

Michael Humphrey, "Australian Islam, the New Global Terrorism and the Limits of Citizenship" in *Islam and the West. Reflections from Australia* (eds. Shahram Akbarzadeh & Samina Yasmeen; Sydney: UNSW Press, 2005) 132-148

Humphrey opens by observing,

Moreover the war on terrorism is, like Huntington's 'clash of civilisations', code for conflict between Islam and the West; and, despite the denials of presidents and prime ministers, the primary targets of the war on terrorism are Muslim individuals, families, communities and societies internationally marked by the September 11 attacks as potentially hostile, a risk (132).

Humphrey sees a shift in the Australian Government "from a perspective of reconciliation to one of risk, from a future premised on social inclusion of diversity to one premised on social exclusion, based on suspicion of the dangerous 'Other'" (133). This shift has changed the terms of participation of Muslim immigrants in the West.

Citizenship rights for first-generation immigrants to Australia have always been conditional. Legally, criminal convictions lead to a loss of citizenship. Socially, racism and marginalization undermine citizenship rights. This conditionality has now been expanded given recent 'national security' legislation aimed at restricting rights of asylum and establishing emergency powers to fight the threat of global terrorism. The effect "has been to racialise immigration, asylum and nationality, thereby producing a differentiated citizenship and circumscribing the quality of democratic life" (134). Broad categories of people become suspicious Others, "even if they are members of families that have been in Australia for generations, long-term Australians" (135).

#### Islam as a Religion of Immigrants

A number of international events have shaped how Western host societies have viewed their Muslim migrant communities, e.g. the Iranian Revolution, the Rushdie Affair and the Gulf War of 1991. Working class Muslim communities have often been stigmatized and marginalized as unwilling to fit into Western societies. State surveillance has now been intensified, with Muslim immigrants "viewed as if religious belief constituted them as a hostile political identity" (135).

Humphrey notes that Lebanese-born Muslims (first generation) represent 10% and Turks 8% of Australian Muslims. Of Australian-born Muslims around 30% claim Lebanese ancestry and 18% Turkish. Many mosques have a strong ethnic character. Islamic religious life is characterized by autonomy and a local community character, reflecting the lack of an Islamic centre in the contemporary world, including in the West. AFIC operates as a consultative national Islamic body and has never been seen as a source of religious authority. The struggle of the 1980s and 1990s between Saudi Arabia and the Islamic Republic of Iran for world leadership of Islam impacted the large Muslim diaspora in Europe, but not Australia.

The experience of migration and settlement in the multicultural industrial cities of the West, rather than being culturally assimilating, has made Muslims more aware of their ethnic and religious differences. This differentiation has been intensified by their social marginality as unskilled workers vulnerable to unemployment, welfare dependence and racism.

The vast majority of Muslim immigrants are from rural or urban poor backgrounds. In Europe many were treated as temporary residents, with acquisition of citizenship restricted in a way that has not occurred in Australia where Muslims have come under migration and settlement programs.

In Germany Turkish migrants experienced greater freedom to express their ethnic and religious identities than in their homeland. But feeling threatened by a consciousness of 'moral contamination' this freedom has encouraged them to revive their Islamic religious and ritual practices. So labour migrants returning to Turkey would remark how it was in Germany that they started attending the mosque and practising their religion.

Opposition to building new ethnic places of worship (churches, temples and mosques) in the suburbs is an indication of the limits of multiculturalism. Multiculturalism in Australia has never moved beyond recognition of difference, failing to reconcile difference and develop a multicultural citizenship or a new Australian identity that involves a changed perspective on the world.

### **First-Generation Immigrants and Homeland Politics**

One reason why cultural 'Othering' occurs in a multicultural society is because it is felt "that migrants bring unwanted aspects of their past with them, especially internal political conflicts" (139).

Following the Israeli invasion of Lebanon in 1982 there was a radicalization of Lebanese Muslim communities and the emergence of political Islam and these developments were reflected in the religious policies of both the Lebanese Sunni and Shi'ite immigrant communities. Clerical appointments in Sydney mosques established direct links with the pro-Khomeinist Sunni Harakat al-Tawhid al-Islami (Movement for Unity in Islam) in Tripoli and the Shi'ite political movements of Amal and Hizbollah.

Political activism and recruitment into homeland politics has been limited in Australia by comparison with what has occurred in Europe. To a much greater degree than in Australia European countries have been treated as sanctuaries for political exiles who were preoccupied with homeland politics, waiting for their chance to return to their countries to carry on the fight against the ungodly.

The only home Islamic government directly involved in organizing and managing the religious affairs of its immigrant community in Australia is the Turkish Government. In the case of Taj ad-din al-Hillali, at various times, representatives from the Lebanese, Egyptian and Saudi governments, as well as Australian Jewish organizations, have all lobbied the Australian Government not to extend his visa to stay in Australia as imam of the Imam Ali Mosque. AFIC moved to support him by elevating his status to mufti. Foreign governments have played an important role as benefactors for building mosques and education centres.

### **Second-Generation Immigrants**

Gilles Kepel argues that second generation Muslims in Europe now regard as *dar al-Islam*, not the "home" of their parents, but Europe itself. Their experience of racism and social marginality made Islamic politics and identity attractive to them. They

stridently claim their religious rights not as the members of another religion and nationality, but as European citizens.

Muslim migrants to Australia have from the outset viewed multicultural Australia as *dar al-Islam*. Second generation Muslims claiming Lebanese and Turkish descent have faced similar problems of racism and marginality to those experienced by the Maghrebis in France, the Turks in Germany and Pakistanis in Britain: "For them Islam is a source of authentic identity, something in which they take pride" (144). In Europe second generation Muslims "are developing a region of consciousness and culture in which the social norms of the majority society do not count" (144; Lars Pedersen).

Now in Australia similar developments are occurring, with new non-ethnic Islamic *da'wah* (call to Islam) movements emerging, e.g. the Islamic Youth Movement and older movements such as the Jamaat Daawah Islamiah and the Tablighi Jamaat (an ascetic non-political movement).

Social marginality has led many to revive their faith, but it has also resulted in social alienation and dysfunctional family crisis. Lebanese and Muslim gangs involved in crime and sexual assault between 1999 and 2002 not only signified a loss of Islamic religious values and belief but incited "racial sentiment towards Islam, Muslims, Lebanese, and Arabs, all readily conflated identities in the popular media" (144).

The gradual de-ethnicising of Islam in the second generation does not mean there is a re-centering of Islam in Australia or globally. Rather, what is emerging is a networked Islam. For "globalization is reconstitutive of all cultures, not just the dominant Western global consumer culture" (144). Muslims are learning "how culturally and socially diverse the *umma* is becoming" (145):

both terrorism and war draw on networked power to achieve a totalizing moment of power. This is the politics of mass perception and emotions focused on the use of apocalyptic violence, which is permitting a fantastic reordering of the world by dramatically essentialising as 'a risk' whole cultures and peoples, thereby setting them apart (145).

### Conclusion

The risk model offers no social future except cultural separation. According to this model potentially dangerous parts - Muslim individuals and communities - must be either assimilated or kept under surveillance and controlled. Humphrey believes that only the antithetical reconciliation model "offers the potential for new and transformed identities and shared social futures" (145).

Humphrey states, "The risk model is a political fantasy in a globalizing world"; "recipe for alienation and division": "It also ignores the sociological and political trends of continuing de-centering of Islam in networked worlds, in the diaspora in the West" (145).

Humphrey believes, following Kepel's comments on youth attitudes in Iran and Algeria, that the second generation is rejecting religious authoritarianism as irrelevant to their lives. Humphrey sees the challenge facing Australia to be that of addressing "national security in the age of 'international terrorism' without destroying the collective values and morality that sustains our social world in our cities, nations and transnational relationships" (146).