

Islamophobia in the Context of Its Similarity to the First Crusades

Barış TÜZÜNER |  <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-8167-3204>

PhD Candidate | Corresponding Author | baris.tuzuner@erdogan.edu.tr

Recep Tayyip Erdoğan University |  <https://ror.org/0468j163>

Philosophy and Religious Studies | Rize, Türkiye

Erol SUNGUR |  <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-7311-3415>

Assoc. Dr. | Author | erol.sungur@erdogan.edu.tr

Recep Tayyip Erdoğan University |  <https://ror.org/0468j163>

Philosophy and Religious Studies | Rize, Türkiye

Abstract

The purpose of this article is to examine the phenomenon of Islamophobia, which expands from fear to hatred and then to violence, and to highlight its commonalities with the First Crusade. Thus, the aim is to analyze the phenomenon of Islamophobia from a broader perspective, along with its historical dimension. Western researchers have defined Islamophobia as a baseless fear to Muslims. However, today this concept has transformed into a complex phenomenon that expresses the marginalization Muslims face in European societies and the reasons for this marginalization, as well as possible solutions. After World War II, the Muslims who went to Europe as workers obtained citizenship in the countries they moved to. This led to them gaining more visibility in public spaces and wanting to benefit from social rights as much as an average European citizen. However, this situation has been met with an ethnocentric reaction from local citizens, who fear losing their privileges. Therefore Muslims, labeled as "others" who reject integration into social life, have been put back in the crosshairs in Europe through mass media. Moreover, the Islamophobic rhetoric used by far-right European politicians seeking to establish themselves in political life, along with terrorist attacks like September 11, has led to a rapid increase in violence against Muslims in Europe. It is understood that a negative propaganda campaign against Muslims was conducted during the First Crusade (1096-1099), which also contained similar elements of fear. In medieval European society, it is observed that religion, which played a decisive role in identity, was the source of conflict between Muslim and Western cultures. When we examine the echoes of Pope Urban II's call in the city of Clermont, France (1095), it is understood that there are very similar expressions to those used in contemporary Islamophobic elements. Clerics who fervently supported the Pope's call and political actors who considered their own interests incited the masses and initiated the First Crusade. At the end of the three-year campaign, the Crusaders, who took control of Jerusalem, executed almost all the Muslims living in the city and gathered the Jews in a synagogue, accusing them of spying for the Muslims, and burned them. As in the present day, it is a historical fact that while religious elements were the dominant factor in the emergence of the conflict between these two cultures, economic and political elements were also present. The fact that no academic study comparing Islamophobia and the First Crusade in terms of their commonalities has been conducted in our country constitutes the unique aspect of our article. While using qualitative research methods to answer the main question of the study, data sources were obtained through observation, document examination, literature review, and the examination of newspapers and brochures. These findings were analyzed using the descriptive analysis method. As a result of the research, similarities have been identified between the First Crusade and contemporary Islamophobia. It is understood that negative prejudices against Muslims and the Islamic religion existed in both periods. It is understood that while religious and cultural justifications were put forward by the ruling powers to create a negative perception of Muslims and the Islamic religion, political and economic reasons were manipulated.

Keywords

Sociology of Religion, Islamophobia, Xenophobia, Orientalism, First Crusade, Christianity, Europe.

Citation

Tüzüner, Barış - Sungur, Erol. "Islamophobia in the Context of Its Similarity to the First Crusades". *Rize Theology Journal* 29 (October 2025), 13-30.

<https://doi.org/10.32950/rid.1610135>

Publication Information

Type

Research Article

Peer-Review: Double anonymized - Two External

Process Information

Date of Submission: 30.12.2024

Date of Acceptance: 14.05.2025

Date of Publication: 20.10.2025

Ethical Statement

It is declared that scientific and ethical principles have been followed while carrying out and writing this study and that all the sources used have been properly cited. This article is based on the doctoral dissertation prepared by Barış Tüzüner, a doctoral student in the Department of Philosophy and Religious Sciences at the Graduate Education Institute of Recep Tayyip Erdoğan University, under the supervision of Assoc. Prof. Erol Sungur, who is an Associate Professor in the Department of Sociology of Religion at the Faculty of Theology of Recep Tayyip Erdoğan University.

Ethics Committee Approval

Ethics committee approval is not required for this study.

Plagiarism Checks

Yes - iThenticate

Complaints: ilahiyatdergi@erdogan.edu.tr

Auth. Contribution Rates

Corresponding author (BT) %50, author (ES) %50.

Conflicts of Interest

The author(s) has no conflict of interest to declare.

Grant Support

The author(s) acknowledge that they received no external funding in support of this research.

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I. Haçlı Seferiyle Benzerliği Bağlamında İslamofobi

Barış TÜZÜNER |  <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-8167-3204>

Doktora Öğrencisi | Sorumlu Yazar | baris.tuzuner@erdogan.edu.tr

Recep Tayyip Erdoğan Üniversitesi |  <https://ror.org/0468j163>

Felsefe ve Din Bilimleri | Rize, Türkiye

Erol SUNGUR |  <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-7311-3415>

Doç. Dr. | Yazar | erol.sungur@erdogan.edu.tr

Recep Tayyip Erdoğan Üniversitesi |  <https://ror.org/0468j163>

Felsefe ve Din Bilimleri | Rize, Türkiye

Öz

Bu makalenin amacı, korkudan-nefrete ardından şiddete doğru dönüşerek genişleyen İslamofobi olgusunu incelerken, I. Haçlı seferi ile taşıdığı ortak yönleri göstermektir. Böylelikle İslamofobi olgusunun tarihsel boyutuyla beraber daha geniş bir perspektiften analiz edilmesi hedeflenmektedir. Batılı araştırmacılar, İslamofobi'yi Müslümanlara karşı temelsiz bir korku olarak tanımlamışlardır. Ancak günümüzde bu kavram, Müslümanların Avrupa toplumlarında maruz kaldıkları ötekileştirmeyi ve bu ötekileştirmenin nedenleri ile muhtemel çözümlerini ifade eden komplike bir olguya dönüşmüştür. İkinci Dünya Savaşı'nın ardından Avrupa'ya işçi olarak giden Müslümanların, gittikleri ülkelerde vatandaşlık alması, kamusal alanlarda daha fazla görünürlik kazanmalarına ve ortalama bir Avrupa vatandaşı kadar sosyal haklardan faydalanmak istemelerine yol açmıştır. Fakat bu durum, yerel vatandaşlar tarafından kendi imtiyazlarını kaybedecekleri korkusuyla etnosantrik bir tepkiyle karşılanmıştır. Çünkü toplumsal hayata entegrasyonu reddeden "ötekiler" diye etiketlenen Müslümanlar, kitle iletişim araçları yoluyla Avrupa'da tekrar hedef tahtasına oturtulmuştur. Bununla birlikte, siyasi hayatta kendisine yer edinmek isteyen aşırı sağcı Avrupalı siyasetçilerin, kendi çıkarları doğrultusunda kullandıkları İslamofobik söylem ve 11 Eylül gibi terör saldırıları neticesinde Avrupa'da Müslümanlara karşı şiddet olayları tahmin edilemez bir hızla yükselmiştir. İçerisinde benzer korku unsurlarını barındıran I. Haçlı seferinde de (1096-1099) Müslümanlara karşı olumsuz bir propaganda faaliyetinin yürütüldüğü anlaşılmaktadır. Ortaçağ Avrupa toplumunda, kimlik açısından belirleyici bir rol oynayan dinin, Müslüman ve Batı kültürleri arasında çatışmanın kaynağı olduğu görülmektedir. Papa II. Urbanın Fransa'nın Clermont kentinde (1095) yaptığı çağırının yankılarını incelediğimizde, içerisinde günümüzde kullanılan İslamofobik unsurlarla çok benzer ifadelerin olduğu anlaşılmaktadır. Papalığın çağrısını ateşli bir şekilde savunan din adamları ile kendi çıkarlarını düşünen siyasi aktörler, kitleleri harekete geçirerek I. Haçlı seferini başlatmışlardır. Üç yıl süren seferin sonunda, Kudüs'te yönetimi ele alan Haçlılar, bu şehirde yaşayan neredeyse bütün Müslümanları kılıçtan geçirmiş ve Yahudileri de Müslümanlara casusluk yaptıkları iddiasıyla sinagogda toplayarak yakmışlardır. Günümüzde olduğu gibi bu iki kültür arasındaki çatışmanın ortaya çıkmasında dini unsurların başat etken olmasıyla birlikte ekonomik ve siyasi unsurların bulunduğu da tarihi bir gerçektir. Taşıdıkları ortak yönler açısından İslamofobi ve I. Haçlı seferini mukayese eden akademik bir çalışmanın ülkemizde yapılmamış olması makalemizin özgün yönünü oluşturmaktadır. Çalışmanın temel sorusuna cevap bulmak için nitel araştırma yöntemi kullanılırken veri kaynakları, gözlem, doküman incelemesi, literatür tarama, gazete ve broşürlerin incelenmesi yoluyla elde edilmiştir. Bu bulgular, betimleyici analiz yöntemi ile analiz edilmiştir. Araştırma sonucunda I. Haçlı seferi ve çağdaş İslamofobi olgusu arasında benzerlikler olduğu tespit edilmiştir. Müslümanlara ve İslam dinine karşı olumsuz önyargıların her iki dönemde de var olduğu anlaşılmaktadır. İktidar kesimlerinde dini ve kültürel gerekçeler öne sürülerek Müslümanlara ve İslam dinine karşı olumsuz bir algı oluşturulurken siyasi ve ekonomik nedenlerin manipüle edildiği anlaşılmaktadır.

Anahtar Kelimeler

Din Sosyolojisi, İslamofobi, Yabancı Düşmanlığı, Oryantalizm, I. Haçlı Seferi, Hristiyanlık, Avrupa.

Atıf

Tüzüner, Barış - Sungur, Erol. "I. Haçlı Seferiyle Benzerliği Bağlamında İslamofobi". *Rize İlahiyat Dergisi* 29 (Ekim 2025), 13-30.

<https://doi.org/10.32950/rid.1610135>

Yayın Bilgileri

Türü

Araştırma Makalesi

Değerlendirme: İki Dış Hakem / Çift Taraflı Körleme

Süreç Bilgileri

Geliş Tarihi: 30.12.2024

Kabul Tarihi: 14.05.2025

Yayın Tarihi: 20.10.2025

Etik Beyan

Bu çalışmanın hazırlanma sürecinde bilimsel ve etik ilkelere uyulduğu ve yararlanılan tüm çalışmaların kaynakçada belirtildiği beyan olunur. Bu makale; Recep Tayyip Erdoğan Üniversitesi İlahiyat Fakültesi Felsefe ve Din Bilimleri Anabilim Dalı Din Sosyolojisi Dalında Görevli Doç. Dr. Erol Sungur danışmanlığında Recep Tayyip Erdoğan Üniversitesi Lisansüstü Eğitim Enstitüsü Felsefe ve Din Bilimleri Anabilim Dalı Din Sosyolojisi Dalında Doktora Öğrencisi Barış Tüzüner tarafından hazırlanan doktora tezinden hareketle üretilmiştir.

Etik Kurul İzni

Bu çalışma etik kurul izni gerektirmemektedir.

Etik Bildirim: ilahiyatdergi@erdogan.edu.tr

Benzerlik Taraması

Yapıldı - iThenticate

Yazar Katkı Düzeyleri

Sorumlu yazar (BT) %50, yazar (ES) %50.

Çıkar Çatışması

Çıkar çatışması beyan edilmemiştir.

Finansman

Bu araştırmayı desteklemek için dış fon kullanılmamıştır.

Telif Hakkı & Lisans

Yazarlar dergide yayınlanan çalışmalarının telif hakkına sahiptirler ve çalışmalarını CC BY-NC 4.0 lisansı altında yayımlanmaktadır.

Introduction

The relations between Muslims and Westerners are traced back to the early period of the emergence of Islam. However, the context and implications of these relations are generally viewed negatively by both Muslims and Westerners. It is understood from the studies that the underlying fundamental elements of this situation are not solely composed of religious reasons, but also stem from political and ideological sources.¹ According to the Westerners, the question of what Islam is and what kind of people Muslims are presents a highly variable picture. For example, in the early periods of Islam, there are descriptions of this new faith as a heretical movement that emerged from Christianity. In later periods, however, Islam was interpreted as a new but fabricated religion.²

In these stages, due to the lack of direct and face-to-face contact between Muslims and Western Christians, the accounts about Muslims and the Islamic religion were conveyed through second and third sides. Based on the accounts of travelers and merchants, most of whom were clergymen, the perception of Islam and Muslims was depicted negatively during these periods. The Muslims' conquest of the Iberian Peninsula in Spain, starting from the island of Sicily in the 9th century, marked the beginning of a new era between the Westerners and the Muslims. Direct contacts led to a positive change in the previously negative attitudes of both cultures.³

However, the negative attitude has been maintained among religious and state figures for two main reasons. *Firstly*, the papacy, which held a strong position in European politics, attempted to consolidate its authority by managing the process negatively. *Secondly*, there were events occurring around the conquests of Sicily and the experiences in Andalusia. The entry of Muslims into Europe with their organized and disciplined armies had a shocking effect on Europe, which was in a disorganized state at that time. The Muslims' advanced scientific activities, according to the conditions of that era, were positively received by the public. Therefore, this situation led to admiration for the Muslims. As well Arabic was accepted as the language of science in Andalusia for a long period. However, the regular and disciplined armies and scientific activities of the Muslims led to a feeling of inferiority towards the Muslims at their borders among religious and political leaders in Europe. For these reasons, the negative attitudes towards Muslims that have persisted since the past have been continued among the leaders.⁴

So much so that this feeling of inferiority has led Christian clergy, who appeal to large audiences, to refute the Islamic religion. It has also driven their political leaders to wage war against Muslims. From the perspective of Christian clergy, the experience in Andalusia and similar conquest movements in Europe have often been interpreted as signs of the apocalypse. In this context, many Muslim commanders were claimed to be the Antichrist in Christian belief. Additionally, the belief that Muslims are "barbarians and lustful" individuals has created a negative impression among the masses.⁵ These perspectives have significantly influenced the Western mindset while seeking answers to the questions of what Islam is and who Muslims are.

The Crusades, which were initiated to break this new Muslim power that emerged in Western Europe and to eliminate the devastation caused by Muslim incursions into the West, laid the groundwork for a religious war environment between the Muslim world and Christian West.⁶ Additionally, many significant historical events such as the conquest of Istanbul and the presence of the Ottomans on the European stage have formed the basis for the historical dimension of Islamophobia.⁷ It is not possible to examine all aspects of the phenomenon of Islamophobia, which has a quite extensive historical dimension, in a single study, both in terms of time and volume. Therefore, it has been limited to revealing the similarities between the phenomenon of Islamophobia, which we identified as lacking in the literature, and the First Crusade.

In the first part of our article, from the perspective of Sociology of Religion, we aimed to examine the period when Christianity was quite influential as an identity in the Medieval Western culture and to analyze the religious elements constituting the First Crusade in the context of its impact on Islamophobia.⁸

¹ Caner Övşan Çakaş, *Avrupa'da İslam'ın Ötekileştirilmesi ve Yükselen İslamofobi'nin Analizi* (İzmir: Dokuz Eylül Üniversitesi, Doktora, 2018); Merve Ar, *İslamofobinin dini ve kültürel kökenleri* (Samsun: Ondokuz Mayıs Üniversitesi, Doktora, 2019).

² İsmail Taşpınar, "Doğu'nun Son Kilise Babası Yuhanna Ed-Dımaşkı (649-749) ve İslâm", *Marmara Üniversitesi İlahiyat Fakültesi Dergisi* 21 (Ocak 2014).

³ Maria Rose Menocal, *The Ornament of the World: How Muslims, Jews and Christians Created a Culture of Tolerance in Medieval Spain* (New York: Back Bay Books Publications, 2003), 15-20.

⁴ Steven Runciman, *Haçlı Seferleri Tarihi*, çev. Fikret Kızıltan (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu, 2008), 1/69.

⁵ Müşerref Yardım, *İslamofobi'nin 5N 1K'sı* (Ankara: Akademisyen Yayınevi, 2024), 28.

⁶ Aziz Suryal Atiya, *Ortaçağ Sonlarında Haçlı Seferi Propaganda ve Projeler* (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu, 2023), 19.

⁷ Sabine Schiffer-Constantin Wagner, "Anti-Semitism and Islamophobia- New Enemies, Old Patterns", *Race&Class* 52/3 (2011), 77-84.

⁸ Giray Kırpık, *Doğunun ve Batının Gözünden Haçlılar* (İstanbul: selenge Yayınları, 2009), 39.

Because the First Crusade, while appearing to unite the unstable structure of the Western world against a common enemy, accomplished this within the framework of religious motivation. Because, to legitimize the First Crusade, the cross, which is the symbol of Christianity, was brought face to face with the crescent, which is the symbol of Islam. Additionally, among the historical events that influenced the conceptualization of Islamophobia, the First Crusade holds a significant place in its political dimension. Because the way the First Crusade was organized is evidence that the papacy considered its authority superior to political authority. Therefore, the papacy used legitimate state apparatuses in accordance with its own desires and plans.⁹ Encouraged by the Papacy, Christians, during the period of Al-Andalus, acted against Muslims with the idea of eliminating their presence in the Iberian Peninsula (reconquista). Thus, Christians began to move beyond their defensive lines to reclaim existing European territories and planned to take Jerusalem from the Muslims through the Crusades.¹⁰ This expedition, in terms of its development and outcomes, left a profound impact on both cultures, both politically and religiously. Today, we can clearly see how the historical material that feeds conceptual Islamophobia was produced and used in this expedition. There is a vast body of literature written about the First Crusade, which had a profound impact on the history of these two ancient cultures.¹¹ Because it had very profound political, economic, cultural, and religious impacts from both Muslim and Western perspectives, historians who participated in the crusade as well as scholars who researched it later produced a vast amount of historical material.¹²

In the second part of our study, the phenomenon of Islamophobia¹³ is emphasized, focusing on its transformation from fear to violence in the contemporary world. To understand this transformation, it has been explained how Muslims, who were considered enemies for religious reasons before the First Crusade, have turned into cultural enemies in the contemporary world. Therefore, the impact of colonialism and Orientalist understanding on Islamophobia has been emphasized from the perspective of European history. The invitation of Muslims to the West through 'guest worker migration' by Western leaders after World War II marked the beginning of a new era of direct contact between these two cultures. Initially, Muslims who came to these societies as migrant workers encountered tolerance, but as a result of the processes and events that unfolded, they gave up on returning to their own countries.¹⁴ This event played a major role in the change of tolerance shown towards Muslims. Because local citizens, who believed that their own privileges and economic rights would be diminished, began to other Muslims with an ethnocentric attitude. While this change in attitude was being implemented, negative historical material from the past in Western culture against Muslims and the Islamic religion was reintroduced and used. Especially the Islamophobic attitudes propagated by the media have been manipulated in a direction against Muslims and the Islamic religion. Again, far-right leaders who consider their political interests have supported this situation. Among them, the Dutch leader Geert Wilders has described Islam as a despicable religion. In France, National Rally Party leader Le Pen has declared Muslims as unwanted others in France. From Austria, the "Green Party" and the "Christian Democratic Party," with the coalition they formed, established the "Ministry of Integration" as their first action and took steps against Muslims. In Germany, the "Alternative for Germany Party" received more votes than Merkel's party in some regions in 2019 with its anti-Islam rhetoric.¹⁵ As can be understood from the examples, a significant portion of Western politicians have tried to gain power in the political arena by othering Muslims. Additionally, efforts to establish a connection between terrorist acts and Islam have fueled the perception of Muslims as terrorists. As a result, according to reports obtained from research conducted on Muslims, they have faced concerning othering and incidents of violence. In this context of change, we see that the concept of Islamophobia has been preferred to express negative feelings, thoughts, and behaviors, expanding from fear to violence.¹⁶

1.1. The Impact of the First Crusades on Islamophobia

Islamophobia gained popularity and drew the attention of the Western world after the September 11 terrorist attacks, but the roots of the concept date back to much earlier times. According to many researchers¹⁷ working on the aforementioned topic,

⁹ Mosca Gaetano, *Siyasi Doktrinler Tarihi Eski Çağdan Zamanımıza Kadar*, çev. Semih Tiryakioğlu (İstanbul: Bilge Kültür Sanat Yayınları, 2019), 66-67; İbrahim Kalın, *Ben Öteki ve Ötesi İslam Batı İlişkileri Tarihine Giriş* (İstanbul: İnsan Yayınları, 2016), 88.

¹⁰ Kalın, *Ben Öteki ve Ötesi İslam Batı İlişkileri Tarihine Giriş*, 89-90; Kırpık, *Doğunun ve Batının Gözünden Haçlılar*, 50.

¹¹ Özgür Türker- Serkan Ükten, "Haçlılar, Moğollar ve Ortadoğu'da Haçlı – Moğol Münasebetleri" 1/54 (2014), 319-344.

¹² Giray Kırpık, "Haçlı Seferleri Tarihinin Kaynakları", *Journal of Turkish Studies* IV/3 (2009), 1437-1452.

¹³ Schiffer- Wagner, "Anti-Semitism and Islamophobia- New Enemies, Old Patterns".

¹⁴ Bichara Khader, "Muslims in Europe or European Muslims? The Construction of a Problem", *Rivista Di Studi Politici Internazionali* 83/2 (2016), 169-187.

¹⁵ Bekir Emiroğlu, "Avrupa'da Yükselen İslamofobi: Güncel Zorluklar ve Dinamikler", *Sosyal, Kültür ve Kimlik Boyutlarıyla Avrupa Birliği*, ed. Murat Necip Arman- Cengiz Çağdaş (Ankara, 2021).

¹⁶ Kadir Canatan- Özcan Hıdır (ed.), *Batı Dünyasında İslamofobi ve Anti-İslamizm* (Ankara: Eski Yeni Yayınları, 2007), 42.

¹⁷ Ahmet Aslan, "İslamofobi Çalışmalarında Kuramsal Yaklaşımlar: Türkçe Makaleler Üzerine Bir Değerlendirme", *Süleyman Demirel Üniversitesi Fen Edebiyat Fakültesi Sosyal Bilimler Dergisi* 54 (2021), 1-26.

Islamophobia expresses a sociological condition¹⁸ that emerged in the second half of the 20th century, while its historical dimension has influenced its formation.¹⁹ According to Huntington, the relationship between Islamic and Western cultures has a "bipolar" structure, which leads to a natural conflict between these two cultures that has persisted over time.²⁰ Because one of the most important elements sustaining Western culture is seen as this contradiction. Therefore Westerners have been building their culture on this contrast since Ancient Greece. For example, according to Roberts, "This was not just an abstract idea but a psychological and cultural reality." Non-Greeks, that is, those who did not speak Greek as their native language, were collectively considered barbarophoni, 'barbarians'.²¹ Therefore, this contradiction has permeated the cultural codes of the West.²² This perspective naturally requires the existence of two opposing sides for a conflict. According to Ritzer, in order to ensure social continuity, the dominant group manipulates the group it has declared as the enemy.²³ The Western culture, which has built its historical accumulation through this perspective, has defined itself within a narrative of an enemy throughout history. For example, in the contemporary world, Westerners who viewed communism as an enemy found themselves needing to identify a new enemy when they emerged victorious from this struggle with the end of the Cold War in the late 1990s. This new enemy, as Huntington puts it, are the Muslims, who are almost impossible to reform.²⁴ Therefore, when studying the emotions, thoughts, attitudes, and behaviors towards Muslims, it would be appropriate to evaluate the subject within the framework of conflict theory. We also used conflict theory to explain the historical aspect of the mentioned phenomenon without resorting to historical reductionism. Because, just as in the present day, it is understood that in the medieval Western culture, Muslims were also marginalized through a confrontational approach.

1.2. The Impact of Christianity on European Identity

For Muslims today, regardless of their ethnic identity, one of the dominant elements used to define them is Islam. Because, according to many Western researchers, Islam designs its adherents more strictly compared to Christians.²⁵ Although Christianity is considered a main element in the formation of contemporary Western civilization, it is stated that Christianity is not the dominant element in today's world. Because, according to Westerners, Western civilization, which is based on Ancient Greek civilization, sprouted from there under the influence of Roman civilization. According to many Western historians, Christianity is far from being an active element during these stages (especially in the period leading up to the Migration Period). Because Christianity was not even recognized as an official religion by the Roman Empire until the first quarter of the fourth century. On the contrary, in Rome, which had a pagan belief culture, religion was seen merely as a factor placed in the shadow of the empire. Christianity, which played an active role in the construction of identity in medieval Europe, only became an important element of identity for Westerners as a result of the alliance made by the Carolingian Dynasty and the papacy in the 8th century.²⁶ During the period from this era to the First Crusade, Christianity is seen as an important element of identity. Just before the First Crusade, the political instability and economic collapse in Europe created a need for Westerners to establish themselves with a new identity. In such a period, Christianity reflects the concept of being Western as the most important identity element in medieval Europe. Because during this period, the pope does not content himself merely as the leader of the Western Church, but rather defines himself as an authority above political power.²⁷ However, the Enlightenment period of the 18th century, which emerged under the influence of the Renaissance and Reformation movements, fundamentally changed the perception of religion in Europe and led to a societal break from religion. With the Industrial Revolution, the perspective on religion was almost completely turned upside down.²⁸ As Weber put it, "The Disenchantment of Magic."²⁹ Therefore, the understanding of nationalism has replaced religion among the elements that define Western culture. This understanding

¹⁸ Canatan- Hıdır, *Batı Dünyasında İslamofobi ve Anti-İslamizm*, 42.

¹⁹ Canatan- Hıdır, *Batı Dünyasında İslamofobi ve Anti-İslamizm*, 83.

²⁰ Samuel Huntington, "Medeniyetler (Çatışması) Değilse Nedir? Soğuk Savaş Sonrası Dünyasının Paradigmaları", *Medeniyetler Çatışması ve Samuel P. Huntington*, ed. Murat Yılmaz (İstanbul: Vadi Yayıncılık, 2020), 42-45.

²¹ John Morris Roberts, *Avrupa Tarihi*, çev. Fethi Aytuna (İstanbul: İnkılap Yayıncılık, 2015), 49.

²² Anthony Giddens, *Sosyoloji*, ed. Hüseyin Özel (İstanbul: Kırmızı Yayınları, 2012), 1055.

²³ George Ritzer- Jeffery Stepnisky, *Modern Sosyoloji Kuramları*, çev. Himmet Hülür (Ankara: De Ki Yayınları, 2017), 97-98.

²⁴ Huntington, "Medeniyetler (Çatışması) Değilse Nedir? Soğuk Savaş Sonrası Dünyasının Paradigmaları", 42-45.

²⁵ Huntington, "Medeniyetler (Çatışması) Değilse Nedir? Soğuk Savaş Sonrası Dünyasının Paradigmaları", 42-45.

²⁶ Kırpık, *Doğunun ve Batının Gözünden Haçlılar*, 50.

²⁷ Gaetano, *Siyasi Doktrinler Tarihi Eski Çağdan Zamanımıza Kadar*, 65-66.

²⁸ George Ritzer, *Büyük Bozulmuş Dünyayı Büyülemek Tüketim Katedrallerindeki Süreklilik ve Değişim*, çev. Funda Payzın (İstanbul: Ayrıntı Yayınları, 2019), 104-111.

²⁹ Michael D. Bailey, "The Disenchantment of Magic: Spells, Charms, and Superstition in Early European Witchcraft Literature", *The American Historical Review* 111/2 (2006), 383-404.

organizes political structures by centering its own race and tends to otherize or assimilate ethnic groups outside its own race. Therefore, contemporary European societies formed within the framework of nationalist movements tend to see Muslims as the other race. Therefore, many studies have been conducted suggesting that Islamophobia carries the same meanings as Xenophobia (the fear of foreigners).³⁰ In fact, these two concepts are often used interchangeably. The European Monitoring Centre on Racism and Xenophobia (EUMC) publishes regular reports on Islamophobia, demonstrating the similarity between these two concepts.³¹ Therefore, when defining contemporary Western culture, one of the most important identity elements, nationalism, emerges as an understanding that adheres to legal principles and adopts standardization as a principle. All of this shows us that in today's world, Christianity is not seen as a sufficient concept on its own to reflect the Western concept, but it is considered an important element influencing the formation of the Western concept.

1.3. Europe Before the Crusades

Understanding the emergence of the Crusades opens the door to comprehending how societal structures shaped in European and Eastern societies, the transformation of religious institutions, the construction of cultural identities, and the redefinition of power relations came into being. Because Catholic Christianity functioned not only as a belief system during this period but also as a unifying social structure and a producer of collective identity.³² In medieval Europe, the concept of "the West" was not merely a geographical definition, but a cultural imagination and an identity constructed in opposition to the "other." Although the political unity was disrupted with the fall of the Western Roman Empire, a religious and cultural unity was rebuilt under the influence of the Catholic Church. The Christianization of the Germanic, Scandinavian, and Celtic peoples laid the groundwork for these multi-layered societies to shape a common "European" identity.³³ In this context, religion is not only a belief but also a means of establishing a political union. This transformation in Europe has also led to the reproduction of the sociopolitical structure with a hierarchy nourished by religion. Kings, dukes, and emperors leaned on the authority of the papacy in their quest for religious legitimacy, while the papacy tried to keep secular power in check. The excommunication and power struggle between Henry IV and Pope Gregory VII illustrate the power balance of this dual structure and the capacity of religion to shape politics. From a sociological perspective, this can be interpreted as a struggle for hegemony between religious authority and secular power.³⁴

In the East, however, the disintegration of the Byzantine Empire was not only a political instability but also a process where social trust was shaken and central authority was redefined. Internal strife, inter-dynastic marriages, and factionalism within the army reflect class conflicts and the tensions arising between power blocs. The rise to power of Alexios Komnenos is not only a change of ruler but also an indication that political power was built through social alliances.³⁵

The emergence of the Crusader idea during this period can be interpreted not only as a thought of religious salvation but also as an expression of social tensions in the West. The landowning aristocracy, increasing population, and economic contraction have created an internal squeeze in Western societies.³⁶ The way to overcome this entrapment has been an outward orientation combined with both material and spiritual "conquest" ideals. Pope Urban II's call for the Crusade is a sociological turning point in this context, as it involved the mobilization of religious symbols to guide large masses. Additionally, the Byzantine Emperor's request for help from the Catholic world has shown that the long-standing cultural and religious division between East and West was being reshaped on the basis of mutual dependence. The political weakness of the East allowed the West to consolidate its institutional-religious power, thus the Papacy established hegemonic influence over a political structure outside its own for the first time.³⁷ The beginning of the Crusades was not just a military and religious movement, but also a multidimensional transformation process in which identities, authorities, and social structures were reestablished.

1.4. The Strengthening of the Western Church and Its Active Role in Politics

We can say that the deep conflicts between the Eastern and Western churches are not solely based on religious foundations, but

³⁰ M. Ali Kirman, "İslamofobinin Kökenleri: Batılı Mı Doğulu Mu?", *İslami Araştırmalar* 21/1 (2010), 21-39.

³¹ Christopher Allen, *Islamophobia* (England: Ashgate Publishing Limited, 2010), 10.

³² Kırpık, *Doğunun ve Batının Gözünden Haçlılar*, 50.

³³ Roberts, *Avrupa Tarihi*, 157.

³⁴ Max Weber, *Ekonomi ve Toplum*, ed. Bilal Yakup, çev. Latif Boyacı (İstanbul: Runik Kitap, 2023), 346; Wise Bauer, *Ortaçağ Dünyası Roma İmparatoru Büyük Constantinus'un Hristiyanlığı Kabul Etmesinden I. Haçlı Seferi'ne*, çev. Mehmet Morali (İstanbul: Alfa Basım Yayım, 2013), 705-706.

³⁵ Bauer, *Ortaçağ Dünyası Roma İmparatoru Büyük Constantinus'un Hristiyanlığı Kabul Etmesinden I. Haçlı Seferi'ne*, 704.

³⁶ Jacques Le Goff, *Ortaçağ Batı Uygarlığı*, çev. Hanife Güven- Uğur Güven (Ankara: Doğu Batı Yayınları, 2015), 68-69.

³⁷ Bauer, *Ortaçağ Dünyası Roma İmparatoru Büyük Constantinus'un Hristiyanlığı Kabul Etmesinden I. Haçlı Seferi'ne*, 708; Kırpık, *Doğunun ve Batının Gözünden Haçlılar*, 53-54.

rather on political ones. In the mid-11th century, Pope Leo II, who was at the head of the increasingly institutionalized and politically strengthened church in Rome, formed a delegation and appointed Cardinal Humbert as its leader, sending them to Istanbul. The purpose of this visit was to end the ongoing religious and political disputes between the church in Istanbul and the church in Rome, and to establish peace for Christian unity. However, Humbert's condescending attitude towards the Patriarch of Constantinople, Michael Cerularius, and the content of the letter he presented deepened the conflict instead of enhancing this unity. After this incident, the Patriarch of Istanbul, Michel, did not accept the delegation from Rome, so the Roman delegation went to the Sunday service at Hagia Sophia and left the document excommunicating the Patriarch of Istanbul at the church's door. Following this event, the Patriarch of Istanbul convened a council and excommunicated those who had excommunicated him. In the official sense, this historical event is recognized as the Schism of 1054.³⁸

Although the date of the churches' separation is marked as 1054, the historical process underlying this should not be overlooked. Although many reasons are cited in a historical context, *four* fundamental events laid the groundwork for the separation of the two churches. The *first* of these is the system of Five Patriarchates (Pentarchy), which caused a multi-headed structure and constant problems. According to this understanding, which became systematized in the 6th century, while the Roman Patriarchate represented all Western regions, the Istanbul Patriarchate represented some regions of Thrace and Anatolia, the Alexandria Patriarchate represented the regions of Egypt and Libya, the Antioch Patriarchate represented some Eastern regions, and finally, the Jerusalem Patriarchate represented Jerusalem and its surroundings. However, since the Roman Church represents the first systematically established church of Christianity, it has been deemed the highest among other important churches. Therefore, although Christianity was governed as the Five Patriarchates (Pentarchi) for a long time, the most important position was attributed to Rome. Ultimately, this understanding led to a significant problem where the Western Church, influenced by Latin culture and later institutionalized, saw itself as superior to other churches and attempted to gather them under its own roof. The *second* reason is the modification of the Five Patriarchates (Pentarchy) by the Western historians' term "Caesaropapism" to equate the church in Istanbul with the holiness of Rome mentioned above. The emperor Constantine, who moved the Roman administrative center to the east in AD 326, built a large church in Istanbul, bringing the new center of the state there. In the later period, the Eastern Roman emperors continued to intervene in religious affairs, as was the old tradition. Because in the ancient Roman tradition, the institution of religion holds a place represented by the empire and situated under its roof. Therefore, the emperor's intervention in religious matters is a customary practice. We see these interventions most clearly in the Christian councils convened under the command of the Byzantine emperor. Therefore, this situation is considered an intervention of political authority in the religious sphere. Thus, the bishopric located in Istanbul has been considered equivalent to, and at times even superior to, the one in Rome. The *third* reason is the disagreements arising from language differences. The spread of Christianity over a very wide geography has been influential in the emergence of this situation. During the phase of Christianity's transition to the West, the language used was Greek, and this language remained the liturgical language accepted in Eastern Rome. However, the language of the Western Church gradually evolved into Latin. This separation evolved into a situation where the popes of the Western Church, who came to power in the 5th and 6th centuries, did not know Greek at all. Therefore, serious issues arising from the language barrier were inherited between these two churches that could not understand each other. The *fourth* reason is the *Filioque**, which refers to the difference in understanding of the Trinity. The Eastern Church has not gone beyond this understanding by stating that the Holy Spirit proceeds from the Father to Jesus. However, the Western Church, as a precaution against the Arianism movement, accepted that the Holy Spirit proceeds from both the Father and the Son, taking the doctrine of the Trinity to a different level.³⁹ For these fundamental reasons we have listed, the Eastern and Western Churches experienced a schism both religiously and politically before the First Crusade.

In 1073, Hildebrand, elected pope with the title Gregory VII, saw the Western Church as the sole representative of Christianity. According to him, the scattered Christian world could only become a strong entity if it united under a single roof. In this context, he did not see the need to write a letter to the patriarch in the East, that is, the bishop in Constantinople, which is still officially considered the center of Christianity, after the papal election that continued until his time. Because he believed that his own position was unquestionably superior to that of the East.⁴⁰ Even within this understanding, Gregory VII, who saw himself as the protector of Christianity, sent the Patriarch of Venice, Dominicus, to Constantinople to meet with the emperor in order to eliminate the difficulties on pilgrimage routes and make them safe. The Pope's intention was actually to gather the Christians in the East under his authority and to establish a Christian union where Rome would be recognized as the highest authority.

³⁸ Ahmet Hikmet Eroğlu, "Doğu Batı Kiliselerinin Ayrılış Nedenleri", *Dini Araştırmalar* 2/5 (1999), 387-413; Runciman, *Haçlı Seferleri Tarihi*, 1/77.

* This concept has been used to explain the form of faith systematized as the Trinity in Christian belief.

³⁹ Eroğlu, "Doğu Batı Kiliselerinin Ayrılış Nedenleri".

⁴⁰ Runciman, *Haçlı Seferleri Tarihi*, 1/77.

Because the reconquista movement in Spain, which inspired the Crusader thought, could similarly be applied in the region where Byzantium reigned. In the Aragon region of northeastern Spain, King Ramiro I was killed by a Muslim in Grado while leading a large army against the Muslims with the approval of the Pope, causing a shockwave across Europe. Taking advantage of this event, Pope II. Alexander of that time issued a document declaring that all sins of those fighting in Spain for the cross would be forgiven. Subsequently, Gregory VII, who ascended to the throne, also made moves towards political consolidation under a single umbrella for all Christians, in line with the same understanding. In this context, he first made an agreement with the Normans, who were constantly in conflict with him. However, as we have explained, the wrong choice of Gregory VII. in European politics led him to flee to the Iberian Peninsula. The pope who succeeded him, Wilbert, also failed to produce an effective policy during his brief papacy. The idea of Christian unity continued to strengthen during the papacy of Odo de Lagery, who was elected pope by the cardinal council in 1088 under the title of Urban II, the patron of the Crusades. Because Urban II had the idea of a papacy that would unite the Christian world under one roof, following the appointment of Gregory VII, who had appointed him to the bishopric of Ostia⁴¹ Therefore, it was necessary to create a holy war environment to mobilize the Christians first.

1.5. Convincing Christians to Go to War

It does not seem very likely that politically fragmented Europe will go to war with Muslims as a united front. Because, due to their internal dynamics, political leaders who are constantly in conflict need to first convince the people of a holy war in order to act together. Aware of this situation, the papacy tried to convince the Christian people to go to war with the promise of heaven, while the barbarian tribes, who were not yet Christians, tried to convince them with worldly riches from the East. However, it has been quite difficult to convince the Christian people to go to war. Because Christianity does not have an understanding that encourages war.⁴² In fact, for the early church fathers, war equated to genocide. This situation was a general acceptance when Christians still lived in rural areas.⁴³ For example, Saint Basilios, one of the early Eastern Church Fathers, vehemently opposed the idea of war.⁴⁴ According to him, even if a soldier is forced to kill someone in war to obey an order, he is ultimately a murderer and guilty because he has killed someone. As penance for this crime, he must forgo dinner for three years. Such severe punishments demonstrate Christianity's strict stance on war. Therefore, in order for the First Crusade to be established, Western Christians needed to completely change their rigid belief about war. In fact, the views of Eastern Christian clergy on war were partially altered by early Western Christian clergy. For example, Saint Augustine only expressed the view that war (just war) would be waged by the command of God. However, they demonstrated their understanding of the encouragement of war within an institutional framework through the changes in the decisions they made in parallel with the institutionalization of Christianity. In this context, the papacy viewed the decisions of the Eastern Church as binding because it initially recognized it as a high authority due to its location in the capital of the empire. However, as the Byzantine Empire began to lose power, the Eastern Church's strength also started to wane, leading to a change in this understanding. Thus, while Western Christianity was experiencing a period of political rise, it strengthened its power by adopting a reformist approach to issues such as war. According to Runciman, this change in attitude of the Western Church towards war led to the emergence of the idea of holy war among Christians. In other words, the idea of waging war for the interests of the Western Church was not only met with tolerance but also transformed into a desired aspiration.⁴⁵

1.6. The Holy Call

The idea of mobilizing the Crusader armies emerged during the council held in the city of Clermont, France, from November 18 to 28, 1095.⁴⁶ To share the discussions and decisions made at this council with the public, Pope Urban II invited the people to the open area in front of the cathedral on November 27. According to Runciman, the content of the speech is not clear.⁴⁷ Therefore, most of the works we have today, which are claimed to have come directly from the Pope's mouth, are far from historical reality.⁴⁸ However, it is possible to convey the general outlines of the pope's speech from that day. Especially mentioning the

⁴¹ Runciman, *Haçlı Seferleri Tarihi*, 1/71-79.

⁴² Kırpık, *Doğunun ve Batının Gözünden Haçlılar*, 24.

⁴³ Runciman, *Haçlı Seferleri Tarihi*, 1/66; Kalın, *Ben Öteki ve Ötesi İslam Batı İlişkileri Tarihine Giriş*, 89.

⁴⁴ Halil Temiztürk, "Kapadokyalı Bir Kilise Babası: Aziz Basil ve Hristiyanlığın Şekillenmesine Etkisi", *Karadeniz Teknik Üniversitesi İlahiyat Fakültesi Dergisi* 3/1 (2016), 35-61.

⁴⁵ Runciman, *Haçlı Seferleri Tarihi*, 1/67-75.

⁴⁶ Peter Tudebodus, *Bir Tanığın Kaleminden Birinci Haçlı Seferi, Kudüs'e Yolculuk*, çev. Süleyman Genç (İstanbul: Kronik Kitap Yayınları, 2019), 58.

⁴⁷ Runciman, *Haçlı Seferleri Tarihi*, 1/84; Tudebodus, *Bir Tanığın Kaleminden Birinci Haçlı Seferi, Kudüs'e Yolculuk*, 58; Kırpık, *Doğunun ve Batının Gözünden Haçlılar*, 55.

⁴⁸ Tudebodus, *Bir Tanığın Kaleminden Birinci Haçlı Seferi, Kudüs'e Yolculuk*, 58.

massacres committed by Muslim infidels in the east, the pope stated that the Christian world in the east had asked for their help and that refusing it would be wrong. He claimed that the Turks had stained the pilgrimage route with blood through their raids. To stop this Christian bloodshed, Urban II urged everyone, rich or poor, to take to the roads when summer came.⁴⁹ If Christians in Europe cease fighting among themselves and strive for a just war, God will grant them the blessings they seek. As we have explained, the papacy found the appropriate ground to realize the idea of a holy war by adding the thought of cleansing the pilgrimage routes from the Turks to the holy purpose of the pilgrimage, due to the political struggles and poverty within Europe. So much so that, under the influence of Urban II, the people responded to this call with the phrases "God wills it!" (Deus le volt!) after his speech.⁵⁰

1.7. Campaign

We can state that two separate military campaigns were organized in relation to the First Crusade. The *first* is the expedition undertaken by ordinary people who gathered around pious monks who considered the expedition a duty at the Clermont council. This expedition ended in failure.⁵¹ The *second* is an expedition consisting of more disciplined individuals, led by princes and nobles. These nobles consist of middle-aged and older nobles who have been left in a corner, unable to find a place for themselves in their respective kingdoms. Generally, these nobles, who joined the expedition for the riches of the East promised by the papacy, have flocked to Anatolia. However, these nobles made an agreement with the papacy, promising to govern the lands they would conquer in the East on behalf of the papacy. However, when they arrived in Anatolia, the Byzantine Emperor Alexios first demanded that they swear fealty to him. Despite many disagreements, all the nobles signed an agreement with the emperor.⁵² The treaties made with both the papacy and the emperor have shown that a conflict of interest was present in a political sense. Nobles who set out with regular and disciplined armies and later became rulers of the three Christian states established in the region also came to Anatolia with these regular armies. Among these names, Baudouin, Godefroi's brother, became Count of Urfa (Edessa), Bohemund became Prince of Antakya (Antiocheia), and Godefroi ascended to the throne of the Kingdom of Jerusalem.⁵³ Another important noble who participated in the expedition was Raymond de Toulouse. This nobleman, in his sixties, was the first to respond to the pope's call in 1095. Since his wife belonged to the Aragon dynasty, he had strong ties with Spain. This situation allowed him to gain experience from his previous struggles with the Muslim Arabs. Raymond, who reached Istanbul in 1096, crossed over with the last arriving Crusader army after obtaining the approval of Emperor Alexios.⁵⁴

According to the decision made by the Crusader leaders, the collective assault that began at the first light of dawn on July 14 ended in favor of the Crusaders on the afternoon of July 15, and the armies entered Jerusalem. One of the Crusader leaders, Tancred, looted the Dome of the Rock despite it being a sacred place when he captured it. Historian Tudebodus, a witness, reported that on the day Jerusalem was captured, the streets of the city were filled knee-deep with the blood of the Muslims who were killed. In the final stage of Muslim hatred, no Muslim was spared in Jerusalem except for a few people. Muslims were killed without regard for women, children, or the elderly. Only a few Muslim soldiers with whom an agreement had been made were allowed to leave the city. They were all gathered in the synagogue and burned under the accusation of having aided the Muslims.⁵⁵ Another historian, Işın Demirkent, recounts this massacre in her book through the mouth of historian Fulcherius: "Our knights and foot soldiers, as soon as they killed them, cut open their bellies to retrieve the gold that the Arabs had disgustingly swallowed from their throats while still alive." *Our men, with swords in hand, roamed the city and left no one alive. They even killed those who begged for mercy, entered the people's homes, and took whatever they found.*⁵⁶ Ultimately, Jerusalem was taken by the Christians. However, other religious groups were completely eradicated through the atrocities that even the Eastern Christians living there did not accept.

This event, which caused deep animosity between Westerners and Muslims, has laid the groundwork for the formation of mutual perceptions from both cultural perspectives. In the second part of our article, we will try to highlight the factors that led to the

⁴⁹ Kalın, *Ben Öteki ve Ötesi İslam Batı İlişkileri Tarihine Giriş*, 90.

⁵⁰ Runciman, *Haçlı Seferleri Tarihi*, 1/84-85; Kırpık, *Doğunun ve Batının Gözünden Haçlılar*, 55.

⁵¹ Runciman, *Haçlı Seferleri Tarihi*, 1/103.

⁵² Tudebodus, *Bir Taniğin Kaleminden Birinci Haçlı Seferi, Kudüs'e Yolculuk*, 60-63; Runciman, *Haçlı Seferleri Tarihi*, 1/96-101.

⁵³ Bauer, *Ortaçağ Dünyası Roma İmparatoru Büyük Constantinus'un Hristiyanlığı Kabul Etmesinden I. Haçlı Seferi'ne*, 711; Kırpık, *Doğunun ve Batının Gözünden Haçlılar*, 61-62.

⁵⁴ Runciman, *Haçlı Seferleri Tarihi*, 1/123-127; Kırpık, *Doğunun ve Batının Gözünden Haçlılar*, 60.

⁵⁵ Runciman, *Haçlı Seferleri Tarihi*, 1/218-221; Kırpık, *Doğunun ve Batının Gözünden Haçlılar*, 94; Tudebodus, *Bir Taniğin Kaleminden Birinci Haçlı Seferi, Kudüs'e Yolculuk*, 184-185.

⁵⁶ Işın Demirkent, *Haçlı Seferleri* (İstanbul: Dünya Yayıncılık, 2004), 55.

emergence of Islamophobia. However, before that, it is necessary to understand the Orientalist approach that causes contemporary Islamophobia to shift from a religious basis to a cultural basis.

2.1. The Orientalist Influence on Islamophobia

During the Enlightenment period, which emerged from the Renaissance and Reformation movements, the West moved away from a Christianity-centered worldview towards a secular intellectual framework. However, this transformation did not lead to the end of historical prejudices against Islam and Muslims; on the contrary, this animosity continued in a more sophisticated and systematic manner. Especially during the colonial period, Western interest directed towards Islamic regions has transferred this enmity onto an academic platform through scientific studies. In this process, Muslims became both direct targets of colonial policies and subjects of study in scientific and cultural works.⁵⁷

From the 18th century onwards, while Europe experienced a mental transformation under the influence of Enlightenment thought, at the same time, Western powers' colonial activities also accelerated with new methods. In this context, a significant turning point occurred in the construction of the perception of Islam and Muslims. In previous centuries, in regions of Europe where Muslims were dominant, this perception was largely shaped by the physical presence of Muslims. However, in the subsequent period, Muslims were exiled from Europe, and Western powers settled in their place, seeking to understand and control the Islamic world in their own ways. The "School of Living Oriental Languages" (École des Langues Orientales Vivantes), established in 1795 under Napoleon's leadership in France, became one of the pioneers of academic activities aimed at studying Islam and Eastern societies in the West.⁵⁸ These studies, influenced by the positivist paradigm, led to the emergence of a new discipline, namely Orientalism. Orientalism is an academic discipline that analyzes Islam and Eastern societies through Western modes of knowledge production and carries this out under a scientific guise.⁵⁹

In this context, Europeans presented their scientific and technological superiority as a civilizational mission against the Islamic world. According to this idea, Westerners developed a new discourse to civilize or, in other words, to modernize the societies they colonized.⁶⁰ According to Alper İplikçi, the West has placed its colonial understanding on the axis of dominance; it has reshaped the economy, culture, and politics of the societies it has colonized.⁶¹ Bernard Lewis, on the other hand, argues that the West, according to its own civilization understanding, should guide Eastern societies in discovering their own dynamics. However, Edward Said argues that this approach is not characterized by scientific neutrality but rather by a purpose of manipulation.⁶² As Said points out in his work "Orientalism," Napoleon's manifesto to the people of Egypt is an example of the West's hypocritical approach. Although Napoleon claimed to the Egyptians that he was a Muslim and had come to save them, he appointed scientists in the institutions he established to obtain the riches of the East. This production of knowledge gave rise to an Orientalist scientific understanding used for colonial purposes.⁶³

During the Enlightenment period, with the process of secularization, the West questioned the authority of Christianity and replaced it with rational, scientific thought. In this context, Islam was also analyzed using positivist methods; thus, hostility towards Islam and Muslims evolved from a religious opposition to a cultural opposition. For example, according to Voltaire, one of the important writers of the Enlightenment period, Muslims are nothing but barbarians. In his famous work "Turks, Muslims, and Others," where he expresses his thoughts on Islam and Muslims, Voltaire states that the religion of Islam is a system invented by cunning clergymen to deceive foolish masses.⁶⁴ This transformation has replaced the traditional understanding of "infidel Muslim" with the image of the "barbaric Muslim."⁶⁵ Lewis has suggested that this change can be explained by a scientific theory, arguing that Islam exhibits a structure that cannot be culturally integrated into the West. In the Middle Ages, Christianity was defined as the fundamental element of collective identity, while in the modern era, it has been replaced by a culture based on freedom. In this new identity construction, Muslims have transformed from a religious other into a figure positioned culturally against the West.⁶⁶

⁵⁷ Deepa Kumar, *İslamofobi İmparatorluğun Siyaseti*, çev. Işıl Alatl (İstanbul: Pınar Yayınları, 2016), 44.

⁵⁸ Kumar, *İslamofobi İmparatorluğun Siyaseti*, 44.

⁵⁹ Yardım, *İslamofobi'nin 5N 1K'sı*, 27-28.

⁶⁰ Müşerref Yardım, *Fransa'da İslam ve Kolonyal Hafıza* (İstanbul: Eğitim Yayınevi, 2023), 12.

⁶¹ Alper İplikçi, "Kolonyalizm ve Emperyalizm Üzerine Bir Değerlendirme", *Atatürk Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Dergisi* 21/4 (2017), 1527-1540.

⁶² İplikçi, "Kolonyalizm ve Emperyalizm Üzerine Bir Değerlendirme".

⁶³ W. Said Edward, *Orientalism* (Penguin Classics, 2003), 82.

⁶⁴ Marie Arouet Voltaire, *Türkler, Müslümanlar ve Ötekiler* (İstanbul: Zepros Yayınları, ts.), 19-15.

⁶⁵ Bernard Lewis, *İslam ve Batı*, çev. Çağdaş Sümer (Ankara: Aklıçelen Kitapevi, 2017), 10-15.

⁶⁶ Kumar, *İslamofobi İmparatorluğun Siyaseti*, 49; Lewis, *İslam ve Batı*, 54.

Lewis's theory of cultural opposition has also inspired the "clash of civilizations" thesis developed by thinkers like Samuel Huntington. According to Yardım, the origins of this thesis can be traced back to Fernand Braudel's book *Grammaire des Civilisations*, which is related to Western civilization.⁶⁷ This idea has systematically institutionalized Islamophobia in the West. According to Lewis, Muslims should be seen as elements that threaten the liberal and secular structure of the West. This approach has positioned Muslims as potential invaders and destructive elements of Western values. Terrorism, in this context, has been presented as a form of threat developed by the Islamic world against the West. This analysis shows that Islamophobia is not only a response to contemporary political developments but also has a historical continuity.⁶⁸

Ultimately, although the positivist mode of knowledge production that emerged with the Enlightenment claimed to analyze Islam and Muslims on a scientific basis, the majority of these analyses were shaped by prejudices, and Muslims were systematically defined with labels such as "barbaric," "debauched," and "lazy."⁶⁹ Europe, in line with this understanding, evaluated the economic and cultural superiority it achieved as a kind of civilizational mission; it viewed Muslim societies as "others that needed to be reformed." This situation has turned into a "mission to introduce civilization to those lacking it" in Western culture.⁷⁰ Thus, hostility towards Islam and Muslims has continued by shifting from a religious basis to a cultural basis.⁷¹

2.2. Contemporary Reasons for the Emergence of Islamophobia

After World War II, Western European states embarked on the process of revitalizing the devastated continent of Europe. As a result of the war's heavy consequences, it is almost impossible for Europe, which experienced severe destruction in both industry and infrastructure, to complete the process of physical reconstruction using its own labor force. Because Europe suffered very large human losses in this war. Politicians aware of this reality have focused on alternative solutions. Therefore, a new development has occurred in Europe on behalf of Muslims. Because Muslims were invited to Europe in a way they had not experienced before in order to provide this workforce.⁷² In this context, particularly in Western European countries such as France, Germany, and England, these states supported this process within the framework of policies aimed at eliminating the devastating economic consequences of World War II and accelerating industrial activities in the race for reconstruction. Since the transition from analog technology to digital technology had not yet occurred, there was a natural need for manpower to contribute to mass production on assembly lines during this period. During this transition phase, workers in factories producing with manual technology were building careers in a field where they specialized within a uniform production mechanism. As a result of this trend, each country has tried to procure labor through the geography it is connected to in order to meet the manpower needs that arose.⁷³ For example, while France, which has a significant influence over Africa, tried to recruit labor from this continent, Germany, with its shared historical experience with Turkey, turned its attention to our country. For the same reasons, similar invitations for workers have been seen between England and India-Pakistan, which had a long colonial relationship.⁷⁴

In the context of the aforementioned migration, Western countries employed the workers they accepted under the "Labor Migration Law to Western Countries" for high wages.⁷⁵ Because the workers will return when they earn enough money to live a prosperous life in the countries they come to. Thus, there will be no negative situation in terms of sociocultural aspects.⁷⁶ For this reason, the first wave of migrant workers were generally welcomed within the framework of a positive tolerance policy, which is not a common situation for Western states and Muslim populations considering the historical process between Muslims and Westerners. In fact, because it was planned that the guest workers who came for this reason would be sent back to their countries after a short period, the first guest workers were welcomed with flowers at train stations, and a tolerant attitude was adopted towards them.⁷⁷ Western European politicians addressed the need for labor within the framework of this approach, which can be described as a short-term solution. However, as time passed and their thoughts changed, immigrant workers who brought their spouses with them began to seek ways to obtain citizenship as their children were born there and raised in

⁶⁷ Yardım, *Fransa'da İslam ve Kolonyal Hafıza*, 17.

⁶⁸ Bernard Lewis, "The Roots of Muslim Rage", *Atlantic Montly Pub.* 266/3 (1990), 47-54.

⁶⁹ Yardım, *Fransa'da İslam ve Kolonyal Hafıza*, 5-8.

⁷⁰ Yardım, *İslamofobi'nin 5N 1K'sı*, 38.

⁷¹ Maxime Rodinson, *Europe and the Mystique of Islam* (London: Tauris Publications, 2002).

⁷² İplikçi, "Kolonyalizm ve Emperyalizm Üzerine Bir Değerlendirme".

⁷³ Ayhan Kaya, *İslam, Göç ve Entegrasyon: Güvenikleştirme Çağı* (İstanbul: Bilgi Üniversitesi Yayınları, 2016), 4.

⁷⁴ Philip Lewis, *Islamic Britain: Religion, Politics And Identity Among British Muslims* (London: Tauris Publications, 1994), 16; Daron Acemoglu vd. (ed.), *The Search For Europe: Contrasting Approaches* (Bibao: Openmind Publications, 2015), 304.

⁷⁵ Kaya, *İslam, Göç ve Entegrasyon: Güvenikleştirme Çağı*, 4.

⁷⁶ Lewis, *Islamic Britain: Religion, Politics And Identity Among British Muslims*, 16.

⁷⁷ Acemoglu vd., *The Search For Europe: Contrasting Approaches*, 305.

Western educational institutions.⁷⁸ In other words, this situation has disappeared with the upbringing of the second generation, the children of the first-generation workers who had a mental notion of returning.⁷⁹ This process in Europe, where workers transitioned to citizenship, coincided with a period of transition from classical capitalism to late capitalism. According to this understanding, there is no longer much room for investment based on human labor in the field of production. Therefore, unskilled workers have been pushed out of this type of production field. Because massive multifunctional machines have taken over the main part of production. In this context, there is no longer a production scene based on human labor as in the classical capitalism era. In classical capitalism, unskilled workers whose labor was exploited and controlled through production have now been pushed out of production. Therefore, the majority of Muslims invited as migrant workers have become surplus.

Politicians who did not take the phenomenon of migration into account felt the difficulty of being unable to send back the workers they had invited as a serious social pressure. Because the fact that immigrants do not return after completing their mission and reject integration into the society they are in has caused social tension from the perspective of Westerners. The early migrant workers could not make much of an impact in the public sphere because they worked intensively under very harsh conditions in factories, road construction, and hospital construction. For these people, the sole purpose was to save money and return to their homeland as soon as possible to live in prosperity, so they were not seen as a public nuisance. However, the second generation, who acquired citizenship, were educated in the institutional structures of the West. The second generation, who learned the language of Western countries in educational institutions, one of the most important institutions of socialization, struggled to exist in society with their own beliefs and values. Therefore, the immigrants who were welcomed with flowers have now become unwanted others both economically and socioculturally.⁸⁰ Starting with the second generation, the relationship of immigrant workers with Western institutions has begun to deepen. This new generation, which is well-versed in both their own languages and the languages of Western countries, has started to share the same public space with them. Because when some of them started working in white-collar jobs as doctors in research hospitals or engineers in industrial companies,⁸¹ the effects of migration on social life began to be observed.⁸² This situation has had a negative impact on Muslims due to local citizens' concerns about losing their economic privileges. However, it was not only economic and sociocultural factors that caused the shift in the positive attitude towards Muslims. After the terrorist attacks in the 2000s were associated with Muslims, the fears and anxieties of Westerners evolved into a different dimension of hostility.

2.3. Terrorist Attacks

Another significant factor contributing to Islamophobia is the belief that there is a connection between Islam and violence and terrorism. Conveying some events that support this idea and have led to the connection between Islam and terrorism will contribute to the understanding of the article. From the perspective of Westerners, this thesis has been validated by the hostage crisis between the US and Iran before 2000 and the Salman Rushdie incident, as well as the terrorist acts that occurred after 2000.⁸³ With the Iranian Revolution in 1979, 52 people working at the US embassy in Iran were held captive for 444 days. In the Salman Rushdie incident, a knife attack was carried out against the author Rushdie, who insulted Islam's holy book and prophet, as a result of a fatwa issued by Iran's religious leader, and the author was severely injured. These two incidents led to the formation of a negative perception of Islam before the year 2000. With the September 11 terrorist attacks, Islam was fully regarded as a producer of terrorism activities in Europe. Additionally, the 2004 Madrid and 2005 London terrorist attacks, considered Europe's 9/11, supported this notion. Again, some magazines published in Europe have published derogatory cartoons of the Islamic prophet. Muslims who reacted to this situation were portrayed as anti-freedom in the Western media. In the 2015 Paris terrorist attacks claimed by ISIS, 128 people were killed. Again, in 2017, a bomb attack during a concert for children by an American artist in the city of Manchester, England, caused an increase in hatred against Muslims.⁸⁴ As a result of this and many similar incidents, the thesis that there is a link between Islam and terrorism has been historically reinforced by stories that demonize Muslims. Such events have gradually replaced fear of Muslims in Western countries with hatred. Because historical accumulation has already said that Islam is a deviant movement. Therefore, the Islamic religion can support both violence and terrorism.⁸⁵ For example, the then Prime Minister of the UK, Tony Blair, emphasized in a speech on March 5, 2004,

⁷⁸ Amjad Hussain, "British Muslims And The British Understanding Of Islam", *Süleyman Demirel Üniversitesi İlahiyat Fakültesi Dergisi* 1/18 (2007), 7-13.

⁷⁹ Acemoglu vd., *The Search For Europe: Contrasting Approaches*, 305.

⁸⁰ Christopher Caldwell, *Avrupa'da Devrimin Yansımaları: Göç, İslam ve Batı*, çev. Hasan Kaya (İstanbul: Profil Yayınları, 2011), 80.

⁸¹ Hussain, "British Muslims And The British Understanding Of Islam".

⁸² Nilüfer Göle, *İç İçe Girişler: İslam ve Avrupa*, Metis Yayınları (İstanbul: Metis Yayınları, 2008), 48.

⁸³ Emiroğlu, "Avrupa'da Yükselen İslamofobi: Güncel Zorluklar ve Dinamikler".

⁸⁴ Emiroğlu, "Avrupa'da Yükselen İslamofobi: Güncel Zorluklar ve Dinamikler".

⁸⁵ Views of Government's Handling of Terrorism Fall to Post-9/11 Low (USA: Pew Research, 2015).

that regardless of the political cost, it was necessary to fight against Islamic terrorism.⁸⁶ Especially the 9/11 attacks have been a turning point for Muslims and Westerners. As a result of this event, ideological prejudices from the past have intensified and increased. As a result of terrorist acts such as the London Underground bombings in 2005, Muslims have transformed from people to be feared into hated and unwanted others. Therefore, it has been observed that hate crimes against Muslims have significantly increased. Consequently, a significant portion of adult Muslims living in America have been subjected to physical or verbal violence after the September 11 terrorist attacks.⁸⁷

2.4. The Rise of the Far Right

Another reason for the increase in violence related to Islamophobia is the presence of far-right parties in European parliaments. Germany, which became the center of far-right formations during World War I, faced defeat in the war, leading to a new political search for Europe. According to this understanding, European countries, which now follow a more moderate political approach, have not given much credit to far-right formations. Additionally, with the arrival of labor migration and the formation of a more moderate political climate, immigrants seem to be breathing a sigh of relief in the political sense. However, as we mentioned earlier, the emergence of employment problems due to economic transformation and the visibility of second-generation immigrants in European society after obtaining citizenship have contributed to the resurgence of the far-right in Europe. As we will discuss in the following section, the terrorist acts seen in Europe and America have led to the far-right becoming even stronger and entering parliament.⁸⁸ Some Western nationalist politicians and media organizations have demonized Muslims, portraying them as potential criminals. Because they have derived benefits from this situation. In fact, the populist right is already gathering supporters in Europe through its manipulations of anti-immigrant sentiment and Islamophobia. Dutch politician Geert Wilders has garnered votes from predominantly far-right-leaning individuals by stating, "Islam is not a religion, it is an ideology, the ideology of a backward culture."⁸⁹ In this context, another reason for the increase in negative feelings, thoughts, and behaviors towards Muslims is these extremists who find a place for themselves in the political arena.⁹⁰ Moreover, the political powers that own the central governments have resorted to populist rhetoric to make politics through Muslims. For example, French President Emmanuel Macron articulated a project called "Islamist separatism" in a speech on February 18, 2020. In this speech, Macron stated that it is a freedom for Muslims to learn their religion and culture in their own languages. However, he stated that this situation could only occur if it adhered to the fundamental values and principles of the French Republic. This bill, which passed through the subcommittee of the French National Assembly in 2021, has brought along many question marks. The idea has emerged that the main purpose of this initiative is to turn Muslim masses into a political instrument. Macron's approach, which he proposed as an escape from his country's economic problems, has been harshly criticized by Le Pen, another significant political figure in France. Le Pen has declared war on Islam and everything related to Islam. According to her, Islam should be banned in France. The same situation applies in Germany. In Germany, the "Alternative for Germany" party, founded in 2013, has based its political style on Islam and Muslim opposition. In this way, it received nearly double the percentage of votes in the 2019 elections compared to the 2014 elections.⁹¹

2.5. The Widespread Use of Mass Communication Tools

The role of mass media in the evolution of Islamophobia from fear to violence is also very significant. As Lean describes in his book "The Islamophobia Industry," he provides a striking example of how Islamophobia is transmitted through mass media in America. A columnist named Geller, after writing an online blog post titled "Monster Mosque Presses for Death and Destruction in the Shadow of the World Trade Center" on May 6, 2010, had it broadcast on Fox TV, calling the public to protest in the streets.⁹² Ideological writings like these created in the media network have shown how Islamophobia transforms from fear into violence. Such approaches lead to the negative portrayal of a complex phenomenon like Islamophobia in mass media. Because the perceptions of Islam and Muslims held by people living in America and Europe are largely shaped through the media.⁹³

François Burgat from the French newspaper Le Monde went to Tunisia to interview Rashid al-Ghannushi, who was declared a terrorist by European states. After conducting this interview, Burgat stated that no journalist had met with Gannushi before,

⁸⁶ Liz Fekete, "Anti-Muslim Racism and the European Security State", *Race&Class* 46/1 (2004), 3-29.

⁸⁷ Mohamed Besheer, *Muslims Are A Growing Presence In U.S., But Still Negative Views From The Public* (USA: Pew Research, 2021).

⁸⁸ M. Nail Alkan, "Avrupa'da Yükselen İrkçılık: Pegida Örneği", *Gazi Akademik Bakış* 8/16 (2015), 275-289.

⁸⁹ Erişim, 10.05.2022

⁹⁰ Besheer, *Muslims Are A Growing Presence In U.S., But Still Negative Views From The Public*.

⁹¹ Emiroğlu, "Avrupa'da Yükselen İslamofobi: Güncel Zorluklar ve Dinamikler".

⁹² Nathan Lean, *İslamofobi Endüstrisi*, çev. İbrahim Yılmaz (Ankara: Diyanet İşleri Başkanlığı, 2019), 87.

⁹³ Merve Ar, *İslamofobinin dini ve kültürel kökenleri* (Samsun: Ondokuz Mayıs Üniversitesi, Doktora, 2019), 193.

and therefore all the news about him had been prepared at the desk. Burtat also stated that, following this interview, the Western academic world and the press are completely biased, and contrary to what is written and said there, Muslims have their own unique culture and are not terrorists.⁹⁴ In this context, according to studies on Islamophobia, this phenomenon has generally been addressed in the media from an ideological perspective. Therefore, a conscious manipulation is being carried out, paving the way for violence against Muslims. The Muslim population, who constantly feel uneasy in a societal sense, is gradually increasing. In a society that feels unsafe, the Muslim community, which is increasingly forced into a more isolated life, prefers to establish a life according to their own in small ghettos in Europe and America. This situation naturally leads to isolation and makes it difficult to integrate with mainstream societies.

2.6. Increase in Violent Acts According to Reports

It is understood that the phenomenon of Islamophobia, which we are trying to define, has affected Muslims and Westerners at a level of fear over a period of approximately 50 years, from its emergence based on contemporary reasons in Western culture to the September 11 terrorist attacks. In this phase, it is observed that the growth of this fear towards Muslims is due to the lack of communication and representation among Muslims, as well as the inability of non-Muslim Westerners to accept Muslims living within their own cultures in Western societies, leading to an ethnocentric attitude towards Muslims. The Westerners' attitudes lead Muslims to prefer a life that turns into isolation. The terrorist attacks that occurred in various major cities of Western countries after September 11 led to the existing fear of Muslims evolving into violence and turning into a witch hunt. In the development of this situation, the manipulation and guidance of large masses by far-right politicians and racist social media users have been particularly influential. As a result, acts of violence against Muslims have significantly increased.⁹⁵

Besheer, one of the researchers working to prevent social violence against Muslims in America, has scrutinized the factors causing the increase in violence against Muslims in a study. In this context, according to the study titled "Continuing Negative Attitudes Towards Muslims in America," American society was asked to evaluate their feelings towards all religious groups on a scale from zero to one hundred. According to this research, Muslims have been identified as the most unwanted religious group in American society. Naturally, this situation has revealed the underlying elements of violence.⁹⁶

Among Western countries, the religious group with the highest population growth rate compared to other religious minorities is Muslims. There are fundamentally two reasons for this. The *first* reason is the very high birth rates of Muslims, and the *second* is their more intense immigration to these countries compared to other groups. Therefore, based on these two reasons, in one of the academic studies conducted on the acceptance and integration of the Muslim population, particularly in Western European societies, Diamat measured the attitudes towards Muslims and Jews. This study investigates whether Muslims are members of Western society. In this context, participants are asked the following question: "As a member of your family, would you prefer a Muslim or a Jew?" Jews were preferred more than Muslims.⁹⁷

Islamophobic individuals, who view Muslims' visibility in the social arena negatively and consider them unwanted others as a religious group, naturally do not hesitate to engage in violent actions against Muslims when they find the opportunity. As a result of a study conducted in the United States between 2015-2016, it was shown that while there were 91 Islamophobic attacks within a year following the September 11, 2001 attacks, this number reached 127 in 2015-2016. Again, another study conducted in 2017 shared the view that three out of every four adult Muslims in America have been subjected to marginalization.⁹⁸

Conclusion

This article has examined the structure of the phenomenon of Islamophobia, which has evolved from fear to violence in contemporary times, and its similarities with the First Crusade (1096-1099). In both periods, it has been observed that similar feelings, thoughts, and behaviors towards the religion of Islam and Muslims emerged, and these evolved into violence over time. We have identified that these changes and transformations occurred in five fundamental stages.

The *first* stage is the phase of forming an impression towards Islam and Muslims. It has been observed that in both the medieval world and the contemporary world, perceptions of Islam and Muslims have been shaped by second and third-hand accounts. In the Middle Ages, these negative and ideological perceptions were created mainly by religious figures and merchants, who were

⁹⁴ Canatan- Hıdır, *Batı Dünyasında İslamofobi ve Anti-İslamizm*, 119.

⁹⁵ Besheer, *Muslims Are A Growing Presence İn U.S., But Still Negative Views From The Public*.

⁹⁶ Besheer, *Muslims Are A Growing Presence İn U.S., But Still Negative Views From The Public*.

⁹⁷ Jeff Diamat, *Q&A: Measuring Attitudes toward Muslims and Jews in Western Europe* (Pew Research, 2018).

⁹⁸ Katayoun Kishi, *Assaults against Muslims in U.S. surpass 2001 level* (USA: Pew Research, 2017).

mostly travelers, whereas today they are perpetuated by media and political actors. In this context, especially through mass media, content is produced using a completely ideological language towards Muslims, creating a negative perception.

The *second* stage is the phase where positive perceptions are formed through one-on-one interactions. The perception formed before one-on-one interactions with Islam and Muslims is fundamentally ideological, hence negative. However, with the direct interactions between Muslims and Westerners, this perception has softened somewhat in both periods and evolved in a positive direction. For example, from the perspective of Westerners, a positive perception of Muslims, who were superior to them both scientifically and militarily in the medieval world, developed among the public. In this context, the Arabic language was accepted as the common scientific language in Andalusia. In fact, admiration for Muslims began to develop. Even today, when Muslims are invited to the West, they are met with a positive atmosphere, replacing the negative impression from the past with a positive climate. Contrary to the historical narrative, the industrious nature of Muslims has played a significant role in the formation of this impression.

The *third* stage is the stage of fear. The positive impression of Islam and Muslims has gradually been replaced by fear. Because in both phases, political and religious actors have constantly manipulated the public about Islam and Muslims out of fear of losing their own privileges. In the Middle Ages, rulers viewed the Muslims' orderliness and discipline with a sense of inferiority, but they manipulated this event to portray Muslims as gradually growing stronger and threatening to destroy European culture. Today, Muslims similarly tend to reject the integration into Western culture and maintain their own culture. Additionally, the belief that Muslims are taking away the economic privileges of local people by obtaining citizenship exposes them to an ethnocentric backlash. In this context, fear has been instilled by highlighting that Muslims, especially due to their adaptation problems with Western culture, prefer an isolated life.

The *fourth* stage is the stage where fear turns into hostility. In both periods, it has been observed that perceptions continued for political and economic reasons transformed into hostility. In both periods, the perception and behavioral changes towards Islam and Muslims were manipulated by the dominant cultural elements under the influence of the ruling group, while events associated with Islam and Muslims facilitated the transformation of fear into hatred. For example, in the medieval world, since the dominant element was religion-related concepts and inferences, these concepts were highlighted and used as a tool for religiously marginalizing Muslims, creating hostility towards them. In today's world, however, the dominant element is based on nationalism, which has led to the othering of Muslims through the understanding of a single nation, creating enmity.

The *fifth* stage is the stage of violence. Due to the idea of constantly producing enemies against Islam and Muslims embedded in the codes of Western culture, hostility towards Islam and Muslims has been shown in both periods. It has been stated that this situation is justified, paving the way for legitimate violence against Muslims. Because Islam was ideologically considered the destroyer of Western culture in both periods, legitimate violence was inflicted upon Muslims. In the Middle Ages, violence was inflicted upon Muslims under the guise of the First Crusade, justified by dominant religious motivations but shaped by deep economic and political concerns. In the contemporary world, violence has been unleashed within a framework dominated by the understanding of nationalism based on conflict theory. Muslims who refuse to integrate into Western culture have the potential to destroy Western culture when they become sufficiently powerful. Because they have demonstrated this through terrorist activities. In this context, the religion of Islam has given rise to Muslims who carry out terrorist activities because it is a religion that supports terrorism. Therefore, it is justified to use violence against Muslims. Because it is impossible for Muslims to integrate into Western culture due to their strict adherence to their religion. Additionally, the very high birth rates of Muslims have led to the belief that they will soon disrupt the demographic structure of Europe. For these reasons, urgent measures should be taken against Muslims.

Today, the marginalization and discrimination that Muslims face in Europe and the United States appear to have transformed into a structure that threatens social peace. In this context, it should be emphasized that Islamophobia is not only a historical phenomenon but also a contemporary social issue. The data examined in the study indicate that solving this problem requires not only addressing Muslims but also a general shift in mindset towards Islam and Muslims in Western culture. The following suggestions have been presented for this transformation.

In order to effectively combat Islamophobic perceptions, a legal regulation is needed first and foremost. Based on the common definitions of Islamophobia, it is necessary to establish a legal framework for negative feelings, thoughts, and behaviors towards Muslims. Along with, it is of great importance to strengthen civil society organizations that will highlight the positive representations of Muslims. Considering the media's decisive impact on societal perception, it is necessary to produce visual content that emphasizes Islamic values, possesses high production quality, and appeals to a global audience. Especially considering the impact of Hollywood productions, it can be anticipated that such strategic media productions will be effective in terms of perception management.

From a historical perspective, the impact of Islamic civilization during the Andalusian period on Western culture should be revisited, emphasizing that Muslims, just as in the past, play an active role in the construction of European society today. This narrative should be supported through academic publications, seminars, and conferences; the historical legacy of Islam in Europe should be made more visible in the public sphere. Throughout history, reductive representations of Islam and Muslims as "barbarians" and "debauched" should be addressed, and scientific studies should be conducted to highlight the difference between these representations and the actual life practices of Muslims. These studies should be supported not only in the academic realm but also through popular culture tools that can reach a wide audience.

Finally, there is a need for legal regulations that will define the boundaries of responsibility for media organizations producing content with ideological orientations. Such regulations can contribute to a more just representation of Islam and Muslims in multicultural European societies not only through punitive measures but also by promoting ethical publishing principles. At this point, it is observed that the far-right and populist political formations rising in Europe are instrumentalizing Islamophobia to deepen social polarization. Opposition to immigration, emphasis on national identity, and security policies shape these discourses, leading to the establishment of a language that "otherizes" Muslim communities. The legitimization of such discourses by political actors not only affects public perception but also legislative processes, laying the groundwork for policies that restrict the rights and freedoms of Muslims. In this context, Islamophobia should be addressed not only as a cultural or individual prejudice but also as an institutionalized and politicized issue.

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