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Margaret Hodson

ABSTRACT: Many white nationalist thinkers have attempted to justify their anti-Muslim views by exploiting fears of “jihad” in various forms. Based on an analysis of alt-right sources, this article proposes a new category of “baby jihad,” or jihad via demography, which undergirds Islamophobia in the West. White nationalists who fear “baby jihad” point to demographic changes in fertility rates, age distribution, religious identification, and migration patterns to argue that Muslims pose an existential threat to Western society. This article places these arguments in context by citing demographic data and begins to explore some of the gendered dynamics associated with the politicization of reproduction. “Baby jihad” is a useful conceptual lens for understanding rising populism and anti-refugee sentiment throughout North America and Europe.

Key words: white nationalist, Western demographics, baby jihad, Muslim refugees and immigrants, replacement theory

INTRODUCTION

In this article, I seek to analyze white nationalist conceptions of changing Western demographics. Specifically, I argue that anti-Muslim thinkers view demographic changes as a form of jihad. Many scholars have examined alt-right rhetoric surrounding other so-called types of jihad: violent jihad, civilizational jihad, stealth jihad, political jihad, cultural jihad, and others. However, white nationalist fears of “baby jihad,” or jihad via demography, have been under-analyzed. As such, I hope to contribute to the scholarly analysis of an emerging discourse in Islamophobia. Analyzing fears of baby jihad lends a new understanding to rising populism and anti-refugee sentiment throughout North America and Europe. Global demography will change ever-more rapidly in the coming decades. As such, it is extremely pressing to understand arguments used by white nationalist, anti-Muslim hatemongers, if only to debunk these myths.

I will undertake a literature review of works by prominent anti-Muslim and/or white nationalist authors including (but not limited to) Raymond Ibrahim, Crucified Again: Exposing Islam’s New War on Christians (2013), William Kilpatrick, The Politically Incorrect Guide to Jihad (2016), Ann Corcoran, Refugee Resettlement and the Hijra to America (2015b), Mark Steyn, America Alone: The End of the World as we Know it (2008), and Brigitte Gabriel, Because they Hate: A Survivor of Islamic Terror Warns America by Brigitte Gabriel. I chose these authors due to their national platform and prominence in anti-Muslim activism. Raymond Ibrahim was born to Coptic Egyptian parents and frequently writes about the persecution of Christians in the Middle East. Ibrahim has troubling ties to prominent anti-Muslim groups; he has contributed to Robert Spencer’s Jihad Watch and is a Shillman Fellow at the David Horowitz Freedom Center.1 The Southern Poverty Law Center (SPLC) listed Jihad Watch as an “active anti-Muslim group” in 2015. Jihad Watch is funded through the David Horowitz Freedom Center. The Center’s mission is to “combat the efforts of the radical left and its Islamist allies to destroy the values and disarm [America] as it
attempts to defend itself in a time of terror.” 2 William Kilpatrick’s work is supported in part through the Shillman Foundation. The Shillman Foundation is the same organization that supports Raymond Ibrahim’s fellowship at the David Horowitz Freedom Center. 3 Kilpatrick has also contributed to Robert Spencer’s Jihad Watch and FrontPage Magazine. The mission of his blog, Turning Point Project, is to “educate Catholic and other Americans about the threat from Islam by arming them with the information and analysis necessary to meet the challenge.” 4 Mark Steyn is a prominent conservative and an excerpt from his America Alone published by Macleans magazine led the British Columbia Human Rights Tribunal to hold a hearing on the legality of alleged hate-speech and anti-Muslim sentiment in Steyn’s article (Beirich 2008). In addition, Steyn received the “Mightier Pen Award” in 2007 from the Center for Security Policy. 5 The SPLC classifies the Center for Security Policy as an extremist group and “conspiracy-oriented mouthpiece for the growing anti-Muslim movement in the United States” (Southern Poverty Law Center 2017b). Ann Corcoran is the founder of Refugee Resettlement Watch blog. Corcoran’s book Refugee Resettlement and the Hijra to America was published by the Center for Security Policy. Additionally, Corcoran spoke at ACT! for America’s national conference in 2015 (Southern Poverty Law Center 2015). Brigitte Gabriel is the founder and president of ACT! for America. The Southern Poverty Law Center (2017a) classifies ACT for America as “the largest grassroots anti-Muslim group in America, claiming 280,000 members and over 1,000 chapters.” I chose these authors for the prominence of their anti-Muslim works, but also for their literature addressing the intersection of Islamophobia and demography. I will consider demographic data along with the work of these authors.

Specifically, I will examine recent demographic data from the Pew Templeton Global Futures project Changing Global Religious Landscape Report published in April 2017. This report outlines historical demographic data from 2010–2015 and projected trends for 2015–2060 based on religious group. Additionally, for data on migration, I’ll use the 2015 The Future of World Religions: Population Growth Projections, 2010–2050 from the Pew Research Center. Within each subsection of the article, I will first present the relevant demographic data. Then, I will analyze white nationalist fears stoked by projected or historical demographic changes. It is important to note that much of the literature reviewed in this article was written before the two Pew reports were released. Only one author directly cites data from the Pew Research Center in his work about demography as jihad. However, my goal is to put demographic data and anti-Muslim views into conversation. I seek to show the linkages (or lack thereof) to better understand white nationalist fears. Overall, demographic data can provide a fuller picture of these fears. Demographic projections show massive changes in the future religious make-up of the global population. Specifically, the 2017 Pew Research Center report projects that “babies born to Muslims will begin to outnumber Christian births by 2035.” In addition, the number of Muslims globally is predicted to equal the number of Christians by 2060 (p. 5). The primary factors impacting demographic changes are fertility rates, age distribution, religious switching, and migration. Fertility rates and age distribution have the largest effect on shifting demography, while religious switching and migration have much smaller effects.

I argue that while the data set presents no inherent value judgement about changing demography in the West, white nationalists view projected changes negatively. I seek to examine why white nationalists fear these demographic changes as a form of jihad. I will begin with fears of religious switching, focusing on both conversion from Christianity to Islam and declining religiosity. I argue that white nationalists view conversions, both forced and voluntary, as a weapon intended to destroy Western society, culture, and religion. Male converts are feared as future jihadists and thus pose a national security threat (Steyn 2008, 93–4). Female converts are feared for undermining societal values (Paquette 2015). However, fears of declining Christian religiosity deviate from the norm of demography as jihad. Fears of declining Christian
religiosity indicate deeper anxieties about moral decay and secularism. As such, these anxieties represent an internal threat from within Western society as opposed to an external threat posed by Islam. However, this internal threat of declining religiosity makes Western society more susceptible to the external threats of “demography jihad” (Gabriel 2008, 218).

I will then consider the demographic factors of fertility rates, age distribution, and migration. Much like conversion, white nationalists view high Muslim fertility rates as a form of jihad. White nationalists use violent rhetoric such as “literal baby boom” (Steyn 2008, xviii) and “war of the wombs” (Kilpatrick 2106, 131) to paint Muslim motherhood as weapon wielded against Western society. This concept of “baby jihad” objectifies Muslim women as baby-producing machines. In turn, these babies will bring about the ruin of Western society through stealth jihad to implement Sharia law, amongst other things such as genital mutilation, rapes, and persecution of Christians. These fears are exacerbated by an aging European population in contrast to a young Muslim population. Finally, migration is viewed as another type of demographic weapon. White nationalists write of the “hijra” as a form of stealth jihad (Corcoarn 2105b), a “Trojan horse” (Solomon and Al Maqdisi 2009) to alter the demographic make-up of non-Muslim countries and implement Sharia law. Of course, “baby jihad,” or demography as a weapon, is closely interlinked to other types of jihad such as violent jihad or cultural jihad. However, I hope that this focused examination of “demographic jihad” can contribute to the existing academic discourse and build off other, interrelated types of jihad.

**FERTILITY RATES AND MIGRATION: INTRODUCTION**

As stated in the introduction, “babies born to Muslims will begin to outnumber Christian births by 2035” (Pew Research Center 2017, 4). However, globally there will still be more Christians than Muslims in 2035. Projections show that this gap should close completely by 2060: “By 2060, Christians and Muslims will make up nearly equal shares of the world’s population.” (Pew Research Center 2017, 5). This demographic shift is largely attributed to the high fertility rates of Muslims in comparison to Christians along with age distribution differences. While Muslims have an average fertility rate of 2.9 children per woman, the average rate for Christians is 2.6 children per woman. In fact, “Muslims have the highest fertility rate of any religious group,” according to the report (Pew Research Center 2017, 15). In addition, Muslims have the youngest population of any religious group. This means there is a more favorable age distribution with high numbers of young people and less old people. This allows for net births to exceed net deaths for the religious group. However, “In Europe . . . Christian deaths already outnumber births—a deficit that is projected to grow through 2060. And in North America, the number of Christian deaths will begin to exceed the number of births by around 2050.” (Pew Research Center 2017, 28). While Muslims have high fertility rates and a young population, Christians are faced with lower fertility rates and an aging population.

In addition to fertility rates and age distribution, one final factor impacting demographic shifts is migration. The 2015 report titled *The Future of World Religions: Population Growth Projections, 2010–2050* addresses how migration will shape Europe’s future. The report noted that “In a projection with no migration, the Muslim share of Europe’s population would be expected to grow from 6% in 2010 to 8% in 2050. When expected migration is factored in, the Muslim share of the population forecast in 2050 rises from 10%.” (p. 150). At first glance, migration may seem to play only a small role in increasing the Muslim population in Europe. However, “about half (53%) of the projected growth of Europe’s Muslim population can be attributed to new migration” (Pew Research Center 2015, 50). North America will see smaller increases due to
According to the report, “Muslims are projected to make up 2.4% of North America’s population in 2050 when factoring in migration, but only 1.4% with no new migration.” (Pew Research Center 2015, 51). Migration clearly impacts the demographic trends of Europe and North America, especially in the long term. However, migration is a secondary driver of demographic change compared to the more important factors of fertility rates and age distribution.

**FERTILITY RATES: BABY JIHAD**

Ibrahim wrote an article called “Islam’s ‘Baby Jihad’” in direct response to Pew Research Center (2015). Baby jihad paints the fertility of Muslim women as a form of warfare against the West. Unlike the internal threat of moral decay from within Western society, baby jihad is an external threat linked to Islamophobia. Ibrahim begins his article by citing data directly from the report, including that “by 2050 Muslims will make up around ten percent of Europe’s population” (Ibrahim 2015). He then explicitly links these demographic changes to the “ruin” of Western society. Ibrahim expressed fears of a “Londonistan,” or an Islamization of London, that would bring about the end of a Christian Europe. He spoke of beheadings, sex rings, rapes, discrimination against Christians, desecration and vandalism of Christian holy spaces, and terror attacks accompanying the spread of Islam throughout the West. Ibrahim believes all these terrible atrocities will occur with the spreading of Islam. He wrote that “in short, alone with all the other forms of jihad to be wary of—the sword jihad, the tongue jihad (deceit/propaganda), the money jihad (financial support to jihadis)—the West should also be aware of the baby jihad.” Thus, Ibrahim explicitly links demographic data from the Pew Research Center to the supposed ruin to Western society. Babies become a form of warfare, and maternity is weaponized. To extend this logic further, women themselves are objectified as baby-producing machines. They are not viewed as fully human, but instead only feared for their fertility rates. According to Ibrahim, these fertility rates and the subsequent “Muslim babies” will destroy the West. This is clearly Islamophobia and not an internal threat from within Western society—although moral decay can make Western society more susceptible to this external threat.

William Kilpatrick builds upon Ibrahim’s description of baby jihad in *A Politically Incorrect Guide to Jihad*. Kilpatrick uses the term “war of the wombs” along with baby jihad. He coins the terminology “war of the wombs” from a quote attributed to Algerian President Houari Boumediene. Kilpatrick writes that “In 1974, when Algerian president Houari Boumediene predicted mass migration from the Southern to the Northern hemisphere ‘to conquer it,’ he also made an additional threat: ‘And they will conquer it with their sons. The wombs of our women will give us victory.’” (Kilpatrick 2016, 131). The language used by Kilpatrick turns Muslim babies into instruments of war. Fertility rates become weapons. Steyn echoes this argument in *America Alone*, writing that “those self-detonating Islamists in London and Gaza are a literal baby boom” (2008, xviii). Steyn thus links the demographic concept of a baby boom with violent extremism. Another example: “over the next generation, that population of excitable young men will explode—demographically I mean, though very literally if the more severe mullahs have their way,” (Steyn 2008, 19). These quotes clearly show that white nationalists view demography—specifically motherhood, fertility, and babies—as a form of violent jihad.

**MIGRATION: “HIJRA” AS JIHAD**

Fears of fertility rates are also inherently linked to fears of immigration, or “migration combined with maternity,” in the words of Kilpatrick (2016, 131). Migration is weaponized along with fertility rates. White nationalists such as Kilpatrick and Ann Corcoran use
the word “hijra” to describe migration. Hijra refers to the Prophet Mohammed’s journey from Mecca to Medina in 622 CE. Kilpatrick defines hijra as “slow-motion conquest by migration” (2016, 116). White nationalists see hijra and the Prophet Mohammed’s example as a parable about migration as a weapon against non-Muslim societies. Kilpatrick wrote that “Muhammad didn’t come to Medina in order to integrate, he came to dominate. In a relatively short time, he expelled or killed the Jews in Medina and established Islam and the only religion in the region” (2016, 131). Frank J. Gaffney, Jr., President and CEO of Center for Security Policy, wrote about the concept of hijra in the introduction to Refugees Settlement and the Hijra to America by Corcoran. Gaffney wrote that: “hijra remains the model to this day for jihadists who seek to populate and dominate new lands.” Thus, Gaffney also links migration to the example of the Prophet Mohammed. Neither author references other possible rationales for migration including war and humanitarian crises. The only wars being fought are wars against the West—by Muslim immigrants. These Muslim immigrants attack the society of their host nation instead of peacefully assimilating. Muslim immigrants are a “fifth column” of secret “stealth jihadists” lying in wait to overthrow Western society and implement Sharia law, according to white nationalists. White nationalists also draw on rhetoric from radical Muslim leaders to back up their arguments. For example, Libyan dictator Muammar Gaddafi said in 2006 that “We have fifty million Muslims in Europe. There are signs that Allah will grant Islam victory in Europe—without swords, without guns, without military conquests. The fifty million Muslims of Europe will turn it into a Muslim continent within a few decades.” (Spencer 2009). This quote has been cited as evidence of “hijra” on websites such as Refugee Resettlement Watch (Corcoran 2015a) and Jihad Watch (Spencer 2009).

Corcoran describes hijra as the religious imperative of Muslims to wage “civilization jihad” against non-Muslim societies through immigration. She writes, “Jihad is a struggle against unbelievers. Immigration is a jihad on the West.” (2015b, ebook location 189). She also references Modern Day Trojan Horse by Sam Solomon and E. Al Maqdisi. In this book, the authors argue that immigration is the Trojan horse, and violent Muslims are deliberately sneaking into America to wage jihad. Kilpatrick additionally comments on Modern Day Trojan Horse. With regards to Solomon and E. Al-Maqdisi, he claims “they’re not saying that every single Muslim immigrant wants to subvert Western society, but rather that mass migration and Islamic conquest have been linked ever since Muhammad” (2016, 115). However, Kilpatrick throughout his book makes clear he doesn’t believe that moderate Muslims exist. This is one reason baby jihad is so scary for white nationalists. Even ostensibly peaceful Muslim families are feared as stealth jihadists, simply waiting for the right moment to strike. With such a warped viewpoint, it becomes clear why white nationalists fear projected demographic changes so viscerally.

**RELIGIOUS SWITCHING: INTRODUCTION**

The Pew Research Center 2017 report indicates the minimal impact of religious switching on projected demographic changes. Most religious switching occurs from Christianity to religiously unaffiliated, with a very small amount of demographic change generated by conversion from Christianity to Islam. According to the report, “the net impact of religious switching [from 2010 to 2015] accounted for an estimated 23% of unaffiliated growth and 0.3% of Muslim growth while reducing Christian growth by 7%.” (p. 7). Overall, religious switching from 2010–15 led to a -9.0 million decrease in the number of Christians worldwide, a +0.5 increase in Muslims, and a +8.0 million increase in religiously unaffiliated.
To put those numbers into perspective, the total number of Christians globally in 2015 was 2.3 billion. The total number of Muslims in 2015 was 1.8 billion, while the religiously unaffiliated comprised 1.2 billion of the world population (Pew Research Center 2017, 8). Thus, the net impact of religious switching on demographic changes is dwarfed by the larger population growth factors of fertility rates and age distribution. Projections for religious switching in the period 2015–20 are consistent with recent historical trends. These projections predict a net loss of -8 million people from Christianity, with most of these “converts” becoming religiously unaffiliated. Specifically, the Pew Research Center projects a 7.6 million net gain for the religiously unaffiliated category and a +0.42 million net gain for Islam (2017, 17). These numbers clearly show a minimal impact of religious switching on demographic changes both historically and in future projections.

Despite this minimal impact, nationalists still hold onto deep-seated fears. I will first address fears of conversion before moving onto declining Christian religiosity. Nationalists view conversion as a weaponized form of religious switching. Thus, conversions are a form of attack against Western society. There is a gendered dimension to the threats posed by converts; male converts are feared as future jihadists as thus national security threats, while female converts are feared for questioning Western values. Specifically, female converts challenge materialism, consumer culture, and the objectification of women within mainstream society. White nationalists fear both the violence of forced conversion and the persuasive soft power of voluntary conversion. Overall, the conversion subset of religious switching is viewed as a significant threat, despite quantitative data to the contrary (Pew Research Center 2017, 7).

**RELIGIOUS SWITCHING: CONVERSION**

As stated above, alt-right commentators view conversion as a weapon wielded by Muslims against Europe and America. In *America Alone*, author Mark Steyn lists “three strategies Islam deploys against a dying West.” These strategies are demography, conversion, and “the murky intertwining of modern technology and ancient hatreds” (2008, 138). Including demography and conversion in the same list of anti-West tactics shows their linkage in the mind of white nationalists. Furthermore, Steyn uses the word “deploy,” a word defined by *Merriam Webster* as “to extend (a military unit) especially in width.” The connotations of deploy invoke military action and violence. This word choice paints conversion as a weapon or tactic of war. Additionally, Steyn describes the West as “dying.” This can mean deaths both from violence, but also from declining population growth.

Steyn also argues that as Muslims further “Islamify” European cities, Christian inhabitants will begin converting to Islam en masse to avoid persecution as a new religious minority (2008, 92). In fact, Steyn believes that examples of forced conversion, or at least suppression of Christianity and Judaism, are already occurring in Europe. He claims that under the influence of Islam, Europeans have begun practicing polygamy, forced marriage, and female genital mutilation (Steyn 2008, 135). He also claims that “Danish Jews are advised not to wear yarmulkes, Swedish blondes are dyeing their hair black, and Parisian women have taken to wearing head coverings so as to blend in with their surroundings.” (Steyn 2008, 135). While these people haven’t yet converted, Steyn insinuates they are being forced to change culturally for fear of persecution. In the long run, these gradual changes—Swedish women dyeing their hair, or Danish Jews not wearing yarmulkes—will lead to either forced or voluntary conversion to Islam.

Raymond Ibrahim echoes these sentiments in *Crucified Again: Exposing Islam’s New War on Christians*. Ibrahim begins his section on “forcible conversion” with historical anecdotes. He shares stories of Christians being beaten, bloodied, or even killed for refusing to convert. Next,
he claims that “even institutions of forced conversion once thought defunct are being revived in modern Islam” (2013, 184). He writes about modern incidents of attempted forced conversion from Christianity to Islam in countries such as Bangladesh, Palestine, Pakistan, and Uzbekistan, and Sudan (2013, 183–6). Notably, these examples of forced conversions do not occur in Western countries. However, like Steyn, Ibrahim views conversion as a violent weapon. He describes in detail the bloody beatings, rapes, and murders that have occurred in attempts at forced conversion.

The perceived threats posed by converts are viewed through a gendered lens. For male converts, the primary threat, in the mind of white nationalists, comes from the possibility of violent extremism. According to a report from Swansea University on behalf of Faith Matters, “Over recent years, newspapers within the UK have consistently linked Muslim converts to security threats” (Brice, 2010). In the eyes of many nationalists, male converts are future terrorists in the waiting. To this point, Steyn provides a list of terror attacks carried out by converts including shoe-bomber Richard Reid and London Tube bomber Germaine Lindsay. Steyn writes that these former Christians are extremely dangerous because their white-sounding names won’t set off alarm bells during security screening processes (2008, 93–4). In fact, Brice’s Faith Matters report concluded that “it would appear that converts to Islam are regarded as a greater threat than born Muslims by British newspapers” (p. 14). Fears of violent extremism from converts indicate deeper Western fears about national security.

And yet, from a numerical standpoint, “jihadist” attacks on Western countries, especially the United States, are extremely rare. According to another study from the Triangle Center on Terrorism and Homeland Security, only 50 Americans have been killed by American Muslims in terrorist attacks since 9/11 (Kurzman, 2014). By contrast, a study from the Combating Terrorism Center at the United States Military Academy in 2012 found that attacks by right-wing extremists since 9/11 had killed 254 Americans (Perlinger 2012, 87, 100). Of these terror attacks, even a smaller number were committed specifically by converts. Just as conversions aren’t causing massive demographic shifts, jihadists aren’t causing massive numbers of terror attacks on Western soil. Therefore, it seems clear that Western fears of both jihadist attacks stem from insecurities about Western power and the ability of Western nations to fend off terror attacks. Fears of jihad and national security rest primarily with male converts, while female Muslim converts bring about a different set of anxieties for nationalist commentators. Female Muslim converts challenge false stereotypes about oppressed Muslim women and create fear for nationalists by challenging Western societal norms of objectification of women. Objectification of women means the West hyper-sexualizing female bodies for mass consumption.

These fears are also linked to the high numbers of female converts in comparison to men. According to the Council on American Islamic Relations, female converts outnumber male converts four to one (Haddad, Smith, and Moore 2006). One prominent female convert is Lauren Booth, whose conversion attracted a flurry of media attention due to family ties to both actor Tony Booth and former British Prime Minister Tony Blair. Especially for British citizens, Booth is emblematic of a white female converting to Islam. At the time of her conversion, Lauren Booth wrote an article for The Guardian titled “Lauren Booth: I’m now a Muslim. Why all the shock and horror?” In this article, Booth shares her “conversion story” and argues against the stereotype of oppressed Muslim women. Her own stereotypes about Muslim women as “block-robbed blobs” were shattered, and she learned that “believe it or not, Muslim women can be educated, work the same deadly hours we do, and even boss their husbands around in front of his friends until he leaves the room in a huff to go and finish making the dinner” (Booth 2010).
Many similar articles to Booth’s story have been written by women such as Theresa Corbin, a white covert living in New Orleans, Louisiana. Corbin wrote an article in 2014 for CNN titled “I’m a Feminist and I Converted to Islam.” Even the title of Corbin’s article addresses the Western misperception that feminism and Islam must be mutually exclusive. Like Booth, Corbin also admits to false notions about “oppressed” Muslim women. However, she came to realize that “Islam turned out to be the religion that appealed to [her] feminist ideals.” On the whole, Western audiences struggle to grasp the appeal of Islam for young white women such as Booth and Corbin. Even more shock is expressed at young American girls joining ISIS. According to a report from New America, one in seven American ISIS converts are women. 30% of these female converts are teenagers (Paquette 2015). Marie Saltman, a researcher at the Institute for Strategic Dialogue, noted that female ISIS converts “are denying being sexual objects of the West . . . they refuse to be objectified. They use the veil so they cannot be sexualized” (Paquette 2015). Female Muslim converts refuse to be sexualized by Western society and thus don the veil as an emancipatory act of protection against the male gaze and mass consumption of female bodies in the public sphere.

Thus, female converts to Islam are viewed as a threat to Western values. These converts challenge the notion that Western women are free while Muslim women must be oppressed. They also challenge the West’s objectification of women. Nationalists such as Steyn admit that this ideology can hold a large appeal for Western citizens, especially youth. Steyn writes in *America Alone*, “If you’re a teenager in most European cities these days, you’ve a choice between two competing identities—a robust confident Islamic identity or a tentative post-nationalist cringingly apologetic European identity. It would be a mistake to assume the former is attractive only to Arabs and North Africans.” (2008, 90). It is precisely the strong appeal of Islam that scares nationalists such as Steyn so much. This is the soft power of persuasive ideas, not the hard power of violent forced conversions. Both scare white nationalists deeply.

**RELIGIOUS SWITCHING: DECLINING RELIGIOSITY**

Religious switching encompasses not only conversion from Islam to Christianity, but also movement from Christianity to the category of religiously unaffiliated. Alt-right commentators explicitly link declining Christian religiosity to declining Western demographics. Specifically, these anti-Muslim thinkers believe moral decay leads to declining Christian religiosity, which in turn leads to lower Western fertility rates. Pew Research data do show that religiously affiliated women have higher birth rates than religiously unaffiliated women. The 2017 Pew Templeton Global Religious Futures project report predicts that “the 2015 to 2020 total fertility rate for religiously unaffiliated women is projected to be 1.6 children per woman, nearly a full child less than the rate of 2.5 children per woman for religiously affiliated women” (p. 18). However, there is no evidence that moral decay causes both religious switching and lower fertility rates. The white nationalist fears of moral decay and secularism indicate anxieties about internal threats from within Western society.

As previously stated, the alt-right thinkers believe moral decay causes declining Christian religiosity. The concept of domestic moral decay from within reveals insecurities about the supposed superiority of Western society. For example, many commentators made direct comparisons between contemporary Western society and the fall of ancient Greece and ancient Rome. In her book *Because They Hate*, Brigitte Gabriel wrote, “What brought down the Roman Empire? It was decay from within. What brought down the Greek Empire? Decay from within. You are seeing the beginning of the demise of the greatest nation in the world, the United States of America, because of a cancer that eats and devours from within.” (2008, 218).
The comparison between the modern West and ancient Greece and Rome is direct and explicit. These comparisons show that, while there is an external threat posed by Islam, perhaps even a great threat comes from the “weakness” within Western society.

Steyn also echoes the sentiments of Gabriel and cites “cultural indolence” as a reason for Western decline. He wrote, “the sack of Rome was the symptom of the fall of the empire rather than the cause.” Moral decay will be the cause of the West’s fall. The symptom—the comparison to the sack of Rome—is a Muslim “invasion” of Europe and changing demographic tides. However, internal weakness due to declining religiosity makes Europe too weak to fend off Muslim attacks. Kilpatrick wrote that “The end result of the dechristianization [sic] of Europe will very likely be the Islamization of Europe—unless, that is, Europeans are able to recover the faith that made Europe great in the first place.” (2016, 137). Kilpatrick further claims that only strong religious faith led to Christian success during the Crusades. If Christians want to beat this new “Muslim invasion,” they must resist secularism and regain faith. Additionally, author Kathy Shaidle wrote, “It is secularism itself which is part of the problem, not the solution, since secularism is precisely what created the Euro spiritual/moral vacuum into which Islamism has rushed headlong.” (Steyn 2008, 101) Thus, moral decay leads to secularism, which is defined for white nationalists as an increasing tempo of religious switching from Christianity to religiously unaffiliated.

White nationalists believe this increase in switching to religiously unaffiliated causes lower fertility and birth rates for Western women. William Kilpatrick writes that “The decline of Christianity in Europe led to a loss of cultural confidence and a loss of will. This loss of faith also translated into a declining birth rate.” (2016, 131). As stated above, Pew Research Center (2107) confirms that religiously unaffiliated women are projected to have lower fertility rates than religiously affiliated women. However, religiosity is only one factor impacting fertility rates, and is intertwined with educational opportunities, economic development, and age of marriage amongst other factors. However, here begins a shift from internal factors within Western society to external threats. There is indeed a perceived threat from within Western society due to religious switching, secularism, and lower fertility rates. However, the threat is also viewed as externally imposed on Western society in the form of “baby jihad.” I will now transition from discussing white nationalist fears of religious switching to discussing fears from fertility rates, age distribution, and migration. As shown above, religious switching has little impact on demographic changes. Therefore, white nationalist fears of religious switching impacting demography indicate greater fears about national security and cultural values. However, there are data to support large demographic shifts due to differing fertility rates and age distributions. White nationalists view demography as a form of jihad, and thus fear these projected changes.

CONCLUSION

White nationalists view demography—whether religious switching, fertility rates, or migration—as a form of jihad. I believe the concept of “baby jihad” can further be applied to analyze the nationalist rhetoric of populist parties across Europe and North America. These right-wing parties include the UK Independence Party, the French National Front, the Alternative fur Deutschland in Germany, the Independent Greeks Party, and the Freedom party of Austria amongst others. Similarly, analyzing “demography jihad” can lend a greater understanding to current events including Brexit, the election of President Trump, and “Muslim Ban 2.0.” The concept of baby jihad plays an important role in anti-Muslim propaganda through both Europe and North America. Baby jihad strikes at the heart of white
nationalist fears. These fears transform into political parties, platforms, and movements. As these parties and ideologies gain a greater foothold through the West, it is more important than ever to undertake scholarly analysis to understand the root of these fears. Baby jihad is one important fear within a larger nexus of anti-Muslim sentiments. However, it is only one piece of the puzzle and doesn’t represent the entirety of Islamophobia. It must be understood in conjunction with other white nationalist fears including those of stealth jihad, cultural jihad, civilizational jihad, and other false conceptions.

ENDNOTES


6 Frank J. Gaffney, Jr., introduction to Corcoran 2015b.


REFERENCES


