to me more as New Zealand's Norway 2011. As with Norway, we have been tainted by a form of religio-cultural extremism. For make no mistake, white supremacist ideology combines race hate with religious tropes.*

The Christchurch attack was not a simple case of being anti-immigrant; that is only one element. Nor is it a case only of being opposed to non-white races as such. Yes, the supporting rhetoric was racist. But the target was religious, not simply race.

Among those executed were some who had the same skin colour as the killer:

Caucasian Muslims. And yes, the attacker was out to get immigrants – those who had come to this land as foreigners. But not just any immigrants, for the targeted group is those construed as having the aim of 'replacing' white inhabitants.

In the context of the motivating white supremacist ideology emanating from Europe, 'white' is identified as Christian. Yet the perpetrator does not himself claim a specific Christian identity. And he is not a citizen; he is not of our land; he is an Australian immigrant. He is not us. Yet, New Zealand's policy of welcome and hospitality was extended to him as it has been to Muslim, and other, immigrants from many parts of the world.

Islam was in the frame on account of a narrow reading of European history and a radicalised reaction to Islamic extremism there and elsewhere. And as there has been no event of Islamic extremism in New Zealand to react to, this terrorist act was vicarious, echoing exculpatory tropes used by some radicalised Muslim extremists,

such as in the UK and Europe, when seeking to take revenge for attacks upon Muslims in other lands. The killer, acting alone, acted from the motivation of an evil ideology that mixes race hate with Christian cultural history.

Although now banned, so creating a real problem for accessing for research purposes, material that was widely circulating from the terrorist's so-called manifesto is revealing. Hyperbole and sheer falsehood are rampant. He spoke of taking revenge for the *'hundreds of thousands of deaths caused by foreign invaders in European lands throughout history'*; *for the millions of Europeans enslaved by Muslims; the thousands of European lives 'lost to terror attacks', and with a sudden shift to the present, to 'reduce immigration rates to European lands by intimidating and physically removing the invaders'*.

Very clearly, tropes were employed that directly parallel those of the manifesto of Anders Breivik, the 2011 Norwegian extremist, also a lone-wolf gunman, who in similar fashion, and despite a different target group, callously slaughtered unarmed innocents for parallel reasons: to stir up a wider resistance to, and rejection of, Islam and Muslims. *Tropes of Eurabia fear-mongering were simply copied and pasted into an Antipodean context. And, as with Australian Islamophobic extremists, including some political parties there whose platform is virulently anti-Muslim, the Antipodes – Australia and New Zealand – are regarded as inherently and rightfully European, so sharing in the same destiny.*

This is a destiny born out of Europe's historical Christendom-era identity; a socio-political-cultural, rather than a theological or religio-spiritual, identity. But the reference points are Christian, nonetheless, namely Western Christendom that once defined a European identity arraigned against the empires of Islam. In the modern era this extends to the Ottoman empire. And let us not forget the ANZAC connection. It was not in fighting Johnny Turk that gave birth to a legend now taking on the hall-

marks of civic religion in our society. It was in engaging troops of the last great Islamic caliphate. From a Muslim perspective, the Gallipoli landing was arguably another Western Christian Crusader action. This country is inclined to sit very lightly to the realities of its historical heritage. We appropriate the past for sporting purposes, maybe. Some things are simply airbrushed out. But history has a way of re-visiting the present.

Certainly, it is an imagined form of Christianity and Christian socio-political history that the ideology of the Christchurch white supremacist drew upon and referenced, as did Anders Breivik. For it was under the banner of Christendom that saw the battles lines drawn between Christian Europe and its then Islamic enemy. In behind this ideology is the lingering memory of the epoch of the Crusades, of holding out during the siege of Vienna, and of the new Christian advance through the Reconquista of Spain. And, as with Breivik, the Christchurch killer's ideological perspective is shared by many in the Alt-right and other extremist communities. Immigrant Muslims are the invaders; to be resisted at all costs, and preferably eliminated. Critical historical ignorance is palpable and the grasp of contemporary socio-political realities utterly flawed.

Islamophobia

This is all the stuff of Islamophobia, the inchoate fear of Islam and Muslims. And this is the true focus of the white supremacist's extremism in the Christchurch attack. It was not simply an anti-immigrant and racially motivated event: it was deeply religious, if only because It has one particular religious' community in its sights. However, it is not just the religious identity of the targets, nor the religious elements in the attacker's ideology that is of relevance. Islamophobia is a widespread and pernicious component of contemporary social reality in this country, despite the tremendous expressions of empathic, respect, sympathy and acceptance that has been

forthcoming since the attack, from both the wider – so secular – public and also from other religious communities, in particular a strong voice from the Christian community.

Whilst in a comparatively peaceful context religious commitment may be supportive of the positive valuation of diversity, and in this case the acceptance of Muslims, a recent large-scale study indicates that in New Zealand, in recent years, anti-Muslim prejudice has been stronger and more widespread than antipathy toward migrants in general across the community at large and certainly within some sectors of the Christian community.¹¹ That finding is of no surprise to me. And another New Zealand study concludes that increased exposure to negative news featuring Muslims or Islam “is associated with both increased anger and reduced warmth toward Muslims”.¹² The overall findings tend to support “claims that it is widespread representations of Muslims in the news, rather than partisan media biases, that drives anti-Muslim prejudice”. Nevertheless, the media, in relation to what information and representation of Muslims and Islam is selected, and so cast *as* news, plays a huge role in providing a seedbed of toxicity that nurtures not just reactive negativity but, from out of that, rejectionist views that set the scene for extremist ideologies and, eventually, violent action.

New Zealand has been caught up in concerns and fears concerning returning fighters from Syria – the remnants of ISIS – including our own “Bumbling Jihadi”. We have been distracted by our own Islamophobias, our own fear of Muslim extremism. We missed the presence of reactionary extremism in our midst. As a result, Christchurch’s right-wing extremist, as with any others of his ilk, simply, even

¹¹ Shaver JH, Troughton G, Sibley CG, Bulbulia JA (2016) Religion and the Unmaking of Prejudice toward Muslims: Evidence from a Large National Sample. PLoS ONE 11(3): e0150209. <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0150209>.

¹² Shaver JH, Sibley CG, Osborne D, Bulbulia J (2017) News exposure predicts anti-Muslim prejudice. PLoS ONE 12(3): e0174606. <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0174606>

literally, flew in under the radar. However, it is becoming clear that the presence of white supremacist individuals and their abhorrent actions had been known to Christchurch and the Canterbury region for some time. But, ironically, a culture of benign tolerance of even diverse and objectionable oddities meant no security scrutiny had been entertained. This has begun to change. But security surveillance measures are only part of a new order of response.

Diversity Rejection

I suggest that it is the underlying issue of the rejection of diversity – both of religious and other kinds – that lies at the heart of the impositional exclusivism that drives much contemporary extremism. It certainly drives the extreme ideologies that manifest in deadly terrorist acts. Today, globally and also locally, there is increasing evidence of hostile, even violent, reactions to diversity, including religious, ethnic and cultural. All too often this is grounded in religious ideology and a presumption of competitive identities. While by no means the only causal element, religion, or rather religious ideologies, especially when taken and applied in what can only be described as an ‘extreme’ fashion, is undeniably a major component. It appears in many situations of conflict and strife.

The primary component in any strategy aimed at countering this extremism and terrorism has to be in respect to identifying, and addressing, the ideological rhetoric and elements within communities from which potential terrorists are likely to come, and by which they are likely to be nourished. But to do that, to make sense of any potential data or evidence, we need a framework of interpretation, a lens of perspective. It is in respect to this that my own work on a paradigm analysis of religious fundamentalism offers a way of understanding the origin and dynamic structure of religious extremism and so of religiously-motivated terrorism. It is not

possible to elaborate upon the details of this paradigm here; I have published extensively on it elsewhere.¹³ Nonetheless, some brief comments are in order.

“Absolutism” is perhaps a more apposite term for what has often been identified as “fundamentalism”, although for the purposes of wider discussion we cannot but use the latter term as it has such wide coinage. As a mindset and ideological template, fundamentalism is not only a religious phenomenon. There are many types and application of absolutist thinking. Secular fundamentalism, or secularism, for example, which takes an absolutist negative stance toward religion per se, is as equally pernicious as any religious fundamentalism. My aim has been to tease out an understanding of the relationship between fundamentalism and extremism, and the propensity for terror to which it may lead. The process, often referred to as a process of radicalization, by which an individual or a group becomes extremist in thinking, rhetoric and behaviours, involves many factors of which, crucially, ideology is one.

A critical analysis of fundamentalism distinguishes between passive, assertive and impositional forms. Passive fundamentalism amounts to a sincerely held, but not impinging or imposing upon anyone else, set of beliefs. These exist within the marketplace of non-threatening religious and other ideological options. But then comes the more rigid and insistent view of some groups whose style and approach identifies them as being in the assertive or hard-line phase. This is often marked by a sense of withdrawal – as, for example, into communities or compounds; or in other ways absenting themselves from wider secular society. It is also marked by expressions of being necessarily oppositional to the wider world. Such

¹³ See for example, Douglas Pratt, ‘Fundamentalism, Exclusivism and Religious Extremism’, in D. Cheetham, D. Pratt and D. Thomas (eds.), *Understanding Interreligious Relations* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 241-61; – ‘Religion and Terrorism: Christian Fundamentalism and Extremism’, *Terrorism and Political Violence*, Vol. 22:3 (June 2010): 438-56; – ‘Religious Fundamentalism: A Paradigm for Terrorism?’ *Australian Religion Studies Review*, Vol. 20, No. 2 (2007): 195-215.

fundamentalism is also inherently 'over against' the religious (or political) tradition with which it is otherwise identified. Or it opposes ideologically the status quo of the society from which it withdraws. Assertive religious fundamentalism sets the scene for religious extremism that leads into the impositional fundamentalism that may, and sometimes clearly does, yield up violent behaviours. Other forms of assertive and aggressive absolutisms do likewise.

Extremism: What can we do about it?

In recent years, much attention has been paid to countering violent extremism (CVE) – a term that embraces more than just religious extremism. CVE has become a field of both academic study and practitioner engagement, with wide international support and involvement. It typically has two dimensions – the application of a security apparatus to detect and thwart violent extremist acts before they take place, and engagement with communities from which extremists emerge. This latter is with respect to both supporting the security dimension and also promoting dialogue and education with the aim of undercutting the appeal of extremist ideologies and claims.

Thus far the attention of such strategies has been primarily with Islamic extremists and Muslim communities. This is now recognised to be wholly inadequate. Given the anti-Muslim extremisms driving Islamophobia, and the evidence of reactive extremism in response to negative perceptions of Islam, similar strategies should be applied to other extremists and their communities of support.

Extremisms are born of fundamentalist or absolutist ideologies, whether religious or non-religious. Expressions of extremism precede, and undergird, any allied violent behaviour. There is much rhetoric, for example, that is high on indicative scale of extremism on account of the depth of hateful antipathy it involves and invokes. There is often, too, an implicit – and sometimes explicit – call to oppose, derogate and reject

the targets of the rhetoric. Words can wound. They can incite. They foment. They express underlying values and beliefs that are inimical to positive appreciation, preferring, instead, the rejection of diversity, however that may be exercised.

The particular thrust of my own research and reflection suggests that, when it comes to religious extremism, the underlying problem of the rejection of diversity – the eliminative denial of differing ‘others’ or of that which presents alterities and alternatives to a status quo – needs to be addressed, both ideologically and practically. So, the specific issue we face is that of combatting diversity rejection. This is, at heart, the issue of human beings learning to live together in peaceful productive relationships not simply in spite of, but in positive affirmation and appreciation for, the rich diversity – including religious – of the identity and make-up of individuals and societies.

The capacity for peaceful co-existence in a context of mutual acceptance and respect is premised on the capacity to assert some form of pluralism: to affirm diversity. This requires some form of pluralist perspective and understanding. And this, of course, is anathema to jingoistic nationalism and the racial superiority of white supremacy and the alt-right movements.

Pluralism, broadly speaking, is the stance that embraces the fact of diversity and gives it a positive interpretation with a self-reflexive edge. By contrast, inclusivism names the response of regarding all ‘others’ – be that referring to racial, ethnic, cultural or religious ‘others’ – as in some sense subsumed within, or under, one dominant or ‘superior’ identity. And exclusivism, as the word suggests, regards only one religion as correct or true, or only one racial or cultural identity as valid, with all others necessarily ‘excluded’. Extremism, born of exclusivism, seeks in the end to eliminate the polluting or threatening otherness.

The critical issue of combatting extremism, and its accompanying manifestation in terrorism, is in addressing perceptions of, and responses to, diversity and plurality that are held and advanced by specific communities. If exclusivist, then there is a tendency to support, even tacitly, extremist views and actions. If inclusivist, this is less marked, perhaps absent. But the implication of this position, that the 'other' is merely tolerated, rather than accepted and affirmed in their difference, means it is vulnerable to tacit support of those with similar extremist views.

It is some form of pluralism, which at heart means the affirmation of diversity and the attempt to place one's own identity within the pluralist mix, rather than outside it, that offers a clear way forward. That is where a sign of hope may be discerned. There are a number of ways to think about pluralism as an ideology, and what it means and how it informs a practical response to diversity. But it is diversity affirmation that underlies all forms of pluralism.

Conclusion

While it is true that religion "cannot be exempted from the almost universal human tendency towards hatred of and violence against others",¹⁴ we need to note that for the most part in recent history "nationalism has been far more productive than religion" as an inspiration for terrorism.¹⁵ But when nationalism and religion combine, the result is a potent force. The absolutist ideology of a religious jingoism is impervious to any self-critique and certainly reacts hostilely to external criticism.

The combination of jingoistic nationalism and religious fervour, together with a corresponding ideological outlook, gives the context for extremism to move from the margins to the centre. Arguably, we see this phenomenon today emerging in the

¹⁴ Keith Ward, *Is Religion Dangerous?* (Oxford: Lion, 2006), 81

¹⁵ Karen Armstrong, *Fields of Blood: Religion and the History of Violence* (London: The Bodley Head, 2014), 323.

otherwise secular heartlands of northern Europe and North America as well as elsewhere. It is central to the White Supremacist movement.

Diversity affirmation, both as theory and as a *praxis*, offers, I suggest, a vital way forward in countering the ideologies and effects of religious absolutism and extremism. Of course, as the saying goes: easy to say, not so easy to do. Nevertheless, unless a line of diversity affirmation is pursued and promoted, the risk is that religious – and other – forms of absolutism, fundamentalism, and allied extremism will continue to grow in reach and strength.

It is a right affirmation of diversity that will build upon the tangible measure of our society's rallying around a minority religious group in their hour of need and suffering. Accompanied by an outpouring of grief and solidarity, this has been a measure of the resilience of our country even as it has been shaken to its core. It gives a measure of solace, comfort, and a sign of hope to Muslims in New Zealand, and how Muslims, and others, elsewhere perceive us. A White Supremacist's deadly escapade is a lost cause. *Despite what has happened, New Zealand remains a place where peace and tolerance are advocated, affirmed, and lived. This has been tested. But it will not yield.*

Extremist Orientalism: The local and the global in the Christchurch massacre

Erich Kolig

Dr Erich Kolig is a social and cultural anthropologist and retired academic. He has taught mainly at Otago University and Vienna University. He is the author and/or editor of New Zealand's Muslims and Multiculturalism, Freedom of Speech and Islam, Muslim Integration, Conservative Islam, and of many other publications.

Abstract: *Violent extremist Islamophobia led to the atrocity in Christchurch in March 2019. The essay's intention is to unpack the ideology of white supremacy, its globalised spread, and its connection with the European – in particular Austrian – identitarian movement. Its "racist" and anti-immigration stance is totally discordant with the socio-political nature of New Zealand and the country's official pluralist and multicultural policies. New Zealand is a settler state and former British colony and as such has accepted Muslims since the mid-19th century. Yet Islam is still widely considered a recent religious import and the Muslim community per se an immigrant group. This prejudicial image is instrumentalised by white supremacism (or white nationalism), as espoused by the perpetrator's so-called manifesto, for the absurd claim that New Zealand is a "European" domain in which Muslims are "invaders".*

Introduction

In the afternoon of 15th March 2019, a terrorist attack was carried out in Christchurch, New Zealand, by (as described by most commentators and media reports) an Australian white supremacist (henceforth B.T.). His targets were worshippers praying in two mosques – Christchurch's main mosque Masjid al-Noor and the smaller Linwood mosque. Presumably deliberately, he had selected the important Friday afternoon prayer salat al jummah (comparable to Sunday morning mass in Christianity), which was not only a very symbolic choice by the attacker, but also assured a maximum number of worshippers at prayer. Ready to listen to the khutba, the weekly sermon, they would be an easy target. At the time of writing the death toll stands at 51, men, women and children, and more than 30 injured.

Media and politicians wasted no time emphasising that the perpetrator was Australian, not a New Zealander, and only resident in New Zealand for a relatively short period of

time. If we leave aside the clearly patriotic motivation for placing the guilt offshore, it is significant to recognise that the relevant hateful ideology was seemingly “imported” with this foreign person from overseas. Subsequently, it also became known that he had travelled widely in pursuit of his ideological preoccupation. Particularly, a stay in Austria the year before and his contacts there with the leader of the Austrian identitarian movement, Martin Sellner, seem to have been “seminal”.¹ Considering these circumstances the globalised character of the ideological “payload” he carried becomes clear. Austria’s ultra-right-wing, anti-Muslim ideology has obviously become a source of “inspiration” in this sad drama. It seems that a significant stop on his travel through Europe was in Austria where a monetary contribution he made to the local Identitäre Bewegung caught the eye of the national intelligence services. This is understandable, because of the country’s political history, extreme right-wing activity and propaganda is much more in the focus of attention of the intelligence services than in New Zealand where surveillance of suspected Muslim extremism is a higher priority than “racist” or far-right extremism.² Right-wing ideas in New Zealand can much more readily be disguised as patriotism or harmless nationalism,³ whereas in Europe suspicion is easily aroused that neo-Nazi and racist sympathies are hiding behind expressions of conspicuous love of country, rejection of immigration, and excessive pride in autochthonous culture.

The identitarian movement in Austria (Identitäre Bewegung Österreichs, IBÖ) is well known for anti-immigration and specifically anti-Muslim and anti-Islam programmatic sentiments. B.T. used the same slogans and sentiments in his “manifesto” – such as

¹ As reported in Der Standard of 14 May 2019 (online ed.) under the headline “Kampf den guten Kampf weiter!” (continue to fight the good fight)– an ironic reference to an email exchange between B.T. and Sellner.

² According to media comments, especially security intelligence expert Paul Buchanan.

³ In this article I am making a clear distinction between a latent and diffuse sense of white superiority, wide-spread among Pakeha in New Zealand but politically harmless, and the ideological – and belligerent – orientation of white supremacy.

“The Great Replacement”⁴ – as other white nationalist movements. But in Austria’s far-right mystique the reference features prominently to the second Ottoman siege of Vienna in 1683.⁵ It had failed and put a final stop to the repeated attempts of the Islamic world to penetrate militarily deep into Europe. The heroic resistance of the Viennese was led by Ernst Rüdiger von Starhemberg, who with his 20,000 men resisted the Ottoman army of 120,000. Significantly, his name and other specific references were written on the equipment of the Christchurch attacker. This gives B.T.’s sources some specificity.

As the first and second Turkic attacks on the Austrian imperial entity of the time are deeply engraved on the people’s history consciousness as having thwarted the Islamisation of Europe, they have become signal events in the nationalist understanding of Austria’s past⁶ and came to insinuate themselves into the radicalisation process of Austria’s ultra-right. In this sense then Islamophobia predates the massive immigration of Muslims post World War II.⁷ But while previously ideas of racial and cultural purity had focused on anti-Semitism, given this historical ideological substratum it did not require a large shift to direct the xenophobic focus elsewhere – namely to the large Muslim immigration since the 1960s. This is probably a major difference to the racist right-wing extremism espoused by Anders Breivik and the Christchurch shooter. Their hateful mantra of “Replacement” rose to prominence only through immigration and multiculturalist policies of recent years. B.T.’s “manifesto” mentions Jews only in passing. It also says nothing about the crusades.

Perhaps the general, soothing climate of tolerance vis-à-vis diversity in New Zealand has tricked internal security intelligence services, engaged in surveiling social media,

⁴ This is a conspiracy theory slogan of the ultra-right that foresees the replacement of the autochthonous Whites through massive immigration of “racial” Others. In German: “der grosse Austausch”.

⁵ The first siege by the Ottoman army occurred in 1529 and had failed.

⁶ However, the Austrian monarchy, in the attempt to embrace its Muslim subjects in the Balkans, also enacted policies that came close to modern multiculturalism.

⁷ Austria’s Muslim population stands now at about 8% of the total.

into overlooking what seems to be a white supremacist, neo-fascist undercurrent slipping through the net of attention. (However, it should be noted that the terrorist's manifest, foreshadowing his intention, was published only eight minutes before the attack commenced – as reported in the media.) As most commentators surmised, keeping an eye on intolerant expressions has perhaps concentrated too much on Muslim extremism – which by all appearances actually has never been a notable problem in this country⁸ – at the expense of keeping an eye on the rise of Islamophobia. Occasional Islam-hostile comments by politicians, mostly to do with Muslim immigration and with reference to security problems overseas had been duly noted, but dismissed as unrepresentative of the general mood. (Such comments were not aimed at the local Muslim population and in any case were mild in comparison with the political discourse in Australia.) It is not my intention, however, to speculate if, with a higher degree of alertness, this attack could have been prevented. Absurdly, in a Western country where globalised violent Islamism has not taken root, the opposite, globalised Islamophobia, has put its horrible, irradicable footprint through the horrendous act of an Australian terrorist.

New Zealand's "race relations" – a term and concept fraught with many shortcomings⁹ – have always been portrayed as harmonious and exemplary, especially so by comparison with its neighbour Australia, where Muslim radicalism and "White nationalist" and anti-immigration alt-right sentiments have frequently clashed. New Zealand experienced none of these difficulties.¹⁰ The nation officially is bicultural, that

⁸ Ostensibly, there have been very few cases of Muslims having been radicalised to the extent that they have come to the attention of security services (on the watch list), courts (for planning attacks, internet crime) and other institutions (e.g. having passports cancelled, jihadi brides).

⁹ Mainly because the term "race" in its traditional English semantic meaning refers both to biological and ethnic criteria.

¹⁰ Kolig Erich, 2010, *New Zealand's Muslims and Multiculturalism*. Leiden: Brill. (272p.); 2012, *Is Multiculturalism Working in New Zealand? On the absence of virulent Islamophobia*. Pp.177-196. In: *Jahrbuch für Islamophobieforschung* 2012. Vienna: New Academic Press; , 2015, 'Whither Cultural Acceptance? Muslims and Multiculturalism in New Zealand'. Pp.159-192. In: *Asians and the New Multiculturalism in Aotearoa New Zealand*, G.Gosh and J.Leckie (eds.). Dunedin, Otago University Press.

means Anglo-Celtic culture and indigenous Maori culture (Tikanga Maori) and Maori language (te Reo Maori) officially are of equal status. The embrace of Polynesian otherness has contributed to creating – much praised, perhaps even hyperbolised, in the country’s official discourse – a general mood of acceptance of cultural, religious and ethnic diversity. Practically, New Zealand is proudly multicultural, fortified by strong human rights legislation guaranteeing freedom of religion, speech and cultural practice (within bounds of the domestic law). (What is a religion and what its practice is allowed to do is prescribed by domestic law and defined by Western parameters.) The principles of pluralism, cultural liberalism and human rights are encompassed by the Bill of Rights Act 1990 and the Human Rights Act 1993. Together they guarantee wide-ranging freedoms of expressing religious and cultural difference.

“Racist” intolerance (meaning cultural, ethnic, religiously motivated verbal and physical aggression and racist expressions of whatever kind) is rarely publicly and forcefully expressed. Yet, it must be noted that expressions of Islamophobia do exist. (It is usually countered with swift public and media condemnation.) Verbal abuse of wearers of distinctive Muslim dress like hijab and veiling does occur; there are news reports referring to veiled women being denied the use of public transport; graffiti and pigs heads at mosques are among other Islamophobic expressions, and the like. Yet, there is certainly little rational reason for distrust of the Muslim presence. New Zealand society has not had “bad experience” with Muslims, which could have ignited acute anti-Muslim sentiments. That is the point: the appearance of Islamophobia has to be a sign of ideological globalisation. Globalisation has been instrumental in introducing to this part of the Western World the ideological matrix from which extreme Islamophobia rises. But at the same time globalisation is not advanced enough for dominant society to genuinely embrace cultural diversity and to shrug off anti-globalist ideas. Let me explain what seems to be an indissoluble paradox.

Muslims, the eternal immigrants

In a population of 4.8 million the resident Muslim community of about (or fewer than) 50,000 has a low profile. While it may be an exaggeration to call the situation paradisiacal and enfranchisement may not be total, the degree of integration of Muslims into the wider society is somewhat better than in other Western countries.¹¹ (Such assessments depend on what criteria are being used and have a large subjective ingredient.) Yet, despite the official atmosphere of tolerance and despite the best intentions of the law, differences in looks and dress attract attention, some of it negative, which Muslims find uncomfortable. Like anywhere else in the Western World, Muslims crave to be ordinary, not the Other, and not be the subject of negative narratives promulgated in the social media and the news media. Yet, protests by Muslims, when they occur, are directed at blasphemy cases or discrimination elsewhere. New Zealand's Muslim community has eschewed loud protests and extremism, remaining peaceful, patient, and inconspicuous in the national political and every-day discourse. Political Islam, which almost certainly as a doctrinally supported, globalised concept is discussed in Muslim circles, has not led to radicalisation to an externally noticeable degree.

The presence of Muslims in New Zealand has long historical roots going back to the times when the country was a British colony.¹² Put in generalised outlines, Indian hawkers and a few Chinese gold diggers seem to have been the first Muslims to arrive. Due to the far reach of the British Empire Muslims from various parts of the world settled here from 1850 onwards, until the wind of fickle politics shifted to a "White New Zealand" policy for a few decades in the 20th century. This lasted until the early

¹¹ See Erich Kolig and Malcolm Voyce (eds.), *Muslim Integration*. Lanham MD: Lexington, 2016.

¹² I refer the reader to Abdullah Drury's numerous writings on the subject. See: Abdullah Drury, 'Mahometans on the Edge of Colonial Empire: Antipodean Experiences', *Islam and Christian-Muslim Relations*, Volume 29, Issue 1, pp. 71-87.

1970s when racist restrictions were removed from immigration policies. The concept of White exclusiveness always sat uneasily in this country because of a relatively large indigenous Polynesian minority, the Maori. (They stand today officially at 15% of the total population) There is also a large island Polynesian immigration together with people from every corner of the world.

In the 1990s there was an Arab, Somali and Afghan immigration move, most migrants arriving as refugees and asylum seekers from the crisis and war zones of Africa and the Middle East. Palestinians and European Muslims too fled armed conflict and persecution to find a safe haven in New Zealand. Through this more recent immigration the practice of Islam became more “orthodox”, more noticeably fundamentalised – but not radicalised. That is to say, being a Muslim now meant observing more strictly doctrinal commandments, religious rules and interdictions. What the new arrivals, equipped with sterner views of Islamic etiquette and custom, may have considered an overly lax practice of Islam, at times led to friction and conflict internally in the Muslim community. Sufi brands of Islam and doctrinally relaxed forms of Islam had given a particular tinge to New Zealand’s Islam and allowed it to be ignored in the wider society. This changed, especially as Wahhabism arrived with the Arab immigration. This is not to say that these migrants brought political Islam, Islamism, or jihadism. Religious fanaticism and radicalisation are suppressed by the national Muslim leadership (FIANZ). Intolerant expressions, critical of other minorities or of the dominant society are not tolerated. When, for instance, one or two imams in recent years expressed, in their sermons or religious lectures, anti-Semitic tendencies, they were immediately censored by the Islamic leadership and suspended from their posts. The goal was not to establish a specific New Zealand brand of Islam, but to keep it free of aggressive undertones, probably for the sake of fitting into the emphatically tolerant official climate. Most recently Syrian refugees have been made welcome and efforts are currently made to integrate them as quickly as possible.

The image of Otherness has been favoured by the recent immigration. Despite its long history, the Muslim presence today is considered the result of recent immigration. Thus, the Muslim community per se is still thought of as an immigrant minority and Islam is seen as a new religion in the country. In New Zealand, the image of Islam and Muslims as the significant, if not hostile, Other clearly has been imported from Europe. Indeed, the majority of Muslims (probably 90%) are either immigrants or first-generation immigrants. From the 1960s on there is also a trickle of local converts both European and Polynesian. Through the Arab religious influence and its success in shaping belief and practice of the faith, the flavour of Islam being an exotic import has been kept alive.

Thus, it is easy for New Zealand's dominant society to fall in line with general Western preconceptions of Islam as the "imported cultural Other". Just as Muslims in the West generally are considered the significant Other of almost antinomious proportions, in New Zealand – despite the fact that it is a society of immigrants and a settler state – Muslims remain outsiders. In this prejudicial perspective, it does not take much to incite targeted xenophobia and provoke the rallying cry of a Western, White identity needing to be defended. (A White outpost to be guarded against alien "invaders", in the words of the manifesto.) The point at which this idea inflames latent aggressiveness to become open physical hostility does not take long to be reached. The ideological spark is provided by the globalised version of Islamophobia.

The immediate proximity of Muslims in European society even dredges up historical "memories": the crusades and the several sorties into Europe by Islamic armies. Such historical specifics are replaced in B.T.s manifesto with a recourse to the English colonial past, ignoring the fact that New Zealand and Australia had "pre-White"

populations.¹³ A significant issue in this is the interplay between the global and the local in the process of globalisation of identities.

The long roots of White supremacy

Pratt notes: “extremism needs to be understood broadly, and more processively, rather than simply the manifestations of an atrocious act.”¹⁴ What ideas are behind it when Anders Behring Breivik could write of “Islamic imperialism”, where is the denial and rejection of alterity grounded, the devaluation of Otherness, the demonisation of diversity itself, the denouncement of pluralism as corrosive and destructive, as an agency of cultural entropy? One also needs to be aware that ideological extremism is not necessarily identical with terrorism, although they are undoubtedly closely related. (This distinction is relevant in the free speech/hate speech legislation.) Not all jihadism seeks the destruction of the West by terrorist acts; not all of Islamism harbours hopes for an imminent dabiq (the Islamic equivalent of Ragnarök). However, here is not the space to engage with such finer distinctions.

A major ideology causally involved in the Christchurch massacre undoubtedly is white supremacy or white nationalism. (They are nuances of the same trope.) It is based both on an overvaluation of the cultural and “racial” self and the devaluation of the Other, denounced not only as different but often as the antinomious opposite. In a largely secularised society religious identifications suddenly still seem relevant and play a fateful role to an extent where cultural awareness culminates not in peaceful and mutually fruitful coexistence, but in culture war.

¹³ B.T.’s manifesto does not refer to Vienna’s history, even though there is brief mention of the “Turk invaders”. It refers to the strong Turkish immigration to Europe in the 20th century.

¹⁴ (P.34). It borders clairvoyance that not long before this act of terrorism, Douglas Pratt published a lucid analysis of white extremism and Islamophobia entitled ‘Refugees, migrants, and the Fear of Islam: The Problem of reactionary Extremism’ pp.27-38. Waikato Islamic Studies Review 2018, 4/1. See also Douglas Pratt, 2018, Religion and Extremism: Rejecting Diversity. London: Bloomsbury.

Latent antipathy towards Muslims is probably wide-spread in the West, infusing the social discourse in various subtle and not so subtle ways. Important here is the programmatic version of it that appears prominently in the extreme right of the political spectrum. Let me tease out some major ideological strands in this murky brew of misunderstood nostalgia, half-digested ideas of cultural glory, and racist prejudices thriving on beliefs in the inferiority of people who look different, believe in different things and follow different customary imperatives. (I am only referring to the Western World and by and large ignoring similar phenomena in other cultures.)

Islamophobia is a sub-species of xenophobia, a more focussed form of prejudice and rejection of Otherness.¹⁵ In actual reality, it is safe to say, both intermesh tightly and only more rarely are they clearly distinct in the sense that a conscious and clear distinction is made, and the negativity attached to one is not explicitly or implicitly extended onto the other. Teasing out this prejudice's descent line it can be seen embedded in a broad spectrum of xenophobic sentimentality, which can be traced back to the era of European Romanticism of the 18th century, known mainly from the arts and literature. But it is also a politico-ideological period that emphasised home-spun patriotic values, the superiority of one's home culture and sentimental over-valuation of a Germanic glorious past combined with scepticism and rejection of foreign and alien influences. (Richard Wagner's operas, for instance, carried on this legacy.) Nationalist sentiments go back even more, to Johann Gottfried Herder 1744-1803),¹⁶ while racist, Aryan master-race ideas joined in somewhat later through Count de Gobineau (1816-1882). Another source is an even older theological xenophobia, exaggerating doctrinal boundaries that divide Christendom and the Islamic world and Judaism. The trope of Occident versus Orient arose from religious antagonism to include now also

¹⁵ Volumes have been published on Islamophobia (eg., John Esposito and Ibrahim Kalin (eds.), 2011, *Islamophobia: the challenge of pluralism in the 21st century*. New York: Oxford University Press. Sheehi Stephen, 2011, *Islamophobia: the ideological campaign against Muslims*. Atlanta: Clarity Press).

¹⁶ However, Herder also enunciated a belief in the fundamental equality of all humankind – in line with universalist Enlightenment thought – and eschewed crude xenophobia.

non-religious cultural differences. Not all of that opposing categorisation is conceived in negative terms. Some of it is romantic, playful – even erotic – and full of fascination for the exotic. But in any case, it is overwhelmingly emphasising alienness and its resistant character to incorporation in the West. Orientalism, as for instance described by Edward Said,¹⁷ contains highly romanticised notions, used in the arts, in referencing the Islamic world – much of it would fall into the category of harmless kitsch; but there is also negative and damaging stereotyping especially in the literature and the academic discourse. All this informs the current distinction between self and Otherness.

Xenophobia has a long history in Europe, including persecution of minorities, anti-Semitism, pogroms, violent enforcement of racial, religious and cultural purity (ranging from religious intolerance and forced conversion to the concept of the Aryan master race). Among this toxic mix Islamophobia stands out today. In Europe it slumbered cryptically for centuries since the crusades, but in recent years it received a major boost through the massive immigration of Muslims. On a somewhat more experiential basis fear and loathing of Muslims, if not Islam per se, was occasioned through 9/11 – the landmark event in 2001 that seems to have sparked a never-ending chain of further jihadist events and changed the West's security consciousness.

Europe's (in)tolerance level historically compares unfavourably with the treatment of religious difference in the Islamic world, where the dhimmiyah system gave some relative security to some minority groups recognised as ahl al kitab (people of the book; i.e. monotheists). Tolerance did not mean equality, nor was it total and absolutely reliable. Minorities classified as polytheistic, or as heretic and schismatic Muslims had an even more precarious existence. Under today's Human Rights aegis, the dhimmiyah system is unacceptable, even though practically it still exists in many places and in

¹⁷ Edward Said, 1978, *Orientalism*. New York: Pantheon.

several different guises. The official Western concept of pluralism does not allow for any socio-political regulation based on institutionalised inequality. Even if it were possible, this arrangement would not suit white supremacy of B.T's kind. The sharing of space with "inferior aliens", even when in a strongly subalterns' social position, is still unacceptable. Nothing less than a complete separation will suffice – a global apartheid, as mooted in B.T.'s manifesto.

Through various recent events it has become clear that Islamophobia is integrated now in the right-wing political spectrum world-wide as bed-fellow with fascism, neo-Nazism, white nationalism and white supremacy. It insinuated itself in the discourse of nationalism and ethno-nationalism. The religious motivation of antipathy towards Muslims through the mellowing of mainstream Christian theology and secularisation has given way to equally pernicious sentiments about watering down European and Western culture by Islamic influence; and even racial motivations feature now prominently culminating in the fear that massive Muslim numbers in the West spoil the European genetic inheritance. Alarms grew as waves of Muslim immigrants arrived – before Syrians and Iraqis, Muslims from the Commonwealth countries started to arrive in the UK, Gastarbeiter from Turkey in search of work in Central European countries, staying on and bringing their families, refugees from Somalia, Algeria and Morocco, Chechens fleeing the civil war and Bosnians fleeing ethnic cleansing in the Balkans. An estimated 20 million Muslims are now in the EU, and 40 million Europe-wide. Average family size and birth rates in Muslim families are above the European average. Alarms were triggered by what some people call this "invasion", which unhappily is fortified by the call of some radical Muslim scholars and imams, who applaud the numerous Muslim migrations to Europe for its presumed effect of tipping the population scales in favour of Islam. Large families are encouraged by them as an Islamic duty to increase the Muslim population and thus strengthen Islam's influence.

Being interested in genetics, and perhaps somewhat facetiously, I would point out that 50% of the genomic mix of Europeans is of Anatolian origin, which arrived in Europe with agriculture about eight millennia ago. It moved through the Balkans along the Mediterranean coast line to the West and up the Danube basin. While mixing with the autochthonous population, it seems to have genetically overwhelmed them. The “autochthonos” genetic legacy is only about 20% of today’s European genome.¹⁸

Undoubtedly the roots of Islamophobia, religious, cultural and racial intolerance that plague the world today, reach deeply back into European history. Now what once was sentimentality and religious rejection of heresy penetrates deeply into the political and ideological spectrum and sits at the heart of extreme right-wing agendas. For the sake of this article and the required brevity no fine distinction is made between various brands and orientations, which make up this intolerantly paranoid world perception: Anti-immigration, alt-right, white supremacy, white nationalism, xenophobic and specifically Islamophobic orientations, neo-Fascist, neo-Nazi, anti-Semitic, identitarian movements, Odin worship, Skinheads, Whitelash, and other ideological phenomena, movements, organisation and underground cells with different specific targets and agendas. In the USA there are also the descent movements of the “classical” Ku Klux Klan, which fall into the global white supremacism category. In this genre more distant relatives are assorted “racist” conspiracy theories, for instance, about a Jewish world domination bid and the anti-immigration “Great Replacement theory”.

It emerges now that New Zealand also harbours networks of this kind, through the internet transcending the local and linking up with the global. Recruitment to radical ideas happens in internet chat rooms rather than physical assemblies. Combatting these phenomena effectively through rational persuasion and education is slow in taking

¹⁸ The remaining 30% of the European genome is of Asian derivation (i.e. the south Russian steppe, probably in connection with the Indo-European language. The percentages include a small proportion of Neanderthal genes. This is according to the latest DNA research by the Max-Planck-Institut and others.

effect, which has turned efforts to electronic surveillance and changes in law.

Unfortunately, also the right to free speech and expression has come under scrutiny. A public good, hard won after centuries of battle, the right to freedom of speech, expressing viewpoints however unpopular is now in danger of becoming the proverbial baby to be thrown out with the bathwater. However much it may seem desirable to muzzle pernicious, anti-humanistic ideologies, the effects on the principle of freedom of expression – one of the mainstays of a liberal democracy – have to be carefully considered. Human Rights would have to be violated and various legal instruments that guarantee free speech would have to be severely infringed to shut out far-right chatter.

The Christchurch atrocity has stimulated the New Zealand government to look at free speech provisions very critically. While the USA treats extremist expressions under the aegis of the First Amendment and usually grants them much freedom, European law is more restrictive. Despite the fact that Human Rights are strengthened by the EU Convention on Human Rights, considerable restrictions to free expression are imposed: Neo-Nazi phenomena (labelled *Wiederbetaetigung*, literally: renewed agitation), anti-Semitism, racism, insulting speech, are curbed. Even blasphemy laws, which some European countries still have on the statute books, still keep a lid on religiously controversial expressions in public. The European Court of Human Rights appears to give special attention to Islamophobic expressions – it seems mainly for the reason of preventing public unrest.

Culture wars and anti-globalisation

Globalisation and its migration patterns have moved – and are moving – global diversity into uncomfortable proximity with unwilling hosts and partners.¹⁹ The

¹⁹ Arjun Appadurai (2006 *Fear of Small Numbers: an essay on the geography of anger*. Durham NC USA: Duke University Press) seeks to bring the fear and loathing of minorities into a causal connection with globalisation.

emergent form of coexistence is not cosmopolitanism: the voluntary peaceful – almost symbiotic – side-by-side of diverse cultures, working out practical syncretisms and syntheses on an informal basis. Globalisation is formal, structured and supported by official laws and guided by specific internationalised conventions and ethics. As yet it remains incomplete in that the particularism of identities in many cases retain an atmosphere not only of exclusivity, but of strong mutual opposition and dislike, which proves resistant to rational and pragmatic argument. Islamophobia, for instance, despite its long history in Europe, has gained a new momentum as an anti-globalising force. “Invigorated” with a new agenda, it has gained a new lease of life. (Not just immigration, but also multiculturalist policies are a result of globalisation and therefore a main target of the far-right’s Islamophobia.)

In the aftermath of the atrocity, there was a spectacular outpouring of compassion and sympathy in the wider public, in political and religious circles. Pictures of the ubiquitous flower tributes went around the world, touching stories of expressions of sympathy were widely reported, and a huge public commemoration ceremony in Hagley Park was held on 29th March 2019. New Zealand’s prime minister, Jacinda Ardern, earned praise for the way she led the public expression of grief. National television was brimful with relevant news bulletins and special reports, echoed by the world media. One memorable slogan emerged engraving itself on the collective memory: “You are us!”. This symbolic and intentional merging of identities is worth commenting on, because it is the exact opposite of the reality and points at what is wrong.

It is also noteworthy – although not uncommon in such situations – that this wave of sympathy also brought out counter-phenomena, expressing rejection of the public mood and defiance of the popular slogan. There were and are sporadic expressions of hostility and Islamophobia: a man loitering with a swastika on his T-shirt, another swearing and

shouting “racist” sentiments in front of the al-Noor mosque (and being cautioned for stretching the freedom of speech; later he was arrested). Also the internet netted its fair share of racist, Islamophobic slurs. It also introduced a sour note when the chairman of the Mt Roskill Masjid in a so-called “love rally” (on 28th March 2019) in Auckland voiced suspicion that behind the atrocity had been Mossad and “Jewish business”.²⁰ No evidence for this conspiracy theory was produced to my knowledge and thus can only be considered a product of anti-Semitic prejudice. Logically, it seems highly unlikely anyway, as the ideological orientation of white supremacy usually also contains anti-Semitic undercurrents and cooperation with Mossad is out of the question.)

An interesting question is: why are national interests of cooperation so easily set aside for the sake of emphasising narrow religious and ethnic dividing lines, separatist identities,²¹ and cultural distinctions of custom, dress and speech? Why are religious identity and racialism for a significant minority still such dividing lines in a practically multi-ethnic, multi-racial, multi-religious – in short avowedly multi-cultural – society, to the extent that antagonism has to be expressed in some way (from snide remarks, insults, hostile social media postings, suspicions about immigration to murderous intent and symbolic ethnic cleansing).

The usual excuse is that Muslims themselves stress their distinct, separate identity. In the European discourse one major Islamophobic argument is that Muslims en bloc are “integration resistant” (i.e., show few signs of wishing to integrate let alone assimilate to the encapsulating “host” society). In short, Muslims themselves do everything to uphold the myth of the significant hostile antinomious Other and therefore are the architects of their own misfortune. In this perspective, visible evidence of the

²⁰ The accusation was formally rejected by Israel’s embassy. Ahmed Bhamji seems to have repeated the diatribe of the Qatari sociologist Dr Abdulaziz al-Khazraj al-Ansari (on a Memri website of 15/3/2019).

²¹ Francis Fukuyama, 2018, *Identity: contemporary identity politics and the struggle for recognition*: London: Profile Books.

disinclination “to blend in” is the hijab and in particular the niqab or burqa (detested for various reasons in the West and on the basis of a symbolic interpretation that may or may not be true).²² The conspicuous Islamic religious architecture, imported from the Middle East and now springing up everywhere in the West, brings an oriental flair into the Western cityscape. (Several cities have adopted building restrictions prohibiting especially the erection of minarets. Such restrictions echo the Middle East where Christian architecture also is subjected to discriminatory rules.) Islamic food and alcohol prohibitions, concepts of halal and haram, also have an unsettling effect on social coexistence. (Commensality and drinking together are important pan-human signals of peaceful coexistence and friendship). The gender division that prevents and limits cross-gender contact and socialising, in some orthodox cases preventing even shaking hands, is also an element of negative attention in the West. Another ingredient is the suspicion that Muslims *sui generis* are implicitly hostile to the West and seek its destruction, or at least challenge the global hegemony of the West.

Mutual fear and loathing among humans has long roots. The fear of the unknown, the alien, the unfamiliar is a natural defence mechanism, most probably once was evolutionarily useful, and is now in all likelihood biologically hard-wired in humankind. Historically seen mutual feelings of distance and antagonism between Muslims and non-Muslim Westerners arose on a theological level between the established religions (Christianity, Judaism, and various Arab polytheisms) and an aggressively emergent new one (Islam). Mutual accusations of heresy were followed by persecution on both sides, expulsion of Christians (and Jews) from the Arabian peninsula under the Rashidun caliphate, Islamic conquest answered by the disastrous crusades and the loss of the Near East to the Christian occident.²³ The idea of a glorious

²² I am referring to the interpretation that the head scarf and especially the face veil is a symbol for female subjugation, a sign of patriarchal dominance and the like. It can also be interpreted differently. (See p.185ff. in Erich Kolig, 2012, *Conservative Islam: A Cultural Anthropology*. Lanham MA: Lexington.)

²³ Few Westerners, even Islamophobes, seem to be aware today that much of the Near East (Levant, Anatolia, parts of the Maghreb) was under Byzantine-Christian domination before the Islamic expansion.

victory of Islam over rival religions, I found, is deeply embedded in the mind of many, if not a majority, of educated Muslims. Not unusually it is coupled with the notion of injustice (in their perspective) perpetrated by Europeans in the crusades,²⁴ just as Austrians remember the Ottoman sieges. Such engraved memories add an historical dimension to an otherwise shallow antagonism towards the cultural Other. In the end, it is as if Huntington has already won the argument.²⁵

Acknowledgment:

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²⁴ Very recent genetic studies have revealed that crusaders were only partly Europeans. It appears that only the upper echelons and the elite came from Europe while troops were recruited from among the local Levantine population. It is unclear whether they were Christians. In later crusades among the troops were persons of mixed European-Levantine descent testifying to miscegenation between locals and invading Europeans and in further consequence suggesting an absence of a clear religio-ethnic-genetic cleft. Today's Levantine Christians show no significant European genomic admixture more so than local Muslims. The crusades had no noticeable impact on the genetic distribution in religious communities. (See Mave Haber 2019, 'A transient pulse of genetic admixture from the crusaders in the Near East from ancient genome sequences. *The American Journal of Human Genetics*, 18 April 2019.

²⁵ Samuel Huntington, 1997, *Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order*. New York: Simon and Schuster.

Remaining Devout Muslims in Affectionate Citizenship: A Possible Modus Vivendi

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Abstract: *The response of the New Zealand prime minister Jacinda Ardern to the Christchurch massacre at two mosques has lighted a flickering flame of hope for diversity and coexistence. The proposed article is a furtherance of my paper presented in the University of Waikato Islamic Studies Conference on Islam and its Relations with Others, on November 11-12, 2015: 'A Matter of Faith, a Matter of Meaning. The Need of Epistemological Pluralism'. The paper is published in International Journal of the Asian Philosophical Association (Alkatiri 2016b). In that article, I argue that in order for the dialogue between Islam and the West possible, there is a need of concrete recognition of the legitimacy of different 'systems of representation' between that of the religious Muslims and that of the non-religious modern West. Further to the aforesaid, in this proposed article, I am going to articulate a number of issues required to be addressed for the needs of religious Muslims to coexist in multicultural citizenship. In the main, a caveat against the superimposing character of nationalism ideology as it insists to replace the ontological, epistemological, and axiological positions of religion in the citizen's minds and hearts needs to be recognized. The article proposes, instead, to leave the notion of nationhood in the 'heart' domain only. That is the domain of 'affection', rather than making it an all-encompassing point of reference to define the 'true-false' (epistemological); 'real-unreal' (ontological); 'good-bad' (axiological) quality of all things for the citizens as the modern nation-state concept requires. That being the case, the Muslims can remain to be religious and at the same time, maintaining affectionate citizenship within the society at large.*

Introduction

My article attempts to contribute to the creation of peaceful global world community. I came from a multidisciplinary background. Over the last two decades I have been engaged in varied works that directly or tangentially concern ethnic and religious diversity on the one hand, and on the other, the so-called radicalization, either that of religion or that of nationalism. In all my works (Alkatiri 2014, 2016a, 2016b, 2018a, 2018b), I did not seek to evade the facts and ignore realities of the complex world we live in today. Perhaps, many have done unintentionally so by the needs to comply with tidy compartmentalization of academic fields. In contrast, I adopted a 'systems thinking'

paradigm. 'Systems thinking' is a new way of seeing the world in terms of relationship, connectedness and context on the premise that everything is connected to everything else (Capra 1999, Strachan 2009). The proponents of 'systems thinking' argue that at the heart of the crises facing the world today is the inability of people to identify the interconnected nature of the crises. They believe 'the problems just refuse to arrive in the neat categories of academic departments' (Sach2 2008:14). The paper I'm presenting in this session would like to make the audiences see the problems of growing Muslims presence in the Western societies, and the perceived 'collapsing Western civilization' which some has attributed to the Muslims presence, from the following perspectives.

I. Multivarious Worlds

We live in a rather special era, a point in history where so much has been happening, with much of contradictions as well. For the purpose of this article, I highlighted six tendencies that characterize our present-day world:

1. Globalization
2. Digital era
3. Late modernity
4. Post modernity
5. Post-secularism
6. Ecological epoch

Globalization is a major characteristic of the contemporary life, which has caused increased interrelations in every single aspect in societies, nations, and cultures. Politics and human affairs in the present era are heavily influenced by globalization. Simultaneously, in a post-modern world, diversity is celebrated and the basic premise of modernity is severely questioned. It is also important to highlight that this late-modern era is characterized by the 'cry of spirit' with spiraling outbreaks of depression, suicide, addiction and psychological sufferings (e.g. see Webb 1979, Oldmeadow 2004).

From political-economic point of view, many have argued that globalization has appeared as the rapers of societies and the environment by transnational economic interests in the name of free market and its supposed benefits for the welfare of all (e.g. Mander & Goldsmith 1996). While globalization affects the worldwide economy and provides more marketplace opportunities, it is believed to be the root cause of the world's crises resulting in:

1. Inequality, mainly in developing countries, causing to great extent the rise of migrant workers (e.g. see Allen 2017),
2. The global politics have led to regional conflicts and civil wars in many parts of the Muslim world, which forced people to migrate.

With the help of the advancement of transportation technology alongside the information and telecommunication technologies, people migrate easier. The people migrate bringing their culture and traditions with them.

Despite the unsympathetic view of religion by the predominant secularization theory, according to which religion is mythical, anti-rational, superstitious, anti-science, unethical, oppressive, cruel, backward, and goes against the dignity of human, I argue that religion must also be acknowledged as human endeavor of pursuing the inner purpose of life in the context of an ever-changing social and material world. Accordingly, religion has been integral to the lives of many individuals and to the constitution of human societies throughout the ages. In the Muslim world, the fact is that Islam has been a lived reality for many if not most of the population up to the present day. This view is the cornerstone of this article. Further, I am putting forward three propositions:

Premise-1: The peaceful coexistence of Muslim migrants in diverse society is NOT impossible

Premise-2: There is a need to understand the 'Cognitive-Meaning-Action' trilogy of Muslim's religious life, on both levels:

- a. The knowledge encounter between Modernism and Islam
- b. The citizenship of devout Muslims in a modern nation state

Premise-3: ‘Affectionate citizenship’, in which the citizen’s allegiance to the state was freely given and based on love, without necessarily forcing a single homogeneous national identity as the assimilationist’s and integralist’s approach of nation building, is possible and viable.

With this article I argue that this ‘heart’ or affection dimension of human relations needs to be studied more, supported by empirical works, with qualitative approach.

I. The Psychology of Globalization and Migration

I will begin with premise-1. The psychological effects of migration and globalization have been the subject of many studies. The research by Kinnvall (2004) identified three main plights of migrants. They are: (i) identity confusion, (ii) ‘ontological insecurity’¹, and (iii) ‘existential anxiety’². According to Kinnvall, the insecurity and anxiety among individuals and groups will guide them to seek reformation of self-identity, driving them to take a grip on any collective that is believed as being able to reduce their dilemma and answer their questions. She identified further the two groups that are well-known as identity signifiers are: (i) religion and (ii) nationalism. In this context, I suggest that religion, both as a spirituality – namely, as a source of hope, optimism, and inner-peace; and as a sociological system, i.e. as an identity signifier, an institution, and a value system, might have been given a renewed prominence.

In nearly the same way, a longing for community or longing to belong is widely discussed in ‘green community movement’ literature in environmental studies as a rising

¹ Ontological security refers to ‘a stable mental state derived from a sense of continuity and order in events’ (Bilton et al 1998, p.4)

² Existential anxiety refers to feelings of unease about meaning, choice, and freedom in life. The anxiety or despair or angst is attributed to the idea that life is inherently pointless, that our existence has no meaning, because there are limits or boundaries on it, namely, that we all must die someday.

phenomena in urbanized society (e.g. Maser 1997). Given the current state of economy, politics, disintegrating families, violent social relations, uncertain sense of security, and the confused condition of our guiding values, there is an increasingly common yearning for clearer ethical values on which to base a politics filled with meaning and purpose (Maser 1997), or to reconnect people with a set of shared values and principles with which to embrace the uncertainties of life. In this situation, ‘language of community’ is believed by social psychologists as one way of overcoming:

1. Breakdown of community principles
2. Feeling of isolation and disconnectedness

It’s interesting and important to recognize a parallel between (i) the longing for community, (ii) the resurgence of religion whatever its hue; and (iii) the rising alternative lifestyles which many of them demonstrate explicit resistances to urbanism and capitalism; as well, (iv) the emergence of neo-paganism and other invented spiritual traditions. In Max Weber Language, those are attempts to ‘re-enchant’ the world (Jenkins 2000).

In light of that, my article would like to highlight that the grouping phenomena is not always a bad thing. A number of studies such as what follows, show favourable aspects of grouping to the possibility of peaceful coexistence in multicultural society:

1. Contrary to Samuel Huntington’s (1996) prediction that cultural differences necessarily tend to lead to conflict, thus, immigrants who have multicultural affiliations will put less effort into civic associations, public life, and politics, Jensen’s (2008) work shows that people who have affiliation with their cultural origin are twice as likely to be the source for civic engagement. They usually have more concern for the welfare of one’s cultural community and a desire to bridge communities to embrace understanding

2. Peucker and Ceylan's (2017) study offers a counter-narrative to the widespread allegations that Ethno-religious community organizations in Western countries, the Muslims especially, have often been described as being disconnected from mainstream society. They draw on a synthesis of emerging research on the citizenship-enhancing effects of mosque involvement and on an explorative study involving thirty in-depth interviews with civically active Muslims in Australia and Germany. The article examines the potential of Muslim community organizations to mobilize their member into performing their citizenship through civic and political participation. It offers empirical evidence that many Muslim community organizations, rather than promoting social segregation, act as accessible entry point for Muslims' civic participation, facilitate cross-community engagement and provide gateways to political involvement. These civic potentials of Muslim community organization have remained underestimated in the public and political discourse on cohesive societies and healthy democracies.

II. 'Cognitive-Meaning-Action' Trilogy

Having said that, I will turn to premise-2 to point up the need to understand what I termed in my PhD thesis "the 'Cognitive-Meaning-Action' trilogy" of Muslim's religious life (Alkatiri 2016a). That is to articulate the idea that religion - Islam in this context - bestows 'meanings' to the adherents, and influence their domains of thought and action as well, and furthermore, that the three are correlated. To explicate that, my thesis developed a theoretical framework in sociology of knowledge and sociology of religion. The piece is published in a special issue on 'Islam and Social Contract' (Alkatiri 2014). For the purpose of this article, in the context of diversity and coexistence in which the devout Muslims are a part, I would like to point out the need to consider the aforesaid 'cognitive-meaning-action' issue upon two levels. They are on the levels of:

1. Knowledge encounter between Modernism and Islam
2. Citizenship of devout Muslims in a modern nation state

In what follows, I will begin with the first point.

Right here at Waikato Conference in 2015, I presented a non-political, non-economic issue that lie at the heart of the enduring conflicts between Islam and modern West. The aforesaid issue, however, has not been given adequate attention academically. I presented the ontological and epistemological disagreement between Islam and modern system of thought, between the God-centric Islam and human-centric modern thought. By bringing up the ‘*Muslim reconstruction of knowledge*’ project or what has been inaccurately called ‘*Islamization of knowledge* project’ that has been debated between Muslim thinkers and philosophers for over half a century (e.g. see Zaidi 2006), I concluded that we need an ontological and epistemological pluralism to exist in order to make the dialogue between Islam and the West possible. What that actually means is a concrete recognition that specific worldview shapes a specific set of cognitive system. In other words, a concrete recognition of the legitimacy of different “systems of representation” so it is called in *representational* theory of mind in Cognitive Psychology. My article is published in International Journal of the Asian Philosophical Association (Alkatiri 2016b). For the sake of brief presentation here, I would like to highlight the incompatibility between materialist and religious ontology. Materialist ontology denies any pre-constituted structure of being and any teleological order of existence, whereas in all non-materialist ontology such as religious and mythological worldviews, belief in the existence of metaphysical dimensions of reality is a common feature. As for Islam, the physical and metaphysical domains are variously referred to in religious terminology.

Furthermore, the disagreement between Islamic and modern knowledge epistemology has been debated for long in Islamic philosophy literature (e.g. Yazdi 2003). Islamic cognitive system recognizes (i) *ilm huduri* (Arabic for ‘knowledge by presence’) besides

(ii) *ilm husuli*, i.e. 'knowledge by correspondence' which is knowledge in the ordinary or modern sense of the term. With those in mind, clearly, there are potential clashes between Islam and modern West in the cognitive realm. Let me reiterate however, by bringing up Muslim's *reconstruction of knowledge* project I aimed to demonstrate that there is more to the Muslims' desire to re-enchant the world than simply anti-imperialist sentiments. The fact that Muslims resent the West for its cultural invasion, economic exploitation, political oppression, military superiority, cannot negate the incompatibility of *Allah-centric* Islamic thought and homo-centric modern thought. Accordingly, for a peaceful coexistence between Islam and the West, this cognitive issue needs to be intellectually recognized and addressed. In light of that, I would like to suggest that New Zealand pioneer the attempt by taking initiative to open up philosophical dialogues between Islam and modern West in higher education and community levels.

Turning to the second point of Premise-2, with respect to the issue of Muslim citizenship in a modern nation state, in a conference in Turku, Finland, on "Ethnic and Religious Future of Europe" in 2017, I problematized the modern nation state concept as it necessarily implies a requirement to force a unity into diversity in order to build a solid nationhood. Subsequently, in practice, every citizen is supposed to adopt a single national identity. Drawing upon empirical studies from Indonesian history – a country with a highly diverse society with Muslim majority population; and a comparative literature review of equally diverse African states, my thesis concludes to advocate embracing diversity instead of forcing unity into diversity by way of integration, acculturation, and assimilation. Given the characteristics of the present era, embracing diversity is the only way to move forward into the future, to create harmony globally by staying true to our own identity whilst respecting others. My paper is published in the conference journal by the Donner Institute in Finland, the *Scripta Donneriani Aboensis* (Alkatiri 2018a).

III. Devout Muslim and Affectionate Citizenship

Finally, is the last premise of this article. Based on my first-hand knowledge about New Zealand Muslim community, especially the one in Christchurch where a number of who were killed in al-Noor mosque terrorist attack are people I and my family know quite well, I contend that ‘affectionate citizenship’ in which the Muslim citizen’s allegiance to the state was freely given and based on love, and without necessarily implies a single national identity, is possible and viable. In fact, that could be an ideal scheme of citizenship for remaining to be devout Muslims in multicultural global society. This ‘heart’ or affection dimension of human relations has not been adequately studied. On that account, I would like to suggest the Waikato Islamic Studies Group conduct a qualitative research for the purpose of unveiling the extent of its viability and the complexities of issues involved, with NZ devout Muslims as the respondents.

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New Zealand as *Dar al-Shahāda*?

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Abstract: *This presentation will discuss the reactions to the terror attacks of March 15 in the light of Tariq Ramadan's concept of Dar al-Shahada (Abode of Witness). I believe the concept of Shahada can provide an interesting and helpful perspective and give some indication of the way forward.*

Introduction

The terrible events of March 15 in Christchurch, in which fifty people were killed and another fifty injured by a gunman in two mosques during Friday Prayers (*Salāt al-Jum'a*)ⁱ, have shaken us up and challenged our thinking in various ways. How we think about such an event depends considerably on the context in which we put it and how we frame it. In this article I want to share some of my thoughts on this, in particular that we might think about it in terms of the concept of *shahāda* (witness[ing]). This has been prompted for me by some of the statements in the book *To be a European Muslim* by Tariq Ramadan, a leading European Muslim thinker. Noting the traditional dichotomy of *Dar al-Islam* vs. *Dar al-Harb* (Abode of Islam vs Abode of War, so that effectively Muslims in the latter are in enemy territory) he sees Western countries now as more normal places for Muslims to live, since they can have full citizenship and religious freedom, and suggests they be thought of as *Dar al-Da'wa* or *Dar al-Shahāda* (Abode of Mission or Abode of Witness).ⁱⁱ The two words are related to some degree but it is the term *shahāda* that I think can illuminate our present situation and help to frame it.ⁱⁱⁱ It is appropriate to mention here that the idea of witnessing is also

present in a Christian religious context, especially among evangelical Christian who often call their efforts ‘witnessing for Christ’.^{iv}

Probably the best known usage of the word *shahāda* is when it refers to the act of reciting the Muslim basic beliefs about God and Muhammad, ‘I witness that there is no god but God and Muhammad is the Messenger of God’ . These words are pronounced, usually in Arabic, at the beginning of the *Adhān* , the call to Salat(Prayer), as well as on other occasions. I think Muslims here in Christchurch, and perhaps in New Zealand generally, have had more opportunity to say these words in the presence of non-Muslims in the last few weeks than ever before as well as to witness to their faith by performing the Salat by other beliefs and practices. This is particularly well illustrated the week following the shootings by the *Salāt al-Jum‘a* conducted in Hagley Park, witnessed by thousands who were either present or watching via television.^v Even though the rituals were mostly in Arabic, some were explained and the accompanying actions constituted a witness.^{vi}

On a more somber note, *shahāda* also means martyrdom and fifty martyrs^{vii} have witnessed to their faith by their deaths. Some died heroically seeking to protect or save others; most presumably died unwillingly but they died as Muslims since they had been so singled out by their murderer and were engaging in distinctively Muslim activity. The traditional belief is that martyrs go directly to heaven and that has been frequently articulated in this context. One suspects there are many non-Muslims who hope the same. Others have suffered in various ways and have given witness to their faith by their unity and their fortitude in adversity. They have also witnessed to their basic humanity, assisted in this by the many media reports of individual experiences. This is more important than it may seem because the failure to perceive the basic humanity of many racial, ethnic and religious groups is one of the reasons for prejudice and discrimination against them.

To the Kiwi community these events were a major shock and a wakeup call. They have borne witness to us and warned us that we are not quite the blessed isles we and others thought we were, nor are we totally free of the ideological demons that drive such horrors. Their witness has showed us that ‘it can happen here’. The prime minister described it as one of New Zealand’s ‘darkest days’.^{viii} The immediate precautionary measures, such as schools and other buildings locked down, and police armed were perhaps predictable, as was the closer surveillance of some individuals. The speedy decision by the government to restrict gun ownership was perhaps also predictable under the circumstances and also testified to the strength of popular feeling that made it politically possible.

Less predictable but in my view most important of all was the massive response of ordinary Kiwis in support of the Muslims with donations of money and food and expressions of sympathy, empathy and solidarity individually and in several large gatherings and vigils. The banks of flowers and notes of condolence left outside the mosque opposite Hagley Park^{ix} provide a particularly beautiful and striking witness. In the words of one couple, ‘We cut the silver fern out of our garden just to let all our Muslim community know that our hearts are breaking for them today and we stand with them in solidarity with them.’^x The words spoken by the first governor of New Zealand at the Treaty of Waitangi in 1840, ‘*He iwi kotahi tatou*’ (We are one people), could be said to have gained a new meaning and *aroha* (love, the word appeared often in the condolence cards) a new application. In these things the Kiwi community has given witness to its capacity for compassion and practical assistance, perhaps surprising itself in the process. Officialdom likewise expressed its support and the prime minister has been an excellent symbol of this. She has met with many of the Muslims and worn a headcovering in recognition of Muslim custom; in a parliamentary speech directed at the families of the fallen she said, ‘We cannot know your grief but we can walk with you at every stage. We can, and we will, surround you with *aroha, manaakitanga*

(friendship) and all that makes us us.’^{xi} Our hearts are heavy, but our spirits are strong.’ Churches and community groups have prayed for those affected and held meetings, including a large service for the Muslim community in one of the main squares of the city^{xii}, thus in some measure informing the community about Islam as well as illustrating the community’s response.^{xiii} Even patched gang members were visibly present in some gatherings outside mosques expressing their sympathy.^{xiv}

Muslims have responded to this with considerable appreciation. This is illustrated eloquently in the sermon by the Imam of Masjid al-Noor in his sermon to thousands a week later.

‘We are told by our prophet Mohammed that you can never truly show gratitude to almighty God if you are incapable of loving your fellow man. To the people of New Zealand, thank you for your peace. Thank you for your haka. Thank you for your flowers. Thank you for your love and compassion.

To our prime minister, thank you. Thank you for your leadership. It has been a lesson for the world’s leaders. Thank you for holding our families close, and honouring us with a simple scarf. Thank you for your words and deeds of compassion. Thank you for being one with us.

Thank you to the New Zealand government and to all the wonderful people who have shown us that we matter, and are not forgotten.

Thank you to our police force and frontline services. You put our lives before your own, every day. Thank you to the neighbours, for opening your doors to save us from the killer. Thank you to those who pulled over their cars to help us. Thank you to those who brought us food and helped us when we found it difficult to stand.

Thank you New Zealand for teaching the world what it means to love and care.’^{xv}

As the Imam mentions, the witness that both the Muslim community and the general Kiwi community have made in this situation has not been limited to these shores but

has attracted worldwide attention. The international media have reported it and commented on it and foreign governments have made statements and sent condolences. Apparently even inquiries about residence in New Zealand have increased since these events.^{xvi} In a world all too full of terrorist activity the response of Kiwis in this case is, I think, unique or nearly so. I have responded to several emails from friends and colleagues overseas and thus had occasion to provide my own witness to these events. I am sure that I am not alone in this. One of my colleagues sent me a statement published by the mayor of Austin, Texas.^{xvii}

Of course, there are other, less savoury witnesses to be considered. The perpetrator who shot the people in the mosques made his own witness, most seriously by his actions, secondly by videoing them and posting them immediately on Facebook and thirdly with an ideological manifesto posted on the internet that is said to reflect white supremacist or nationalist and anti-immigrant ideas and also to encourage violence and murder. The larger community's immediate response, was to disavow these actions – in the words of the prime minister, 'Our values will not be changed by this attack. You may have chosen us. But we utterly reject you,'^{xviii} The police intervened physically and fairly quickly arrested the perpetrator, the film of the attack was removed by Facebook within minutes and the ideological statement was banned and possession of a copy of it made illegal.^{xix} All of this was part of the community's witness.

This unsavoury witness has also been spread worldwide, especially via the internet. Facebook claims that by the time the footage was removed it had been viewed 4000 times and that it removed 1.5 million copies of it in 24 hours.^{xx} This is a witness to some problematic features of the internet, which hosts some very extreme ideologies and allows their holders to spread the witness to their views, mainly for like-minded people. It has stimulated further debate about how to control this aspect of the internet.^{xxi} It may have stimulated two major cases of violence overseas. Churches and

hotels were bombed in Sri Lanka on Easter Sunday apparently by a Muslim group and it has been claimed that this was in revenge for the Christchurch attack.^{xxii} A Jewish synagogue was attacked in the U.S. and the perpetrator had evidently seen some of the Christchurch postings.^{xxiii} While the role of the Christchurch attacks in these was probably small, they may be viewed as one of a number of violent right wing extremist actions in the world in the recent past, influenced by them and contributing to others.

The events of March 15 are also a witness that reminds us that there are others in New Zealand who think more or less like the perpetrator, some of whom he may have been in contact with.^{xxiv} Awareness of this has led to a formal inquiry into the actions and adequacy of the country's security agencies.^{xxv} It has also led to some media attention to right-wing extremists in New Zealand, small in numbers but of possible significance.^{xxvi} Moreover, among the general populace there certainly have been cases of slurs, discrimination, harassment and violence directed at individual Muslims, mainly for racial reasons or out of fear of immigration (a concern of the Christchurch perpetrator) but sometimes from what may be called islamophobia, fed particularly by overseas media that stress the violence and extremism in the Muslim world. Letters to the editor in newspapers have included some striking examples of islamophobia, but also calls for understanding.^{xxvii} Some recent commentary has called attention to this. Incidents, however, have generally been dealt with in a supportive and low-key way by the authorities and downplayed by Muslim spokespeople.

There are several incidents that might be seen as foreshadowing's of the current one. Ahmed Zaoui, a member of the Algerian Islamic Salvation Front was arrested upon his arrival in New Zealand in December 2002 but attracted considerable popular support and was cleared as a security risk; he became a New Zealand citizen in 2014. In 1990, during the Gulf War, graffiti was sprayed on the Islamic centre in Wellington, but considerable support and sympathy was received from local churches, a Jewish

congregation and other agencies. In Hamilton in 1998 the mosque was burned in an arson attack; the local people were deeply shocked and the city council and citizens, spearheaded by some church groups and the local Jewish community, helped them in various ways. Graffiti was sprayed on an Auckland mosque after London bombings in July 2005 and, in response, an inter-faith rally was organised.^{xxviii} We are not free from ideological demons or lower level forms of intolerance, discrimination or verbal abuse, but it is reasonable to believe that our capacity for compassion and practical assistance can deal with them. That is the witness of our record.

Serious issues are raised when we ask how we might avoid violent events such as those discussed here. Should we legally ban public verbal or written discourse designed to stir up hatred of particular groups in society usually defined by race, ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation etc., because it will or may lead to or encourage violence against members of these groups? But then do we risk violating the principle of freedom of speech, certainly included in the 'values' mentioned by the prime minister, since genuine freedom of speech exists only when very unpopular views are allowed to be aired publicly.^{xxix} Perhaps some forms of hate need to be debated publicly so they can be dealt with and not fester beneath the surface of society or in corners of the internet. It is also the case that defining 'hate speech' in some situations is difficult.^{xxx} It would be a kind of victory for the haters if efforts to stop them led us to compromise one of the basic principles of our society. Perhaps we must listen to their witness to provide the most effective witness against them. It may be that the level of incitement to violence in the Christchurch perpetrator's ideological statement may justify banning it, but one might raise such questions about it. To understand him some at least need to read what he has written and not be limited to the snippets and second-hand reports that most of us (including me) have.^{xxxi} I think most Kiwis would be massively put off if they read the attacker's manifesto and lead to reject such ideology more completely.

In any case, we must witness. Ignoring hate will not do. The mayor of Austin, Texas, in his commentary mentioned above, stresses the point that silence ‘in the face of false and hateful hyperbole’ is not golden. ‘Regardless of our political party or our policy beliefs, we must speak up when we hear political and populist rhetoric that hides hate in otherwise accepted speech. We cannot claim innocence when we allow others to stoke fear to drive a political or policy agenda with which we agree.’ At the ‘ordinary’ level, what do you do if a friend or acquaintance uses a word evoking prejudice or hate of some group? It is often not easy to speak up but if one can do so, thus witnessing to what is right, it may help exorcise the demons.

Is New Zealand *Dar al-Shahada*, Abode of Witness, or can it be? In the narrowest sense of Tariq Ramadan’s usage we are, since anyone may openly say ‘There is no god but God’ and thus identify as a Muslim or may become a Muslim, which is done by saying these same words. They may also witness to their faith by performing its practices or by verbal statement. The same is true for other religions. Generally, we witness peacefully to each other both by our specifically religious words and deeds and by the way we live our lives and how we react in crises (martyrdom being an extreme example here). Unfortunately, some sometimes witness by violence and the rest witness by their response, whether violent toward the perpetrator or not but hopefully compassionate toward the victims. In all these things we witness to those beyond our shores also. Ideally an Abode of Witness would a place where all individuals and groups witness in love, compassion and understanding to each other about their religion and many other aspects of their lives, thus developing a society in which we do know each other and relate at least by tolerance and at best by love. I believe and hope that recent events have taken us at least a few steps further along in this direction and challenge us to go further.

Notes

- ⁱ The salat or prayer performed at noon on Fridays in congregation and usually in the mosque. It is the most important salat of the week, in Arabic *salāt al-jum‘a*.
- ⁱⁱ Ramadan, Tariq, *To be a European Muslim: A Study of Islamic Sources in the European Context*. The Islamic Foundation, 1999, pp. 123 passim, 214-5. I made passing reference to this a few years ago in ‘Muslims ‘in’ New Zealand or ‘of’ New Zealand?’ in *Muslim Integration: Pluralism and Multiculturalism in New Zealand and Australia*, edited by Erich Kolig and Malcolm Voyce. Lexington Books, 2016.
- ⁱⁱⁱ *Da‘wa* most literally means ‘inviting’, but here in the sense of inviting a non-Muslim to become a Muslim or a Muslim to become a better or more faithful Muslim.
- ^{iv} Witnessing in this sense corresponds to the Muslim *Da‘wa*, but for the purposes of this essay both can be included under the larger heading of ‘witnessing’ as used here.
- ^v Hagley Park is a very large park in the centre of the city and the largest of the two mosques stands opposite one side of it. 20,000 people were in the park of whom 5000 were Muslims according to the *Christchurch Press* 23/3/19, p. A3.
- ^{vi} ‘Even off the back of today, you’ve had thousands of people exposed to a faith they may not have been exposed to. It’s really a bringing together of communities.’ Jacinda Ardern quoted in the *Press* 23/3/19, p. A3.
- ^{vii} The word for martyr is *shahīd*, pl. *shuhadā*, and is derived from the same root as *shahāda*, and my dictionary gives ‘witness’ as its first meaning. The English word ‘martyr’ is derived from a Greek word meaning ‘witness’.
- ^{viii} *Press* 16/3/19, p. A3.
- ^{ix} Masjid al-Noor, located as noted opposite Hagley Park in the centre of the city, the larger of the two mosques in the city. The other, Linwood Mosque, was also attacked.
- ^x *Press* 16/3/19, p. A3.
- ^{xi} *Press* 20/3/19, p. 4.
- ^{xii} Latimer Square. *Press* 22/3/19, p. 2.
- ^{xiii} At the time of writing I have scheduled two lectures about Islam to church groups because of these events.
- ^{xiv} See Mike Yardley’s somewhat acerbic comments on this in the *Christchurch Press* 26/3/19 p. 14. Members of the Destiny Church, a controversial Christian fundamentalist group were present at some of the gathering and made it clear that they consider that ‘New Zealand belongs to Jesus’ but they avoided any disrespectful actions and appear to have engaged positively with the Muslims sometimes, according to the report in the *Press* 27/4/19 p A12.
- ^{xv} From the abridged sermon of Gamal Fouda on 22/3/19, in *The Spinoff* (internet).
- ^{xvi} ‘Global interest in New Zealand surges’, *Press* 27/3/19, pp. 1-3.
- ^{xvii} Adler, Steve, Commentary: ‘Why, in the face of hate, our greatest threat is our silence.’ *Austin American-Statesman* 25/3/19.
<https://www.statesman.com/opinion/20190320/commentary-why-in-face-of-hate-our-greatest-threat-is-our-silence>
- ^{xviii} Statement the night of the attack, *Press*, 16/3/19. P. 2.
- ^{xix} Reasons for banning it are given on the internet at <https://www.stuff.co.nz/national/christchurch-shooting/111503450/document-written-by-alleged-christchurch-gunman-classified-objectionable?rm=a>
- ^{xx} *Press* 22/3/19, p.20 and 30/4/19, pp. 14-15. According to the latter article Facebook removed the footage within minutes but by then it had been viewed more than 4000 times and saved and shared

around the world. Over the next 24 hours of the 1.5 million videos of the attacks removed more than 1.2 million were blocked at upload. Chinese social media were slower, however.

^{xxi} E.g. ‘Down the online rabbit hole’, *Press* 22/3/19, pp. 20-21; ‘Global failings’ *Press* 30/4/19, pp.14-15.

^{xxii} Though not with convincing authority, to my knowledge.

^{xxiii} Congregation Chabad of Poway, California gunman killed one woman injured three, 27/4 /19. See *Press* 30/4/19 p 15 (from Washington Post) and internet <https://www.nbcsandiego.com/news/local/poway-synagogue-shooting-chabad-way-san-diego-sherrifs-department-509162631.html>. A link says ‘Filled with racist rants and quotes from the Bible, Earnest praises the suspects responsible for the New Zealand mosque and Pittsburgh synagogue shootings and adds they were his inspiration for the planned shooting in Poway’. <https://www.nbcsandiego.com/news/local/Who-Is-John-T-Earnest-Suspect-in-Poway-Synagogue-Shooting-509166781.html>

^{xxiv} See, for example, the article about a group called the Dominion Movement in the *Press* 26/3/19, pp. 16-17.

^{xxv} *Press* 26/3/19, p. 1.

^{xxvi} E.g. ‘Radical losers and lone wolves’, *Press* 23/3/19, pp. C1-2.

^{xxvii} For some examples see W. Shepard, ‘New Zealand’s Muslims And Their Organisations New Zealand Journal of Asian Studies 8, 2 (December, 2006), 15-17. For a recent example see ‘Attacked Muslim woman mocked’, *Press* 25/4/19, p.3.

^{xxviii} *Ibid.*

^{xxix} The point is thus argued by Karl du Fresne: ‘We were told that Muslims in New Zealand wouldn’t be safe until we had tough new laws governing ‘hate speech’, however that might be defined. We were urged to dispense with old-fashioned democratic notions of free speech and balanced debates. According to this argument, some views are so self-obviously correct that no one should be allowed to challenge them and others are so self-obviously contemptible that they must be prohibited. It worries me deeply that I frequently hear this line even from journalists, who should be the first to defend the barricades when freedom of speech is at risk.’ ‘So now we know: we’re a nation of racists and Islamophobes’, posted 24/3/19. <https://www.nzcpr.com/so-now-we-know-were-a-nation-of-racists-and-islamophobes/#more-28914>

^{xxx} Netsafe chief Martin Crocker says that the sorts of sites that the Christchurch shooter used to spout his racist views are in some countries with oppressive regimes used by people in their fight for freedom. *Christchurch Press* 22/3/19, p. 21.

^{xxxi} See note 19 above. This document does indicate that some may be authorized to possess the document for ‘legitimate’ purposes, including education, analysis and in-depth reporting’.