

**Title—The Anthropology of Islam in Europe: A double epistemological impasse**  
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Argument Synopsis:

Fadil's essay is primarily a historiographic review of the anthropological literature focused on Islam in Europe. Fadil makes use of two theoretical frameworks, the first referring to the historical marking of Islam as Europe's "Other." The second framework is concerned with anthropology's difficult relationship with religious traditions in general, and Islam in particular, in their ontological claim-making. Fadil organizes the existing literature into three key figures of the Muslim: as migrant, as Islamist, and as ethical subject. She claims that this scholarship on Islam in Europe is equally informed by a set of tensions which revolve around the desire to account for the ethical subjectivity of Muslims, while at the same time downplaying it. Fadil notes the two aims for her review, being to offer an overview of the current trends in anthropology scholarship on Islam, with a focus on North-West Europe, and to offer a critical reflection on the state of anthropological knowledge production on this topic and how it is marked by a 'double epistemological impasse.' These two 'impasses' are defined as the orientalist demarcation of Muslims as 'Other' and the difficulty of representing Islam as a complex discursive tradition.

According to Fadil, the Muslim question operates as one of the main cultural fault lines for the idea of Europe to be debated and reimagined. A large question underscoring the review is how the historical gaze on Islam has fundamentally structured contemporary scholarship on Islam in Europe. As she overviews the important contributors to the literature, Fadil notes the difficulties in writing about the constitutive capacities of Islam without reproducing an orientalist narrative. Anthropology plays an important role in the holistic view of lives of Muslim migrants, including elements of culture and religion. Islam is frequently treated as an important site to explore the conflict between tradition and modernity. The first figure to appear in the literature is the Muslim as migrant. The next is that of the fundamentalist, who exists as a haunting figure whose imagined ability to overturn the secular ontology acts as a continuous source of societal, political, and scholarly tension. The last is that of the ethical subject, because Fadil argues that it is impossible to treat Muslims merely as moral subjects. Fadil demonstrates how the racialized gaze on Islam has informed anthropological scholarship on Islam in Europe. Fadil's two 'impasses' revolve around the necessity to demonstrate the adaptability of Islamic forms of mobilization with dominant models of secularism and the difficulty to account for the constitutive weight of the Islamic tradition.

Key Themes and Concepts:

- Islam in Europe is often perceived within one of three figures: the Muslim as migrant, as Islamist/fundamentalist, and as ethical subject
- Islam as a heterogenous set of discourses that seek to instruct practitioners the correct form and purpose of practices
- Consequence of anthropological work has been a shift away from a national perspective on the public sphere, to a more transnationally situated view of Islam