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The Phenomenon of Islamophobia and Spreading of Islamism in the West

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Abstract

SUBJECT AND OBJECTIVES: The pervasive phenomenon of the Islamic uprising has taken the West by surprise, and for this reason, with the available tools, it analyzed it to discover the strengths and weaknesses of the problem, and to be able to face such an analysis; but on the other hand, the religion of Islam is a religion of development and it calls for all kinds of knowledge and asks the Muslim ummah to improve the elements of power in their soul and try to be the best ummah and to be the pioneer of the people of the world.

METHOD AND FINDING: The religion of Islam in the West and the interaction way Western societies and governments and their interaction with Muslim minorities in those countries is a topic that has been the focus of analysts and culturologists for nearly two decades in scientific, academic, and media circles in Europe and the United States. Meanwhile, it seems that different attitudes and schools of thought towards Islam and Muslims living in Europe and America are far from the objective and practical situation of social movements of minorities and Islamic currents in these areas, in other words, due to the existence of different views and approaches on how to interact with these religious minorities, Islamic currents in the West find themselves in deep identity straits.

CONCLUSION: The present study sought to explain the concept of Islamophobia and Islamism in the West, which was used to explain this meaning and concept.

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Introduction

The spread of Islamism and the emergence of Islamic groups is one of the most important political and social changes of the last quarter of the 20 century, especially in the West.

On the other hand, the religion of Islam, which is the source of the formation of a unique and distinct civilization, is an All-Encompassing religion that considers all the political, economic, social, cultural and spiritual dimensions of human beings. There is a vital need to become acquainted with Islam today; but in the meantime, a phenomenon called Islamophobia has emerged.

The phenomenon of Islamophobia has historically arisen between the Arabs and the Jews of the Arabian Peninsula and is one of the terms that has become relatively common, especially in the context of Islam's relationship with the West; Therefore, the phenomenon of

Islamophobia has a history since the advent of Islam.

This phenomenon is rooted in ancient history, which is full of a long series of turbulent relations between the West and Islam, and during these turbulent relations, the Islamophobia has been established in the Western mentality and has made Islam a serious threat that threatens western everything.

On the other hand, with the expansion of the influence of Islam and the widespread acceptance of its religious and spiritual messages by the world and the provision of the ground for expressing the desire for Islam in the world, so the Western countries became anxious about the influence of Islam, and Muslim theorists in various ways and explicitly admit that after the collapse of communism, it is the only Islamic ideology that can pose a serious problem for the Western world.

Accordingly, the present study examines the concept of Islamophobia and its causes and the phenomenon of Islamism in the West.

The Phenomenon of Islamophobia

Islamophobia has been mentioned as a new term for old fears. (*Sajid, 2005*)

Some scholars believe that the West fear and hatred of Islam is not new and dates back to the 8 century, when the group refers to the historical experiences of Spain, the Crusades and subsequent eras. (*Toprak, 2010*)

Islamophobia is a concept that refers to fear, prejudice and irrational discrimination against Islam and Muslims. The theme of Islamophobia is that the Islamic world in general and Muslims living in Western countries in particular should be considered as a source of threat and danger to the people and culture and civilization of the West.

In general, Islamophobia implies that Islam has nothing in common with other

denominations and cultures and is a violent, petrified and intolerant religion, and that Islamic civilization is inferior to the Western civilization and it is a political ideology.

Accordingly, Muslims are always presented as threatening national values and Western culture. (*Emami and Hosseini Faeq, 2011*)

On the other hand, some individuals and organizations have tried to define this term, which refers to some examples of these definitions:

- Kofi Annan; The former UN Secretary-General said at a conference on Islamophobia in 2004: When the world has to generate a term to describe prejudice and stubbornness, it is an unfortunate and difficult development. (Morshedizad and *Ghaffari Hashjin, 2007*)
- The Runnymede Trust, which established the British Muslim and Islamophobic Commission

in 1996, published its report in November 1976 entitled “Islamophobia: A Challenge to All of Us”.

The report defines Islamophobia as unfounded fear and reluctance towards Muslims, which leads to repulsion and discrimination against them.

- American author Stephen Schwartz condemns Islamophobia as condemning Islam as a whole and the history of Muslims as extremist, denying the moderate Muslim majority and considering Islam as a problem for the world, dealing with Muslim conflicts as necessarily the result of their mistakes; with emphasizing that Muslims seek change based on their religion and declaring war on Islam as a whole.
- An article in the journal “Sociology” in 2007 defined Islamophobia as racism against Muslims and the continuation of

anti-Arab and anti-Asian racism. (*Emami and Hosseini Faeq, 2011*)

Causes of Islamophobia

In order to answer this question, it is necessary to consider a set of factors that include a range of historical, cultural, social and political factors, and below are some examples of these factors:

1. Migration and Confrontation of Cultures

The majority of Muslims in European countries have an immigrant background. Most of these countries increased labor migration from Muslim countries following World War II.

The initial plan was for these immigrants to stay only temporarily in these countries and then return to their country of origin, and therefore their integration into host communities was not encouraged; but many of these migrant workers eventually decided to stay.

EU countries imposed severe restrictions on immigration

in the 1970 in response to the recession, and in subsequent decades, most of the migrants who came to these countries were family members of former migrant workers, including Muslims, who benefited from family reunification programs.

A growing number of Muslim refugees have come to the EU since the 1970, and as a result of these developments, Muslims have become increasingly prominent in the EU since the 1980, especially in capitals and other big cities of these countries. (*Enayat, 2006*)

2. The Ideology of “Political Islam”

Political Islam contains religious ideologies, each of which claims to have truth and certainty, and in many cases, denies and rejects each other.

These ideologies can be divided from Salafi tendencies such as Wahhabism, which is considered a conservative tendency, to liberation movements in some countries and movements formed against Western colonialism and influence and Zionism,

which common feature of all currents is the belief in the ability of Islam in answering the the issues political, social, cultural and economic problems of the world today.

The religion of Islam is innately a political religion; however, throughout history and due to the developments that took place in the Islamic world and its relationship with the outside world, the ground was prepared for different Islamic tendencies to re-emphasize and double the political dimensions of Islam and the political and mobilizing capacities of Islam to face enemies and Use it to stand up to tyrannical and deviant rulers, as well as to counter what they considered to be deviations. (*Ward, 2005*)

3. Eurocentrism or Racism

Man was part of a old pleasant system; His thoughts and behavior were trapped in a limited worldview, and the direction of his future life was more or less determined. Therefore, there was no need

to question his place in the world, and identity was not an issue. (*Ward, 2005*)

The idea of modernity deals with the belief that the constraints of tradition lead to progress towards human liberation; but promoting the present and the future and denying the past make people question the nature of their identity. Identities were valued linearly during this period, and in this valuation, urban, bourgeois, European, white, Christian, and the like were considered inferior.

In the same way, development took a linear direction, and according to this view, there is only one way to develop, which is to become Westernized and to go through the experience that the West has taken. (*Emami and Hosseini Faeq, 2011*)

4. The Effects of September 11 Attacks

September 11, 2001 marks a turning point in international developments and marks the beginning of a new era. At the

social level and in connection with the issue of Islamophobia, there has been an increase in pessimism and intensification of violence, discrimination and intolerance against Muslims.

Since then, some politicians have dared to speak out that they could not speak publicly, accusing Islam and Muslims of terrorism, calling for restrictions on Muslim immigration, and proposals to expel Muslims and prevent the spread of mosques, they raised the exclusion of veiled women from education and many issues like this; however, due to the severity of these attacks after 9/11, the rate of violence and verbal and physical attacks against Muslims and prejudice against Muslims and their rejection has been higher than in the period before 9/11. (*Ward, 2005*)

Islamism in the West

The Islamic world, described as a stagnant and closed world in the West, is undergoing fundamental changes. Islamic modernism has

always been closely linked to resistance to the Western military forces and their political and cultural superiority over the Islamic world.

The Islamist movement in Asia and Africa, which has become a gathering place for its followers, has infiltrated the stronghold of today's elites and taken root among students, engineers, doctors and lawyers. The general appeal of modern Islam is such that in all the free elections held in these countries, the representatives and supporters of Islamists win.

The fact that the current political system in most Islamic countries hardly resists change has nothing to do with their culture or religion; rather, it depends solely on regional and global policies and their conditions and calculations.

Since Islam arrived at Europe, it has been able to have a great impact on their civilization and culture; but the process of change in Europe and the removal of religion from the scene of social and

political life caused the current vacuum and provided the ground for the return of religion to the arena of European life.

In this situation, the religion of Islam, considering the perfection and guidance of human beings to complete all human aspects of growing, has been able to fill the spiritual and psychological gaps created in the seekers of religion and keep them from falling into the abyss of destruction, absurdity and anomalies of the industrial age.

However, the true manifestation of Islam has become an important factor for change and transformation among human beings and has been able to create the necessary coordination between material needs and spiritual values and respond to the spiritual and psychological gaps created in the human beings of the Western industrial age. (*Athartmar, 2012: 127*)

Islamism means placing Islam at the center of politics

and political action, and thus, Islamism is a political ideology that seeks to gain power to implement Islamic Sharia.

Islamists considered the solution of social problems to be the formation of an Islamic government and the implementation of Islamic rules and the rule of jurisprudence and sharia, which by this definition, Islamism should not be interpreted as a return to traditional Islam; because Islamists use new categories, theories, and practices such as ideology and revolution. (*Zare, 2004*)

The religion of Islam is often unrealistically perceived by Western public opinion only as a religion meaning a paradigm for a faithful life; while Islam is not the only apparatus of faith; rather, it is a comprehensive and absolute universalist doctrine expressed in the form of religion, based on its own legal system, a political ideology, and a plan for a state system, through

which Islam can exert its influential force as a set of cultural laws.

Liberate a norm for an authoritarian and hierarchical model of government, as well as a religious and cultural apparatus whose theme is a premodern system of government. (*Toprak, 2010*)

In the analysis and intellectual confrontation of the Western thinkers and personalities with Islam, the following two different views can be seen:

- Thinkers and personalities who speak with a positive attitude towards Islam and introduce it as the only perfect religion and savior for modern crisis-stricken human beings.
- People who introduce Islam as the greatest and most powerful enemy of the Western world. (*Enayat, 2006*)

Concerns about the increasing of Islam have so permeated the American media that conservative

media channels have told their statesmen: "Soon the American people will wake up by the call of prayer".

On the other hand, the emigration of Muslims to Western countries has had a great impact on the West awareness of Islam, and this has made Europeans and Americans more closely acquainted with the divine teachings of Islam, and this has accelerated the growing trend of Islam in the West.

What is important here is that the vision of the people of the West has been strengthened despite the anti-Islamic propaganda, and such propaganda no longer has the same negative effects as in the past; therefore, the West, after deep study and research on Islam for many years, has well understood that the religion of Islam, far from self-made human prejudices, invites all human beings to true purity and happiness, and ultimately the God of the universe. (*Alizadeh et al, 1397*)

Conclusion

The spread of the influence of Islam and the widespread inclination of the West towards its religious and spiritual messages alarmed the Western countries, and they used psychological operations to tarnish the image of Islam in public opinion.

After the collapse of communism, the West considered only the ideology of Islam as a serious problem, and by presenting the clash of rival civilizational identities, referred to the confrontation of religious and secular values as the arena of historical rivalry between Islam and Christianity and called it the Cold War.

Accordingly, many Western parties, thinkers, and politicians cite the spread of Islamism and the presence of Muslims in the West as unusual, and by proclamation of violent, unchangeable and fundamentalist try to change the facts of Islam in the public mind of the world in various titles and

ways, especially after the events of September 11, 2001.

To prevent this Islamist movement, the West has pursued a policy of creating Islamophobia by presenting distorted and violent images of Islam and Muslims; despite all these efforts, Islam today has the fastest growth among all religions in America, Europe, Africa and some other parts of the world, so at the present time, it is the second largest religion in terms of number of followers in Europe and America.

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