



Extended Abstract

Addressing Islamophobia through the Prism of Conflict Transformation: The Role of Dialogue Competencies

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Introduction (M_Heading1)

Islamophobia is a relatively new term (1997) whose history is much older. It can be understood within a family of similar terms (Judeophobia/Anti-Semitism, Christianophobia, xenophobia, etc.) that share in common the notion of exclusivist discourses based on fear of one identity group or another, considered to be ‘Other’. Not all ‘X-phobias’ are exactly the same: each has a historical context and current power dynamics that make comparison possible, but at times challenging.

In this paper, I shall focus on a theory of Conflict Transformation developed by John-Paul Lederach and apply it to the work of a few international organizations, such as OCDE and the KAICIID Dialogue Centre, in raising awareness and developing strategies to counter intolerant, exclusivist discourses, such as Islamophobia. The theoretical approach used will be that of transdisciplinarity, with special attention to the concept of “tiers inclus” (third included), as well as that of interworldview dialogue, as part of interreligious dialogue for peacebuilding.

Methods (M_Heading1)

The method used in this paper is based on both applied and action research.

Results and Discussion (M_Heading1)

The results of our analysis reveal that while numerous conferences and a rapidly expanding field of study around the concept of Islamophobia has emerged in recent years, the implementation of many recommendations and in particular the training around dialogue competencies necessary to counter

exclusivist attitudes and intolerant behaviors remains sporadic and lacks systemic efforts towards conflict transformation.

Conclusions (M_Heading1)

Our conclusion is that while dialogical competencies to address any anti-group X, Y, and/or Z, including Islamophobia, is a constructive and non-violent way to change exclusivist attitudes and intolerant behaviors, developing those competencies remains at its infancy and requires massive scaling up in order to provide the kind of social impact that would transform significantly the present increasing discourses of intolerance.

References and Notes

1. Lederach, John Paul. *The Moral Imagination: The Art and Soul of Building Peace*. Paperback edition: Oxford University Press: Oxford, UK, 2010.
2. Nicolescu, Basarab (editor). *Transdisciplinarity: Theory and Practice*. Paperback edition, Hampton Press, 2008.
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