THE MUSLIM, STATE AND MIND: PSYCHOLOGY IN TIMES OF ISLAMOPHOBIA

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INTRODUCTION: FRIENDLY EARS

I thought I could trick the psychologist.

Adam chuckled and took another bite of his burger. I had known Adam for years, yet this was the first I heard of this story. Alongside two friends, we sat at a corner table where the shop's walls glowed beneath old, pearly lights. Adam was in good spirit, unaware the tale of state violence he was about to share would not be his last. Something was racist in the state of Denmark.

Adam prefaced his visit to the psychologist. Not long ago, he and three friends took a joyride around Copenhagen. Like many young adults, he was obsessed with cars and relished any opportunity to drive. Unlike 'Western' young adults—Denmark explicitly discriminates between *Western* and *Non-Western* individuals in policy—Adam was flagged by Danish security.

Unaware of this, Adam entered a lavish neighbourhood. The apartments here were grand and elegant, a fitting setting for dreams of luxury. The myth of social mobility is legendary among Muslims in the Global North.

Adam's security flag was not the only thing he was unaware of. Soon, his car was surrounded by rifles. These came accompanied with shouting, 'Get out of the vehicle' and 'Put your hands above your head'. This neighbourhood, it seems, housed the residences of Denmark's rich and powerful. Among the residents was the Danish foreign minister. For the Danish police, Adam was a calculated risk as soon as he entered the neighbourhood, fearing for the foreign minister's life. Adam was on the floor and cuffed before any of this made sense to him.

He was released from custody once the police yielded to reality—young Muslims on a joy ride. Adam had an idea why he was flagged. Many years ago, a family member had travelled to fight the Assad regime at the beginning of the Syrian revolution. Through the logic of security, racist at its core, every Muslim in that man's circle of contacts were now a 'risk'. Even those without a history of violence, like Adam, may be suspected of planning to assassinate a Danish politician in the blink of an eye.

This racist guilt-by-association logic would later come back and haunt Adam, with catastrophic effect. For now, Adam was unwilling to take this hyper-militarised response in stride. It is uncommon to be greeted with assault rifles, Adam thought, and here is where the psychologist came in.

Adam hoped to produce some evidence against the police. For reasons central to this book, one prominent idea was to

document the *trauma* resulting from the violence he experienced. This seemed like a sensible approach, but there was a problem: Adam didn't *feel* traumatised. But then how else could Adam demonstrate the violence and racism of the police? If he needed a psychologist, he needed to exaggerate the impact of the incident.

Adam's account of his psychological consultation was comical to the point of satire. In the first session, the psychologist held up a finger and asked Adam how he felt (the psychologist is most likely introducing Adam to Eye Movement Desensitisation and Reprocessing (EMDR), which involves finger tracking. EMDR interventions are often employed for trauma). He felt nothing, but still needed to give the psychologist something to work with.

"Anger," Adam responded.

"OK, what if I slowly start moving my finger to the right, like this?" asked the psychologist.

"Angrier!"

"And if I move it back?"

"Really angry!"

Adam's story was interrupted by bouts of laughter, the table shaking as we laboured to breathe between bites. It makes for a tragic scene of dark comedy when a person feels forced to bluff a trauma response *to hold the police accountable*.

In the end, the strategy failed, but not because the psychologist became privy to Adam's plan. Rather, Adam felt the

psychologist was taking his performance *too* seriously. He was worried he was to receive a *mental health diagnosis,* when he just needed something—a piece of paper, perhaps—to present against the police.

Adam decided to leave this debacle with the police behind him. Ever the optimist, he assumed it was over. He was partly correct. While the police would not return for Adam *for this reason* again, they attempted to charge him with terrorism years later. In this later incident, police detained Adam in front of his family but was *immediately* released because a judge claimed the police's behaviour was unsanctioned. Frustrated by this judicial hiccup, the police returned *the next day* and detained Adam using a *different* pretence—*again*, in front of his family.

Adam then suffered in prison for *two years without charges*, as the Danish police toiled to build a terrorism case on a frail, racist house of cards. Meanwhile, for the first *five months* of Adam's sentence, the prison guards entered his cell *every day.* They stripped his body bare and overturned every item in his room. If the guards forgot to strip Adam during the day, they would wake him up at night. Arbitrary abuse seems to be the price of security in an allegedly progressive society like Denmark (Adam brought a case against his experiences of prison abuse and won recently in a Danish high court. He was given a very small sum of money to compensate for five months of prison abuse.). When the police finished building their case against Adam, two years later, it went to court and he was finally acquitted of all terrorism charges in front of a jury.

Adam's experiences of injustice are worthy of their own book, alongside the many other Muslims who suffer state violence in silence. These stories highlight the cascading number

of institutions involved in state violence towards Muslims in the Global North—from police and judges, counter-extremism experts, media pundits and psychologists. Above all, Adam needed *something* in psychology to make himself *seen.* These themes are all central to this book. As with all injustice however, *two years* of liberty lost are but words on a page. Such affronts to dignity lie on a plane where words cannot reach.

Needless to say, Adam never returned to the prospect of salvation in psychology. He recently admitted there was *one* psychologist in prison he found helpful, but only because they were happy to discuss Adam's appalling court proceedings.

Friendly ears are few and far between for the alleged enemies of Western civilisation.

THE MUSLIM, STATE AND MIND: A RATIONALE

It may seem strange for a book on psychology and statecraft to begin with Adam's story. In my years of writing, teaching and organising on psychology *and* Islamophobia, I recognise a book *ought* to begin with a more impersonal account: list the official statistics of Islamophobic hate crimes; explain that Islamophobia is a form of racism—as real as any other racism—with a real and demonstrable impact on health; display the astounding statistics of mental health problems in the Muslim community, especially as a result of discrimination; offer a public health strategy towards the eradication of Islamophobia; pray my writings will be read by policy makers. Perhaps, if I followed these guidelines exactly, there is hope the inner and outer conditions of Muslim distress would be understood.

This is not such a book. Not because there is no truth to these arguments—there certainly are. This book takes a different approach because I feel something is *lacking* in our current 'racism and mental health' discourse. This *lack* becomes more evident when we speak of Muslims in the Global North. In this *lack,* our capacity to dream an alternative future is disrupted. We cannot see beyond incessantly trying to improve the institutions we find ourselves in.

I believe whatever is *lacking* can be found by inverting the question often posed to me, 'What is the impact of Islamophobia on Muslims?' In response, I cast the question back, 'What does Muslim distress reveal about psychology *and* the Global North?' In doing so, the gaze towards the Muslim is re-directed. This is the first instance of resisting a popular discourse which reduces 'Muslims' to simply another racialised community among many—to the detriment of them all.

It might be easy to see Adam's story as exceptional. Certainly, hyper-militarised interactions are not a regular occurrence for Muslims in the Global North. And yet, it is often on the margins when the nature of *collective* experiences comes to light—the boundaries inform the content. In Adam's case, we see several themes arise. We first note Adam's experience of being racialised as a Muslim, and what that entails in terms of his relationship with the state. We also note how immediately Adam understood what he needed to hold the police accountable—a psychologist—despite having little to no awareness of mental health itself. Finally, we can point out the banality of it all. There was no protecting Adam from his experience of state abuse, not because such protection is not possible, but because the roads to such protection are all but

perverted. In this book, I will argue that psychology plays a significant role in claims to justice—and not just for Adam.

This book is not simply about the *impact of Islamophobia on Muslims.* Certainly, marginalisation will have an impact on Muslim mental health access, interventions and outcomes. But this book is precisely *not* a treatise for public health. Public health refers to preventing disease and promoting health for the whole population. People advocate for Islamophobia as a public health issue because of its legitimate (mental) health implications. As I will argue, however, it is *politically* significant that public health is a popular means of making Islamophobia legible. Can we imagine other ways of mobilising on Muslim experiences?

The premise of this book is simple. If psychology is political *and* Muslims are politicised, there is more to this interaction than its implications for health. In fact, one may speculate that the politics of psychology may reveal something about Muslims, and the politics of Muslims may reveal something about psychology. I will argue that the therapeutic sets the parameters for how Muslims are made legible. In other words, the psychological is the Muslim's entry into recognition. The therapeutic's ascension in the Global North not only limits the possibilities for Muslims to mobilise on issues which concern them. Indeed, it underwrites their very relationship to the state—a psychological contract.

THE RISE OF PSYCHOLOGY

Psychology is ever on the rise. Even among radical circles, demands for de-funding the police and abolishing prisons are issued in tandem with calls for more mental health funding to

tackle homelessness, violence and other social issues. (See *The End of Policing* (2017) where Alex S. Vitale offers a compelling argument to abolish the institution of policing, which depends on developing a more robust mental health care system, among other things.) The Eurocentrism of mental health theories, practices and institutions are no longer taken for granted. Racialised minorities are all seeking acknowledgement for their experiences as well. Calls to 'decolonise' sweep the Global North—including the psy-disciplines.

In this fervour, the growing interest in Muslim mental health seems inevitable. Academics, health professionals and NGOs strive to improve mental health awareness, access and treatments within Muslim communities. To this, the disciplines of counselling, psychology and psychiatry (henceforth referred to as *the psy-disciplines*) hold a high pedigree in public consciousness. Healthy minds promise a remedy to life's struggles, and it seems Muslims are especially in need of this elixir. A national study in the US, for example, recently found Muslims are two times more likely to be suicidal than other faith and non-faith groups (Awaad et al., 2021). Better mental health access, treatment and outcomes are viewed as a panacea to many of these issues.

At the same time, it is common knowledge that the histories of the psy-disciplines are laced with uncertainty, tackling numerous economic, cultural and political stakeholders which guide the fields. Frantz Fanon, the Martinique and revolutionary psychiatrist whose writings on decolonisation remains well-read to this day, famously addressed these collusions. Frantz Fanon (2002) reminds us a colonised mind is not simply one which has submitted to the coloniser's way of thinking. Rather, it is a mind which has lost its grasp over the social

and political causes of its oppression—to speak the language of the coloniser. A colonised mind cannot make sense of their experiences outside the frames it is given, nor can a colonised people hold power to account other than through the roads laid out before them.

If one cannot speak of the histories of the psy-disciplines without relating to statecraft, then the argument is equally true for Islamophobia. To fully appreciate how Muslims are racialised and Othered today, the role of the psy-disciplines must be acknowledged. Indeed, it is not even about Muslims. Modernity is psychologised, and it is difficult to grasp *any* principal issue of our times without alluding to the psyche of a person, group or nation (De Vos, 2012).

This book thus speaks towards how social and political issues are framed and experienced, especially for Muslims. This is how this book differs from other books which might centre on the (racial) trauma of *being* a racialised minority. Critical race theorists remind us that the issue of White supremacy is not about *white people,* but the structures—liberal/capitalist/nationalist—which privilege whiteness. Similarly, the marginalisation of Muslims, and their experiences therein, are a by-product of many conditions endemic to the West itself—economic uncertainty, decentring in globalisation, etc.

While the immediate association between statecraft, the psy-disciplines and Muslims will be the War on Terror, it is important to not reduce it to this alone. For example, recent scholarship has taken Guantanamo Bay as their main object of analysis. While Guantanamo Bay remains a stark symbol of global Islamophobia—in relation to American imperialism especially—it and the War on Terror are only part of a bigger picture. To make this argument, I will discuss the link between

statecraft, Islamophobia and the psy-disciplines from two perspectives: security on the one hand, and neoliberalism on the other. Readers need not be acquainted with either to understand their significance for Muslims.

In security, I will go beyond Guantanamo Bay to explore the role of the psy-disciplines in the management of ideal Muslim citizenry. In neoliberalism, I will explore how neoliberal policies shape the form and content of contemporary psychology, particularly impacting minority communities. Despite the overlap—the subject of 'resilience' belonging both to security and neoliberalism as it relates Muslims—we can already acknowledge an important difference. Contemporary security policies were built on racist foundations which first explicitly targeted Muslims, before taking a population-wide approach through public health. In neoliberalism, economic policies and strategies are intended for the entire population but have particularly adverse effects on the Muslim community. We must thus acknowledge that the War on Terror is not the be-all, end-all challenge for Muslims. It is one register of the politics of psy-disciplines and of Muslims.

WHY POLITICS?

Following Queen Elizabeth II's death, Britain was told to go into mourning. While many grieved at the loss of their queen, others were more critical of her place in history. To this, some argued the Queen was 'above politics,' undeserving of the relentless charges seared against the British monarchy: their role in British colonial rule; the riches they amassed from across the world; the splendour they enjoyed on the taxpayer's dime while the people suffer a cost-of-living crisis.

As such, when they say the Queen was 'above politics,' they mean her constitutional role was above *party politics*. This is significant, not least because the *location of politics* is also important for psy-disciplines. Much like the Queen, the psy-disciplines and its practitioners are assumed to be apolitical unless they *explicitly politicise themselves*. The location of the political is further revealed by the liberal attitude among mental health professionals to remain 'politically neutral' in the therapy room.

But this view of politics is untenable for this book. To continue, it is necessary to present my position on the *political* first. This is not a comprehensive review of political theory, but simply a point of clarity so the reader may follow in my own trajectory going forward. The political is all-encompassing. This point must be made explicit, for there is a tendency (anecdotally, among psy-professionals) to locate politics alongside other seemingly distinct domains like economics, the social, the psychological, etc. Drawing on Antonio Gramsci, I am not relating to ideology negatively here, but rather as a way of alluding to the *common-sensical* thoughts and practices of a society (Hoare and Sperber, 2016).

Following on from this, *hegemony* is another concept that is important, still drawing on Gramsci. Hegemony relates to a process by which the ruling elite of a society maintain power through *coercion and consent*. While coercion is clear, it is through consent that a power hierarchy is maintained without the need for brute force. People are best governed, in other words, when they govern themselves accordingly.

Ideology and *hegemony* come together when those in power both produce and draw upon common sense, through its various institutions, to maintain this hierarchy. Such is the

broad argument of post-structuralists like Michel Foucault, who outline the psy-disciplines role in governance. They argue these psy-institutions play integral roles in disciplining individuals who do not conform, as well as setting the parameters to *discipline of oneself* to the hierarchies of power.

Where coercion is concerned, this speaks to the state's authority over violence. Here the political is revealing of whose lives are least grievable; whose lives are deserving of death; and whose lives are worth a fate worse than death itself. At the same time, it sets the norm for those whose lives are worth commemorating; whose preservation of livelihood is the ultimate objective.

It can be difficult to understand the significance of the *hegemonic*, both for Muslims and for psychology. The all-encompassing nature of the political is cloaked in modern institutions, like government, law and citizenship. The nature of politics I am describing is significant for all racialised Muslims, regardless of *their* understanding of the political. Let us take citizenship as an example.

We are all capable of making choices, referred to as *agency*. Agency is the basis of citizenship, the foundation of what makes us *all* political. Indeed, the coercion/consent process of *hegemony*—whereby those in power seek to maintain this hierarchy—only makes sense if we account for the people's ability to choose otherwise. A criticism of citizenship, however, is that it presupposes an orientalist model of 'choice'. Citizens are not equal in their choices, nor their consequences. While presumably citizenship should guarantee human rights for all, we have seen time and time again how a Muslim's citizenship is conditional on the choices they make (the Institute of Race Relations in the UK recently published on this subject.).

Some of the more notable instances are the US's extrajudicial assassinations of Anwar Al-Awlaki and his 16-year-old son, Abdulrahman Anwar al-Awlaki, both of whom were American citizens. In the UK, the government deprived Shamima Begum of her British citizenship for joining ISIS as an adolescent, rendering her effectively stateless and stranded in Syria. Finally, there is also Mohamedou Salahi, a Guantanamo Bay detainee. With Salahi, I am inverting the conditionality of citizenship by drawing on the instance when Mauritania kidnapped Salahi and delivered him to the United States. To this, the *New York Times* journalist, Ben Taub (2019), records a revealing remark from Salahi's family lawyer, Brahim Ebety: 'He was a victim of an extremely rare crime: that a country had kidnapped its own citizen and handed it over to a foreign country, outside of the justice system, outside of all legal processes.' This point leaves a bitter realisation—there are no legal allowances. Both Salahi's whereabouts and citizenship were irrelevant to the demands of the Unites States.

To return then to the reason for this discussion, to assume *anyone*—the Queen, psychologists, etc—is 'apolitical' is to suggest, somehow, they inhabit a realm outside of ideology and a relationship to the state. Rather, the political is infused organically in all things, including the fabric of psychology and psychiatry, which I outline further in Chapters 2, 3 and 4.

No Psychology without Politics

If the political is all-encompassing, it is important to understand how its trace is removed from everyday life. One of the ways, significant to both psychology *and* Muslims, is the *therapeutic ethos* (this is the subject of Chapter 3). The *therapeutic ethos* relates to modernity's hyper-individualised fixation on the *self*. When everything is reduced to individual experience,

issues such as poverty are understood as individual problems to be managed—financially, psychologically, socially, etc.

There is a *depoliticising* force in a therapeutic ethos, our political agency muddled in an infinite blend of thoughts, feelings and relations. In this sense mental health professions are somewhat of an illusion. They gladly bear the burden of helping individuals navigate their *experiences* of worsening economic conditions, for example. Yet, in bandaging these experiences, they may inadvertently preserve the very conditions at fault. As liberation psychologist Martín-Baró (1996) reminds us, uncritical psychologists may inadvertently serve the status quo in their practice. This is perhaps the most important message in this book: the theories, practices and settings of mental health are *not apolitical*. And if they are *not apolitical*, they implicate racialised Muslims (and Others) every step of the way.

Ian Parker (2007: 4) argues the need to think of psychology as hegemonic, maintaining structures of power. He argues that 'because psychology is part of the problem – individualising and essentialising social processes – we need to know how to treat the problems we experience as social processes instead of handing ourselves over to those who will turn them into psychology again'. This final part—not *handing ourselves over to those who will turn them into psychology again*—is a central thrust of this book.

Politics is particularly important for mental health. We take for granted that 'health' is a mouldable concept. The definition and significance we give health is only as strong as the values which underline this process. In other words, if we presume 'mental health' is *essential* for all, there are metaphysical, moral, social and political claims underlying this statement (Coggon, 2012). Otherwise, to deny these is to assume that 'mental health' is a natural concept, suggesting it can be emptied from all the claims just mentioned. This would mean there is a neutral—presumably

biological—basis of 'mental health' which exists regardless how we make sense of it. Although this often can be the way we discuss mental health, the reality is far from it.

Psychology and psychiatry are disciplines littered with complicated political histories and uncertain futures regarding their objects of interest—the psyche and distress. From the drafting of psychiatric classifications (like the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders*, DSM or the International Classification of Diseases, ICD), or various debates surrounding definition of illness, there is no lack of arguments in this regard. In psychology, Ian Parker (2007) reminds us that indeed the psy-disciplines consist of many factions whose co-existence is fragile. Be it cognitive, behavioural, social or others, each psychology discipline and sub-discipline competes for supremacy and attention.

It can be difficult to keep track of these disciplines, as they often go through various cycles of their own crises, prompting further fractures. This would also be unnecessary. One of the elements I hope to underline here is that 'mental health' itself is a particularly Western artefact, regardless of its content. This is not to directly engage in the debates surrounding Global Mental Health, though its critique remains relevant (Mills, 2014). Rather, it is to highlight that the 'Western' framing of mental health carries with it certain baggage which remains relevant for Muslims.

My comments on the *political* throughout this book will be referring to this hegemony, as I attempt to outline psychology's role in governing Muslim. This book does not offer an escape from the political, nor does it suggest this is even possible. The reader is reminded that no regime or ideology works in purity. Exceptions and possibilities for alternative ideologies anchor human history.

POSITION AND DISCLAIMERS

This book draws on many years of research, clinical practice, and activism. In practice, these twist into a braid rather than individual strands of work, feeding one another. I identify as a scholar-activist, somewhat sarcastically. The boundary between scholar-activist is artificial; complete devotion to to either side is awkward. Activists whose work is completely devoid of theoretical foundations, or scholars whose interest in a subject is purely intellectual and academic, are both controversial. Certainly, this falls more readily on scholars than activists. As for research, I draw both on my research on Islamophobia, which can roughly be divided into two: how Muslims develop their identities in the Global North, and how Muslims are racialised according to social conflicts, like the War on Terror. I particularly focused on mental health professionals in the latter.

As for activism, I was raised with the idea that community is one of the most vital needs of an individual. This is particularly so in modernity where, as sociologist Zygmunt Bauman (2013) reminds us, we are no longer a *community of people* but a *network of individuals*. The need for community prompted me to ground my feet in various organisations that work on the ground, of which Islamophobia has been key. As such, I have worked closely with community groups and non-governmental organisations over the years, whose insights have been invaluable in my understanding of power.

Lastly, my clinical work attends to individuals impacted by racism, state violence and security in some shape or form. The stories I have had the privilege of bearing witness to in therapy have had a tremendous impact on my views. As such, rather than maintain a facade of impartiality, my position towards this book is reflexive, interdisciplinary (as in, not confined within the psy-disciplines) and critically informed.

It would be laborious to outline how this book differs from other, similarly-themed works. A growing body of literature has explored the various intersections of Islam/Muslims, Islamophobia/racism and the psy-disciplines in different respects. A non-exhaustive list of examples include *Institutional Racism in Psychiatry and Clinical Psychology* (Fernando, 2017), *Psychoanalysis under occupation: Practicing resistance in Palestine* (Sheehi and Sheehi, 2022), *Madness in International Relations* (Howell, 2009), *Mental Health in the War on Terror: Culture, Science, and Statecraft* (Aggarwal, 2015), and *Islamophobia and Psychiatry: Recognition, Prevention, and Treatment* (Moffic et al., 2018). While there is certainly much overlap and critique of this literature, for the sake of brevity I put forward my own ambition with this book: 1) to reflect particularly on the importance of the political as it relates to Muslim and the psy-disciplines in the Global North and 2) to make these critical reflections accessible to readers who may be neither familiar with Islamophobia nor the psy-disciplines. Given the breadth of the subjects, however, there are several disclaimers to be made.

Disclaimers

First, this book is not an empirical study. Instead, I draw inspiration from Fanon whose writings provide deeper and personal—rather than comprehensive and allegedly impartial—analysis from isolated cases. Second, many of the themes of this book will not be 'felt' by those operating on the ground. Those working in mental health often do so within a complicated organ of roles and expectations which foreground how Muslim clients should be treated. Third, I have been reminded that a critical position should always be followed by a solution or strategy. Charges against vast and complicated systems—like the War on Terror—come off as hollow without them.

But besides several reflections in the conclusion, I neither purport to have a way forward *beyond* the subjects I critique in this book, like the War on Terror or neoliberalism. Instead, I rely on Kierkegaard's doctoral writing on Socrates as an *ironist* (Kierkegaard, 2000). An ironist does not have a way forward, as a prophet would, but rather turns and reflects on those walking alongside them.

Fourth, I might imagine it is possible to bracket 'everyday' Muslim issues from the themes of this book. Thus, a psychiatrist who sees hundreds of Muslim patients might view their presenting symptoms as more significant than, for example, the structural realities of marginisalition. But I will argue this division is not only artificial, it is also political. Certainly, patients presenting with 'depression' may not speak of their marginalisation, but this does not discount its reality or impact. Fifth, I will be relating to the 'Muslim mind' throughout this book. To be sure, the Muslim mind is a Western construction. It is not rooted in biology—there is nothing about a mind that can become Muslim. When I use Muslim mind, it is to refer to the way that Muslim thoughts and behaviours are especially attended to.

Sixth, this book is neither a reprimand of the disciplines nor a rebuke of mental health professionals. Since their inception, the psy-disciplines have been wrought by internal debates on the *science* of it all. Most acknowledge the importance of power in psychological and psychiatric knowledge: the people who create it; the institutions which produce it; the global markets which disseminate it, etc. Just as many psy-professionals were driven by the racist and orientalist frames of empire, Erik Linstrum (2016) observes how Western psychologists *deployed* theories of psychology to subvert these logics (one can still critique liberal arguments against racial hierarchies, which I will do later).

The only critical stance I will underline is one I believe most will agree on: the psy-disciplines are artefacts of the Global North. This does not take away from the lofty ambitions to relativise our understanding of illness and healing according to time and space. Nor those who follow, meta-relativising the differences across the world, attempting to find anchors for 'mental illness' somewhere in our shared humanity. I will leave it to the reader to figure out their own journey in this regard.

Thus, this book is far more a cautionary tale of the inconsistent and often conflicting developments within the psy-disciplines, as these relate to Muslims. I will relate to the 'apolitical' stance presumed by the psy-disciplines, as if aloof and impervious to the conditions of power. This extends beyond the obvious 'usual suspects' of the abuses of the psy-disciplines, such as under the Nazis, the Soviet Union, or the legitimisation of torture in the War on Terror.

OVERVIEW OF CHAPTERS

The chapters can be divided in two parts. Chapters 2, 3 and 4 explore the political in Islamophobia, psychology, and mental health respectively. Given the criticism that discussions of Islamophobia often remain in the abstract (Massoumi et al., 2017: 6), Chapters 5 and 6 will take these discussion of the political and explore two real-world configurations: security and neoliberalism. Thinking through the politics of psychology and Islamophobia, these latter chapters unpack the infrastructures which subordinate Muslims.

Chapter 2 introduces racialisation in Islamophobia. The concept is necessary, not only to make sense of Islamophobia, but to understand how it is erased through psychological

discourse. The chapter critiques the neoliberal, multicultural attitude towards Islamophobia as 'one racism among many'—to the detriment of all racialised groups. It also rejects an understanding which reduces Muslim racialisation to issues of discrimination. Instead, it offers a dynamic position on Islamophobia which takes serious the Global North's own history and insecurities and considers the role of the psy-disciplines in managing ideal Muslim thoughts and behaviours.

Chapter 3 considers what Muslim distress reveals about the psy-disciplines themselves. As the psy-disciplines are decidedly *not* apolitical, this chapter explores what causes Muslims distress about the politics of psychology. Drawing on Frantz Fanon, it argues that the Muslim mind is intimately bound to the state. It will provide the example of a Muslim 'extremist' who fell outside the boundary of national belonging, and how they need to *psychologise* their experiences to re-establish the social contract with the state—a psychological contract.

Chapter 4 explores the politics of Muslim mental health itself. While the *cultural* and *religious* dimensions of Muslim mental health are increasingly attended to, this is less true for politics. The concept of *trauma* is of particular interest in this regard. This chapter will explore the political utility of *psychological discourse.* This is important for Muslims to make their experiences legible to secular-liberal societies, while potentially depoliticising them at the same time.

Chapter 5 is on security. It explores how political violence immediately produces a search for the holy grail of explanatory models: a unified, psychological model of pre-crime as a modern manifestation of a risk-based society. Mental health professionals play a significant professional role in this respect. Not simply in the surveillance and management of political

thought, but in the cultivation of a culture of vulnerability. This chapter will explore how the contemporary culture of vulnerability is built on a fatalism which sees the state perpetually in peril. This privileges the role of the *psyche* in the pursuit of pre-crime—the capturing and managing of individuals who have not yet committed an act of violence.

Chapter 6 charts capitalism's legacy in psychology, and explains how neoliberalism represents a unique evolution towards responsibilising individuals for social and political ills. For Muslims in particular, the deep-rooted psychological tradition of maximizing productivity intertwines naturally with 'spiritually-based' self-care techniques which explicitly focus on the individual. This chapter will explore the emergence of neoliberal techniques like 'resilience' and 'self-care' which simultaneously pathologise – psychologically and spiritually – the experience of distress. It will question how Muslims are especially subject to promoting themselves as citizens of value and cheerleaders of wellbeing.

The final chapter concludes by rearticulating the need to recognise the State's psychologisation of social and political ills. It will underscore the unique relationship between the Muslims and psy-disciplines' light on the themes highlighted above. Accordingly, it will argue the futility of 'decolonising' Muslim mental health—even with Islamic mental health psychology—unless we first *politicise* our understanding of Muslims and the psy-disciplines.