

by the volume's contributors, they do not follow the well-developed path these works advocate; namely an attempt to invite readers to view neo-pagan movements as *one* of a variety of possible responses to modern challenges and *one* of a variety of possible expressions of spiritual, religious and ethno-religious identities. On the contrary, due to the lack of both a comparative perspective and a careful grounding in the local contexts (and local lives), the contributors of the volume tend to reproduce the idea of pagan and native faith movements as marginal and exotic *nolens volens*.

Despite these shortcomings, the volume is undoubtedly a significant contribution, and it will constitute an important point of reference for scholars working in the vibrantly developing field of pagan studies. The theoretical contributions of the joint work by Scott Simpson and Mateusz Filip, which carefully explicates the basic "pagan" terminology and concepts, is a great example of the volume's contribution to the field. Moreover, the volume has opened the door for more research on the subject due to its emphasis on three very promising issues: the interplay of ethnic and religious ideas, myths and rituals in shaping pagan and native faith movements; the movements' connection with right-wing groups, patriotic and nationalist ideologies (while simultaneously recognizing the often-simplistic divisions between "left-wing" and "right-wing" movements); and the relation of the movements to mainstream or "traditional" religions, the exploration of which could be very helpful in understanding both sides of this relation — and of religion *per se*.

***Why the West Fears Islam: An Exploration of Muslims in Liberal Democracies.* By Jocelyn Cesari. New York, NY: Palgrave MacMillan, 2013. pp. 404. \$24.95 paper. \$75.00 cloth**

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Islamophobia has recently become the subject of a growing list of publications. But while its history and development have been well chronicled,

Jocelyne Cesari's *Why the West Fears Islam: An Exploration of Muslims in Liberal Democracies* might just be the first book to empirically demonstrate a profound *irony* standing at the heart of Islamophobic discourse. Based on five years of data collected as part of the Islam in the West program at Harvard University, along with data stemming from surveys and focus groups conducted in Amsterdam, Berlin, Boston, Paris, and London, *Why the West Fears Islam* seeks to make sense of "the disjuncture between what Muslims do and the political construct of the 'Muslim problem'" (xiv). Over the course of 145 pages (another approximately 150 pages consist of a series of appendices providing details on the surveys and focus groups), Cesari compellingly demonstrates that the empirical data challenges the notion that Islamophobic discourse is based on the specific fears often articulated by the purveyors of this discourse. Rather, Islamophobia appears to be based on a much deeper unspoken fear that the presence of large numbers of Muslims in the West will serve to challenge the widely assumed neutrality of secular liberal discourse.

According to Cesari, survey data from non-Muslims suggests that most people do not view the presence of individual Muslims as a problem. Rather, fear stems from Muslims in quantities since large numbers of Muslims may alter mainstream norms and lifestyles. The stereotypical fear is that if Muslims gain political power in Western democracies, *shari'a* will become the law of the land and all women will be forced to cover their heads. Hence the veiling ban in France and anti-*shari'a* laws in the United States. But Cesari argues that focus group discussions present a view of Muslims completely at odds with the expectations of Islamophobic discourse. She states, "Specifically our results show that Muslims resist any collective identification to Islam, do not see incompatibility between their personal religious identity and their national community of residence, and even envision Islam as an asset to their civic engagement" (27). Focus group participants rarely mentioned membership in international Islamic groups and the concept of *Ummah* (the worldwide community of Muslims) was never mentioned at all. The data strongly suggests that Muslims are much more interested in integrating into the norms of Western society than changing them. So why does the West really fear Islam?

Cesari argues that it is perceived Muslim non-compliance with the process of secular justification that provokes a fear response in the West. Muslims seem to prioritize collective rights over individual rights and they regularly ground their positions on public policy issues in a religious worldview rather than on secular rationality. Though this may be

true for some, there is a deep irony in the fact that the empirical data strongly suggests that “the vast majority of Muslims are already living their religion within the immanent framework” (112). In other words, secularism is winning. There are many more Muslims reinterpreting Islam to fit into a secular framework than there are Muslims seeking to undermine liberal secular discourse. Some high profile Muslim leaders may rant against secularism, but Cesari’s empirical data suggests that their influence is minuscule among rank and file Muslims in Europe and America. This empirical evidence resonates strongly with anecdotal evidence I have personally witnessed over the last several years, in conversations with a number of Muslim leaders in America, who regularly express deep concern with what they perceive as a creeping secularization of their communities. Cesari brilliantly demonstrates the irony that fear of Islam so thoroughly infused in Western discourse belies the underlying truth that it is Western secular discourse that is fundamentally changing Islam in the West, not the other way around. Islamophobic fear is deeply ironic and misguided. Might some other factor be generating it? Cesari’s answer to this question is the most important insight of her book. She recognizes the work done by Talal Asad and others to historicize the supposed naturalness and universality of secular liberal discourse. This discourse, like all discourses, arose in a specific context — post-Enlightenment Christian Europe. According to Cesari, “The presence of Islam unveils (pun intended) the specifics of European secular cultures and demonstrates the limits of the universal claim of secularism” (143). The presence of Muslims serves to “contextualize secularism,” in effect challenging the Western notion that the development of liberal secular culture is the natural outcome of teleological forces of progress. This kind of grappling with the contextual nature of the West’s fundamental value system will naturally be resisted. But given the growing levels of wealth inequality in the West, the spiraling levels of gun violence (at least in America), the morally questionable foreign policy stands, and epidemic levels of physical and mental illness, perhaps a Muslim challenge to secular liberal discourse is at least worth listening to (a point made well by Roxanne Euben in *Enemy in the Mirror*). Cesari concludes that “Symbolic integration of Muslims within national communities would require a dramatic change in current liberal and secularist narratives. It is a daunting task but it can be done” (144). It is disappointing that the book ends without any concrete proposals on how this daunting task (what an understatement!) might be accomplished. The note of hope, however, is appreciated.

*Why the West Fears Islam* is an important book that deserves a wide readership among political scientists, sociologists, religion scholars, and others. Unfortunately, such a substantively important book has been marred by one of the worst jobs of copyediting and proofreading I have ever seen. The book is littered with typographical errors, ungrammatical sentences, and inconsistent orthography, the errors accumulating to such a degree in some places that my reading was regularly interrupted. Most problematic, perhaps, 2010 New York gubernatorial candidate, Rick Lazio, is three times referred to as Rock Lazio (including in the index). Jocelyn Cesari deserved a better fate from her editors at Palgrave MacMillan. But despite the editorial train wreck, Cesari has produced a volume of tremendous importance in these Islamophobic times.

***The New Evangelical Social Engagement.* Edited by Brian Steensland and Philip Goff. New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2014. 336 pp. \$99.00 cloth, \$29.95 paper**

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Near the end of this fascinating collection of essays, Joel Carpenter asks an important question and then offers an equally important answer: “So how new is the new evangelicalism?” Apparently not very. “There is not one trend or emphasis” among the new evangelicals profiled in this book, Carpenter explains, that was not evident in the work of a group of progressive evangelicals who in the early 1970s crafted an innovative statement of beliefs on social issues as well as an agenda for future action (275). Editors Philip Goff and Brian Steensland agree with Carpenter that much of what is happening in the new millennium is built upon the foundations established during the disco era. “Today’s new evangelicals,” they argue, “are but the most recent iteration of evangelicalism’s long-standing tendency to spin off its own renewal movements” (2). Nevertheless, the subjects of this book offer important new insights into the state of evangelical faith in the modern United States.