

HAS ISLAM STILL OWN SUBSCRIBERS AND PRO-ISLAMISTS?

Marián Děd, Peter Ondria*

ESPOSITO, L., J., MOGAHED, D.: *Who speaks for Islam? What a billion Muslims really think?* New York: Gallup Press, 2007, 204 p. ISBN: 978-1-59562-017-0

John L. Esposito is University Professor of Religion and International Affairs as well as of Islamic studies at Georgetown University and Founding Director of the Center for Muslims-Christian Understanding, at the Walsh School of Foreign Service, Georgetown University. He is leading expert in Islamic questions at North America. He was also the president of Middle East Studies Association of North America and American Council for the Study of Islamic Societies and a consultant to governments and multinational corporations. He is the author and co-author of numerous books from which the most important are: The Oxford Encyclopedia of the Modern Islamic World and Oxford Islamic Studies Online as well as The Islamic Threat, World Religions Today, What everyone needs to know about Islam.

Dalia Mogahed is a senior analyst and executive director of the Gallup Center for Muslim Studies. He is one of the leaders of Gallup's unprecedented study of more than 1 billion Muslims worldwide. Her analysis has appeared in a number of leading publications, including the most famous as The Economist, The Financial Times, The Wall Street Journal, Foreign Policy magazine etc. She comes and lives in Washington D.C. she is married and has two sons.

* PhDr. Marián Děd, is an external Ph.D. student at the Faculty of Political Sciences and International Relations, Matej Bel University in Banská Bystrica, e-mail: majkodedko@gmail.com.

PhDr. Peter Ondria, Ph.D., is an Assistant Lecturer at the Department of Political Sciences, Faculty of Political Sciences and International Relations, Matej Bel University in Banská Bystrica, e-mail: peter.ondria@umb.sk.

Mentioned publication – book is logically divided into five main chapters with their own titles which are closely connected between each other. The most important and valuable for the readers is that each chapter has its own systematically ordered short sections. Book has also very interesting introduction with courageous final thesis and try to cover the five main themes: Most of the American people automatically connect horrific facts about September the 11th in the USA with all Muslims and they don't even know anything about views and beliefs of people in Muslim countries. Why, they are not complaisant to learn nothing. It's easy just to believe that the Muslim countries are without any values, understanding and ready to spread fundamentalism. Why it is important for us to study and learn about Islam? And why is it so useful to know Islam. We distinguish a lot of reasons, from which the most important are that Islam is the second largest religion in the world, (first is the Christianity) and in the USA will be soon the second largest. In many ways we can compare Islam it with Judaism and Christianity. We also need to change the general view which thinks of Muslims as strange and inevitably linked to headline terrorists' events. This view must be changed according to the knowledge based society which is better informed with a deeper understanding.

The second part is the most important connected with the field of political science, especially, from the view of the theory of political science. Can Islam exist in democratic countries? Let's try to be more specific. Is it possible to spread democracy in Islamic world and countries? Everyone who tries to answer this question has to resolve in own mind the other: Why Islamic religion has play such a dominant role in Muslim politics? Islam in Arabic word means something like submission. Every Muslim has to be submitted to the will of God, one who is always responsible not only for obeying God's will but also for implementing it on earth in both his or her private and public world. So the responsibility to Islam as well as to Muslim community overrides all other social ties and responsibilities to family, tribe, ethnicity or nation. Politics is therefore central, since it represents the means used to carry out Islamic principles in the public sphere. Although many Muslim and Western governments talk about democracy, self determination – as understood by the majority of those polled – does not require a separation of religion and state. (p. 35) Basic fact is that for the Muslims is their religion more than personal faith. That means that form them to be a Muslim isn't simply to belong to a faith community or mosque but to live in an Islamic state, which is governed and directed by their own Islamic

law and according to this Muslims continue to pursue their own faith and interpretation of it. Like Jewish law is for Jews, adherence to Islamic law is an important point of faith for Muslims. The Islamic law touches all aspects of their personal life, especially religious requirements, dietary regulations, and family law. In this case we would like to mention one untraditional fact about Muslim dietary, particularly the requirement to eat meat that has been slaughtered in a religiously appropriate way and not to eat pork meat and products in the contrast for Westerners.

Third part with the name “What Makes a Radical” discuss implication of Islam on global terrorism or if we even can talk that there is some possible relationship. Is Islam the religion and way of life which causes terrorism? This chapter very carefully analyzes *Jihad* – to strive or struggle as a Sixth Pillar of Islam. His own importance (as many of us know) is rooted in holy book Quran’s as a command to struggle in the path of God and in the example of the Prophet Muhammad and his Companions. In this very good known tradition we can find violent and also non-violent meaning of Jihad. We will try to explain our own knowledge about Jihad. When Muhammad returned from battle he told to own followers that we have returned from the lesser jihad to the greater jihad. The greater jihad is more difficult, demanding and important struggle against one’s ego, selfishness and evil. At the end of our final notes for this chapter we would like to mention one of three key points: “What does distinguish the politically radicalized from others is their perception of the West’s politics, not its culture.”

Chapter four with the title “What Do Women Want” it’s awfully interesting. This part of the book is intermediate studies which have been sponsored by the Council of American-Islamic Relations touching the position of women in Islamic countries. In this case we could build up the question: Does Islam separate men from women? If yes why? Generally we have to accept an important aspect that gender segregation and seclusion are practiced in some Muslim societies, in many Muslim countries, from Egypt and Tunisia to Malaysia and Indonesia, men and women, especially in cities and towns, increasingly study and work together. What’s happening in contrast to Islamic religion? Process of globalization and globalizing world, where two incomes are often necessary to maintain a household, women increasingly joining the workforce and breaking down traditional Islamic’ notions of gendered space. On the other hand Globalization of communications has created a situation in which Arabs and Muslims around the world often see more than we do. In this point we would like

to cite Quran and mention some important things: The Quran declares that men and women are equal in the eyes of God; man and woman were created to be equal parts of a pair (51:49). The Quran describes the relationship between men and women as one of “love and mercy” (30:21) Men and women are equally responsible for adhering to Five Pillars of Islam. Quran 9:71-72 states, “The Believers, men and women, are protectors of one another; they enjoin what is just, and forbid what is evil; they observe regular prayers, pay “zakat” and obey God and His Messenger.”

Last, but not least, the final chapter or part of the book with its own amazing title: Clash or coexistence? Authors try to polemize about the term of Islamophobia. Shortly, we can describe this term as a two-stranded form of racism – rooted in both, “different: physical appearance of Muslims and also in an intolerance of their religious and cultural beliefs.” (Esposito, 2006, <http://blogs.georgetown.edu/?id=20320>) In Muslim societies is broadly spread out something we can call like Anti-Americanism or Anti-Europeanism. It is a broad phenomenon that cuts across Arab and Muslims societies. We distinguish a lot of reason why it is so, but most important is the U.S. foreign policy which is fulfilled with an anger and frustration among the mainstream in the Muslim world. American political heads find plenty of reasons around the world as Pakistan for its development and nuclear program, while failing to press Israel and India on their nuclear development. End of this chapter is marked by the effort of authors to find out some fundamental resolutions in Islam and its relationship with the Western society. Let's try to be more specific, mutual tools to solve the societal problems of contemporary world. They polemize that best way how to solve the problems between the West and Muslim nations lies in mutual respect which flow into better behavior in both sides.

At the end of this exciting and marvelous book you find a typical part materialized in acknowledgements. It is fulfilled with maximal effort of authors to thanks a lot of people who helped to spread knowledge of hundreds of great minds.