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## ISLAMOPHOBIA, XENOPHOBIA AND RACISM\*

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### Abstract

The term Islamophobia; It is an explanatory concept introduced to draw attention to Islam and anti-Muslim sentiments. In the academic literature, there is an increasing inclination towards the analysis of xenophobic behavior and rhetoric. This negative trend, which feeds Islamophobia and rises especially in the Western world, has historical, social, political and psychological causes and consequences. In this respect, this study includes literature research on Islamophobia or the fear of Islam. In order to understand Islamophobia and how it manifests, the concept of xenophobia is examined first. It is also included in the research that Islamophobia is a special type of xenophobia, but under certain conditions it has implications that go beyond this issue. There is a considerable literature on xenophobia and anti-Islam at the global level. It has been determined that the phenomenon of Islamophobia, which is observed in Western societies, has strong links between concepts such as xenophobia, racism and localism, which are also common in these countries.

**Key Words:** *Islamophobia, Xenophobia, Racism, Islam*

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# İSLAMOFOBİ, YABANCI DÜŞMANLIĞI VE İRKÇİLİK

## Özet

İslamofobi terimi; İslam ve Müslüman karşıtı duygulara dikkat çekmek için tedavüle sokulan açıklayıcı bir kavramdır. Akademik literatürde yabancı düşmanlığına yönelik davranış ve retoriklerin analizine dair gittikçe yükselen eğilim gözlenmektedir. İslamofobiyi besleyen ve özellikle Batı dünyasında yükselen bu negatif eğilimin tarihi, sosyal, siyasal ve psikolojik nedenleri ve sonuçları bulunmaktadır. Bu çalışma bu yönüyle İslamofobi ya da İslam'dan duyulan korkuya dair literatür araştırması içermektedir. İslamofobiyi ve nasıl tezahür ettiğini anlamak için öncelikle yabancı düşmanlığı kavramı incelenmiştir. İslamofobinin yabancı düşmanlığının (Xenofobia) nın özel bir türü olduğu ancak belli koşullarda bu hususu aşan içerimler taşıdığı da araştırmada yer almaktadır. Yabancı düşmanlığı ve İslam karşıtlığı üzerine global düzeyde hatırı sayılır bir literatürünü oluşturmuştur. Batı toplumlarında müşahede edilen islamofobi olgusunun yine buralarda yaygın olan yabancı düşmanlığı, ırkçılık ve yerelcilik gibi kavramlar arasında güçlü bağlar olduğu tespitine yer verilmiştir.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** *İslamofobi, Yabancı Düşmanlığı, İrkçılık, İslam*

## Basic Concepts: Definition and Methodology

In the 1990s, the term "Islamophobia" was coined to call attention to anti-Muslim sentiment, conduct, and rhetoric. There is a growing trend in the academic literature to look into topics like anti-Islam and anti-Muslim sentiment, including its history, causes, and effects. This research aimed to conduct a review of the literature in order to better understand the phenomena of Islamophobia. To comprehend Islamophobia and how it manifests itself, the notion of xenophobia should be examined first. A lot has been written on the connection between xenophobia, which is prevalent in Western society, and other concepts like racism, a hostility toward difference, and nativism, all of which have their roots in the same problem.

Xenophobia is the fear and hate of outsiders or immigrants, and it is akin to racism. Despite their similarities, xenophobia and racism are separate enough, and one can be both. This is the case all around the world as a general trend among nations. Racism is based on the assumption that racial differences lead to a single race's inherent superiority. Xenophobia is derived from the Greek concepts *xenos* (guest) and *phobos* (stranger) (fear). Although there are many differences between xenophobia and racism, the terms are frequently used interchangeably. As a psychological state, dread of the foreigner or stranger has a semantic overlap with nativism, which favors native residents over immigrants, at all ages. Having a xenophobic attitude toward outsiders has been a fact not only in the West but also in the rest of the world.

Numerous causes have contributed to the global growth in xenophobic sentiments against immigrants. In countries where migration is a problem, the emergence of anti-immigrant rhetoric in the media and politics will be a major social issue. Relationships with foreigners altered according to religious, social, political, and economic considerations. However, xenophobia is a specific sort of intolerance towards newcomers or outsiders by the native-born majority. Modern xenophobia demonizes the other as "muslim", "jew", "barbarian" or "underdeveloped".

By sharing rationale and feelings with the "land owners" or native population, all forms of communal prejudice, including racism, tend to exclude and oppress the other. Global immigration policies provide an opportunity to reexamine outsider stereotypes. Because EU and USA have been the center of migration, both pro and anti-immigrant policies are distilled here. The primary issue is that xenophobia has become an ethical and social value. Post-politics in the USA and the Brexit referendum in the UK have intensified violent acts globally. Consider Trump's presidential campaign and his rise to power in the USA, where both discourse and practice of xenophobia have increased. As in Trump's "immigrants aren't people" "Animals." Corte and Gomez (2018) These xenophobic statements are amplified by the cultural structure. In this sense, xenophobia is a distinct sort of violence and that "The "lying" policy has worked well in the Brexit campaign. Boris Johnson, the former foreign minister who went on to become prime minister, and other prominent politicians were involved in this process. Statistical information on the matter, it is argued, has significant distortions. and, the public was manipulated. This was mirrored in the media as well. Trump, the incoming president-elect, is the other notable figure. Because of his election campaign language and his "cynical" and "humiliating" demeanor toward his opponents,

Trump has served as a precursor to anti-truth politics.” (Yılmaz & Geylani, 2021:26) What this demonstrates is how politics works in the West, and how it affects both foreigners and native-born residents.

Xenophobia is a widely held social and political belief, yet it also has its antithesis. So, xenophilia subcategories such as Afrophilia (anti-Black racism), allophilia, allosemitism, and Islamophilia could be used to combat racism and heterophobia. This conception is not a social movement or an intellectual development in the West. Other groups of notions have a close meaning link to xenophobia. Those few sentences help explain xenophobia as a human predisposition. This includes ethnocentrism, populism, and nationalism. Nativism is the belief that native-born people are superior than foreign-born people. Hence birthplace becomes a criterion for citizenship in a modern state, and so nativism is the distinction between “the people” (we) and “the foreigners” (not-us) (Guia, 2016; Gellner, 1995; Higham, 1988, p. 1-3). In fact, nativism is directly linked to xenophobic debates on anti- or pro-immigrant policies.

Right and left wing ideologies in the West sought to form supermen and so super-nations by eliminating non-westerners and thus immigrants. The eugenicist movement in the EU and USA exemplifies this idea. By closing borders or building mega-walls, eugenics promotes the creation of a developed Western nation. Some libertarian political discourses also favor eugenics and social Darwinism (Yakushko & Blodgett, 2018). Ethnocentrism is blamed for anti-immigrant and thus anti-foreigner societal policies.

However, the most true and similar concept is racism. Race is a term used to describe how various nationalities see racial and ethnic minorities (Bobo, 1988; Silva, 2003). In *The Origins of Species: Or, The Preservation of Favoured Races in the Struggle for Life* (p.239), Charles Darwin claims that “grade of civilization... seems a most important element in the success of nations”. Galton (1869, 1904) and Pearson (1905, 1911) was using this argument to argue that foreign-born immigrants were “lower races” in British society. Thus, contemporary xenophobia is developed from Western Darwinist theoretical ideas and spread globally (Tucker, 1996; Fanon, 1959).

## Islamophobia as Xenophobia

Xenophobia as a form of prejudice is related to Islamophobia in the West for a long-standing phenomenon. Islamophobia is a sort of discrimination towards Islam as a religion and individuals perceived as Muslims whether believers or not. In this sense the Muslims met discrimination as threatening foreigners without considering their unique national identities (Taras, 2012).

There are and could be a variety of reasons why a human being develops a dread of the other. An propensity like this could be caused by historical and innate factors. The natural desire to safeguard our property from potential harm might lead to xenophobic views. It should be underlined, however, that modern racism appears to be interpreted as Western supremacy. The appropriation of the aforementioned question may be observed in Samuel Huntington's *Clash of Civilizations*, where he claims that the new cold war is based on cultural rather than material causes. The most outspoken argument claims that Islam has

an inherent proclivity for violence, posing a severe threat to Western civilization. Indeed, Halliday (1999) clearly pointed out that Islam was depicted as a menacing other. And Said's *Orientalism* (1978, p. 286–287) provides a good knowledge regarding the links between the West and Islam particularly. (Said, 1985) focuses particularly on the Middle East and claims that European dominance was manifested not just in political and economic terms, but also in cultural terms. It entailed the creation of a discourse known as Orientalism, whose structure emphasized the distinction between the native (the West) and the other (the Orient, Islam) (Said, 1985:19).

Islam has been depicted as a barrier to the universal Western ideal of globalization, which encompasses Western ideals, political and cultural networks. Islam is seen as a threat as a result of the fear and hatred aimed toward Muslims. As Halliday (1996) points out, there is a distinction between Islamophobia and anti-Muslimism. Anti-Muslimism is a political philosophy that could be construed as anti-religion rather than anti-Islam. Discrimination against Muslims, populations whose sole or primary religion is Islam, and whose real or imagined Islamic character is a prejudice, is ubiquitous. It appears to be claiming that anti-Muslimism is a new form of racism that discriminates not only on physical but also religious grounds. According to Halliday, the name "Islamophobia" is incorrect since it is too homogeneous, and the phrase implies that there is just one religion and that all Muslims are the same. Finally, Islamophobia refers to a fear of Islam as a religion, not Muslims. However, the xenophobic or racial perception of Islam, shown in the form of Islamophobia, cannot be applied or created to the entire Western civilization and culture. Otherwise, it may be a reactionary response that fails to account for the facts. In this way, Islamophobia is not just a problem in the Western world; xenophobic attitudes toward Islam and Muslims exist in Muslim-majority countries as well.

The term "Islamophobia" was first used in a publication by the non-governmental organization Runnymede Trust, which studies the relationships between different races in England. The publication, titled "Islamophobia: A Challenge for Us All," was the first time the term was used (Bleich, 2012, p.179). Islamophobia can be defined as "fear of Muslims or of the Islamic faith," despite the fact that there is no general agreement on what it means.

It should be understood as having negative attitudes or feelings toward Islam or Muslims, despite the fact that a general definition is impossible to provide. Despite popular belief, not every criticism of Islam and Muslims can be characterized as anti-Muslim or Islamophobic. In the case of Islamophobia, when negative evaluations are directed at all or most Muslims or various aspects of society, a broader set of negative attitudes or feelings towards individuals or groups of individuals is elicited, as is the case with related concepts such as homophobia or xenophobia. Similarly to terms such as racism, sexism, and antisemitism, Islamophobia is a fear of Muslims. Apart from that, Islamophobia can provide insights into many other negative emotions such as hatred, jealousy and suspicion. It can also cause anxiety and feelings of rejection. This can cause feelings of disgust or anger. It encompasses those who adhere to this religion as well as those who comply to a religion that is hostile to Islam or Muslims. As a result, it is clear that Islamophobia has multiple manifestations, and in the West, Islam and Muslims are frequently perceived as intrinsically intertwined entities.

Since Islamophobia is defined as a fear of Islam in Europe and America, as well as acts of hostility and aggression against Muslims are a result of this fear and hostility and aggression. It is possible to have Islamophobia for a variety of reasons, the most prominent of which are cultural and historical factors as well as political, economic, and theological ones.

In light of cultural and historical considerations, it may be possible to establish a connection with western civilization. We are witnessing, historically, that unique civilizations such as the western one exhibit a monotype structure that is closed to multiculturalism and cultural differences. One plausible explanation could be that western civilization has progressed to a higher level of development when compared to the rest of the world. As a result of this fact, westerners have come to regard other societies, including Muslims, as "lower, inferior, second-class" societies. In ancient Greece and Rome, for example, the first Europeans were terrified of these Asian enemies who lived near their borders, and they referred to them as barbarians. According to historical records, the "Eastern" has a negative attitude toward the "Western" in various historical periods. As previously stated, in relation to social Darwinism, the eugenic movement defined Asians and non-Western societies as despotic and barbarian people, while describing the "lover" peoples as the antithesis of their own identity. Indeed, anti-Semitism prevailed in the West, particularly in the practices of the Nazis, which laid the groundwork for the extermination of Jews. Antisemitism appeared to have given way to anti-Islamism, also known as Islamophobia, in recent years.

There are political factors at play in the development of Islamophobic policies and attitudes in the Western world. A report prepared by the Pew Forum estimates that approximately 17 million Muslims reside in Western Europe today. Because of immigration into the Union, this number rises by 1.7 million each year. In Europe and America, the Christian population is primarily composed of elderly people, and their population growth rate is lower than that of the Muslim population. In response to the rapid increase in the number of Muslims in the population brought about primarily by immigration, but also by rising birth rates and conversions from Christianity to Islam, the continent of Europeans and Christians became known as "Islamized." As a result, the fear among westerners that Muslims will gain majority status in their own countries and that they will lose their position of dominance as a result of becoming a minority provokes them to practice anxiety and fear. Islamophobia has manifested itself in this context in the EU and the United States as religious intolerance. Due to Muslim immigration to Europe and rising Muslim birth rates, many right-wing political parties in Europe are motivated to use the aforementioned "threat" to gain popular support in order to get political power in the short term.

These anxieties and fears are intentionally used to gain support for initiatives that will exacerbate Islamophobia. There has been an increase in unemployment rates among Christian populations that leads to racist and exclusionary attitudes toward minorities such as Muslims and Islamophobic incidents such as violence against Muslims. Muslim individuals who travel to Europe and America and work as unskilled laborers have begun to purchase second and third generation children of high quality, have begun to ascend to important state levels with education, have intensified their efforts to assert their rights, and have grown in economic strength. This is a difficult situation to be in from an economic, religious, and political standpoint. All of these real-world circumstances have been perceived as a potential threat, which has resulted in Islamophobic reactions.

## Concluding Remarks

Consequently, the perception of identity created by historical consciousness manifests itself as the self and the other (we and them). Throughout history, human communities living in various parts of the world and establishing a variety of civilizations have survived by developing their own set of moral principles. The interactions that arose as a result of this process, as well as the efforts to explore and seize different regions, pitted human societies against one another, resulting in great wars and, as a result, widespread destruction. The factors that enable human societies to relocate on the planet include not only conquest, but also motivations such as trade, curiosity, and understanding the differences between peoples and cultures.

The development and collapse of great civilizations that have emerged throughout history are also linked to the phenomenon of migration, which is defined as human movement across space. The efforts of large and powerful armies to take over the world are bound to result in conflicts between people who hold opposing views. In the same way, psychological tendencies such as the desire to protect what one has and the desire to obtain what one does not have are considered to be the primary motivations for conflict throughout history. The religious, linguistic, cultural, and racial differences that have always existed and will continue to exist are the force that drives these processes.

When it comes to modernization, the "West" has always been a center of attraction for people from all over the world. However, the great unrest in the "East" has become increasingly repulsive to the settled populations. Other eastern societies, particularly Muslims, are attracted to the West by the advancement of the Western world in areas like administration, politics, trade, and technological advancement, as well as the favorable living conditions it provides. Another important reason is the devastation caused by wars between powerful modern states in the West and the rest of the world in the Eastern hemisphere. However, demonizing the West is meaningless, and it reinforces the tendency to understand the deep problems in the Eastern world through externalization, which is similar to the xenophobia that has developed in the Western world.

In addition to the numerous reasons listed above, there are also internal factors that contribute to Islamophobia. The internal contradictions of Muslims, their attempts to see their own problems through the eyes of others, and the difficulties they have integrating into their new environments all contribute to the development of opposing attitudes. The negative attitudes of dominant Western countries such as the EU and the United States have been investigated, however, because this is an issue that requires further investigation.

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