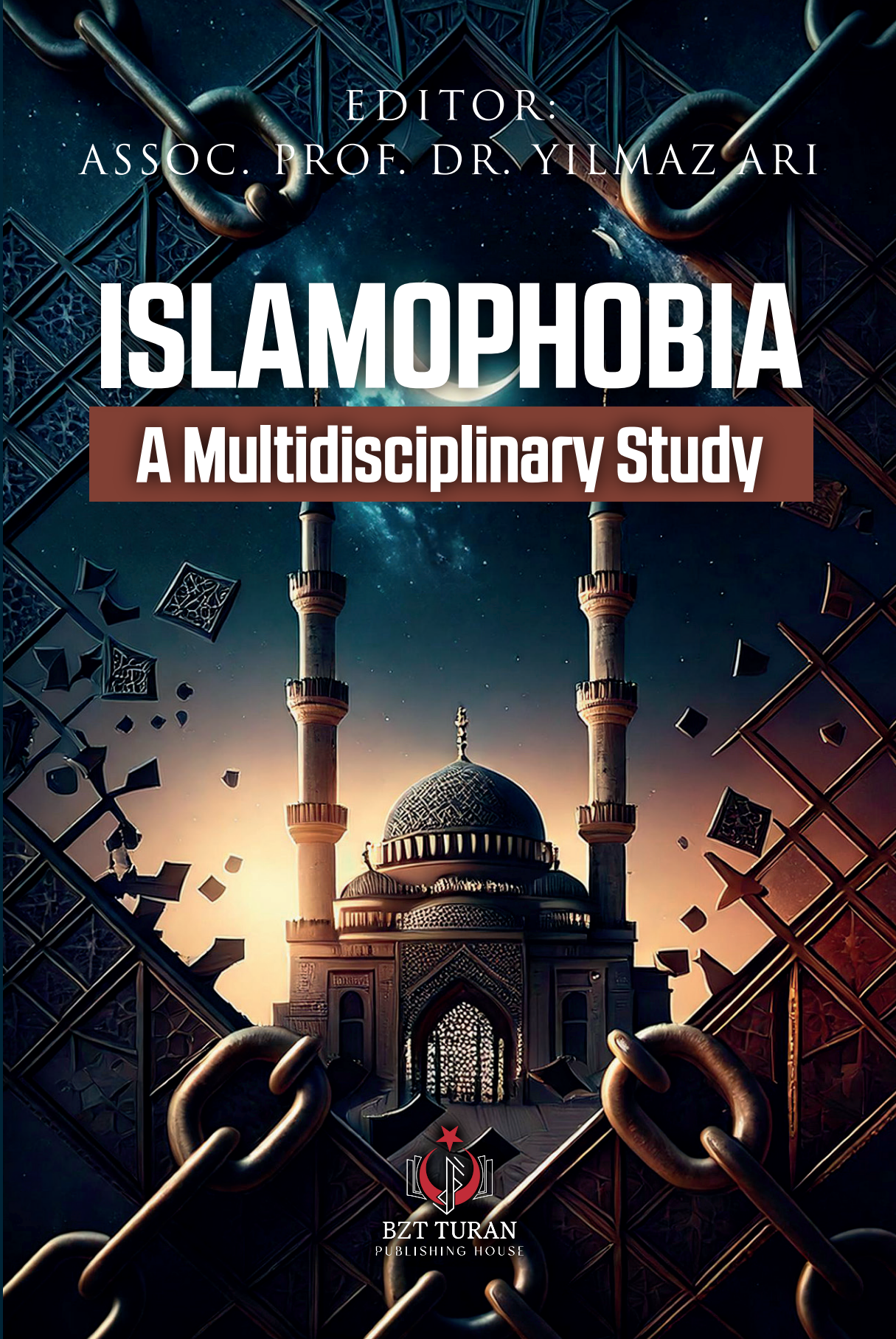
EDITOR:
ASSOC. PROF. DR. YILMAZ ARI

ISLAMOPHOBIA

A Multidisciplinary Study



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From the Editor

Dear Readers,

The book you are holding is the product of an effort to shed light on Islamophobia, one of the most pressing and complex issues of our time, through the lenses of various academic disciplines. This work not only examines the impacts of Islamophobia on individuals and societies but also delves deeply into its sociological, psychological, educational, exegetical, historical, and philosophical dimensions.

The sociology of religion explores the societal manifestations of Islamophobia, while the psychology of religion helps us understand emotions such as fear, prejudice, and hatred. Religious education questions the role of education in addressing and resolving this phenomenon, and the discipline of tafsir examines how Islamophobic perceptions are sometimes rooted in misinterpretations of religious texts. Islamic history provides insights into the historical origins of this phenomenon, while philosophy interrogates its ideological underpinnings and its impact on human thought.

By integrating these diverse perspectives, this book aims to provide readers with a holistic understanding of Islamophobia and to propose pathways for addressing it. Enriched by contributions from experts in these fields, our interdisciplinary approach underscores the complexity of Islamophobia while offering valuable insights for both academic inquiry and societal transformation.

I extend my heartfelt gratitude to all the contributors and everyone who supported the preparation of this volume. I hope this work inspires readers to engage in new discussions and develop solutions to the challenges posed by Islamophobia.

Sincerely,

Assoc. Prof. Dr. Yılmaz ARI
Editor
Eskişehir / TÜRKİYE, 2024

CHAPTER 1

ISLAMOPHOBIA AS A GLOBAL PHENOMENON: SOCIOLOGICAL DEPTH AND CONTEMPORARY REALITY

Assoc. Prof. Dr. Yılmaz ARI[1]

1. Introduction

Islamophobia, as one of the global issues of our time, can be defined not only as an individual bias or fear but also as a phenomenon that profoundly affects social structures (Saparca, 2019). Although the term "Islamophobia" gained popularity in academic circles in the West during the 1990s (Bangstad, 2015), the roots of this phenomenon stretch much deeper. Islamophobia primarily refers to fear, prejudice, hatred, and discrimination directed at Islam and its followers (Ergül, 2015). However, this simple definition does not fully reflect the social, cultural, and political dimensions of the phenomenon.

Islamophobia has become interwoven with social structures and cultural norms in many Western societies, leading to significant long-term social polarization (Duman, 2020). This phenomenon is not limited to individual prejudices; it is a complex issue reinforced by societal structures and ideological tools (Saparca, 2019). From the perspective of the sociology of religion, Islamophobia functions not only as an individual attitude but also as

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an exclusionary mechanism used by societies in constructing their identities (Genel, 2014).

Social integration and exclusion mechanisms, representations of religion in relation to capitalism, and the functions of ideological tools help us understand that Islamophobia is not merely an individual prejudice but a phenomenon that strengthens social structures and reinforces the interests of dominant groups (Balcı & Karadeniz, 2021). These approaches explain how Islamophobia functions in maintaining the continuity of social order and preserving power relations. From the Crusades of the Middle Ages to the colonial period and modern times, fear and hostility towards Islam have been systematically nurtured in the Western world (Buehler, 2014). After the September 11 attacks, the media and politics increased societal fear by associating Islam with terrorism, turning Islamophobia into a global phenomenon (Aktaş, 2017).

The media is one of the most effective tools in spreading Islamophobia. Platforms such as television, cinema, and social media have reinforced societal fear by presenting Muslims as a dangerous "other" through false and negative representations (Göknel, 2015). Particularly, populist policies and anti-immigrant rhetoric have made Islamophobia a politically legitimized tool (Bayar & Güdül, 2022). As seen in the examples of France, the UK, and the US, discriminatory rhetoric by political leaders towards Muslims has increased social polarization and strengthened this prejudice (Gölcü & Çuhadar, 2017).

Islamophobia is not limited to the West; it has become a global phenomenon (Buehler, 2014). The portrayal of political tensions in the Middle East in the media has contributed to depicting Islam as a threat, creating a social issue affecting Muslims worldwide (Saparca, 2019). Particularly in Europe and America, the rise of anti-immigrant and nationalist movements (Özarslan, 2023) has turned Islamophobia into a societal issue, reinforced through both politics and social norms (Tosun, 2024).

Fighting Islamophobia is a comprehensive responsibility that goes beyond overcoming individual prejudices and must be addressed at both societal and institutional levels. In this process, education, media literacy, legal regulations, and active participation of civil society emerge as key tools. Providing more accurate and balanced representations in the media, implementing cultural change programs, and developing effective anti-discrimination policies by states can create a strong resistance to Islamophobia. At the same time, efforts to raise social awareness, develop empathy, and access accurate information will play a critical role in overcoming this prejudice in the long term.

This article will examine the historical development of Islamophobia from its origins to the present from the perspective of the sociology of religion, discussing the impact of elements such as the media, politics, and social structures in the formation and spread of this phenomenon. It will also focus on the importance of education, media literacy, the role of civil society, and legal regulations in combating Islamophobia. Addressing Islamophobia is a multidimensional struggle that requires the collective effort of individuals and institutions.

2. The Historical Background of Islamophobia

The origins of Islamophobia are not limited to the socio-cultural structures of modern Western societies; rather, they trace back to much deeper historical roots. The historical trajectory of this phenomenon extends from the Middle Ages to the present and has been primarily shaped by the conflicts, misunderstandings, and cultural differences between the West and the Islamic world (Çakaş, 2019). Islamophobia first became evident during the Middle Ages, with Europe's growing hostility towards the East, particularly towards the Islamic world. This hostility was further systematized during the colonial period and evolved into a global phenomenon in the 20th century (Bozan, 2018; Ergin, 2021). Today, negative perceptions of Islam and Muslims have become a form of prejudice for many individuals, both religiously and culturally, and the origins of these perceptions date back further in history.

From the 7th century onwards, the interaction of Islam with other cultures and belief systems reveals that the early relationships between Christianity and Islam were largely based on religious competition. In the early periods of Islam, the political aspect of the religion was prominent, gradually acquiring a religious identity and developing into a distinct belief system, especially through its elements that differed from Christianity and Judaism (Aydın, 2011). Islam's claim to be the "final religion" and its criticism of earlier religious traditions were perceived as a threat to Christianity and Judaism. In response, arguments were made that Islam did not perform prophetic miracles and that the Quran was an inconsistent and complex text. Moreover, the idea that Islam spread through the sword reinforced the perception in the West that "Islam spread by the sword" (Hoyland, 1997).

At the beginning of the 7th century, as Muslims advanced as far as Spain, the Christian world's perspective on Islam and Muslims began to change. The period of Al-Andalus under the Umayyad caliphate initiated the rapid spread of Islam into Western Europe, laying the foundations of the fear of Islam in Europe. This fear and prejudice were further reinforced through the

Crusades during the Middle Ages, and Islam began to be seen as a threat to the Western world. The anti-Islamic attitudes that developed in the West during the Crusades deepened with the fall of the Eastern Roman Empire and the conquest of Istanbul in 1453. The Ottoman Empire's conquests in Western Europe, its territorial expansion, and control over maritime routes strengthened the fear of Islam in the Western world (Şeker, 2023).

In the 19th and 20th centuries, Europe's colonial expansion led to the definition of Islam and Muslim communities as "backward" and a threat. Orientalist viewpoints and the political discourses of the time contributed to the formation of negative stereotypes about Islam (Metin, 2013). After the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989 and the collapse of communism, Western countries targeted Islam to define a new "Other" (Kirman, 2010).

The date of September 11, 2001, marked a turning point in the global spread of Islamophobia. Following this event, an atmosphere of distrust towards Islam and Muslims began to spread in the West, creating a fear-based new power structure. In modern societies, these fears and prejudices led to increased social exclusion, discrimination, and hate crimes (Kirman, 2010). After the September 11 attacks, Western media began using more negative language about Islam and Muslims, labeling them as "terrorists" and deepening negative perceptions of Islam (Erdin, 2014).

The negative mentality towards the Islamic world, developed by the West, was reproduced and spread to the masses through the media in the post-September 11 period (Yüksel, 2014). During this time, the actions of terrorist organizations such as ISIS, Boko Haram, and Al-Shabaab led to the association of Islam with "violence"; in 2006, Pope Francis's statement about Islam spreading through the sword further reinforced this perception in the West. Today, Islamophobia is not just an individual prejudice but a structural problem that leads to the exclusion of Muslims in social, economic, and public spheres (Kalın & Esposito, 2024). This situation reinforces the stereotypical judgments that demean Muslims in the West, alienate them, and define Islam as a violent ideology.

2.1. The Middle Ages and the Crusades: The First Traces

In the Middle Ages, the rise of Islam was not merely a religious event for the Western world, but also symbolized a deep cultural and ideological chasm between the West and the East (Erdin, 2014). From the 7th century onward, Christian Europe viewed the rapidly spreading Islam not only as a religious threat but also as a cultural, social, and political rival (Gür, 2023). The Crusades, which began in 1095, became one of the most prominent

events that systematized the fear and hostility that the West felt toward the Islamic world. During this period, Western historians and writers labeled Muslims as "barbarians," "reactionary," and "culturally backward" (Kalın, 2020; Göknel, 2015). For the European leaders and elites, the perception of Islam went beyond just seeing it as a religious threat. Islam was defined as a "heretical" and "primitive" culture, with exaggerations of the differences between Christianity and Islam, leading to the development of a discourse focused on hostility and otherness. In the West, Islam was associated with negative adjectives such as "irrational," "oppressive," "barbaric," "ruthless," "aggressive," "violent," "terrorist," and "inferior," which were used to legitimize open Islamophobia and animosity against it (Ayık, 2013). These approaches provided an ideological foundation for policies of discrimination and exclusion towards Muslims.

These negative images of Islam laid the foundations for centuries of prejudice in the West. In the centuries following the Crusades, Western thinkers and writers continued to depict Islam as a religion "associated with violence" (Alıcı, 2019). This process led the West to perceive Islam both as a religious competitor and a cultural threat. These Islamophobic images in Western literature gradually permeated literary works and popular culture, gaining wide societal acceptance.

2.2. The Colonial Era: The Image of Islam as a "Backward" Religion

Another critical period in the historical consolidation of Islamophobia is the colonial era. In the 18th and 19th centuries, Europe's expanding colonial empires reshaped the West's relationship with the Islamic world. As England, France, and other European powers seized large territories in Asia and Africa, they began to view Islam not only as a religious obstacle but also as a cultural and political threat (Ayık, 2013). During this period, Western colonial powers often described Islamic societies as "backward" and "despotic," trying to justify their claims of superiority (Alıcı, 2019).

In the 19th century, English and French intellectuals, particularly, presented Islam as a "reactionary" and "anti-modern" religion (Güllüpınar, 2020). As Edward Said argued in *Orientalism* (1998), the West's view of the "East" was not merely a geographical difference but evolved into an ideological structure aimed at constructing the East as the opposite of the West. This "Orientalist" perspective led the West to define its own culture and values as "enlightened" and "civilized," while labeling other societies as "backward" and "barbaric" (Akdağ, 2023). This viewpoint particularly portrayed Islam

and Islamic societies as "primitive" and "backward," reinforcing the West's own superiority while deepening the roots of Islamophobia.

Colonial powers sought to impose an understanding that constantly belittled, criticized, and even insulted Islamic traditions. In this way, while Westerners viewed themselves as superior in every domain, they defined Muslim societies as historically "reactionary" and in need of correction, aiming to implant these ideas into the Muslim mind (Bozkurt, 2022). Colonial powers not only applied cultural exclusion but also maintained their economic dominance in the Islamic world through economic pressures (Aslan, 2021). During this period, the negative images produced by the West towards Islam and Muslims spread widely, even reaching the colonized populations. Colonialism used Islamophobia as an ideological tool to justify the West's claims of superiority, not only in military and economic terms but also on a cultural level.

2.3. The Global Dimension of Islamophobia: The 20th Century and Post-9/11

The 20th century, particularly during and after the World War II and the Cold War, marked a period in which Islamophobia became more entrenched on a global scale. During this period, the Western view of Islam deepened, especially in the context of ideological and geopolitical conflicts. During the Cold War, Muslim communities were often defined as the "other" and associated with the opposing bloc in the struggle between the West and the Soviet Union (Erişkin, 2023). In this context, political tensions in the Middle East and the rise of religious movements set the stage for the West to perceive Muslims as a threat.

However, it was the 9/11 terrorist attacks that truly marked the global prominence of Islamophobia (Poynting & Mason, 2006). After this tragic event, Western media, particularly American media, played a significant role in associating Islam and Muslims with terrorism (Salem et al., 2021). During this period, the media continuously linked Islam with violence, using the actions of groups like ISIS and Al-Qaeda to depict all Muslims as potential threats. The media perpetuated the notion that Islam was a religion prone to radicalism and that all Muslims were violent, which led to the spread of Islamophobic perspectives. These discourses not only reinforced individual prejudices in Western societies but also influenced state policies, such as the travel bans against Muslims imposed by the United States (Küçükcan, 2022).

2.4. Political Tensions in the Middle East and Islamophobia in the West

Islamophobia does not only manifest in Western societies; it also appears in different forms in regions like the Middle East and North Africa. Following the Arab Spring, the increasing hostility towards the West and the internal conflicts in the region gave a new dimension to the narratives surrounding Islamophobia. During the Arab Spring, Western interventions were often viewed by the local populations as a conflict between Islam and the West (Nebati, 2019). This led to some regional leaders adopting rhetoric that strengthened both Western Islamophobic discourses and global hegemonic policies. Furthermore, the effects of foreign interventions on the socio-political balance in the region contributed to the deepening of these discourses.

Understanding the relationship between Islamophobia in the West and political tensions in the Middle East is crucial. Western military interventions in the region and the growing anti-Western sentiments that followed have played a significant role in fueling Islamophobia (Aktaş, 2017). For example, the Iraq War and the invasion of Afghanistan are pivotal events that increased fears and prejudices against Muslims in the West. Meanwhile, the events in the Middle East led to accusations of the West engaging in a "religious war" (Eğribel, 2022). These mutual perceptions created a cyclical relationship that perpetuated Islamophobia on both sides.

Islamophobia has evolved as a deeply rooted phenomenon throughout history, adapting to different socio-political conditions and cultural contexts from the Middle Ages to the present. Islam has been perceived by the West not only as a religious rival but also as a cultural and ideological threat, and this perception has been reinforced over time (Aktaş, 2017). The colonial era shaped the Western view of the Islamic world, while the wars and global tensions of the 20th century made Islamophobia a global phenomenon (Kutlu, 2020). This historical process plays a key role in understanding the current Islamophobic perspectives.

3. Sociology of Religion Perspective on Islamophobia

The sociology of religion is a discipline that seeks to understand the impact of religion on societal structures, how individual belief and value systems are shaped by social norms, and the divisive or unifying roles these beliefs play within society (Günay, 2011). When viewed from a sociology of religion

perspective, Islamophobia is not only a result of individual prejudices and fears but also a complex phenomenon shaped by the interaction of societal structures, media, education, politics, and cultural factors. To understand how it is related to processes such as constructing the "other" (Göknel, 2015), social exclusion (Çınar, 2021), and identity formation (Ar, 2023), it is essential to refer to the fundamental concepts and theories within the sociology of religion.

3.1. Emile Durkheim and Social Integration: Islamophobia and Exclusion

Emile Durkheim offers an important framework for understanding the social function of religion. According to Durkheim, religion is a fundamental tool for the integration of societies; it helps in the adoption of social values and norms, making individuals align with the collective order. However, Durkheim also notes that religion can play an exclusionary role (Durkheim, 2011). While religion helps societies define themselves, it also emphasizes differences from other societies and belief systems, thus reinforcing social exclusion.

In this context, Islamophobia functions as an exclusionary tool used by Western societies to define themselves (Bayraklı & Yerlikaya, 2017). Historically, Western societies have positioned themselves as the center of civilization and progress, often labeling Islam and Muslims as "backward," "dangerous," and "barbaric." Such representations strengthen the Western self-image as "modern," "enlightened," and "civilized," while simultaneously marginalizing Islam and Muslims as the "other." Durkheim's theory helps us understand how Islamophobia serves as a tool for constructing this exclusionary identity.

Durkheim's concept of social integration reveals that Islamophobia is not merely a religious prejudice but plays a significant role in the construction of social identities. Islamophobia allows Western societies to create an "other" figure, reinforcing their own cultural identities (Tekin, 2017). This process of exclusion strengthens the division between "us" and "them," contributing to the formation of social cohesion.

3.2. Max Weber and Religion, Economy, and Islamophobia

Max Weber examined the impact of religion on social structures, particularly through the lens of religion's relationship with capitalism. In his work *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*, Weber argued

that religious beliefs have a transformative power on economic and social structures (Weber, 1999). Islamophobia, particularly in the Western world, is fueled by the perception of Islam as a threat to the economic, cultural, and social order.

Certain Western political groups argue that Islam is incompatible with the capitalist economic system and opposes liberal values and individual rights (Gafuroğulları, 2019). These perceptions have led to Islam being seen as a threat. Weber's analysis of the relationship between capitalism and religion offers a key tool for understanding Islamophobia. By the late 20th century, some interpretations of Islam were seen in the West as an alternative to the capitalist economic order and Western value systems. Islam's values of "social justice" and "redistribution" (Akyuz, 2021) were sometimes perceived as conflicting with the individualistic capitalist approach prevalent in the West. This perception reinforced fear of Islam and fueled Islamophobia. Therefore, Weber's views on the transformative power of religion in social structures help explain the economic and cultural threat perceptions that underpin Islamophobia.

3.3. Karl Marx and Islamophobia: Religion and the Ruling Classes

Karl Marx emphasized how religion reproduces social structures and reinforces the interests of the ruling classes. According to Marx, religion serves as a tool to maintain the ideological dominance of the ruling classes (Marx, 1968). Religion functions as an opiate for the masses, convincing them to accept the existing social order (Marx, 2002); the ruling classes use religious values and ideologies to establish control over the populace.

In line with Marx's views, Islamophobia allows Western ruling classes to define Islam and Muslims as "backward" and "culturally inferior," thus presenting themselves as the bearers of a superior culture. One of the reasons for global opposition to Islam lies in the religious views of Western colonizers or elite marginal groups. These groups perceive religion as a regressive phenomenon that leads to false consciousness and alienation from oneself. A core reference point for this worldview is Marx's famous phrase, "religion is the opium of the people." This quote reflects the basic perception of those who hold this view: religion is seen as a false consciousness that alienates people from their true selves, serving the function of reinforcing the economic and social position of the ruling classes (Akkır, 2018).

Western powers have portrayed Islam and Muslims as a threat to capitalism, liberalism, and democratic values, thereby reinforcing their ideological

superiority (Ar, 2017). This strategy became especially prominent toward the end of the 20th century. The Western self-definition as "progressive" and "modern" has been coupled with labeling Islam as "backward" and "dangerous," serving as a tool to reinforce the existing social structure and power relations. According to Marx, such ideological discourses help sustain the power of the ruling classes (Marx, 2002).

Islamophobia provides a clear example of how dominant cultural norms and values in the West can be used as ideological tools for excluding Islam and Muslims. In this context, we can better understand the relationship between Marx's concept of religion as a tool and the Western ruling classes' claims of cultural superiority.

3.4. Islamophobia and Social Identity Construction

The sociology of religion is a crucial discipline for understanding the construction of social identities. Islamophobia is closely tied to the processes of identity formation in Western societies, particularly in their tendency to exclude Islam. The theories of thinkers such as Durkheim, Weber, and Marx contribute to our understanding of the "function of religion in shaping social identities" (Cavlı, 2020), while also shedding light on how Islamophobia reinforces processes of social exclusion and othering. Western societies define their own culture and values as "universal" and "natural" (Gür, 2023), positioning Islam as the antithesis of these cultures and thus excluding religious and cultural differences, constructing the "other."

Islamophobia enables social forces aiming to create a sense of homogeneity and unity to carry out this process in an exclusionary manner, ignoring and marginalizing differences (Aydın, 2019). In this sense, the relationship between religion and social identity helps us understand how religion functions not only in facilitating social integration but also in the construction of identity and the creation of the "other."

The sociology of religion views Islamophobia not merely as an individual fear and prejudice but as a phenomenon "linked to social structures and identity construction processes" (Eken, 2020). The theories of Durkheim, Weber, and Marx regarding the impact of social structures play an important role in understanding the social function of Islamophobia. Islamophobia is part of the process through which Western societies reinforce their cultural identities and exclude the "other." Religion, as both a tool for social integration and a structure that can play an exclusionary role (Arı, 2021; 2024), deepens this process.

4. Islamophobia and Social Structures

Islamophobia is not merely a prejudice or fear at the individual level, but also a phenomenon that is produced, shaped, and propagated by social structures. How this phenomenon is reinforced and spread at the societal level is influenced by many institutions and systems within society. The media, educational systems, state policies, and other social institutions all function as tools that legitimize and deepen Islamophobia within social structures. This section will explore in detail how Islamophobia interacts with social structures and spreads through these systems.

4.1. The Role of the Media: Islamophobia and Stereotypical Representations

The media is one of the most powerful tools in shaping social perceptions and plays a central role in the spread of Islamophobia. Especially in the Western media, Islam is often associated with terrorism, violence, and backwardness, creating a deep sense of fear and hostility toward Muslims in the public. Islamophobic discourse has not been limited to news bulletins, but has also appeared in popular cultural products.

Television series, movies, and news programs frequently depict Muslims as "dangerous," "violent," and "reactionary" (Temel, 2019). For instance, in Hollywood films, Muslim characters are often portrayed as terrorists. In the television series *24*, Muslims are shown as terrorists, constantly depicted as America's enemies, and these themes are repeated in many films (Sputnik Türkiye, 2024). These media representations not only reinforce individual prejudices but also pave the way for the development of collective fear and a sense of alienation in society.

The media's Islamophobic representations have spread the image of Islam as linked to terrorist groups and heightened fears of Muslims within society (Arslan, 2019). In this process, the media's portrayal of the "other," i.e., Muslims, as perpetually "dangerous," has created an effect that reinforces hostility toward Islam and Muslims. The media has thus become a platform that legitimizes Islamophobia not only by spreading individual prejudices but also by shaping it as a structural social influence.

4.2. The Education System: Misinformation and Intolerance

Education is a vital tool for individuals to understand the world, learn societal norms, and interact with different cultures. However, the teaching of

misinformation and prejudice toward Islam in the education system has led younger generations to develop intolerant attitudes. In schools, especially in subjects like history, religious studies, or world history, incomplete or incorrect representations of Islam have caused students to develop negative attitudes toward religious diversity.

In particular, in some Western schools, Islam and Muslims have been associated with terrorism, violence, and backwardness. Students have been taught that Islam is a "backward," "despotic," and "obstructive" religion to the development of societies, which has prepared the ground for them to consciously or unconsciously develop Islamophobic attitudes (Bozan, 2018). In European and American schools, the media-driven representations linking Islam to terrorism have created a deep sense of fear among young people, presenting Islam only as a threat (Yavuzer & Açıkgöz, 2018).

These educational approaches have a reinforcing effect within the social structure, strengthening and deepening Islamophobia. Younger generations continue to harbor negative feelings toward Muslims by combining the misinformation and prejudices they acquire both in school and through the media. The failure of the education system to correct these faulty representations emerges as a crucial factor in perpetuating the transmission of Islamophobia to future generations.

4.3. State Policies and Islamophobia

State policies also play a significant role in reinforcing Islamophobia. In Europe, particularly in recent years, anti-immigrant rhetoric and policies have become structural factors that deepen Islamophobia (Kedikli & Akça, 2017). With the onset of the refugee crisis, countries like France, the UK, Germany, and other European nations have faced a substantial increase in Muslim populations. This situation has often formed the basis for state policies and public concerns regarding Muslims.

In France, especially after the 2015 Paris attacks, the rhetoric from the government and right-wing groups towards Muslims has grown increasingly harsh. The French government, with measures such as the ban on headscarves in public spaces, has implied that Islam and Muslims pose a "threat" to society (Alper & Turan, 2023). Similarly, in the UK and Germany, in response to the rising migrant populations, governments have frequently criticized Islam and portrayed Muslims as a security risk. Such policies have contributed to the strengthening and more systematic establishment of Islamophobic perceptions and prejudices in society.

The shaping of state policies in this manner has not only fueled public prejudices but also normalized the fears directed at Islam. These government actions deeply affect societal structures, helping the official discourse of the state spread and become widespread among the public. In this context, it can be argued that state policies function both to legitimize and reinforce Islamophobia.

4.4. The Impact of Islamophobia on Social Structures

Islamophobia is a phenomenon that is both produced and reinforced by social structures. The media, education system, and state policies play a role in legitimizing this phenomenon and allowing it to spread at the societal level. The media, by often depicting Muslims as "dangerous" and "violent," creates deep fear and alienation within society. The education system, through misinformation and incomplete representations, leads younger generations to develop intolerant attitudes. State policies, by turning Islamophobia into a structural issue, deepen the societal divide. The interplay of these processes prepares the ground for Islamophobia to transform from an individual prejudice into a societal norm.

5. The Role of the Media in Islamophobia

The media is one of the most powerful tools in shaping social perceptions and forming individuals' worldviews. Especially visual and print media affect the process by which the public acquires information, while also shaping societal norms, values, and behaviors. The media's role in reinforcing prejudices and fears toward specific groups plays a central function in the spread of Islamophobia. Particularly after the September 11, 2001 attacks, Western media outlets began producing news and analyses that linked Islam and Muslims with terrorism, violence, and backwardness, leading to the widespread propagation of negative perceptions of Islam in society.

By focusing on negative stereotypes and associating Muslims with terrorism, the media has played a key role in amplifying societal fears of Islam and Muslims. This portrayal has not only affected public opinion but also contributed to the institutionalization of Islamophobic attitudes in social and political discourse, deepening divisions between Muslims and the broader society.

5.1. Post-9/11 Media and Islamophobic Representations

The 9/11 attacks dramatically transformed perceptions of Islam in the Western world. These attacks, particularly in the United States and Europe, triggered fears towards Muslims, with the media serving as a primary tool for reinforcing these fears. Since then, Western media has created an image of Islam closely tied to terrorism and violence (Salem et al., 2021). The portrayal of Islam as a radical and backward religion has fostered a collective sense of fear and alienation in Western societies.

In countries like the UK, Germany, Australia, and the United States, television, cinema, and media outlets have often depicted Muslim characters as "terrorists," "criminals," or "radicals." On these platforms, the dangers of radicalism based on Islam are continuously emphasized, with Muslims often portrayed as individuals posing a security threat (Gardner et al., 2008; Saeed, 2007). These media representations have positioned Muslims as a "dangerous" group, shaping societal perceptions and reinforcing negative views of Islam. The constant repetition of these negative portrayals has deepened misconceptions about Islam and created profound distrust toward Muslims.

The narratives shaped by the media in the West not only focus on terrorism but also promote the idea that Muslims are incompatible with modern society. Muslims have often been depicted as "backward," "violent," and "reactionary" (Lebourg, 2018). For example, the French media, while covering the actions of terrorist groups like ISIS and Al-Qaeda, has sent the message that Islam is closely associated with the ideologies of these groups. Such representations have framed not only these groups but all Muslim societies as a threat.

5.2. The Role of Digital and Social Media in Spreading Islamophobia

Digital media, particularly social media platforms, have become powerful tools for rapidly spreading Islamophobia. The anonymity provided by the internet has made it easier for individuals to produce hate speech and disseminate it to a wide audience. In the 2010s, social media platforms hosted a large amount of misinformation, hate speech, and Islamophobic propaganda (Arslan, 2019). These platforms have played a key role in spreading Islamophobic discourse and deepening societal polarization.

Concrete examples of social media's role in spreading Islamophobia can be seen in events like the 2016 Brexit referendum and the U.S. presidential

election. In these instances, populist leaders and groups used social media to generate anti-Muslim rhetoric and spread these messages rapidly to large audiences (Purtaş, 2016). Social media also facilitated the interactive spread of these messages. On platforms like Twitter and Facebook, fake news and misinformation spread quickly, reinforcing the public perception of a "Muslim threat" (Küçükyılmaz & Ayan, 2019). This situation heightened societal polarization and allowed Islamophobic views to gain more legitimacy in the broader population.

The rise of populist politics has further amplified this phenomenon, with social media serving as a key platform for these leaders to gain support. During Donald Trump's 2016 presidential campaign, Islamophobic rhetoric was frequently expressed through the media. Trump's statements, such as the "Muslim ban," and the support messages quickly shared on social media, fueled growing hostility and fear towards Islam (Karakuş, 2019). Similarly, during the Brexit campaign in the UK, rhetoric framing the influx of migrants as an "Islamic threat" spread rapidly on social media, leading to greater societal division.

The ability of social media to quickly spread and reinforce Islamophobic ideologies has thus created a new avenue for the dissemination of negative stereotypes and fears about Muslims, contributing to a more deeply polarized society.

5.3. Media's Influence: Institutionalization of Islamophobia

The role of the media in institutionalizing Islamophobia, both in individual perceptions and societal structures, is significant. Islamophobia is not only a matter of public fear or prejudice but also evolves into an ideological structure. The media plays a pivotal role in shaping a specific image of Islam, and this image impacts various domains, ranging from state policies to the education system. Islamophobic representations in Western media influence not only daily interactions with Muslims but also shape the political and social dimensions of these relationships.

The constant portrayal of Islam as a "threat" by the media has made such representations appear natural and acceptable. This is a societal norm shaped by the media, where individuals, based on the narratives they consume, may develop negative attitudes towards Muslims. This situation leads to systematic exclusion and discrimination, laying the groundwork for the spread of Islamophobic policies. As a result, media representations of Islam

as a threat contribute to the normalization of Islamophobia at both individual and institutional levels.

5.4. Structural Impact of the Media on Islamophobia

The media is an immensely powerful tool in spreading Islamophobia and reinforcing societal structures. After the 9/11 attacks, Western media constantly linked Islam and Muslims with terrorism, violence, and backwardness, creating a widespread sense of fear and alienation. Digital and social media have accelerated this process, with populist rhetoric and hate content spreading rapidly across social media platforms. By shaping not only individual prejudices but also societal structures and ideologies, the media has significantly contributed to the institutionalization of Islamophobia (Küçükcan, 2022). In this context, the media's role in fostering Islamophobia is not just a temporary influence, but rather a structural impact that leads to long-term societal changes.

6. Politics and Islamophobia

Politics is one of the most critical domains that regulates and guides societal relationships. It also plays an important role in the spread of specific ideological discourses and policies. Islamophobia is not only a cultural prejudice but also a social phenomenon shaped by politics and populist movements. In recent years, populist policies and anti-immigrant rhetoric have become among the most powerful tools for encouraging and spreading Islamophobia (Aktaş, 2017). In Europe and the U.S., particularly right-wing and far-right political leaders have portrayed Muslims as a societal threat, turning Islamophobia into a social and political strategy.

6.1. Populist Policies and Islamophobic Discourses

Populist movements often use the fears and anxieties of the public to gain political power. In recent years, many populist leaders in Europe have made immigration, especially Muslim immigration, a central issue in their political discourse. These leaders have depicted Islam as a threat, arguing that it undermines the cultural fabric of societies and disrupts social harmony.

In France, Marine Le Pen's National Rally Party has gained attention for its strong criticisms of Muslim immigrants. Le Pen has argued that French culture is being "undermined by Islam" and that French identity is under threat, using Islamophobia as a powerful political tool (Üste & Mantoğlu, 2023). Le Pen's rhetoric has reinforced fears about cultural changes in French

society, leading to deep exclusion of Muslim immigrants (Emiroğlu, 2021). Such discourses have not only increased the party's electoral support but have also paved the way for a wider surge of Islamophobia in French society.

Similarly, far-right leaders like Geert Wilders in the Netherlands and Matteo Salvini in Italy have used similar rhetoric to portray Islam as a "backward" and "dangerous" religion, positioning Muslims as elements threatening societal peace (Hekimler, 2021). These leaders argue that Islam is incompatible with Western values and that this incompatibility leads to societal problems. In many parts of Europe, such rhetoric has embedded itself in the public's subconscious, turning Islamophobia into a larger political strategy.

6.2. Islamophobia and Populist Leadership in the United States

In the United States, Donald Trump's presidential campaign stands as one of the most prominent examples of Islamophobic rhetoric. Particularly during the 2016 presidential election, Trump made harsh criticisms of Islam, labeling Muslims as "terrorists" and a "security threat." During his campaign, he advocated for a "Muslim ban," which proposed banning Muslim immigrants from entering the U.S., a stance that garnered significant support and lent legitimacy to Islamophobia (Karakuş, 2019). Trump's "security threat" rhetoric aligned with Western media's portrayal of Islam as linked to terrorism and violence, fostering fear and prejudice against Muslims, while contributing to the spread of racist and xenophobic discourse.

Trump's policies targeted not only Muslims but also immigrants in general, presenting the cultural influence of immigrants as a threat to American identity. These discourses, especially when combined with populist rhetoric during Trump's campaign, resonated with a broad segment of the public. Trump's hate speech spread through social media and decisions such as the "Muslim ban" helped institutionalize Islamophobia in American society, providing a form of "legal legitimacy" for such sentiments. This, in turn, has contributed to increasing social pressures and discrimination against Muslims in certain states and cities across the U.S.

6.3. Anti-Immigrant Rhetoric and Islamophobia

Anti-immigrant rhetoric has also played a significant role in spreading Islamophobia in both Europe and the United States. Immigration, especially from Muslim-majority countries in the Middle East and North Africa, is often framed as a "societal threat" (Akıncı Çötok & Taşdelen, 2013). Muslim

immigrants are frequently depicted as economic, cultural, and societal threats. Narratives suggesting that immigrants "exploit" the labor market, "corrupt" cultural values, and "threaten social order" are widely adopted by populist right-wing political movements.

For example, Angela Merkel's refugee acceptance policy in Germany in 2015 was strongly criticized by right-wing and far-right groups, and Islamophobic rhetoric was closely tied to this critique (Tauscher & Bezci, 2016). Following the refugee crisis, in countries such as Germany, France, and Hungary, the claim that "Muslim immigrants" were damaging national identity became prominent, leading to increased societal polarization (Kedikli & Akça, 2017). Populist politicians used these discourses as part of their election strategies, further strengthening the political and societal framework for Islamophobia.

6.4. The Contribution of Politics to Islamophobia: Structural and Ideological Effects

Politics not only reinforces individual prejudices but also shapes societal structures and ideological alignments. The Islamophobic rhetoric of populist leaders has deepened broader societal polarization. This polarization shapes not only social relationships but also the understanding of religion, culture, and identity by the state, society, and individuals. Political discourses often define Islam as an "other," helping to position Western societies as more "civilized" and "advanced."

In this context, it can be said that politics plays a structural and ideological role in spreading Islamophobia. Populist policies capitalize on the public's fear of religious and cultural diversity, turning these fears into societal strategies that are amplified. Political leaders, with the media's influence, legitimize public prejudice against Muslim immigrants, security threat perceptions, and cultural anxieties, turning Islamophobic discourses into societal norms.

6.5. Using Islamophobia as a Political Tool

Politics does not merely spread Islamophobia as a sentiment or ideological stance within society, but also uses it as a political tool. The anti-immigrant rhetoric used by populist leaders and policies that define cultural and religious diversity as a threat have been crucial elements in legitimizing and reinforcing Islamophobia. Such discourses lead to deeper societal divisions and lay the groundwork for the social, cultural, and political exclusion of Muslims. By shaping societal norms and ideological beliefs related to

Islamophobia, politics ensures the institutionalization of this phenomenon at the political level.

Through these mechanisms, Islamophobia is not only a byproduct of societal fears but also an instrument that populist leaders use to gain support and enact policies that perpetuate division, exclusion, and discrimination.

7. Islamophobia and Methods of Combatting It

Fighting Islamophobia is not only an individual effort but a collective responsibility that spans across societal and institutional levels. It requires a multifaceted approach, including strategies such as education, media literacy, legal regulations, and raising public awareness. These combined methods offer an effective roadmap to prevent the spread of Islamophobia. Each step taken in the fight against Islamophobia not only helps eradicate prejudice but also contributes to building social peace and tolerance.

7.1. Education and Cultural Exchange Programs

Education is one of the most powerful tools in shaping societal change. In the fight against Islamophobia, encouraging religious tolerance and cultural diversity in schools and universities stands out as an important strategy. Ensuring that younger generations have access to accurate information plays a critical role in eliminating prejudices (Erişti, 2014). In this regard, cultural exchange programs and organizations encourage students to interact with individuals of different religious identities and better understand cultural differences. These programs allow students to get to know each other more closely, fostering mutual understanding and contributing to strengthening social cohesion.

Such educational programs provide students with the knowledge that Islam and Muslims are not merely linked to terrorism and violence but also represent a peaceful, humanitarian, and culturally diverse belief system. For instance, in some schools in Germany, projects have been organized for students from different ethnic and religious backgrounds, encouraging them to gain accurate information about Islamic culture and develop empathy (Genç, 2004). These kinds of programs are among the most effective ways to break down prejudices and strengthen social bonds.

Moreover, cultural exchange programs help students not only understand the dynamics of their own society but also explore other belief systems more deeply. Acceptance and respect for differences between religions and

cultures lay the foundation for the creation of more peaceful and tolerant societies in the long term.

7.2. Media Literacy and the Role of Media

Media has a significant influence on shaping societal perceptions. Media texts are shaped by specific choices and have the power and purpose to influence viewers. In these texts, certain opinions, events, or practices are repeatedly emphasized, while opposing views and events are marginalized or ignored (Devran & Tanır, 2019). In the battle against Islamophobia, developing media literacy is of utmost importance. Media literacy education enables individuals to question the misleading and false content they encounter in the media, thereby preventing the spread of negative stereotypes about Islam and Muslims. When people begin to recognize the falsity of the Islamophobic content they encounter in the media, they can adopt a more critical stance toward such material.

Media literacy is crucial not only at the individual level but also at the societal level. Civil society organizations and media platforms can decode Islamophobic discourses in society and raise public awareness to combat these discourses. Especially in the age of rapidly spreading misinformation and hate speech on social media, awareness campaigns on platforms like social media will play a key role in enhancing societal resilience against Islamophobia. For example, global campaigns such as "Stop Islamophobia" can be organized, urging people worldwide to be more sensitive to Islamophobic content.

The media's role in combating Islamophobia goes beyond preventing the spread of harmful content. The media must also present accurate, balanced, and positive representations of Islam. Television series, movies, and documentaries can shape society's perception of Islam, and content highlighting its peaceful aspects can be an effective tool in breaking down Islamophobia.

7.3. Legal Regulations and State Policies

The fight against Islamophobia should not be limited to the efforts of civil society and individuals. States must also play an active role in addressing this issue. Governments need to enact legal regulations to combat Islamophobia and pass laws that prevent discrimination, thereby fulfilling their responsibility to protect social equality. On December 1, 2015, the European Commission appointed David Friggieri as coordinator for combating anti-Muslim hatred. This step marked a significant milestone in

the European Union's efforts to fight Islamophobia. These efforts encompass areas such as education, integration, social inclusion policies, and supporting civil society organizations, while ensuring that NGOs combating racism and anti-Muslim hatred play a central role. The coordinator's office contributes to strategies against hate crimes, intolerance, discrimination, radicalization, and extremism, and fosters communication between Muslim communities and NGOs.

The coordinator's office has taken various important steps to raise awareness of anti-Muslim hatred, facilitate information flow, and strengthen communication. These steps include meetings on the Islamic Law in Austria, participation in global panels on religious intolerance, and conferences aimed at fighting discrimination across the EU. Additionally, meetings with Muslim communities in countries such as Germany, Austria, and Malta, as well as collaborations with international organizations like ODIHR, FRA, and ENAR, form part of this process. In January 2021, a workshop was held with the participation of representatives from over 50 NGOs and equality bodies, where concrete strategies to be implemented at the national level were developed.

Through such initiatives, state policies can play a pivotal role in addressing Islamophobia, protecting the rights of Muslim communities, and fostering a more inclusive society.

The Coordinator, in collaboration with NGOs, has organized roundtable meetings to combat anti-Muslim hate and discrimination. These meetings have addressed issues such as daily discrimination faced by Muslims in the EU, ethnic-based police interventions, and hate crimes, and have developed solutions to tackle these problems. On December 19, 2019, a seminar was held to create a definition for anti-Muslim hate and Islamophobia, aiming to contribute to the development of policies for combating Islamophobia. Furthermore, a similar seminar was organized on January 13, 2020, to define Islamophobia at the EU level and secure a permanent place for it in legislation, with the goal of creating positive changes in national legislation across member states (Ergin, 2021).

Additionally, in the United Kingdom, the government's efforts to prevent Islamophobia are particularly evident through measures aimed at securing Muslim institutions. According to statements from the Home Office, a budget of £29.4 million has been allocated for the security of Muslim institutions, with an additional £4.9 million allocated after October 7, 2023. These investments include technological solutions to enhance physical security and symbolize the government's long-term commitment to combatting

Islamophobia. The security measures provided for the Muslim community can be seen as part of a comprehensive approach to address Islamophobia. Primarily, the goal has been to install security technologies, such as cameras, alarm systems, and fences, to secure mosques and other Muslim places of worship. These measures are a response to hate crimes that threaten social peace. Additionally, under the Home Office's "Protective Security Program for Mosques," mosques and other Muslim institutions must register in order to benefit from the allocated funds (Çetinkaya, 2024). This not only increases security but also sends a message of support and belonging to the Muslim community.

The UK government's actions towards Muslims go beyond just security measures. A significant portion of the funds provided to combat hate crimes and discrimination has been directed to civil society organizations that support democratic processes and fight extremism. This indicates that the government is developing long-term strategies not only for physical security but also for social cohesion and peace. Ultimately, the UK government's efforts to prevent Islamophobia include more than just security policies. The steps taken to prevent attacks, harassment, and other hate crimes against Muslims significantly contribute to reducing intolerance in society. The government's funds and security measures allow Muslims to feel more secure and affirm their equal rights within the society.

With such measures being taken by states, it is essential for governments to define Islamophobia and recognize it as a crime through legal regulations. This would be an important step in preventing discrimination and violence in society, as well as helping to prevent the social legitimacy of Islamophobic discourses. Moreover, campaigns aimed at raising awareness, alongside legal regulations, provide an effective solution in preventing Islamophobia.

7.4. Civil Society Organizations and Cultural Awareness

Civil society organizations (CSOs) play a crucial role in driving social change and raising awareness. These organizations are at the forefront of the fight against Islamophobia, undertaking critical functions such as creating public awareness, lobbying for legal changes, and educating the public. Through various campaigns, CSOs can increase public sensitivity towards Islamophobia and combat concrete issues like violence and discrimination. Additionally, these organizations focus on highlighting the challenges faced by Muslim communities and work to ensure that these communities are part of a more equal and just society. International CSOs like SETA,

Amnesty International, and Human Rights Watch publish global reports on Islamophobia, urging governments and societies to take action on this issue.

7.5. Collaboration and Continuity for Social Transformation

Fighting Islamophobia requires not only the implementation of specific policies and educational reforms but also a deep transformation within all social structures. Efforts in education, media literacy, legal reforms, and civil society's involvement are critical steps in this fight, but the process can only be sustainable through societal cooperation. Every individual, institution, and state must bear responsibility in the fight against Islamophobia and commit to continuous efforts to address it.

8. Conclusion: Islamophobia and Social Transformation

Islamophobia is not just a religious prejudice or individual hate; it is a phenomenon reinforced by societal structures and supported by cultural and political powers. The struggle against Islamophobia requires more than just immediate solutions; it demands a profound, multifaceted social transformation. Understanding Islamophobia involves examining its historical roots, the effects of social structures from the perspective of religious sociology, and how tools like media and politics perpetuate these prejudices.

The historical process from the Middle Ages to the present demonstrates how Islamophobia is deeply intertwined with Western social structures. Colonialism and cultural imperialism have systematically shaped negative perceptions of Islam, portraying it as a threat to the modern world. The construction of the "other" in the West, through discourse that depicts Muslims as a danger, has been reinforced by political rhetoric. One of the most powerful modern manifestations of Islamophobia is the continuous reproduction of these prejudices through media and politics, particularly through misrepresentations related to terrorism.

From the perspective of religious sociology, Islamophobia is not just a matter of individual and group prejudices; it is also a phenomenon reproduced and supported by social structures and ideological tools. Sociologists like Durkheim, Weber, and Marx have highlighted the role of religious social structures in shaping societies. Durkheim's emphasis on the exclusionary function helps us understand how societies construct identities

by excluding the "other," while Weber and Marx's theories on capitalism and the functioning of dominant classes provide insights into Islamophobia as a tool of social control and ideological power.

One of the most influential tools reinforcing Islamophobia in social structures is the media. Particularly after September 11, media representation of Muslims in relation to terrorism has contributed to creating fear and prejudice in society. These representations have led to negative perceptions of Islam and Muslims across large segments of society. Digital and social media have further accelerated the spread of misinformation, hate speech, and increased social polarization. Media literacy is critical in identifying and questioning these false narratives. Additionally, media platforms bear responsibility for creating accurate and fair representations, highlighting Islam's peaceful aspects, and curbing Islamophobic discourse.

In the political realm, Islamophobia is reinforced through populist rhetoric and anti-immigrant policies. In Europe, certain political leaders have used discriminatory language against Muslim immigrants, turning Islamophobia into a societal strategy. In the United States, statements like Donald Trump's "Muslim ban" during the 2016 presidential campaign have allowed the normalization of Islamophobic language. Such rhetoric has not only affected language but has also influenced social and legal practices, contributing to the establishment of a structural foundation that strengthens Islamophobia.

Fighting Islamophobia requires both top-down (state-driven) and bottom-up (grassroots) approaches. Education, media literacy, legal reforms, and active participation from civil society are essential tools in this struggle. Educational systems should teach tolerance and religious diversity, and cultural exchange programs should promote the recognition of differences. Media literacy education ensures individuals become more sensitive to misinformation, while awareness campaigns on social media can strengthen societal responses against Islamophobic rhetoric.

States can play a critical role by implementing legal reforms to combat discrimination and promoting social peace. The Council of Europe's guidelines emphasize the need for effective legal measures against hate crimes. Alongside legal protections, efforts by civil society organizations to raise cultural awareness are vital. Civil society serves as an important tool for raising public consciousness about Islamophobia and promoting accurate media representations.

In conclusion, the fight against Islamophobia should not be limited to achieving harmony among religious beliefs but should also serve to create

more tolerant, egalitarian, and peaceful social structures. Since Islamophobia is a phenomenon produced and reinforced by societal structures, its combat requires not only individual efforts but also a broad societal movement. Interactions between education, media, politics, and laws offer the most effective pathways in this struggle. Raising awareness, accessing accurate information, and developing empathy towards one another will lay the foundation for a transformation that transcends Islamophobia in the long term.

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CHAPTER 2

THE PSYCHOLOGY OF ISLAMOPHOBIA[1]

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1. Introduction

Islamophobia, a social phenomenon with numerous historical roots, has contemporary social and psychological effects on individuals and societies in today's world. Islamophobia has achieved widespread popularity over the past few decades, especially with the publication of the highly influential Runnymede Trust Report titled "Islamophobia: A Challenge for Us All" in 1997. There have been numerous academic disciplines and fields, including sociology, psychology, history, and religious studies, among others, that have been examining Islamophobia from a variety of perspectives. The findings of these investigations have revealed that Islamophobia has been significantly increasing, which has a significant impact on the lives of Muslims.

The term "Islamophobia" has not only acquired popularity but also undergone a remarkable transformation, expanding its influence, dimensions, and applications since the Runnymede Trust Report of 1997. Alongside the significant rise in Islamophobia in the Western world, it has emerged as a critical topic across various disciplines, including politics, sociology,

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criminology, psychology, international relations, anthropology, education, law, and the arts. Islamophobia now occupies very significant space in academia; the number of articles related to Islamophobia in Google Scholar rose to 3100 in 2011, although it was only 107 in 2000 (Garner & Selod, 2015: 10). By the end of the year 2024, the total number of all academic articles in Google Scholar containing the term Islamophobia, either in the title or anywhere in the article, reached 121,000.

2. What is Islamophobia?

2.1. Definition of Islamophobia

Despite the prominence of the term Islamophobia in political and public discourse, a more nuanced comprehension of its implications is necessary to elucidate its true nature (Allen, 2010: 4-5). The widespread use of the term "Islamophobia" has led to disagreements regarding its origins and ideal definition. While most agree that Britain is the origin of the term Islamophobia, there are conflicting claims about its initial usage. Allen (2010: 7) asserts that the initial instance of the term Islamophobia, denoting anti-Muslim prejudice, emerged in the early 1980s in the London Borough of Brent. The term Islamophobia became widely recognised following the 1990s, and the 1997 Runneymede Report (Islamophobia: A Challenge for Us All) defined it as 'dread, hatred and hostility towards Islam and Muslim perpetrated, by a series of closed views that imply and attribute negative and derogatory stereotypes and beliefs to Muslims' (Kalın, 2011: 8). Islamophobia is primarily defined by "fear" and represents a contemporary manifestation of a longstanding fear (Karslı, 2013: 80). Islamophobia possesses a lengthy and intricate history, with numerous contributing factors. Allen (2010) contends that Islamophobia is a continuation of historical anti-Islamism. Weller (2001) considers Islamophobia to be 'undeniably rooted in the historical inheritance of a conflictual relationship that has developed over many centuries involving the overlap of religion, politics and warfare' (p.8).

Recent research on Islamophobia, specifically "Islamophobia Defined: The Inquiry into a Working Definition of Islamophobia" by the All Party Parliamentary Group (APPG) on British Muslims, asserts that 'Islamophobia is rooted in racism and is a type of racism that targets expressions of Muslimness or perceived Muslimness' (All Party Parliamentary Group on British Muslims, 2018). This term has garnered recognition within the political landscape of the UK. Early in 2019, the Labour Party and the Scottish Parliament endorsed the APPG's definition of Islamophobia by

British Muslims, and they also urged the ruling Conservative Party and the Prime Minister to adopt this term. Recent studies unequivocally demonstrate that Islamophobia constitutes a kind of racism that warrants the same level of scrutiny as other racial prejudices.

2.2. Historical Roots of Islamophobia

Examining the historical origins of Islamophobia is the first step towards gaining a comprehensive understanding of the phenomenon of Islamophobia. Despite the fact that Islamophobia is a modern phenomenon, it can be linked back to specific historical origins throughout history, and its roots may be traced back to the mediaeval period. According to Weller (2001: 8), Islamophobia may be perceived as "the historical inheritance of a conflictual relationship" between Muslims and Christians. In this conflictual relationship, precisely the first encounter period between Muslims and Christians deserves deep consideration. The early period of Islam not only brought a massive expansion of Islam in the region but also coincided with the first encounter with the West and Christians (Allen, 2010: 26). The extensive religious, social, and political expansion of Islam, particularly its conquest of significant Christian sites such as the holy city of Jerusalem, engendered a perception of threat among Christians and Jews, fostering fear and animosity towards Islam and Muslims. To safeguard their territories and frontiers against Islamic conquests and expansion, Christians orchestrated armed pilgrimages known as "The Crusades" in the eleventh century, initiating a prolonged period of conflict between Muslims and Christians that persisted for many decades and centuries. The adverse initial interaction and the ensuing militaristic battle between Muslims and Christians during the mediaeval period significantly influenced the historical development of their relationship. Consequently, prolonged conflicts and confrontations established the bilateral relationship between Muslims and Christians. This contentious relationship influenced public perception, leading to the fabrication of numerous folk stories, sensational tales, and myths about Muslims, aimed at bolstering public solidarity against the perceived Muslim adversary in the Western world. This restrained a direct contact between Muslims and Christians and the lack of direct contact contributed to these misconceptions and misunderstandings regarding Muslims and Islam (Allen, 2010: 28).

In the eighteenth century, Islamic conquests and their influence weakened globally, particularly in Eastern Europe, as Europe gained more dominance. This shift completely changed the situation, transforming Muslims and Islam from perceived threats to a mystery worthy of exploration. The Orientalist

tradition, as termed by Said (2003), emerged through a process that expedited European perceptions of Muslims and Islam, predominantly influenced by Orientalist discourse characterized by exotic and fantastical myths and misconceptions, including cannibalism and general monstrosity (Allen, 2010; Arjana, 2015). The representations provided by Orientalist discourse regarding Islam and Muslims reinforced the pre-existing Western perception of them as hostile, savage, uncivilized, and backward. The orientalist rhetoric evolved by depicting Muslims as unable to self-define, necessitating fear and control; thus, this notion became the central tenet of the colonization of the Muslim world in the nineteenth century (Allen, 2010). European powers primarily used these derogatory narratives about Islam and Muslims to justify their colonisation of Muslim territories (Runnymede Trust, 1997). Allen (2010) argues that during the colonisation period, Europeans, viewing Islam through the lens of Orientalism, viewed Muslims as regressive, inferior, displaying hostility towards progress and development. Furthermore, European Orientalist discourse embellished colonialist rhetoric with the idea of introducing progress and civilisation to the Muslim world, a notion that was largely unwelcome in most Muslim nations.

Muslims from all over the world began to migrate to the Western world in the last century, particularly after World War II, with the intention of establishing a new life. This trend was largely welcomed by Western countries, which were in urgent need of human capital to re-establish their lives following the devastating effects of World War II. This dramatically changed the relationship between Muslims and Christians, causing direct and intense contact between them. Besides, some global striking events also deeply affected the perception of western people towards Muslims. It is quite likely that the Iranian Revolution of 1979 was the first significant event that occurred during this time period. Muslims received a great deal of attention, and a traumatic shock was experienced on a global scale (Allen, 2010). Following this, the 1989 Satanic Verses dispute, the headscarf debate in France during the 1990s, the Gulf War in 1991 alongside Saddam Hussein's vilification, Samuel Huntington's 1997 article "The Clash of Civilizations," and the Runnymede Trust Report of the same year, titled "Islamophobia: A Challenge for Us All," have solidified the contemporary status of Islamophobia in the modern world.

2.3. The Role of the Media in Islamophobia

The media, as a form of soft power, is likely the most effective and influential method of influencing the thoughts and emotions of individuals in the modern world. Specifically, the media significantly shapes and directs

the general population, especially in the realm of politics. The capacity of the media to construct or reconstruct, alter or demolish, or strengthen or weaken any idea or ideology in accordance with the desires of the media powerholder undermines its objectivity. It is nearly universally acknowledged that each media organisation is associated with a political stance, ideology, group, or power. It is crucial to investigate and observe the media's functions when analysing any political, economic, social, or global issue. In this context, the media's influence on the dimensions of religious discrimination and Islamophobia is not to be disregarded, as it provides information to individuals (some of whom may be potential discriminators and perpetrators) regarding Islam and Muslims (Sheridan, 2006: 320). Numerous individuals in the Western world obtain their knowledge of Islam and Muslims exclusively through the media, which renders them more susceptible to developing Islamophobic sentiments.

Western media, particularly in the realm of film, has consistently portrayed Arabs and other Muslims as barbaric, savage, lustful, and uncivilised. Furthermore, in recent decades, they have been represented as terrorists (Karslı, 2013: 87). The existence of these unfavourable portrayals of Muslims in films has contributed to the overgeneralisation that all Muslims share the same ideals and characteristics. Semati (2010: 261) argues that following 9/11, Hollywood films have significantly intensified the portrayal of Muslims as 'the other,' beyond political discourses and reinforcing the pre-existing unfavourable characterisation of Arabs and Muslims. Numerous films and shows include negative or ineffectual characters with a conspicuous Muslim identity, characterized by long, dark beards, religious attire, religious symbols, and statements motivated by religious ideology. Not only is this unfavourable image of Muslims limited to the realm of film, but it is also prevalent in other mediums such as publications, theatres, caricatures, comics, cartoons, posters, and even computer games. According to Runnymede Trust (1997: 22), the media commonly uses stock characters and imageries that are predominantly negative or uncomplimentary in their portrayals and representations of Muslims. This serves to both reflect and popularise the prejudice that is held against Muslims. Cinnirella (2013) examines the correlation between perceived threat and social identity, contending that within the UK context, media portrayals frequently depict Muslims as a threat to the majority of Britons. The empirical findings of his research indicate that exposure to media social representations influences sentiments towards Muslims, and that both symbolic and realistic threats contribute to Islamophobic attitudes and the stereotyping of Muslims (Cinnirella, 2013).

The Western media frequently portrays Muslims and Islam in a negative light due to the fact that the media in the Muslim world is inadequately equipped to resist and respond to the influence of the Western media. Certainly, there are numerous successful Muslim individuals in the global media who are actors, actresses, directors, producers, commentators, and columnists. However, their success is primarily individual and does not involve the orchestration of a collective global voice for all Muslims in order to accurately depict them in the media. There are not many successful media companies, news networks, magazines, films, or production companies worldwide that accurately and appropriately portray Muslims. On the other hand, it seems that Islamophobic beliefs hinder or discourage Muslims from actively participating in social discussions, leading to their voice not being heard in the public or political spheres (Runnymede Trust, 1997: 10). Because no powerful individual, group, or organization has responded appropriately, the negative image of Muslims and Islam continues to occupy a significant portion of the media space. The media response is notably weak, while alternative reactions often originate from disorganized Muslim organizations that protest in public spaces. Under the guise of freedom of speech, these responses legitimise and rationalise the adverse depiction of Muslims and Islam. The Runnymede Trust (1997: 25) asserts that the media should not abuse the right to freedom of speech to exploit or promote racial, religious, or cultural prejudice. In practice, Islamophobia crosses the nuanced boundary between the right to freedom of expression and prejudice, bolstering the right to freedom of speech. The media's objectivity remains suspicious, and it continues to significantly contribute to the rise of Islamophobia.

3. The Psychological Dimension of Islamophobia

Islamophobia exerts numerous profound effects on Muslims globally, adversely influencing their lives across multiple dimensions, including social, economic, political, societal, and psychological aspects. One of the most significant impacts of Islamophobia is its psychological influence on Muslim individuals and groups. This section comprehensively argues the psychological dimension of Islamophobia. However, the discourse encompasses not just its impact on Muslims but also the psychological motivations of the perpetrators of Islamophobic attacks.

3.1. The Role of "Fear" and "Hate" Emotions in Islamophobia

Fear and hatred significantly contribute to Islamophobia. The term "phobia" connotes fear or hatred of Islam and can readily inform psychological motives, either deliberately or unknowingly. People might be affected unwittingly by external sources, such as the media, cinema, newspapers, and statements by politicians, leading them to engage in Islamophobic acts. Likewise, Muslims may experience fear or hold hatred due to attacks they have personally faced, observed, or learned about. Currently, Islamophobia appears to have replaced antisemitism as the primary cause of discrimination, hate crimes, and physical or verbal abuse directed towards Muslims. Consequently, it has a psychological influence, characterized by fear, insecurity, worry, and anxiety among Muslims (Karslı, 2013: 75).

Fear typically remains passive, whereas hate prompts action, potentially leading to confrontation and even assault. Hate typically emerges as rage, aggressiveness, and hostility, and some research results imply a positive association between reactive aggression, hostility, and anger (Ramirez & Andreu, 2008). Despite anger being a fundamental human emotion similar to fear or happiness, individuals often struggle to regulate it (Lochman et al., 2006). Anger significantly fuels religious hatred on both sides. Anger may prompt the perpetrator to lose self-control and engage in a physical or verbal attack. Islamophobic attacks often involve verbal assaults, including rants, swearing, and insults, but can also escalate to severe physical violence, such as laceration, beating, or even homicide. However, not only the victims of Islamophobic attacks themselves but also most Muslims, when notified about the attack, likely feel anger. Rage generates further rage. This cycle of hatred and rage can particularly quickly impact young Muslims, who often struggle with managing their anger. The term "Islamophobia" possesses significant meanings, first denoting "fear of Islam"; nonetheless, it has increasingly come to represent "hatred of Islam" (Shryock, 2010: 2). To put it another way, "fear" has changed into "hate." The Runnymede Report outlines seven characteristics of Islamophobia, one of which is 'the fear of Islam mixed with racist hostility to immigration' (Abbas, 2011: 65).

3.2. The Role of Safety Needs in Islamophobia

Abraham Maslow (McLeod, 2007) characterized fundamental human needs in a hierarchical manner, categorizing safety as the second of five levels. He asserts that the human body strives to establish a secure, stable, and constant existence after fulfilling biological and psychological needs

such as food, liquid, sleep, oxygen, freedom of movement, and a moderate temperature (McLeod, 2007). 'Maslow also placed religious inclination on the safety rung because he saw that tendency as an attempt to bring about an ordered universe with no nasty shocks' (Griffin, 2003: 127). From Abraham Maslow's perspective, Muslims experiencing Islamophobia may perceive a threat from hostile assaults on their religious beliefs. Islamophobia appears to jeopardize Muslims' feelings of order and internal harmony, from Maslow's perspective (McLeod, 2007). Furthermore, Islamophobia undermines Muslims' sense of security, since they must adapt to the constant threat of encountering Islamophobia at any time and in any place.

3.3. The Psychological Motivations of the Perpetrators of Islamophobia

Psychological literature usually categorises anti-Muslim prejudice as a manifestation of a broader xenophobia, characterised by fear and distrust towards people viewed as foreign, specifically targeting this group. For instance, Strabac and Listhaug (2008) discovered that prejudice against Muslims was more prevalent than prejudice against other immigrant groups and that the influences of individual and national-level predictors of prejudice are similar to those identified in studies on anti-minority prejudice overall.

The psychological antecedents of Islamophobia have attracted huge attention in academia, and many studies have examined the motives of the perpetrators in order to understand the psychological antecedents of Islamophobia. It is interesting to note that many theoretical methods used to understand Islamophobia focus on the role that threat plays as an antecedent of growing prejudice. Cinnirella (2014: 254) posits that the psychological antecedents of Islamophobia manifest at various levels of comprehension, ranging from the intrapsychic to the interpersonal, intergroup, and societal dimensions of Identity Process Theory (IPT) (Breakwell, 1986, 1993), thereby providing a robust and comprehensive framework. He (2014) examines overarching theoretical concerns related to the socio-psychological dimensions of prejudice, assessing how psychological antecedents and motivations stemming from perceived threats to identity reinforce "self" and "identity," hence intensifying prejudice and discrimination. He (2014) particularly emphasises the fear of terror; analysing the fear of terrorism into its fundamental components reveals apprehension over personal safety and security, concern for property destruction, anxiety over potential harm to significant others, particularly fellow ingroup members, and fear of threats to national infrastructure. Cinnirella (2014) asserts that certain perceived threats

(e.g., fear of terror, which is primarily exacerbated by media representations and portrayals of Muslims) to identity (both individual and group, including national identity) and certain significant identity principles (in particular continuity, self-esteem, self-efficacy, and distinctiveness) may be alleviated by the development of prejudice and discrimination as personal or collective coping mechanisms. After all, Cinnirella (2014) proposes a new model, the Identity and Representations Model (IRM). He attempts to synthesise predictions and observations from various separate theories within social psychology, e.g., Intergroup Threat Theory (ITT), Social Identity Theory (SIT), Terror Management Theory (TMT), and Social Representations Theory (SRT), with the specific aim of explaining the antecedents of Islamophobic prejudice.

Tartaglia et al. (2019) conducted a study to examine whether Islamophobia manifests in two distinct forms: Islamoprejudice and Secular Critique of Islam. 'Islamoprejudice consists of cognitive negative stereotypes of Muslims, the expression of negative affect toward them, and the readiness or intention for discriminatory behaviours toward the members of the Islamic group' (Tartaglia et al., 2019: 1774). Secular Critique of Islam refers to 'critique of Islamic religion motivated by democratic, and universalistic beliefs' (Tartaglia et al., 2019: 1774). Specifically, they evaluated whether two social attitudes, Right-Wing Authoritarianism (RWA), encompassing authoritarian aggression and conservatism, and Social Dominance Orientation (SDO), could differentially predict these two dimensions. The study showed that Right-Wing Authoritarianism (RWA) and Social Dominance Orientation (SDO) had different relationships with Islamoprejudice and Secular Critique of Islam. This means that certain criticisms of Islam should not be confused with personal prejudice, since they are based on democratic, universalistic, and secular principles. However, they show underlying cultural biases. On the other hand, the study revealed that the nonprejudicial and seemingly less problematic form of Islamophobia, that is, secular critique, cannot prevent individuals from perceiving the threat from terrorism in the same manner as Islamoprejudice (Tartaglia et al., 2019).

3.4. Psychological Impacts of Islamophobia on Muslims

Citing Jung, Bedi (2019) contends that xenophobia, in general, and Islamophobia, in particular, are manifestations of the shadow, which is the spectre that affects the individual and cultural psyche. Shadow is an essential component of the human psyche. Shadow refers to the unconscious, deficient, and underdeveloped aspect of human potential that is projected onto another individual, group, culture, or race that we may regard as inferior (Jung,

1995). Since it has a detrimental impact on the lives of Muslims, the shadow of Islamophobia appears to darken their lives from a variety of perspectives. Numerous studies (Moffic et al., 2019) conducted in recent years have demonstrated that the detrimental effects of Islamophobia on Muslims have sparked attention not only in the field of psychology but also in the field of psychiatry.

Kunst et al. (2013) developed the Perceived Islamophobia Scale (PIS) in order to investigate the psychological impact that Islamophobia has on the Muslim minority in Europe. They discovered that Muslims experience psychological distress as a result of perceived Islamophobia, even after controlling for incidents of discrimination. In their study, PIS was found to have a positive correlation with psychological distress, and this correlation remained significant in two samples even after taking into account the participants' experiences of discrimination. Both perceived stress and prejudice were found to have a favourable relationship with the PIS. The final finding was that the PIS predicted higher levels of religious and ethnic identity, even when prejudice was taken into account (Kunst et al., 2013). They (2013) concluded that the perception of societal anxiety regarding one's faith and religious group may adversely affect psychological health, regardless of individual experiences of discrimination. Anti-discrimination legislation alone may be inadequate to save Muslim minority individuals from psychological distress.

According to the findings of another study, almost all of the women who had been the victims of an Islamophobic attack in the United Kingdom "expressed feelings of humiliation, anger, sadness, isolation, and disgust," and many of them claimed that they became reluctant to leave their homes (ThinkProgress, 2015). A survey of Muslim adolescents in California revealed that 53% of Muslim students have encountered religiously motivated bullying in educational institutions, nearly double the national bullying average. The bullying experience for Muslim adolescents is complex, involving both direct and indirect aggression, manifesting in various circumstances and from diverse perpetrators, resulting in psychological harm. Muslim youth report verbal bullying as the predominant form of direct harassment, but physical bullying is on the rise (CAIR, 2017). Ali's (2017) study reveals that the marginalisation and othering of Muslim Americans have resulted in detrimental psychological symptoms, including fear, stress, nervousness, isolation, numbness, desensitisation, and insecurity. His (2017) study examines the renegotiation of Muslim American identity following the disparagement of their faith.

4. Conclusion

Islamophobia, defined as the irrational fear, animosity, or bias towards Islam and Muslims, has emerged as a widespread global concern, with considerable ramifications for individuals and communities. In addition to its social and economic aspects, Islamophobia has significant psychological effects on Muslims, impacting their mental health, identity, and overall well-being. This chapter examines the psychological effects of Islamophobia on Muslims, concentrating on the psychological nature of Islamophobia and its impacts on Muslim individuals and groups. The psychological effects of Islamophobia on Muslims are significant and complex, influencing individuals, families, and communities. The consequences of Islamophobia, including depression, anxiety, social isolation, and communal trauma, require immediate consideration. Through developing a sense of resilience via faith, communal support, and advocacy, Muslims may persist in confronting these problems with strength and resolve. Addressing the core causes of Islamophobia necessitates systemic change, encompassing education, policy reform, and cross-cultural communication. Societies can only foster situations where all individuals, irrespective of their beliefs, can prosper without fear or bias through communal endeavours. In conclusion, the psychological effects of Islamophobia highlight the urgent necessity for a comprehensive strategy to eradicate bias, promote inclusivity, and safeguard the welfare of Muslim individuals and groups in increasingly diverse countries.

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CHAPTER 3

ANTI-ISLAMIC REACTIONS OF DENIERS IN THE CONTEXT OF THE QUR'AN

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Introduction

The interaction of individuals with those who differ from them in terms of religion, race, culture, economic status, etc., often creates various levels of tension. This phenomenon is fundamentally natural and understandable because such encounters offer individuals an opportunity to observe themselves through the mirror of the "other" (Kalın, 2019, p. 75). If an individual has strong confidence in themselves and their values, then the initial tension of confrontation can quickly transform into curiosity about the other and an eagerness to introduce themselves. However, if there is no such self-assurance, encounters with those who are different may result in withdrawal, feelings of inferiority, or attempts to assert dominance, even to the extent of rejecting or overpowering the other. When self-confidence is lacking, and narcissistic tendencies, glorification of violence, or similar factors are present, these interactions may escalate into verbal or even physical aggression, leading to attempts to eliminate or dismiss the other to achieve a sense of relief. The individual and societal experiences encountered during interactions with the culture coded as "other"[2] influence preconceptions

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2 In this study, the term "other" is used sparingly for ease of expression, as it is not possi-

and judgments, shaping the responses given. The past experiences in such encounters inevitably impact the present and the future.

When the "other" faced by an individual or society is a religion, particularly Islam, the standard criteria used in evaluating the "other" often fall short, and distinct criteria are needed. As the final and enduring revelation-based religion, Islam introduces an additional dimension to these encounters - one characterized by the contrast between belief and denial.

Islamophobia, which has developed in recent centuries as a result of such encounters, represents a challenging experience for Islam, a faith grappling with severe threats to its material and spiritual domains. This phenomenon, fueled by perception management campaigns, has positioned Islam and Muslims as objects of fear and hatred. However, many questions surrounding the historical, contemporary, and future implications of Muslim and non-Muslim interactions remain unresolved. Even the origins of the term "Islamophobia" remain debated. Despite being defined relatively recently in 1997 (Bravo López, 2011, p. 562; Sevinç, 2019, pp. 42–43; *Islamophobia*, n.d.), its conceptual content continues to be a subject of discourse.

Islamophobia refers to an unfounded fear, avoidance, or dread of Islam and Muslims (Hıdır, 2022, p. 22). The term "phobia," which simply translates to fear, signifies a feeling that requires a rational or irrational source. The use of the word "phobia" in conjunction with Islam suggests a perception surrounding the phenomenon. Considering the current geopolitical landscape, wherein the Islamic world has suffered significant losses in political, military, and social power - sometimes to the extent of systematic genocide in certain regions - the irrationality of fearing Islam becomes evident.

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ble to speak of a true "other" when it comes to the Qur'an. The Qur'an places faith at the core of its value system, and this value is not monopolized by any individual or group. Since every human being has the inherent potential to believe in God and His religion in an authentic manner (A'râf 7/172; Rûm 30/30), someone who is considered an "other" today may, by following the voice of their innate disposition (fitra), align themselves with the believers tomorrow. Similarly, today's staunch adversary may become tomorrow's closest ally. For this reason, the emphasis on "tomorrow" occupies a significant place in interactions with non-Muslims. While the present reality is, of course, not ignored during these interactions, the potential embedded within human nature requires taking into account the possibility that the dynamics of engagement with non-Muslims might manifest in entirely different ways in the future. The historical testimony to this transformative potential has been repeatedly affirmed, most recently exemplified on a nearly collective scale by the attacks on Gaza. For this process to unfold smoothly, believers are entrusted with a range of responsibilities. The concluding section of this study provides a concise discussion of these responsibilities.

The term "phobia" within Islamophobia, rather than genuinely reflecting fear or apprehension, often conveys sentiments of disdain, contempt, or even hatred towards Islam (Kırılmaz, 2020, p. 180). As such, Islamophobia has been strategically framed as a seemingly neutral and innocuous term, obscuring its roots in anti-Islamism and anchoring it in a perceptual rather than factual reality (Tarhan, 2019, pp. 91–92). This becomes evident in acts of aggression targeting mosques, private properties, individuals, and values, which reflect hatred rather than fear. Accordingly, this study adopts the term Islamophobia to signify anti-Islamic sentiments and hatred.

Some trace the origins of Islamophobia back to events such as the conquest of Istanbul, Andalusia, or even Mecca (Kırılmaz, 2020, p. 178). Proponents of this view interpret Islamophobia as a reflection of the tension experienced by defeated non-Muslim societies. However, understanding the term's emergence without acknowledging the distinct nature of Christian and Jewish encounters with Islam during its formative period would be insufficient to address contemporary issues. The nature of fear experienced by those unfamiliar with Islam during its era of strength starkly contrasts with the fears of the 20th-century non-Muslim, particularly Western Christian, world toward Islam and Muslims.

The recognition of the significant spread of anti-Islamic sentiment is crucial for understanding both historical and contemporary events and ideologies. Although Islamophobia appears to have originated in the Western world, it is more accurately understood as a global threat. Anti-Islam and anti-Muslim hostility, motivated by varying factors, have proliferated like an infectious disease even in Eastern countries such as India and China. In this context, it is essential to associate Islamophobia not only with the attitudes of Christians, Jews, Buddhists, or adherents of other religions but also with ideologies that, while in conflict with religion, aspire to function like one. Additionally, opposition to Islam from individuals raised within Muslim societies but harboring animosity toward Islam must also be considered under this concept.

The perception of Islam as a threat to secularism, democracy, and, by extension, Western civilization - elements canonized by the West - shapes the content of Islamophobia. This includes the framing of Islam and Muslims as relics of the medieval past, which has played a role in the propagation of fear and animosity toward Islam (Hıdır, 2007, pp. 82–83). Moreover, the idea that anti-Islamic reactions constitute a critical fault line within the global system (Kalın, 2019, p. 175) underscores the far-reaching consequences of this dynamic.

A related issue deserving further attention is what "Islam" signifies in the term "Islamophobia." Understanding the constructed nature of the opposition, antipathy, or hatred necessitates a deeper awareness of what exactly provokes such discomfort. This broader perspective reveals a series of historical "halos" surrounding the viewpoints and experiences encapsulated in Islamophobia. At the center of these halos lies opposition to the "authentic faith" established by the tradition of divine revelation as a whole. Therefore, the "Islam" in Islamophobia - though a relatively recent term - may be understood as encompassing not only the final form of the revealed religion but also earlier, original forms adhering to the same principles (Râzî, 1401, p. 23/75–76; Taberî, n.d., p. 16/644–645). Efforts to marginalize religious symbols and exclude religion from social life have also influenced perceptions of Islam, which advocates for a life centered on its values and principles. Consequently, Islamophobia can be interpreted as "the new expression of an old fear" (Hıdır, 2017, p. 31).

In this study, the term Islamophobia is used to describe not only the anxieties consciously or unconsciously constructed around the final revealed religion but also the opposition to the values conveyed by revelation. A key motivation for this framing is the striking resemblance between contemporary Islamophobic reactions and the Qur'anic accounts of opposition to tawhid (the oneness of God) throughout history.

The anti-Islamic discourse and actions reflected in both speech and behavior constitute a phenomenon the Qur'an consistently warns believers about. It provides guidance on how to respond without compromising core principles. This article focuses on a reading of Qur'anic verses that caution Muslims against the opposition to faith, now characterized as Islamophobic attitudes and reflexes. This opposition aligns closely with the existential struggle between faith and denial as described in the Qur'an. In this regard, the emphasis in the Qur'an is less on the identity of the individuals or societies opposing Islam and more on their attitudes and objectives. Accordingly, the article refers to these groups as non-Muslims or deniers, even when some individuals, while nominally part of the Muslim community, openly declare their exclusion through their explanations and actions. The adoption of rigidly secular lines by Muslim societies in their modernization projects has, as Bayraklı and Yerlikaya (2017, p. 52) note, resulted in the creation of an "other" group within their own communities. Even though the fundamental characteristics, thought patterns, and behavioral traits attributed to non-believers in the Qur'an offer valuable insights into Islamophobic reactions, an in-depth exploration of these topics exceeds the scope of this study. However, specific personality traits ascribed to deniers in the Qur'an - such

as arrogance, self-centeredness, and the rejection of the intrinsic equality of human values - are included as needed within the discussion.

1.The Encounter Between Believers and Deniers as a Qur'anic Theme

The Qur'an introduces the dichotomy of belief and denial, obedience and rebellion to Allah, through the narrative of creation and the experiences of the first humans. Iblis, who protested against Allah's command to prostrate, driven by envy and a desire for vengeance, symbolizes denial, while humanity, recognizing its errors and seeking forgiveness, represents faith. Iblis, attributing his banishment from eternal bliss to Allah's command to honor humanity, harbors resentment against Adam's progeny and devises manipulative plans to manifest this enmity (A'râf 7/16; Nisâ 4/119; İsrâ 17/62; Sâd 38/82). This moment marks the dividing line between the camps of belief and denial, where each individual chooses their side (Baqarah 2/256; Kahf 18/29) and adopts the associated patterns of thought and behavior. In the Qur'an, denial is linked to rebellion, vengeance, malice, transgression, enmity, and scheming—qualities attributed to Satan, the adversary of both humanity and faith. Those who follow inclinations that lead to denial and evil, rather than their innate potential for belief and goodness, are identified as members of Satan's group (Mujâdalah 58/19). Conversely, those who choose faith - and thereby align with humanity's purpose and the path of goodness - are described as belonging to Allah (Mujâdalah 58/22). Just as Satan is an enemy to humans (Isrâ' 17/53; Furqân 25/29), disbelievers also act as adversaries to both humanity and believers (Nisâ' 4/101), causing harm whenever given the opportunity (Baqarah 2/205).

Beyond the creation narrative, the conflict between belief and denial[1], as well as the struggle between believers and deniers, is a recurring theme

1 The Qur'an employs a remarkably sharp narrative style in explaining the dynamics of faith and denial. This sharpness manifests in the positioning of faith and denial as diametrically opposed entities, akin to the clarity of black and white, thereby articulating the purest theoretical forms of faith and denial. The Qur'an does not explicitly address the practical spectrum of human states that range from "off-white to dark gray," nor does it provide clear commentary on the reality that both believers and deniers may exhibit certain traits of "the other" that they cannot entirely escape. Instead, the Qur'an offers its readers an opportunity to understand the most refined and unadulterated systems of thought and behavior underpinning these two paradigms, enabling them to reflect upon themselves through the mirror of faith and denial, to know themselves better, and, if desired, to pursue personal growth. This study examines the responses of believers and deniers, adhering to the Qur'anic narrative style on a theoretical level. While acknowledging that, in practice, no believer or denier acts in perfect conformity with the theoretical framework, the analysis remains faithful to the Qur'an's distinct method of expression.

throughout the Qur'an, especially in its stories. The Qur'an places true faith at the center of defining the meaning of life and establishing enduring values (Ibrâhîm 14/27). Thus, articulating faith correctly and activating the human disposition toward belief in a healthy manner becomes very important. This responsibility of inviting humanity to faith with wisdom and knowledge was entrusted by Allah to the prophets and, by extension, to the believers (Naḥl 16/125; Fuṣṣilat 41/34).

As both the Qur'an and earlier sacred texts emphasize, revelation and the prophets, who remind humanity of Allah's commands, have often been met with significant discontent, particularly by the societal elite. Even if they do not accept the invitation, the prophets have rarely been met with respectful, neutral, or even courteous responses proportional to their efforts. This resistance is rooted in the fact that societies accustomed to polytheistic systems—especially their elite—perceive monotheism as deeply unsettling. Embracing faith necessitates systematic changes in one's lifestyle, worldview, and criteria for judgment. For the upper class, this means a potential loss of privileges derived from the existing system, abandonment of inherited structures that support their tangible and intangible interests (An'âm 6/119; 136; 138–139), and the disruption of their societal status (Mukâtil, 1423, vol. 1, pp. 591–592; Ṭabarî, n.d., vol. 9, pp. 512–513). Such threats to status and interests provoke a cascade of negative emotions among deniers, including anger, arrogance, jealousy, envy, and a propensity for violence, which naturally tend to focus on believers as representatives of faith.

The Qur'an vividly describes certain personality flaws attributed to deniers, which emerge from rejecting values aligned with authentic faith and straying from tawhid. Understanding how thought patterns rooted in these flaws translate into actions against believers is crucial. Among the most common characteristics of deniers are arrogance, a presumption that they can act without restraint when empowered, and a rejection of the intrinsic equality of human values. Such attitudes often pave the way for justifying any form of treatment toward those deemed inferior. This disregard for others' worth has been described in the Qur'an as "not respecting kinship ties or covenants" when dealing with the community of believers, whose early members often came from the lower strata of society:

"*They do not observe any bond of relationship or covenant of protection with a believer; it is they who are the transgressors*." (At-Tawbah 9:8; 10)

An example of such disregard can be seen in Prophet Ibrahim's call to tawhid, where his father threatened him with death and cast him out (Maryam 19:46). This action serves as a compelling illustration of the "neglected bond

of kinship" mentioned in the verse. The father's hostility, driven by his discontent with his son's message, deviates from the typical paternal instinct to protect one's child, even when there is no intention to believe. Similar discontent has manifested in various contexts throughout history.

For instance, Pharaoh's decree to kill male infants resulted in Prophet Musa being raised in the royal palace (Al-Qasas 28:8-13). Despite this being a consequence of his own oppressive policies (Al-Qasas 28:37), Pharaoh later reproached Prophet Musa for his upbringing (Ash-Shu'ara 26:19), demonstrating another instance of disregard for human values. Pharaoh's mockery of Prophet Musa's speech impediment (Az-Zukhruf 43:52) further underscores this lack of empathy.

Likewise, the people of Midian's words to Prophet Shu'ayb - "*We do not understand much of what you say, and we see you as weak among us. Were it not for your tribe, we would have stoned you to death, for you have no significant standing in our eyes*" - reflect the dehumanization and disregard for values that result from power intoxication. Such statements exemplify how deniers trample upon human dignity and recognize constraints only when met with opposing power.

Unable to terminate the call to tawhid in its nascent stages, deniers often devise alternative strategies over time. One such approach involves attempting to undermine the integrity of the path of tawhid, or at least creating the impression of its loss. The success of believers troubles them, prompting them to seek flaws in the faith, distort its principles, and engage in ignorant debates (Al-Baqarah 2:142; 275; Aal-e-Imran 3:61; 69; 71-73). Their perception becomes so distorted that truth appears false to them, and falsehood appears true (Aal-e-Imran 3:71; At-Tawbah 9:67). Moreover, they aim to propagate and dominate their own misguided beliefs. The resolute and principled stance of believers in adhering to truth and rejecting falsehood deeply unsettles them, leading to a range of reactions driven by this discomfort.

Anti-tawhid attitudes likely to arise from non-Muslims tend to follow a remarkably consistent pattern across societies and generations. As if instructed or trained in this opposition, those who reject tawhid exhibit similar rhetoric (Adh-Dhariyat 51:53) and personality traits, leading to comparable actions regardless of temporal or spatial context. For this reason, analyzing such reactions, along with the underlying perspectives and character structures, is essential for formulating effective counterresponses.

2. Islamophobic Reactions of the Denying Mentality

At this point in this study, the attitudes of denial, which form a spectrum of actions beginning with antipathy and anger and extending to mockery, insult, threat, exile, and even attempts on life, have been categorized and presented, along with references to their contemporary reflections. In this context, it is first necessary to address the issues of arrogance, undue emphasis on tangible displays of power, and the construction of baseless grandeur, which form the foundation of these reactions.

2.1. The Origins of Islamophobic Reactions: Arrogance, Power Intoxication, and the Construction of an Empire of Fear

The denier, unable to understand the essence of life and the Creator's purpose in existence through revelation, opts to construct a lifestyle based on self-determined rules. While this lifestyle may appear to draw on certain values in discourse, its core focus is on safeguarding the privileges of the powerful. (Duclos, 1987, p. 17; Sarıcık, 1994, pp. 92–93). This perspective, reminiscent of the principle "rules do not bind rulers," creates an environment where all agreements, human values, and sensitivities can be easily violated if interests are threatened. The Qur'an attributes such behavior to deniers who fail to restrain their inherently selfish, ambitious, and lawless nature (Isrâ 17:100; Shams 91:7–10; Layl 92:8–10) (Şenat, 2023, p. 258).

The feelings of worthlessness and emptiness that underpin arrogance are among the most significant causes and outcomes of personality deficiencies. As the sense of worthlessness increases, so does arrogance, creating a vicious cycle that exacerbates the sense of inferiority. As narcissistic tendencies strengthen, the pursuit of grandeur becomes pathological (Baqarah 2:285; Ankabût 29:39; Nûḥ 71:7). When individuals are mired in feelings of worthlessness, they strive to acquire symbols of power they perceive as valuable to fabricate a sense of self-worth. The Qur'an identifies the tendency of individuals, particularly those from upper socioeconomic strata, to define themselves by their possessions - wealth, social status, and prestige - as a characteristic specific to non-believers (Fromm, 2015, p. 55 and beyond; Kahf 18:34; Fajr 89:19–20; Layl 92:7–10; Humazah 104:3).

The Qur'an associates the culture of fear produced by arrogance-induced power intoxication with denial itself, treating it as both the beginning and endpoint of associating partners with Allah (shirk). Arrogance, which stems

from human limitations and an inability to fully fulfill its implications (Mu'min 40:56), is concealed within a fabricated vision of a grand life to prevent others from perceiving one's vulnerabilities. Although displays of arrogance might be subtler among those with comparable power or status, they become overt and aggressive when directed at those with lower social standing.

Power intoxication naturally emerges as a consequence of this atmosphere. The state of arrogance leads to beliefs that one's power can solve all issues (Qalam 68:14; Humazah 104:3; Tabbet 111:2), that one is self-sufficient (Alaq 96:6–7), and a disregard for the ontological equality of human beings. Built upon deep-seated feelings of inadequacy, this worldview devalues those with fewer possessions (the poor and the needy), perceiving them as insignificant. The principle of human equality - a cornerstone of tawḥîd - is severely undermined in the secularized conceptualization of shirk, where wealth and status become prerequisites for strength and value (Hujurât 49:13). Denying the afterlife—and thus the accountability of one's life - leads individuals to act without adherence to any principle toward those they consider weak. They feel no restraint in dishonoring or insulting them. When reflecting on the fact that the initial acceptance of revelation often came from the lower strata of society - those who had nothing to lose and whose intrinsic human value was acknowledged - while the initial rejection typically came from the upper strata, who would experience both material and moral losses if the principles of tawhid were upheld, the implications of this network of relationships become clearer in the context of the call to faith

A pattern emerges from history: the initial acceptance of revelation typically comes from the lower socioeconomic strata - those with nothing to lose and whose inherent human value is recognized - while rejection often originates from the upper strata, whose power and privileges stand to diminish under the principles of tawḥîd. This dynamic sheds light on the outcomes of an invitation to faith.

Human history has witnessed numerous deniers, overtly or covertly attempting to play god (A'râf 7:75–76; Mu'min 40:35; Ibrâhîm 14:21). Pharaoh, whose name became synonymous with oppression and arrogance to the point of claiming divinity (Zukhruf 43:51; Nazi'at 79:24), is described in the Qur'an as a "*tyrant full of arrogance*" (Dukhân 44:31). His empire of fear, a stark example of power intoxication (Yûnus 10:83; Ṭâhâ 20:45; Zukhruf 43:54), illustrates how an individual who perceives themselves as entitled to decide the fate of a community or take the lives of countless innocents can transgress the boundaries of humanity. Pharaoh's audacity

extended to the point where he conditioned belief in Allah and following His prophet on his own approval (A'râf 7:123; Ṭâhâ 20:71), thus exemplifying unparalleled arrogance.

Similarly, Nimrod, who was deluded by his power to the extent of imagining that he held control over life and death, represents a comparable dimension of claiming divinity. In the confrontation with Prophet Abraham, who introduced his Lord as the One who grants life and reclaims it at its appointed time, Nimrod defined his sovereignty in terms of granting life and taking it away. (Al-Baqarah 2:258). By this, he intended to assert his authority to issue death sentences for some and permit others to live. (Yazır, 1979, p. 877; Zamakhshari, 1418, Vol. 1, p. 489). The arrogance embodied in such a claim clearly indicates that the individual considers all forms of treatment toward others, including taking life, as their right and acts without regard for any principle.

Like the prophets who preceded him, Prophet Muhammad and his followers faced significant challenges in conveying the message of tawhid (monotheism) to the Quraysh, who held immense prestige and influence as custodians of the Kaaba - described as the first house of worship appointed for humanity (Al-Imran 3:96) (Tabari, n.d., Vol. 24, pp. 654–655). The Meccans, known for their unique arrogance and pride, subjected the Prophet and his followers to various forms of oppression and coercion.

The state of arrogance, whether it arises from material or spiritual power, influence, nationality, gender, or status, should be recognized as a manifestation of a denial mindset. From this perspective, little has changed in the contemporary world. In the vast prison constructed by the capitalist lifestyle, people live as individuals unable to make decisions about what they eat, drink, wear, or approve of—or even what they support or reject. People, unable to assert ownership over their body's appearance, gender, functions, health, or healing mechanisms, find themselves bowing before a minuscule, unprincipled elite minority who claim to control life and death through technology. All of these developments stand in direct opposition to the principles of Islam, which seeks to safeguard life, faith, dignity, reason, and property (Zaruriyat al-Diniyya: Çınar, 2013, p. 138). Thus, these tendencies and preferences are prone to being interpreted as anti-Islamic practices, as they fundamentally contradict the ethical and moral framework established by Islam.

2.2. Antipathy and Anger

One of the most common Islamophobic reactions exhibited by deniers, who encounter believers and harbor an unending internal conflict between their innate disposition (fitra) and their choices, is a sense of aversion and anger. This anger, described in the Qur'an as "biting their fingers out of rage" (Âl-i ʿImrân 3:119), consumes the hearts of deniers. While some of this anger is overtly expressed, much of it remains deeply rooted within their innermost selves (Âl-i ʿImrân 3:118). When the opportunity arises, this anger directed toward the people of faith manifests in various forms, ultimately finding its target (Ibrâhîm 14:13; Ḥajj 22:72).

A significant aspect of this destructive anger stems not only from the content of the message being conveyed but also from the subconscious acknowledgment of the truthfulness and legitimacy of the addresser. Humans possess an innate knowledge of both good and evil, encoded within their fitra. Hence, even when silenced, the inner voice continues to remind individuals of the truth. God further supports this process by raising questions from within people's own lives and circumstances to awaken them and help them perceive the truth (Tawbah 9:126; Anbiyâʾ 21:35). The narrative of the prominent figures who, upon being encouraged by Prophet Abraham (Ibrâhîm) to inquire about the fate of the idols they worshipped from the largest idol, internally acknowledged his correctness but chose to suppress the truth by throwing him into the fire (Anbiyâʾ 21:52–68) demonstrates how vividly this inner voice can resonate within everyone.

A similar instance is the story of Prophet Moses (Mûsâ), where magicians seeking to triumph over him and gain favor from Pharaoh instantly perceived the truth and embraced faith (Aʿrâf 7:113–120; Ṭâhâ 20:59–70). This recurring process throughout human history illustrates the sudden activation of the internal compass, dismantling the elaborate web of denial meticulously constructed through philosophies and ideologies, akin to the frailty of a spider's web (ʿAnkabût 29:41). Fundamentally, the harsh reactions directed toward faith and believers are often driven by a desire to silence or eradicate the external reflection of the inner voice. The examples provided above effectively depict the anger arising from an inability to bear witnessing the truth externally, which individuals strive to suppress internally.

In the West, where Muslims are frequently accused of encroaching on others through various means, the anger toward Islamic symbols can be seen as a modern iteration of the hostility believers face, particularly during times of vulnerability. Islamophobic anger, which occasionally leads to individual attacks, poses severe risks, especially in non-Muslim-majority countries,

where it can escalate into life-threatening criminal incidents for Muslims. This aversion toward Islam, whether present in non-Muslims or in those who identify as Muslims yet seek to engage with Islam on self-defined terms, constitutes contemporary examples of anger-driven Islamophobic reactions.

2.3. Mockery, Disdain, and Humiliation

The perspective of deniers, who place themselves at the center of existence, causes significant issues in their communication with believers. One of the communication problems between these two groups stems from the inability of deniers to counter the people of tawhid with knowledge or sound reasoning. Instead, they resort to belittling and mocking, attempting to dominate and undermine believers through ridicule. Believers themselves, their financial conditions, their faith, and the symbols associated with their beliefs often become the targets of such scorn and derision.

The arrogance of a denier drives them to the delusion that they possess the best and finest of everything, including their belief system. This mindset can be summarized as follows: "If there were any benefit in this religion, we would have recognized it and believed in it before these so-called unwise people. Since we do not regard this religion favorably, it cannot hold any value." This sentiment is encapsulated in the Qur'anic verse: "And those who disbelieve say of those who believe, 'If it had been good, they would not have preceded us to it" (Ahqaf 46:11).

Another aspect underpinning deniers' characterization of believers as foolish is their blind adherence to the paths of their ancestors, regardless of the truth or falsehood of those paths. In their view, if the path they follow were incorrect, their ancestors would not have lived their lives in line with it. Consequently, since their ancestors did not believe, the religion preached by the prophets and embraced by their followers must also be devoid of value (Baqarah 2:170; Shu'ara 26:74; Luqman 31:21).

A common derogatory term frequently employed by deniers to demean believers is "fool" (safih), implying stupidity or irrationality. This insult, used persistently against believers by various groups across different times, is found in Qur'anic references such as Baqarah 2:13 and 2:142, and A'raf 7:66. Lexicographical sources further illustrate this insult: "Safih" denotes a fool or one who lacks reason (Ibn Manzur, 1979, p. 2032; Isfahani, n.d., pp. 234–235).

For deniers, those lacking wealth, property, or power are coded as inherently worthless, along with their intellect, existence, and faith. The

hardships endured by Prophet Noah (Nuh) vividly illustrate this dynamic. For advocating tawhid, he was insulted and subjected to severe oppression by his people, who dismissed him with statements such as,

"*Should we believe in you when you are followed only by the lowest of society*?" (Shu'ara 26:111).

Believers in Prophet Noah were labeled narrow-minded and marginalized as the "riffraff" (Hud 11:27). Despite their poverty and low social status, there is no record of these believers being involved in any wrongdoing or immoral behavior. In other words, the sole reasons for their humiliation were their faith and poverty. Furthermore, Prophet Noah was ridiculed for building an ark in a remote area far from the sea at God's command, with deniers mocking him as engaging in absurd pursuits (Hud 11:38).

Similarly, the Israelites, who had suffered brutal conditions as slaves for centuries in Egypt and were systematically oppressed for their social identity, faced comparable contempt. Pharaoh's description of them reveals this scorn:

"*They are but a small band, and they are contemptible and insignificant*" (Shu'ara 26:54).

The Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) and the early Muslims were subjected to significant insults and mockery from the Meccan polytheists and Jews. Accusing the Prophet, previously referred to as "Al-Amin" (the trustworthy), of falsehood, fabricating a religion in the name of God, and collaborating with jinn was a frequently repeated form of ridicule and humiliation (A'râf 7:184; Fâtır 35:4; Zâriyât 51:52). Such accusations were essentially fallacious arguments grounded in defamation (Adsoy, 2022, p. 224; Bowell & Kemp, 2022, p. 263). Similarly, describing believers as gullible fools susceptible to deceit, considering it demeaning to share space with them (Ibn Mâjah, 1372 Zuhd, 7), and requesting private meetings with the Prophet were other means of degradation and insult. Mocking the call to prayer or ridiculing poor believers who lacked equipment to join battles were also characteristic attitudes of the disbelievers of that era (Mâ'idah 5:58; Tawbah 9:79).

Similar reactions are often exhibited today by opponents of Islam. "The mindset of ignorance (Jâhiliyyah) is a conceptual framework related to a problematic view of humanity" (Altıntaş, n.d., p. 129). Therefore, this mindset can always resurface and adopt new reflexes. Remarks that provoke Muslims, veiled as freedom of expression, and derogatory acts - such as caricatures targeting the Prophet - reflect the inability of critics to engage in intellectual,

level-headed critique. For instance, in the 1970s and 1980s, portraying devout individuals with wooden clogs and grim faces was a common way to ridicule religious practices. Similar depictions are still visible in some satirical magazines today. The religious understanding depicted in Yeşilçam films, equating faith with superstition, and associating the Muslim world with violence while ignoring underlying interventions, also stem from the same perspective (Bayraklı & Yerlikaya, 2017, p. 58). Addressing political issues in a manner that undermines religious concepts and alienates them can similarly be categorized as Islamophobic responses (Öcal & Kösedağ, 2023, pp. 1189-1191). Undoubtedly, some Muslims exhibit inappropriate behavior or lack etiquette and grace, which can rightfully be criticized. However, when a single, highly negative stereotype of a "Muslim" dominates, it is impossible to accept this within the bounds of fair criticism.

Examples under the category of ridicule and humiliation are widespread. These include using Islamic values or Muslim names as elements of comedy - such as characters like "İnek Şaban," "Avanak Avni," and "Deli Bekir" - or presenting a veiled mother as someone to be ashamed of (Haber7, n.d.). Such responses also extend to the remarks made during the Gaza massacres, where the defense minister of the concerned organization stated they were fighting "human-like animals," a phrase that reflects the consistent stereotyping of Palestinians as animals in this rhetoric (*Israeli Defense Minister: "We Are Fighting Human-Like Animals,"* n.d.; *Animal Stereotypes Toward Palestinians in Israeli Discourse,* n.d.). These remarks reveal the mindset underlying the events. It must be noted that the description of humans as "animals" is particularly difficult for a community commanded to show compassion to all living beings.

2.4.Threats and Exile

One of the most pervasive Islamophobic reactions encountered by believers throughout history from the deniers has been forced migration and/or threats to their lives. Migrations that become necessary to protect life and values held dearer than life itself are incidents that reveal the inability of the deniers to embrace a culture of coexistence. It is important to recognize that these are not spontaneous decisions arising from immediate crises or events. Non-believers devise elaborate plans and set traps to drive believers out of their homelands and silence the voice of tawhid (monotheism), threatening them with either abandoning their faith, leaving their homeland, or facing death (Nuh 71/22; Ibrahim 14/13; Ankabut 29/24).

For believers, the difficult decision and experience of migration are not merely acts of relocation aimed at preserving life. Protecting one's faith and fulfilling its requirements are primary objectives for migration. While leaving the land where one was born and lived is not a desirable situation, migration becomes a praised and encouraged action in the Qur'an when circumstances necessitate it (Al-i Imran 3/195; Nisa 4/97; 100; Ankabut 29/56). Migration was not only imperative for Muslims adhering to Islam in its final form but also for believers in earlier periods under specific conditions. In this respect, the stories in the Qur'an can also be read as a history of migration.

The example of Prophet Ibrahim, who was expelled by his father whom he invited to faith, and later forced to leave his homeland after being miraculously saved from being cast into the fire (Maryam 19/46; Ankabut 29/26; Saffat 37/99), is one of the examples of enforced migration mentioned in the Qur'an. The statement in the relevant verse, "We saved him and Lût" (Anbiya 21/71), indicates that migration was the sole means of survival under those circumstances (Kur'an Yolu, 2017, p. 4/281-282). Similarly, Prophet Lut, after being sent as a messenger to his people to remind them of chastity and the natural laws of sexuality decreed by Allah, was also subjected to a second forced migration. His people mockingly said, "*Expel Lut's family from your town, for they are people who keep themselves pure!*" (Naml 27/56), forcing him and his followers to leave their land. When no prospects for life and mission remained in that region, Prophet Lut was compelled to abandon the land where he had settled and built a life, following Allah's command (Hud 11/81; Hijr 15/65). The Qur'an also recounts the experiences of other prophets who were forced to migrate. Prophets Nuh, Hud, Salih, and Shuayb had to leave their regions due to impending divine punishment on their communities, relocating to new lands to start anew (A'raf 7/88-89; Hud 11/66; Ankabut 29/15).

The experience of the People of the Cave (Ashab al-Kahf), which also holds significant meaning in Christian tradition (Ersoz, 1991), is not fundamentally different. The key distinction lies in the fact that these young believers, forced to choose between worshiping Allah and facing death, voluntarily abandoned their homeland, embarking into the unknown. Allah rewarded their sacrifice with the miraculous experience of the cave, granting them special protection and turning their courage into a source of inspiration in the history of tawhid (Shenat, 2013, p. 512).

The migration of Muslims to Abyssinia and later to Medina, along with the migration of Prophet Muhammad to the same city, are different manifestations of the historical inability to coexist. As is well known, one of

the first things Prophet Muhammad learned about prophethood from Waraka ibn Nawfal, the cousin of his wife Khadijah, was that he would eventually be forced to migrate. When Prophet Muhammad asked in surprise, "Will they expel me?" Waraka replied, "Yes. No one has brought anything similar to what you have brought without encountering enmity" (Bukhari, 1422, p. 1/7), alluding to a phenomenon deeply rooted in humanity's collective memory.

In recent history, forced migrations imposed upon Muslims in times of vulnerability, such as in Afghanistan, Iraq, Syria, the Balkans, East Turkestan, North Africa, Myanmar, Arakan, Yemen, Palestine, and most recently in Gaza and Lebanon, are contemporary forms of this persistent inability to coexist. The suffering endured by millions displaced from their homes and subjected to hostility in regions they sought refuge in reflects the painful consequences of choices not initiated by Muslims. While migration is not solely caused by religious opposition or confined to affecting Muslims, internal conflicts and contradictions among Muslims can also necessitate migration. However, when comparing the harm inflicted historically by non-Muslims and Muslims upon each other, especially over the past few centuries, it is evident that there is neither equivalence nor proximity in scale.

The forced migrations experienced in the Islamic world, particularly in geopolitically critical regions, necessitate taking displacement as a serious and imminent danger. The principle that a weakened community's ability to defend itself against external threats diminishes applies universally but is particularly devastating for Muslim societies. Such circumstances continue to yield severe consequences across time and place.

2.5. Attempts on Life

Despite its challenges, exile remains an option that enables survival during critical times and the continuation of the mission of faith in a new place. However, being deprived of life without even the opportunity to migrate is among the realities faced by believers. This ultimate stage of intolerance and refusal to engage with those who are different manifests through threats that escalate step by step with significant noise. In the final analysis, the denialist mindset that refuses to share a common ground with believers eventually resorts to death threats when exile fails to deter the faithful:

"*They said, 'Indeed, we consider you a bad omen. If you do not desist, we will surely stone you, and a painful punishment from us will touch you.*'" (Yâ Sîn 36:18)

The Qur'an frequently recounts the threats of death faced by prophets and their followers. A review of both Qur'anic narratives and historical events reveals that these threats were far from empty. The cry of a believer, who had hidden his faith due to fear of Pharaoh's wrath but could no longer remain silent after witnessing the oppression of Prophet Moses, underscores the gravity of such threats:

"*Will you kill a man [merely] because he says, 'My Lord is Allah,' while he has brought you clear proofs from your Lord?*" (Mu'min 40:28)

By God's help, this individual was saved from being killed (Mu'min 40:45) and stood by Moses.

In the Yâ Sîn chapter, which serves as a summary of the Qur'an's central themes, the encounter between believers and those who refuse faith is presented as a case study, without specific mention of places or names. In this account, a man "from the farthest end of the city" comes running, much like the companion mentioned in the chapter of Mu'min. This man speaks in support of the prophets, declares his faith, and risks his life to aid them. However, the response of the mob threatening the prophets with stoning and torture (Yâ Sîn 36:18) is devoid of rational arguments. For them, the shortest way to silence this "enemy" is to kill him (Yâ Sîn 36:26).

Thus, this man's struggle for faith becomes part of the recurring cycle witnessed throughout the history of revelation, and his dedication serves as an enduring example for subsequent generations. This example also demonstrates that death is not the ultimate silencing of a believer. Though his name and identity remain anonymous, this man[1] continues to convey the message of monotheism until the Day of Judgment.

The death inflicted upon believers by the deniers is often accompanied by unimaginable forms of torture. Pharaoh's title as "*the one of stakes*" in the Qur'an (Fajr 89:10) has been interpreted as a reference to his torturous methods of killing believers (Ṭabarî, n.d., vol. 24, pp. 370–373; Muqâtil, 1423, vol. 4, pp. 688–689). Reports even suggest that he martyred his wife,

1 Although exegetical works (tafsir) suggest that the city where the event took place was Antakya (Antioch) and that the individual in question was Habib al-Najjar (Muqātil, 1423, pp. 3/576-577; Ṭabarī, n.d., pp. 19/419-421), certain chronological inconsistencies arise regarding this claim. If the information that Habib al-Najjar lived during the apostolic period is accepted as accurate (Ateş, 1996), explaining the detail of the "three messengers" mentioned at the beginning of the narrative becomes considerably challenging. However, in alignment with the spirit of the surah, it is possible to benefit from the didactic aspect of the narrative without assigning any specific location or names. This is because the event described here has a universal and timeless quality, capable of being repeated in any context or period (Asad, 1999, pp. 2/898-899).

Lady Asiya, using similar methods (Ṭabarî, n.d., vol. 23, pp. 114–115). The narrative of believers being burned alive in fire pits, merely for their faith, illustrates the extent of barbarity that can occur when such actions are feasible (Burûj 85:3–8). Indeed, the burning of people alive in Gaza's makeshift shelters today highlights the potential for these atrocities to be repeated.

The Qur'anic accounts also emphasize that even prophets, despite being respected by their communities, could not always be guaranteed personal safety when interests were at stake (Hûd 11:91; Naml 27:49). According to the Qur'an, the history of the Children of Israel includes instances of prophet-killing (Baqarah 2:61, 87; Ṭabarî, n.d., vol. 2, p. 31; vol. 20, p. 344). These were not isolated incidents but recurring patterns (Baqarah 2:61; Âl ʿImrân 3:112; Mâʾidah 5:70). Although Jews did not recognize them as prophets, it is known that Zechariah, John (Yahya), and Jesus (Isa) were also targeted for execution. Jesus was saved through divine intervention (Nisâʾ 4:157), but the other prophets were martyred (Aydın, 2024a, 2024b).

It should be remembered here that the Prophet Muhammad embarked on the Hijrah journey after narrowly escaping a recently planned assassination attempt (Al-Anfal 8:30; Ibn Hisham, 1375, vol. 1, p. 480). The attack he faced in Ta'if and the assassination attempt in Medina exemplify the persistent desire of disbelievers to rid themselves of the one who spoke of tawhid (the oneness of God). The torture and killings inflicted upon believers, particularly those from the Prophet's era who belonged to socially disadvantaged strata, vividly illustrate how the right to life of the faithful was completely disregarded (Ibn Hisham, 1375, vol. 1, pp. 317–321; Ibn Ishaq, 1398, vol. 1, pp. 189–197).

There is a direct connection between the onset of colonial activities in the Islamic world and the shedding of Muslim blood. The loss of life in Muslim territories, formally or informally occupied in recent times, is immeasurable. In places such as Afghanistan, East Turkestan, Iraq, Syria, and many other Muslim lands, millions of lives have been lost. The traces of systematic oppression and massacres in the Balkans remain vivid, with the region still struggling to recover from its period of convalescence. The memory of Bosniaks, who were handed over to the Serbs despite the known consequences while under the protection of UN forces, remains a stark reminder. At the time of writing, the number of civilian Muslims massacred in Gaza has approached fifty thousand, and the risk of the violence spreading to Lebanon and even wider regions grows with each passing day.

Muslim blood is sometimes shed directly by occupiers and often by governments or organizations supported by them. At times, conflicts and clashes of interest lead to Muslims harming one another. However, in such situations, there have always been forces provoking sensitivities and groups capable of resisting such manipulations. In these instances, the hand pulling the trigger and the one placing the weapon in that hand must both be recognized. Failing to do so will always leave any assessment incomplete.

Alongside the large-scale societal oppressions, recent years have witnessed isolated attacks in various parts of the world, which have increasingly become a problem for Muslims living as minorities in their respective countries. In such incidents, which target defenseless civilians, locations like mosques, restaurants, or homes where people gather collectively are attacked. These small-scale massacres arise from the same mentality that drives the large-scale ones.

3.Attitudes Expected From Muslims Toward Islamophobic Reactions

The sociocultural conditions, preconceptions, and biases that contribute to Islamophobia are multifaceted, involving two key parties. On one side are those who express Islamophobic reactions, whether they belong to other faiths or nominal Muslims who distance themselves significantly from Islam while aligning with those harboring such biases. This study has thus far examined the attitudes of this group toward believers. The Qur'an's references to this matter are not intended to denigrate non-believers. Rather, these explanations serve a dual purpose: to caution believers and, if non-believers read the Qur'an without prejudice, to reflect their inner nature, potentially exposing elements of their character they may not even recognize.

On the other side of this equation are Muslims, who are subject to Islamophobic discourse, actions, and reactions. Their experiences in such situations may elicit human emotions such as sadness, anxiety, feelings of worthlessness, doubt about their values, anger, reciprocal hostility, counter-violence, or even a desire for revenge. While acknowledging the presence of such natural emotions, the Qur'an mandates responses aligned with Islam's universal values, refined through reason and wisdom, placing this responsibility on believers.

A foundational step for Muslims in addressing negative attitudes from non-Muslims is to develop awareness and vigilance even before encountering such reactions. In essence, the Qur'an establishes an early warning system

to prevent believers from being caught off guard by hate speech or actions. This prepares them to respond appropriately when they face these challenges in practice, without succumbing to human weaknesses.

One of the first insights regarding Islamophobia is that these reactions often reveal more about the personalities and worldviews of Islamophobic individuals and societies than about Islam or Muslims themselves (Bayraklı & Yerlikaya, 2017, p. 54; Kalın, 2019, p. 75). Consequently, when faced with reactions that exceed constructive criticism and escalate into anger, hatred, or harm, Muslims must recognize that the issue lies with their interlocutors rather than with themselves. The Qur'an preemptively warns believers of such possibilities:

"*You will surely be tested in your possessions and your lives. And you will surely hear much abuse from those who were given the Scripture before you and from those who associate others with Allah. But if you are patient and fear Allah - indeed, that is of the matters [worthy] of determination*." (Aal-e-Imran 3:186)

This verse subtly indicates that encountering difficulties is inherent to the process of faith. Believers are reminded to persevere resolutely, maintain their principles, and understand that facing hardships is an integral part of striving in the way of Allah:

"*Or do you think that you will enter Paradise while such [trial] has not yet come to you as came to those who passed on before you? They were afflicted by poverty and hardship and were shaken until [even their] messenger and those who believed with him said, 'When is the help of Allah?' Unquestionably, the help of Allah is near.*" (Al-Baqarah 2:214)

As Islamophobic reactions progress step by step, believers' responses must similarly adapt to the circumstances. The Qur'an outlines three primary attitudes for Muslims when faced with adverse actions from non-believers. The first phase involves maintaining good conduct, refraining from insulting others' sacred beliefs, showing patience, and continuing relationships without placing undue importance on hostile actions (Furqan 25:63; Mumtahina 60:8). The second phase begins with protest and opposition, and if this proves insufficient, it transitions to the stage of defense and active struggle, or jihad. (For a systematic classification of these stages based on Qur'anic verses, see Şenat, 2009, p. 212 ff.) Throughout all stages, exceeding limits, succumbing to anger, or adopting excessive attitudes are strictly prohibited (Ma'ida 5:2).

When the Qur'anic teachings under both categories are synthesized, the following framework emerges: When non-believers exhibit arrogance, antipathy, anger, mockery, or scorn, Muslims are advised to respond with patience and dignity, avoiding stooping to their level, and continuing engagement with knowledge and wisdom. If the mockery and scorn shift focus from individuals to religious values, Qur'anic verses, or the Prophet, then Muslims enter the second phase, protesting the situation with dignity and temporarily suspending communication. If matters escalate to threats, forced displacement, or attempts on life, believers are instructed to resort to self-defense and active measures, including warfare, while adhering to the values imparted to them. Before and after engaging in such measures, Muslims are advised to avoid forming intimate relationships or strategic alliances with those outside their faith community, recognizing that such expectations are often unilateral (Ma'ida 5:57; Tawba 9:23; Mumtahina 60:9). Additional principles include fostering deterrent strength (Anfal 8:60) and acting in unity and perseverance (Aal-e-Imran 3:103, 105; Anfal 8:45-46).

Conclusion

Throughout history, Muslim-non-Muslim interactions have oscillated between moments of profound crises and instances of amicable competition. However, a series of successive and interlinked crises has severely strained these relations, nearly eroding the roots of a once-thriving culture of coexistence, particularly in regions historically rich with Islamic contributions. What is being labeled as a "new" phenomenon is, in reality, a reflection of an age-old global order. The struggle against tawhid (monotheism) persists, sometimes overtly, other times covertly, under the guise of Islamophobia. At this juncture, there is an urgent need to heed the Qur'anic warnings, which function as guiding principles akin to preventive medicine, to address and heal the current state of affairs. While it may be difficult to accept, it must be acknowledged that when believers falter in their resolve, they will inevitably encounter Islamophobic reactions. In this context, Muslims who face such reactions must move swiftly beyond the phases of shock, astonishment, and dismay, and instead, roll up their sleeves to devise pragmatic and situation-appropriate solutions. The Qur'an's admonitions regarding how non-Islamic elements might act when given the opportunity serve as a critical reminder for Muslims not to lapse into complacency. Vigilance is imperative to safeguard their communities' security and well-being against developments that may pose threats. Contrary to the prevailing systemic trends, strength rooted in adherence to principles of justice and law is one of the key values

Muslims must uphold and wield to mitigate Islamophobic responses. Despite differences in views, attitudes, and approaches, fostering cooperation and achieving unity in vital matters is among the most effective antidotes to Islamophobia. The roadmap is clear; the unresolved question remains: how many more sacrifices must be made before this course is reembraced?

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CHAPTER 4

ISLAMOPHOBIA IN THE CONTEXT OF RELIGION AND RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

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Introduction

In the last twenty years, it has been observed that negative perceptions and attitudes towards Islam and Muslims have increased in Western countries. Research shows that many Muslims are subject to religious discrimination in their daily lives, and their devalued position in the society they live in has reached a disturbing level. (Allen and Nielsen, 2002; EUMC, 2005; EUMC, 2006; FRA, 2024). Negative perceptions and attitudes towards Muslims and the Islamic religion have turned into hostile behavior, especially after the September 11, 2001 attacks in the United States and the terrorist attacks that occurred in various European cities since 2004. Different theories can be put forward as to what triggered this increase in Islamophobia in a relatively recent period: a religious superiority struggle between Christianity and Islam that has been going on for thousands of years, a political conjuncture in which the Western world is trying to find a new enemy, an effort to build a single global culture on earth, etc. It is also a clear fact that time is needed to read the reasons behind Islamophobia more accurately in terms of historical, cultural, religious, sociocultural and political factors and to examine them from different aspects.

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Economic migration was encouraged by European countries in order to revitalize their economies, and even *migration* became a common policy of many European governments. As a natural result of this situation, European society, which had a more homogeneous structure in terms of religion, tradition and culture, has transformed into a very diverse ethnocultural and heterogeneous structure over time. While European peoples experienced the transition to multicultural life on the one hand, immigrants and subsequent generations tried to integrate into the sociocultural structure of Europe on the other. In this process, the phenomenon of *religion* has been an important problem in the common living area for both groups. The experiences of societies with different religions and cultures living together in multicultural public spaces have given rise to an important area of discussion after the Muslim communities wanted to meet their needs for *religious life* and *religious education* on the grounds where they have made their existence permanent over time.

In the literature, it is possible to frequently come across studies that address Islamophobia based on theological, sociological, political and media perspectives. However, it can be said that there are fewer studies focusing on the impact of Islamophobia on education systems and more specifically on *religious education*. This study aims to determine a series of suggestions regarding the contents that can be integrated into educational curricula in order to prevent the damage that prejudice and discrimination, which are deepening day by day, do to the culture of living together in multicultural societies and the negative Islamophobic perceptions and attitudes on Muslim communities, in the context of religious education. In the study, after providing information on the historical background of the concept of Islamophobia, its sociological and psychological dimensions, and Islamophobic practices in the education systems of Turkey, Europe and North America, suggestions that can be included in the curricula of educational systems within the scope of combating Islamophobia are included.

Islamophobia as a concept was first used in 1922 by the French orientalist Etienne Dinet as “Prejudice against Islam” in Western societies and by Christian segments (Dinet & Ibrahim, 2022): Aslan, 2021:1-26). It became widespread in spoken language in the 1990s to describe the discrimination that Muslims experienced in Europe. In 1997, the British think tank Runnymede Trust published a report titled “ *Islamophobia: A challenge for us all”,* pointing out the fear and hatred towards Muslims living in the UK , and stated that the West’s perception of Islamophobia, which has formed the basis of hostility and accusations against Islam and Muslims, is that Islam is a different tradition that is far from science, technology and all kinds of

change, closed to interaction with other religions and has no effect on other religions, that Islam is a bigoted, irrational, barbaric, gender-discriminatory, political ideology that is always ready for war, that the first thing that comes to mind when Islam is mentioned is terrorism, that Muslims are far from peace and tolerance, that they are in favor of violence and war, that Muslims should be excluded by exhibiting negative attitudes and behaviors towards them, and that there are justified reasons for their entry into certain areas to be banned (Alıcı, 2019:55). It was stated that all these practices should be seen as justified indicators of Western hostility towards Islam and that this situation is normal.

In terms of meaning, *Islamophobia* is derived from the combination of the Arabic word *Islam,* meaning "peace", "security" and "submission", and the Ancient Greek word "Phobos", meaning "fear" and "dread", meaning *phobia.* The word "phobia" is now widely used to describe various psychological disorders, as well as being a negative term that refers to excessive and irrational fears of certain objects or situations. Islamophobia is conceptually expressed in the literature as the fear of Islam and believers in Islam, ultimately opposition to Islam in the political and social spheres, hatred, hostility and discrimination against Muslims (Özarslan, 2023:63), a situation that has emerged as a result of instilling and feeding the fear of Islam in those who have not met Islam, and increasing the hatred, anger and discrimination towards Islam to higher levels, especially in the Western world (Tamer, 2018:303), an unfounded concern for Islam and Muslims (Bayraklı and Yerlikaya, 2017:52), a concept produced, developed and nourished by Western societies (Bolat, 2022:27), a tendency to see Islam as bigoted, outdated, closed to developments and barbaric by treating Muslims as terrorists, and a concept that includes negative perceptions in which individuals who belong to the Islamic religion are imposed on the world as terrorists, containing fear and hate speech.

With the industrial revolution in the West, the increase in the waves of migration to the West, especially after World War II, has led to the rise of social diversity, the understanding of living together, and multicultural life becoming a distinct understanding. The understanding of multicultural life envisaged that different ethnic, cultural and religious groups could live on the basis of mutual respect and tolerance and make economic and social contributions to the society they live in. However, it has been seen that the theory of living together, focused on mutual respect and tolerance in the context of multiculturalism, has also brought European and North American societies face to face with some tests. Recently, the identification of terrorist incidents with Islam, generalizations in the media, and the increase in far-

right political discourses in Europe have caused Muslims living in Western societies to be marginalized and become a threat to the multicultural structure of Western societies. This situation has thwarted the efforts of different faith and ethnic groups to integrate into society, making it difficult for Western countries to implement multicultural policies. The lack of a solution to this situation causes the sense of belonging and trust of Muslim communities in Western societies to weaken, increasing social polarization and deepening the problems of radicalization and mutual distrust. The spread of Islamophobic policies and rhetoric makes the integration of Muslim communities, especially in Europe, more difficult with each passing day.

Discriminatory discourses and actions of Muslims living in EU countries in employment, education, housing and business life affect every aspect of the daily lives of European Muslims. Although the proportion of Muslim communities varies depending on the country and demographic situation, the Muslim population in the EU is around 5-8% of the total population. According to the results of the survey titled 'Being Muslim in Europe, Experiences of Muslims' conducted by the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights with approximately 10 thousand Muslim participants in Austria, Belgium, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Ireland, Italy, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Spain and Sweden, racism and discrimination-based attacks against Muslims have increased significantly between 2016 and 2022. In Austria (71%) and Germany (68%), where European Muslims face the most discrimination, the rise of far-right politics is stated as the reason for the increase in racism and discrimination (FRA, 2024).

Islamophobia in the Context of Religious Education

Certainly, the phenomenon of religion has many meanings and functions for the individual and society. Religion, which provides spiritual satisfaction in questioning the purpose of life and existence of a person and helps the individual in his search for meaning, can provide hope, consolation and inner peace in the face of difficulties and uncertainties, helps people make ethical decisions by creating a moral framework on what is right and wrong, reduces the feeling of loneliness and contributes to the development of a sense of belonging to a society by including them in a society. Religion has more collective functions in terms of creating a social control mechanism by keeping individual behaviors within certain limits, helping to maintain social order through certain norms and rules, bringing people together through beliefs, worships, rituals, etc. and contributing to the strengthening

of social ties and solidarity. Therefore, religion has an important mission in the formation of a healthy social structure and in the individual's adaptation to the society in which he lives. The basic issue of religious education is how to teach the belief, worship and moral elements of religion, which is one of the basic paradigms of society. By teaching these correctly and reasonably, the development of cognitively healthy individuals will also contribute to the formation of a healthy society (Ayhan, 1997:38).

With the rapidly increasing secularization after industrial society, the idea that religion would gradually recede from the public sphere has become a dominant view throughout the world for the last few centuries (Stark et al., 1996). In the past, in homogeneous societies, religion constituted the symbolic basis and sacred legitimacy of social institutions and values. Therefore, questioning the relationship between religion and education was meaningless (Muhammed, 2003: 281). However, the fact that societies have become increasingly multicultural, especially after World War II, has brought with it many discussions on *religion* and *religious education.* Although today's societies have differences in their education systems according to their forms of government, they somehow include religious education in their curricula (Köylü, 2017: 224). Including religious education in different ways has paved the way for the development of new understandings and methods over time. For example, new scientific disciplines such as "intercultural education" and "interfaith education" have emerged in the West (Tosun, 2023: 101).

It is difficult to talk about a standard and uniform religious education in Europe. It can be said that this situation is due to the political, demographic and cultural structures of the states. The USA, which has a more cosmopolitan religious and cultural structure, continues to discuss religious education in state schools due to the principle of secularism it implements. However, religious education provided in church schools and private schools is more conciliatory (Köylü and Turan, 2017: 49-50). In Russia, which once came to the fore with stricter anti-religious policies compared to European countries and the USA, different views and practices regarding religion-state relations and religious lessons in schools are currently drawing attention. Despite the strict structuralist approach that argues that religious education cannot be compulsory, Russian nationalists and church supporters completely equate being Russian with being Orthodox. When we look at the religious education practices in Islamic countries, it can be said that many countries are still in search of something. Especially in Islamic countries with a secular understanding of governance, how religious education will/should be is still a matter of debate today. However, although many countries in the Western world have a secular state system, they provide religious education in schools

under different names and according to different approaches (Köylü, 2017: 224).

Islamophobic Practices in Education Systems

Where Islamophobia negatively affects Muslims is undoubtedly the education sector. Muslim students can encounter the negative effects of Islamophobia, whether covertly/implicitly by insensitive and unconscious teachers or consciously embedded in the content of the education curriculum. Although this situation is seen in countries where the majority of the population is not Muslim, it also occasionally appears as a problem in Muslim countries with a relatively secular understanding of education.

According to research, the Muslim communities most exposed to Islamophobic practices in education systems are in North America and Europe. It is seen that the attitudes and behaviors such as discrimination, prejudice and exclusion experienced by Muslims in the Western world have started to increase rapidly, especially in the United States after September 11. The impact of Islamophobia is also seriously felt on American Muslims. As a result, American Muslims face various negativities. These negativities faced by Muslims make it significantly difficult to reconcile their Muslim and American identities. Despite the fact that Muslims have responded to these negativities by hiding their identities regarding their beliefs or by educating about Islam and Muslims, they still experience great difficulties in their educational lives. For example, 2023 has been a critical year for the Muslim community in the state of Massachusetts with increasing cases of Islamophobia and discrimination. According to the Islamophobia report prepared by the Council on American-Islamic Relations (CAIR), there was a 72% increase in requests for help from parents and students experiencing Islamophobia in public schools in 2022 compared to the previous year. There was a 40% increase in hate crimes against Muslims during the year, and a 385% increase in workplace discrimination claims. Muslim students at Harvard University were subjected to hate crimes and harassment, including physical attacks, threats, stalking and vandalism, a student's water bottle being laced with a toxic substance and another being severely beaten, as well as doxxing campaigns and death threats. Muslim students at all levels of education, from primary school to university, were discriminated against by their teachers and other students. Students who participated in pro-Palestinian protests faced harsher disciplinary punishments than those who participated in other protest movements (CAIRMA, 2023).

A study focusing on the school experiences of Muslim youth in Canada who are determined to continue an Islamic lifestyle despite the pressure to conform to the dominant culture concluded that teachers' attitudes towards Islamophobia directly affect the situation of Muslim students. The fact that some teachers have an unconscious understanding of Islamophobia or the information about Islam in the curriculum reveals an inequality of opportunity among students (Zine, 2001). Another study found that Muslim students in American schools are subject to discrimination in different places such as classrooms and cafeterias, and that Muslim students' experiences also include belittling their religious identities (Tuzer, 2024). Despite some negativities, Muslims in America have developed different approaches and curriculums to ensure that Islamic education has a place in modern schools. In this context, IQRA' Foundation, Tarbiyah Foundation, Islamic Shakhsiyah Foundation and Noor Kids can be given as examples. The efforts of Muslim societies to make room for Islamic education in modern societies and the educational programs and materials that emerge as a result are important in terms of setting an example for institutions that are seeking similar education. In America, the number of students attending private religious schools is more than 10% of the total number of students. Half of these students attend Catholic schools, while the other half receive their religious education in schools belonging to major Christian denominations, as well as in Jewish, Islamic and Buddhist schools (Çekin, 2013: 143-144).

Islamophobia, which has turned into hate speech today, is causing all tolerant behaviors and attitudes towards the Islamic world and thought to gradually disappear. In fact, in the West, Islamophobia is directly carried out by the state and in educational institutions. It is also possible to see examples of practices that make Islamophobia more apparent in schools in Europe. In a study conducted on the difficulties experienced by Muslim youth in the field of religious education, it was found that families and schools did not provide sufficient resources and support in the field of religious education for British youth, and some Muslim families complained about not being able to find appropriate resources to provide religious education in the secular system (Gent, 2014). In addition to the statement "Not every Muslim is a terrorist, but every terrorist is a Muslim" in a religious textbook in Danish state schools, it was included under the headings "fundamentalism" and "terrorism" in a section on Islam in another grade-level textbook. In another textbook, after providing preliminary information about the September 11 attacks and Osama Bin Laden, information about Islam is included, which can be shown as concrete data in the textbooks about fear of Islam and opposition to Islam (Er, 2008: 766).

Today, reports prepared on Islamophobic practices in educational institutions in Europe show that Islamophobic practices in various countries are becoming increasingly systematic. These practices have a particularly negative impact on Muslim students. France implements policies that restrict the visibility of Muslim students. Practices such as inspecting and reporting headscarves, excessively long skirts, etc. in educational institutions are seen as part of these policies. Teachers and administrative staff in educational institutions are forced to detect such situations and may be punished if they do not report them. Since 2020, thousands of Muslims have been investigated by the French government, and places of worship, as well as civil society organizations, schools, and businesses, have been temporarily or completely closed (Amnesty International, 2022). For example, in Belgium, the Imam of the Brussels Grand Mosque has been forced to resign in order not to lose government funds, and religious leaders have been put under pressure. Such practices pose both a psychological and social threat to Muslim communities. Denmark is discussing banning headscarves in primary schools and has budgeted for teacher training aimed at preventing negative social control over "honour". These reports highlight the institutionalisation of Islamophobic practices across Europe, not only at the level of individual discrimination, but also through state policies and legislation. The recommendations submitted to the Council of Europe's Equality Committee state that such practices are contrary to international norms and that the European Union should take more effective action on the issue.

The roots of Islamophobic practices in Turkey, particularly in religious education, can be traced back to the Tanzimat period. In the efforts to modernize education that began with the Tanzimat, how religious education would be included in the modern education system or whether it would be included at all has been a constant topic of discussion. The interruption of the integration processes of madrasahs into the modern education system can be addressed in historical, social and institutional dimensions. The fact that madrasahs were at the center of religious sciences during the Ottoman Empire, and the modern education idea focused on rational sciences such as science, social sciences and technology instead of religious sciences, led to an increase in madrasah-school conflicts over time.

The fact that people who studied at European universities and were distant and distant from the values of the people and Islamic values have taken over the management positions over time has caused the beliefs and values of Islam to be considered as "backward" and "underdeveloped" and even the traditional cultural elements of the society to be perceived as "outdated". This situation can be seen in the policies implemented from the foundation

of Turkey until recent times. After the Ottoman Empire, especially during the single-party rule in the history of Turkey, these practices against Islam and the beliefs and values of the people have left negative effects and traces in the eyes of the society. Such Islamophobic behaviors were carried out by a certain group that held the official power of the state towards the people, Islam was perceived as an element of fear and a threat to the regime, and Islam and Muslims were declared as elements of fear and threat by being seen as synonymous with reactionism and reactionism. The administration changed with the Multi-Party Period and religious education started to find its place in the curriculum again. However, it is still not clear what will be done and how, but on the other hand, religious schools were opened to meet the need of the society for religious officials, and religious education courses were introduced in primary and secondary schools (Cebeci, 2005:4). In short, it can be said that the place of religious education in the Turkish Education System became a subject of discussion with the Tevhid-i Tedrisat Law. Depending on the wishes of the political power of the country, it was sometimes included in the curriculum as an elective course, and sometimes it was completely removed from the curriculum. It was included as a compulsory course in the primary and secondary school curriculum for the first time with the 1982 Constitution. Religious education in Turkey has been shaped both in legal regulations and in line with the wishes of the society. From time to time, despite Turkey being a secular state, some groups do not want religious education to be taught as a compulsory course and even criticize it.

There is no doubt that the February 28 process was an important period of legal and structural changes for religious education and religious vocational schools in Turkey. Many young people who received education in these schools were negatively affected by this situation. After February 28, the religious vocational secondary schools were closed and Quran courses providing widespread religious education came to a standstill. With the transition to an 8-year uninterrupted education system, the coefficient application was introduced and students were prevented from entering religious vocational high schools and theology faculties, and it was aimed that these schools, which were not preferred over time, would gradually be closed on their own. With the end of the coefficient application that darkened the lives of religious vocational high schools after 14 years and the transition to 12-year compulsory education, the demand for religious vocational high schools increased again. It can be said that Islamophobic practices in educational institutions and public spaces in Turkey decreased with the Justice and Development Party (AKP) rule. Since the 2010s, the headscarf ban in public

institutions and universities has been lifted, and female personnel in the armed forces and the police force have been allowed to wear headscarves. In the period from 2002 to the present, religious freedoms in the public sphere in Turkey have undergone significant transformations. The AKP's approach to religious freedoms has been to both expand individual freedoms and make religious identity more visible in the public sphere.

Conclusion and Recommendations

Today, overcoming the impasse between multiculturalism and Islamophobia requires a wide range of collective efforts, from education to laws, from media to dialogue. It can be said that (i) education, (ii) empathy and encouragement of mutual dialogue, (iii) more responsible and balanced language use by the media, (iv) more accurate and better understanding of different religions and cultures are important factors that will play a role in breaking Islamophobic perceptions and attitudes. It is seen that since Islamophobia generally stems from lack of information, misperceptions and prejudices, *education* will be a powerful tool to change these perceptions. Considering that the effect of education in creating change in social life is an indisputable fact, integrating the topics presented above into educational curricula will also prove that significant change in social life areas can be achieved through education by encouraging social diversity and mutual understanding.

It will be integrated into education systems;

Inclusive education curricula The contributions of Islamic civilization, especially to science, art and philosophy, can be highlighted through courses such as history, religion and cultural studies, etc. In addition, the impact of Muslim scientists on world history and the constructive roles they play in multicultural societies can be conveyed to students.

Ways to improve intercultural dialogue and empathy activities and projects that encourage interaction between members of different faiths and cultures can be carried out in educational institutions through such activities and projects. Such activities and projects can enable students to empathize with members of different religions and cultures, and enable young people to get to know each other and develop mutual understanding.

As critical thinking, media literacy, etc. that will be integrated into their education systems, and with media literacy education, they will be able to notice the language, biased and false information used in news about Islam and Muslims, and develop a more conscious perspective on this issue.

With *teacher training and awareness programs* teachers can communicate better with students from different faiths and cultural backgrounds, and by using course materials that increase their tolerance and cultural awareness, they can learn about different religions and cultures while also beginning to see social diversity as a positive value. This will enable the development of this attitude among students.

Some preventive programs against prejudice are available in educational institutions and social life areas of students. It will help them to recognize what prejudice-based behaviors are.

Joint community projects and volunteer activities are social responsibility projects in which Muslim and non-Muslim students will take part together, and are elements that can create an impact in breaking down prejudices and building mutual trust. Students uniting around social solidarity and common goals can contribute greatly to increasing knowledge and awareness against Islamophobia, as well as instilling in individuals comprehensive universal values such as justice, equality and human rights.

Undoubtedly, the presentation of the discourses that form the basis of Islamophobic actions as religious can be broken by developing a common language between religions. Taking important steps to encourage mutual understanding, tolerance and cooperation between different belief groups has become a necessity today. In this process, human values such as justice, mercy, honesty, charity etc. can form the basis for the creation of a common language between religions. The establishment of regular and positive dialogue platforms, especially between state leaders and members of different cultures and religions, and the identification of similarities and common themes in religious texts can make significant contributions to the creation of a common language.

A very soft and constructive attitude in educational institutions regarding the impact of Islamophobia on educational environments. Instead of a doctrinal approach in religious education, an approach emphasizing education from a broader spectrum should be adopted. In addition to behaving with kindness and respect towards those who do not share the same faith, the concept of living in peace should be emphasized in educational institutions. In cosmopolitan societies with variable structures, the understanding of religious education should be restructured in a way that supports softening this harmful view with a peaceful method. The process should be facilitated by transferring correct religious knowledge, revealing positive religious attitudes and behaviors, and employing the necessary pedagogical methods for a more accurate and objective understanding of religion(Çorbacı 2023).

In order to combat Islamophobia, it is necessary to first eliminate negative prejudices and even transform negative prejudices into positive judgments. For this, it is very important and necessary to inform the society in which we live using all kinds of communication channels. It can be said that the North American and European public needs educated clergy who can enlighten the public about Islam and Muslims, and moreover, it can be said that clergy who are not from another country but live in the same country and have received education in order to meet this need and who are suitable for the social and cultural needs of the country they are in, will increase the capacity to enlighten/inform the society. Educational programs to combat Islamophobia in Western societies can provide important opportunities that will contribute to breaking prejudices and a better understanding of Muslim communities.

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CHAPTER 5

BRIDGES OR WALLS? MIGRATION AND ISLAMOPHOBIA

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Introduction

Throughout history, individuals and societies have engaged in migration for various reasons. The causes (voluntary or forced) and types (individual or mass) of migration have brought about profound transformations in the lives of both migrants and the host societies. These transformations have had a significant impact on the shaping of identity and cultural perceptions for both migrant communities and host societies. Migration movements have facilitated the establishment of cultural and social bridges between societies, allowing for the coexistence of diverse identities and values. However, at certain times and in specific contexts, these very migration processes have also contributed to the construction of divisions and walls built upon fear and prejudice.

With the processes of industrialization and urbanization, Western societies, having gained economic dominance, became the focal point of migration movements from East to West starting in the 1950s. These migrations initially built economic bridges to meet the West's demand for cheap labor, fostering a mutually beneficial relationship centered around economic gain. However, over time, the ethnic and cultural differences and

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awareness brought by migrants increased tendencies toward marginalization in host societies. This process laid the groundwork for the spread of Islamophobic rhetoric and the implementation of discriminatory policies. Economic cooperation, symbolized by bridges, was gradually replaced by structural and symbolic walls representing the exclusion of migrants. Focusing specifically on the situation of Muslim migrants who migrated to the West due to economic poverty and deprivation, it becomes evident that these processes of marginalization have deep historical roots connected to orientalist discourses. These discourses played a decisive role in shaping perceptions of Muslim migrants in Western societies and in the emergence of discriminatory practices.

The Western Christian world has historically constructed its cultural identity around binary oppositions, thereby creating a concept of the "Other" with whom it would be in perpetual conflict. From the very first encounters with Islam, the Western world developed a discourse centered on the distinction between "us" and "them". The theoretical foundations of this distinction have largely been shaped by orientalism and the paradigm of the clash of civilizations. The roots of hostility toward Muslims can be traced back to the early periods when Islam began to have an influence on European lands. Over the course of history, in response to the impact of Islam on the Western Christian world, theological, political, and cultural forms of anti-Islam sentiment developed. In this context, through racism, xenophobia, discrimination, prejudice, and stereotypes, anti-Islam and anti-Muslim sentiment, or Islamophobia, has been systematically structured (Bodur, 2017). However, the visible manifestation of Islamophobic attitudes and behaviors, particularly in Western countries such as Europe and the United States, where migration has intensified, does not mean that this phenomenon is exclusive to the West. In recent years, a global fear of Islam, even anti-Islam sentiment and hostility—in other words, "Islamophobia"—has emerged as a widespread and serious issue (Kirman, 2010). This indicates that Islamophobia should not be viewed as a phenomenon limited to specific geographies, but rather as a global threat. Furthermore, in the 21st century, especially after the events of September 11, the rise of Islamophobia has exacerbated the challenges faced by Muslim migrants during this period.

The relationship between migration and Islamophobia is often addressed within the context of international migration and migrants. Accordingly, in this study, the phenomenon of migration will be discussed within the framework of transnational migration and migrantism, and the concept of migration will generally be used to refer to international migration movements. The study will examine the phenomena of migration and migrantism in light of

the socio-cultural and historical contexts of the Western-centered concept of Islamophobia; the impacts of this concept on modern migration dynamics and its ideological foundations will be analyzed.

The Phenomenon of Transnational Migration: Searching for Light in Dark Tunnels

Migration, in its broadest sense, can be defined as the movement of individuals or groups who, by crossing international borders or within the borders of a single state, change their place of residence either permanently or semi-permanently. Regardless of its duration, structure, or cause, these population movements, which involve people relocating, encompass migrations for various purposes such as refugees, displaced persons, economic migrants, and family reunification (International Organization for Migration [IOM], 2013). This definition includes both internal and external migration. The phenomenon of migration, which has a multifaceted and complex nature, can become even more challenging and painful when individuals or groups are moved into a transnational context that is foreign to their language, religion, and socio-cultural structure.

A large portion of the studies in migration literature focuses on the primary causes of migration in the context of economic, social, and ecological factors. In the context of economic reasons, poverty, unemployment, limited job opportunities, hunger, and insufficient food resources are prominent factors. In addition, racial and ethnic differences, discrimination based on language or religious identity, ethnic cleansing, civil wars, and the resulting atrocities are also considered significant driving forces of migration. Furthermore, pandemics, as well as natural disasters such as earthquakes, floods, and landslides, are important ecological factors that trigger migration movements (Benhabib, 2006). These factors are critical elements that shape individuals' decisions to migrate and guide the social, economic, and individual consequences that result from these decisions.

In this context, the reasons and forms of migration for individuals or groups, as well as the entire process that shapes decisions regarding where to settle and how long to stay, are key factors. For instance, voluntary migrations, which generally aim to improve economic and social welfare, are expected to occur with relatively fewer difficulties, and migrants are likely to develop more harmonious relationships with the host society (Göçmez, 2022). In the case of forced migration (refugees, political asylum seekers), the factors driving migration and the profiles of the migrants can vary significantly. In this context, the determination of forced migrants to

migrate is generally lower, and the process of leaving their homeland tends to be more dramatic and traumatic compared to voluntary migration. These fundamental differences between voluntary and forced migration are among the key dynamics that shape processes such as permanence, integration, marginalization, assimilation, and exclusion in the place of settlement (Martikainen, 2010).

In the process of globalization, rapid advancements in communication and transportation technologies have paved the way for migration to the West to occur largely through networks of relationships. These networks consist of connections from migrants' home countries, such as family and friends, and from the countries of settlement, involving interactions with both previous migrants, new migrants, and the local population. These relationships are not limited to personal connections but can also be shaped through professional networks, such as employer-employee relationships, travel agencies, and human traffickers, and may be based on voluntary or compulsory foundations. These networks, with functions such as information sharing, provide opportunities that facilitate the migration process and establish a dynamic interaction network among the source country, destination country, and transit countries. Having familiar contacts to guide them in the destination country creates significant advantages for migrants, while those without this support face greater challenges. Migrants who know in advance where they are going, who they will meet, and what they will encounter experience less stress, whereas pioneering migrants face the greatest difficulties in areas such as housing, employment, language learning, transportation, and legal regulations. However, once a network is established, these challenges become significantly easier to navigate and overcome for new arrivals (Göçmez, 2022).

Migration networks lead to the concentration of migrants in specific cities and neighborhoods within foreign countries, creating an effect that accelerates the process of ghettoization. Factors such as language barriers, religious differences, physical appearance, and cultural divisions cause migrants to form closed communities, living in isolation from the host society's local population. While this way of life may offer migrants a buffer zone in the short term, providing a relatively less stressful environment, in the long term, communities that become ghettoized experience various conflicts both within their own dynamics and in their relations with the host society. Moreover, over time, it can lead to the marginalization of migrants by the host society, where they are seen as the root of social problems, stigmatized, and demonized. This situation has become more pronounced as migration to the West has accelerated historically; Europe's economic development

policies and labor force priorities have proven inadequate in addressing the integration and adaptation processes of migrants.

Migrations serve as a significant bridge that establishes strong connections between societies and enhances cultural, economic, and social interactions. Migrants not only provide labor to the countries they move to, but they also bring cultural and social richness. However, the sustainability and strength of these bridges depend on the development of mutual understanding and the strengthening of cooperation. On the other hand, the challenges experienced in migration processes can lead to the construction of symbolic and structural walls between societies through discriminatory policies and prejudices, rather than strengthening these connections.

Migration to the West, particularly after World War II with initiatives such as Germany's Gastarbeiter policy, intensified in response to the growing demand for labor accompanying development efforts in Europe, paving the way for significant transnational migration movements across the continent. Initially, these migrations formed bridges between societies with the aim of contributing to economic development; the primary goal was the provision of labor and the increase in production capacity. However, the cultural differences of Muslim migrants and the awareness of these differences gradually weakened these bridges, replacing them with othering and exclusionary walls. This transformation not only made the integration process more difficult for individuals but also laid the groundwork for an increase in social conflicts.

Intense waves of migration to Europe continued uninterrupted until the 1973 Oil Crisis. However, after this date, migration movements continued in various forms, such as family reunification, refugee migration, and illegal migration. When Table 1 is examined, it is clear that migration to the West has shown a steadily increasing trend over the years.

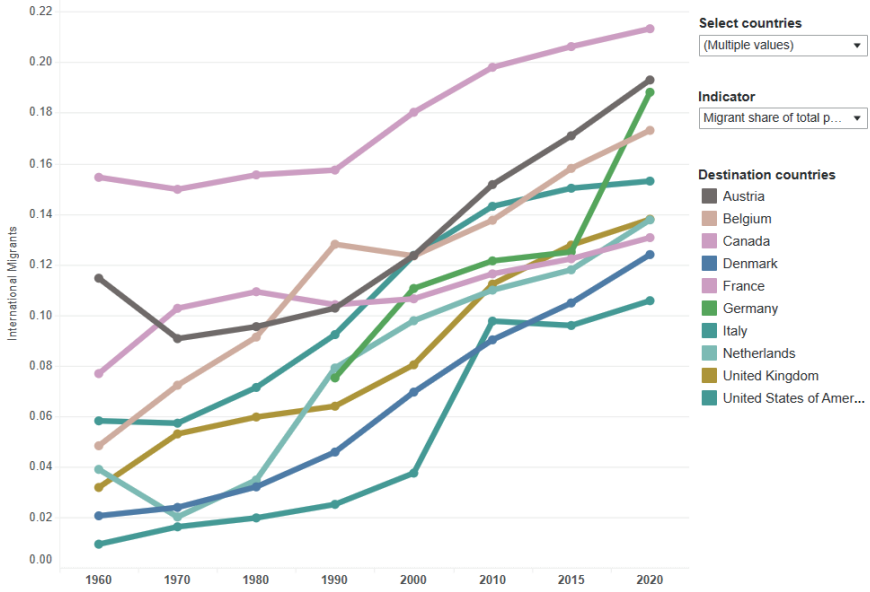

Table 1: Change in the International Migrant Population by Country (1960-2020)

Source: Migration Policy Institute, 2023.

The waves of migration focusing on Europe and the Americas have had deep and lasting effects on the political dynamics and the understanding of liberal democracy in Western Europe (Hollifield, 1992). With the acceleration of globalization over the past 35 years, new social dynamics and uncertainties have deepened, making structural issues such as economic instability, unemployment, and income inequality more visible. In this context, the rise of anti-immigrant sentiment and xenophobia has paved the way for governments to adopt harsher policies and develop more extremist rhetoric. Muslim migrants, in particular, are among the most affected groups in this process and, at certain times and places, have become the primary targets of the extremist wave. This situation has led to an increase in prejudice, social exclusion, discrimination, and practices of othering against these groups, creating deeper conflict risks on a global scale. Here, the term "prejudice" refers to the attitudes and behaviors displayed against Muslims in Western media and everyday life; "discrimination" refers to the different practices, challenges, and barriers Muslims face in employment, education, and access to healthcare. Furthermore, the term "exclusion" refers to the lack of Muslim participation in governance mechanisms and their deprivation of political and democratic rights. Finally, verbal assaults and physical attacks

against Muslims are considered within the concept of "violence" (Kirman, 2010).

Islamophobia, as an umbrella concept that brings together all of these practices of prejudice, discrimination, exclusion, and violence, holds a central place in the examination of the multi-layered problems faced by migrant Muslims in modern Western societies. This is because Islamophobia not only encompasses the negative experiences individuals encounter in their daily lives, but also includes the mechanisms of discrimination and exclusion that are reproduced through social structures and institutional policies. In this context, Islamophobia has a broad area of impact, ranging from its effects on individual identity perception and sense of belonging to processes of integration, adaptation, and social conflict at the societal level. The study of Islamophobia will allow for a deeper understanding of its historical origins, socio-political context, and the effects of contemporary global dynamics.

Cultural Conflict or Systemic Oppression?

Islamophobia is generally defined as an irrational fear and phobia in the Western world, characterized by "hostility, hatred, and animosity towards Islam" or "discontent and hatred towards Muslims." This concept encompasses a multi-faceted phenomenon that involves anti-Muslim sentiment, discrimination, and hostility based on fear of Islam (Kirman, 2010).

It is well known that Islamophobia complicates the integration processes of migrants in Western societies and significantly negatively impacts the potential for cultural interaction. While migrations have the potential to build cultural bridges in Western societies, discriminatory approaches such as Islamophobia weaken these bridges, replacing them with walls built upon fear and prejudice. Orientalist discourses have historically sharpened the distinction between "us" and "them" between the West and the East, creating a foundation for opposition; today, however, Islamophobic policies and discourses have deepened this divide, adding new symbolic and structural walls to it.

The theoretical approaches developed by thinkers such as Bernard Lewis, Francis Fukuyama, and Samuel Huntington play a significant role in increasing the global impact of the concept of Islamophobia. These intellectuals have argued that throughout history, Western civilization has frequently used the strategy of creating a contrasting "Other" figure while constructing its identity. For example, during the Cold War, the West defined its identity around anti-communist, democratic, and liberal values, reinforcing

this through ideological opposition to the Soviet Union. However, with the collapse of the Soviet Union, the West sought a new "Other" figure to maintain its identity legitimacy. In this context, Islam has been positioned as a central "Other" in the construction of Western identity, further strengthening the ideological foundation of Islamophobia. In this regard, Huntington's Clash of Civilizations thesis can be regarded as an important example that justifies the potential for conflict between Islam and the West. However, we will limit the discussion to just one example and consciously refrain from providing a comprehensive introduction to the broader literature.

In his work *The Clash of Civilizations* (2001), Huntington argues that, in the post-Cold War period, international conflicts would shift away from ideological or economic foundations and focus on cultural and civilizational fault lines. According to him, the primary cause of these conflicts between civilizations is the deep and rooted divisions in cultural and religious identities. The boundaries of civilizations are shaped by relationships based on different value systems, such as those between the West and the Islamic world, and by historical conflicts. Huntington asserts that the long-standing conflicts between the West and Islam have not only been limited to physical borders but have also deepened with the differentiation of cultural identities. The West's efforts to spread its ideologies of democracy and liberalism globally, under the claim of universal values, are met with suspicion and resistance from other civilizations, particularly the Islamic civilization. In this context, Huntington emphasizes that cultural conflicts are fueled both by religious and historical prejudices and by the West's systematic policies, which further deepen these divides. This understanding provides an important theoretical framework for understanding how cultural conflicts operate not only as phenomena at the individual and community levels but also as a systematic tool of pressure at the level of state policies and international relations. However, Huntington's perspective has been criticized for reinforcing a Western-centered view and for defining other civilizations in a passive manner. This is because understanding the complexity of cultural conflict requires taking into account not only cultural factors but also the historical, economic, and political dimensions of these conflicts (Sen, 2006).

The concept of Islamophobia first gained widespread attention and usage with the publication of the report *Islamophobia: A Challenge for Us All* by the British think tank Runnymede Trust in 1997. In this report, Islamophobia is defined as "an unfounded hostility towards Islam and, in this context, fear or dislike of all or most Muslims." The report also examines eight closed views of Islam (Runnymede Trust, 1997):

1. Islam is perceived as a homogeneous block, described as static and resistant to change.
2. Islam is regarded as independent of other cultures and considered the "Other"; it is assumed that it has no common values with other cultures, nor is it influenced by them or influences them.
3. Islam is seen as inferior to Western civilization and associated with negative concepts such as barbarism, irrationality, primitivism, and sexism.
4. Islam is portrayed as violent, aggressive, threatening, supporting terrorism, and part of the "clash of civilizations" paradigm.
5. Islam is considered a political ideology and is thought to be used for political or military gains.
6. Criticisms of Islam towards the West are entirely dismissed without discussion.
7. Hostility towards Islam legitimizes discrimination against Muslims and is used as a tool to justify their exclusion from mainstream society.
8. Hostility towards Muslims is normalized as a natural or ordinary condition.

According to this report, Islam is perceived as a static and isolated structure that disregards cultural and religious diversity. Furthermore, Islam is often treated in Western discourse with a reductionist and othering perspective, associated with negative adjectives. This approach is seen to fuel Islamophobic rhetoric and legitimize discrimination and social exclusion (Runnymede Trust, 1997).

Kaya (2016) states that Muslims in the West are increasingly portrayed by Islamophobic advocates as a "dangerous transnational community" consisting only of individuals who "stone women," "cut throats," "commit suicide bombings," "abuse their wives," and "commit honor killings." According to Beydoun (2018), Islamophobia is based on the assumption that Islam inherently involves violence, is foreign to modern society, and cannot integrate with it. This approach is supported and strengthened by the association of Muslim identity with terrorism and the perception of Islam as a civilization-opposing religion.

Islamophobia emerges not only at the individual level but also as an institutional phenomenon supported by state policies and structures. Moreover, this is not a static process, but a dynamic one; public policies

toward Muslims reinforce prevailing stereotypes in society, which in turn create a cycle that triggers hostility and discrimination at the individual level. Particularly, many Western states assess Islamophobic rhetoric within the framework of freedom of thought and expression, as long as it does not involve physical violence. This attitude contributes to the normalization of Islamophobic tendencies.

On the other hand, the formation of Islamophobia in the West should not be seen solely as a reaction of Western societies. The direct or indirect contributions of various actors, such as some Muslim countries, groups, politicians, religious leaders, educators, and the media, cannot be ignored in shaping this phenomenon. Islam, distorted by these actors, has been associated with negative and destructive concepts such as terrorism, violence, bombing, and revenge, thereby reinforcing the sense of threat in the perceptions of Western societies regarding safety and life. The constant association of the concepts of Islam and Muslim identity with destructive events such as terrorism, violence, and murder has led individuals to be exposed to classical conditioning processes over time, and as a result, these concepts have become synonymous with violence and terrorism. Consequently, Islam and Muslims have come to be perceived as the primary motivating forces behind acts of violence and terrorism (Karslı, 2013). However, it is neither correct nor valid to use the negative attitudes and behaviors of some Muslim actors as justification for increasing Islamophobia in the West. Such an attitude cannot be accepted as a justification for legitimizing Islamophobia because generalizing individuals and communities based on a single negative behavior and blaming all Muslims is neither accurate nor fair.

While Islamophobic attitudes and behaviors have deep historical roots in the West, the widespread and normalization of these tendencies in social life marked a significant turning point with the terrorist attacks on the Twin Towers in New York on September 11, 2001. The attack, which was linked to the Al-Qaeda organization led by Osama bin Laden, profoundly influenced social and political discourse, particularly in the context of the United States. In this regard, the view that September 11 divided American history into "before" and "after" is far from being an exaggerated assessment.

In some European countries, state policies have led to the institutionalization of Islamophobia and the spread of discriminatory practices against Muslims through legal frameworks. For example, the closure of mosques in countries like France and Austria, bans on minaret construction in Switzerland, and educational policies in Denmark aimed at severing immigrant-origin children's cultural identities can be cited as examples of such measures.

These actions not only complicate the fight against Islamophobia but also negatively affect the social integration of Muslim communities (Bayraklı & Hafez, 2022).

Islamophobia has become an increasingly influential phenomenon worldwide, especially in Europe. In this context, the United Nations has taken significant steps to raise global awareness of Islamophobia and to address this issue. In a historic decision made in 2022, the United Nations General Assembly declared March 15 as the "International Day to Combat Islamophobia." This resolution not only aims to raise global awareness about Islamophobia but also emphasizes the necessity of addressing the issue at legal, social, and political levels. The United Nations' initiative serves as a call for international solidarity to reduce the effects of Islamophobia and aims to foster a culture of dialogue based on tolerance, peace, and respect for religious diversity.

The Fear Growing with Migration: The Deepening Rift of Islamophobia

The origins of Islamophobia in Western societies lie at the intersection of deep historical, political, and cultural processes, which are not limited to current events. Social perceptions of Muslim immigrants have been shaped alongside the historical transformations of the Western world, and over time, these perceptions have been restructured through various dynamics. To understand the rise of Islamophobia, it is crucial to examine the key events that have driven these transformations. In particular, events over the last 70 years, which have had profound effects on the socio-political structure of the West, have strengthened the link between migration movements and Islamophobic rhetoric. Table 2, which summarizes these processes chronologically, systematically reveals how Islamophobia has been shaped through historical and political dynamics.

Table 2: Key Dates and Events Influencing the Interaction of Islamophobia and Migration in the West

Year	Country / Region	Event	Impact
1973	Middle East / Europe	Arab-Israeli War and the global oil crisis	With the oil crisis, concerns about energy security in the West increased, and relations with Arab countries and perceptions of Muslims gained a political dimension.
1979	Iran	Iranian Revolution	The Iranian Revolution strengthened the perception of Islam as a political force and increased suspicion towards Islam in the West.
1987-1990	Palestine	First Palestinian Intifada	The Palestinian struggle contributed to the perception of Muslims as a political movement in the West and triggered Islamophobic rhetoric through the Israel-Palestine issue.
1989	France	Rushdie Affair and headscarf debates in France	The conflict between freedom of expression and Islamic symbols in the West provided intellectual and cultural grounds for Islamophobia.
1990	Iraq / Kuwait	First Gulf War	Western military interventions in the Middle East led to increased prejudice against Muslims.
1992-1993	Bosnia / USA	Bosnian War and World Trade Center bombing	The genocide of the Muslim population in Bosnia was criticized in the West, while the bombing in the US reinforced the association of Muslims with violence.
2001	USA / Afghanistan	September 11 attacks and the War in Afghanistan	The September 11 attacks became a turning point in triggering global Islamophobia, with security concerns increasing pressures on Muslim migrants.
2003-2005	Europe-wide	Second Gulf War, Theo Van Gogh assassination, Madrid and London bombings, French suburban riots	Events during this period helped spread rhetoric associating Islamophobia with violence and strengthened negative perceptions of Muslim migrants.
2006	Denmark / UK	Cartoon Crisis and remarks by UK Minister Jack Straw	The Cartoon Crisis increased conflicts between freedom of expression and religious sensitivities, gaining widespread media attention on Islamophobic discussions.
2007-2009	Sweden / Switzerland	Lars Vilks drawings and Switzerland's minaret ban	The debates in Sweden and Switzerland exemplified concerns over Islam's integration into European culture and solidified Islamophobic policies.

2010-2011	Europe-wide	Thilo Sarrazin's anti-immigrant book, burqa bans, and other incidents	Discourse during this period deepened the perception of Muslim immigrants as a threat to Western culture.
2015	France	Charlie Hebdo attack and Bataclan Theatre attacks in Paris	The Charlie Hebdo and Bataclan Theatre attacks strengthened rhetoric associating Muslims with radicalism and sparked reactions against Islamophobia.
2015-2016	Europe-wide	Refugee Crisis and discursive shift towards Muslim migrants	The refugee crisis intensified debates over the integration of Muslim migrants in Europe and made Islamophobic discourse more prominent in political spheres.
2016	Belgium	Brussels bombings and associations with radicalization	Terrorist attacks contributed to the legitimization of Islamophobic policies due to associations with Muslim radicalization.
2019	New Zealand	Christchurch mosque attacks and global discourse on migrants as threats	The Christchurch mosque attacks highlighted Islamophobia as a global threat and revealed an increase in anti-Muslim hate crimes.
2020 onward	France / Europe-wide	Legal reforms after the Samuel Paty murder, headscarf bans, and halal slaughter debates	This period marked an increase in restrictions on Muslim lifestyles and the institutionalization of Islamophobic policies.

The events in *Table 2* clearly illustrate how political and cultural developments in the Islamic world have influenced perceptions in Western societies. Particularly, the 1973 Arab-Israeli War and the global oil crisis led to the transformation of perceptions of Muslims in the West, evolving from merely an economic concern to a religious one. Pivotal events like the 1979 Iranian Revolution laid the foundation for Muslim communities being seen as a homogeneous threat in the Western public sphere, which in turn facilitated the spread of Islamophobic rhetoric. These developments significantly contributed to the othering of Muslim communities, presenting them as a homogeneous group in the Western public discourse. The 1980s and 1990s, marked by events such as the Palestinian Intifada and the Rushdie Affair, were years when Muslim identity became intensely debated in the West. Specifically, the headscarf debates in France in 1989 and the First Gulf War in 1990 helped shape the perception of Muslim identity as both a religious and political threat, reinforcing Islamophobic discourse in the West. The 1990s, including the Bosnian War and the 1993 World Trade Center bombing, further marginalized Muslim communities by reinforcing security-focused critiques (Kaya, 2016).

The September 11, 2001 attacks marked a significant turning point in shaping Islamophobia as a global security threat. Following these attacks, the War in Afghanistan and the Second Gulf War, along with events such as the murder of Theo Van Gogh, the Madrid and London bombings, further complicated the integration of Muslim communities in Western societies. During this period, Muslim immigrants were not only associated with radicalization but were also framed within the context of social dissonance and cultural threat perceptions. These developments contributed to the institutionalization of Islamophobic discourse in the West, making it more widespread and effective. The 2006 cartoon crisis in Denmark and the minaret ban debates in Switzerland between 2007 and 2009 clearly demonstrate how Islamophobia has been shaped through cultural symbols. These events showed that Muslim immigrants were perceived as a threat not only because of their religious practices but also due to their visibility and presence in the public sphere (Kaya, 2016). This process has contributed to the deepening of Islamophobia, not only at the individual level but also within societal and political realms.

The post-2011 period stands out as a time when Islamophobia merged with anti-immigrant rhetoric, taking on a more institutionalized character. The European Refugee Crisis (2015-2016) led to the depiction of Muslim migrants fleeing the Syrian Civil War as "foreigners unable to integrate" within Western societies. During this period, migrant neighborhoods were frequently stigmatized as security risks, which made social exclusion more visible and widespread. In recent years, events such as the Christchurch attack (2019), the murder of Samuel Paty (2020), and the headscarf ban clearly demonstrate that discrimination against Muslim migrants persists not only at the societal level but also at the legal and institutional levels. In this process, particularly far-right political parties have further strengthened exclusionary mechanisms by presenting Muslim migrants as a threat to cultural homogeneity. These developments have contributed to the deepening of Islamophobia as a multi-dimensional phenomenon in Western societies.

In contemporary Europe, far-right movements exhibit deep hostility towards Muslim migrants and openly express these attitudes in the public sphere. Particularly in print and visual media, Islamophobic rhetoric has increasingly become normalized and is now an inseparable part of daily news. This trend has been further accelerated, especially after the September 11 attacks and the impact of terrorist acts in various regions. However, this hostility is not confined to current events; it is rooted in the systematic "othering" of Muslim migrants. In Europe, this practice of othering is fueled by a deep historical background based on the origins of radical right

movements. Radical right ideologies have long positioned Islam and Muslims as a threat, integrating these narratives into their ideological identity (Qureshi & Sells, 2003). In this context, contemporary Islamophobic rhetoric emerges as a multi-dimensional phenomenon, formed by the intersection of historical background and current political dynamics.

The perception that the West's religious and cultural identity is threatened by Islam is reinforced through anti-immigrant rhetoric and the media. Western media reduces multi-dimensional issues such as identity, demographics, economy, and social conflict to a religious framework, using this approach to shape public opinion. For example, the social uprisings in the French suburbs, where North African Arabs are predominantly living, are not framed as protests arising from structural issues such as economic inequality and social exclusion, but rather defined through the lens of "Muslim" identity. Similarly, reactions to the Danish cartoons in London (where the Prophet Muhammad was depicted wearing a turban with a bomb) and debates on headscarves in France and Denmark are often addressed solely as religious conflicts. However, the connection of these events to fundamental civil rights, such as women's individual rights and freedom of expression, is typically overlooked (Esposito, 2011). This illustrates how media discourse, by simplifying complex socio-political dynamics, has become a tool for reinforcing Islamophobic attitudes.

A key turning point in the hardening of attitudes towards immigrants in host societies in Europe dates back to the 1970s. During this period, the perception emerged that labor markets had reached a balance, or even exceeded their capacity. The 1973 Oil Crisis, in particular, intensified competition in a period of increasingly scarce economic resources. This situation, combined with the economic crisis, fueled the revival of old insecurities and the emergence of new ones. The increased competition for resources accelerated the negative perceptions of immigrants, and the social and political repercussions of this situation led to a long-term shift in how host societies viewed immigrants (Bauman, 2011).

The cultural conflicts arising from the intersection of migration movements and Islamophobia in Western societies are not only a political and religious issue but also a reflection of the uncertainties experienced by modern societies. Bauman explains these uncertainties with the concept of "liquid modernity." Liquid modernity refers to a period in which traditional structures, identities, and norms are eroded, and individuals live in a constant state of change and uncertainty. In this process, individuals struggle with

the instabilities they encounter in economic, social, and cultural spheres (Bauman, 2019).

In the context of liquid modernity, dynamics such as unemployment, economic inequality, migration, and cultural differences deepen feelings of social uncertainty and insecurity. Continuous migration leads to the formation of an increasingly heterogeneous societal structure in Western countries, which in turn causes the blurring and uncertain boundaries of social, ethnic, cultural, linguistic, and religious divisions. According to Bauman, this process manifests in host societies as "xenophobia" and hostility towards the "other." To control feelings of uncertainty and insecurity, modern societies resort to strategies such as othering, exclusion, and categorization. While these strategies aim to create a sense of security at both the individual and collective levels, they often lead to more discrimination, social polarization, and social dissonance (Bauman, 2019). In this context, Islamophobia has become a concrete reflection of the deepening structural uncertainties and socio-cultural traumas in Western societies, also emerging as a central dynamic of cultural conflicts.

In Western thought, Muslim immigrants are often treated as a homogeneous group, and a reductionist relational link is made between the identities of "Middle Eastern" and "Muslim." However, this approach contradicts both geographical and religious realities. Not all of the population in the Middle East are Muslims, and a significant portion of the Muslim population worldwide lives outside the Middle East. Nonetheless, this prevalent perception in the West arises from generalized assumptions based on geography, religion, and immigration. Immigrant identity, particularly in the case of Muslim individuals, is often reduced to a religious identity, leading to the overlooking of the immigrants' diverse cultural, ethnic, and social backgrounds and erasing individual differences.

For example, during my time in the United States in the 2000s, when I was asked about my homeland and I mentioned Turkey, I was frequently met with the response "Middle East." This clearly demonstrates that immigrant identities are simplified and defined through certain stereotypes, ignoring their complexity. In this context, immigrant identity becomes a "stigma" loaded with both religious and geographical prejudices. In Western societies, Muslim immigrants are typically perceived as a homogeneous group and are othered based on their religious identity. These perceptions lead to the simplification of individuals' unique identities and shape them through generalizations. Goffman's (2014) "stigma theory" provides an important analytical framework to understand the impact of these processes on how

immigrants are socially perceived and how their identities are transformed. Stigmatization processes are crucial in explaining the exclusion and prejudice immigrants face in their social interactions.

On the other hand, some Muslim groups that have politicized Islam have entered into an ideological pursuit with the aim of developing a protective mechanism against the injustices, inequalities, poverty, unemployment, social exclusion, racism, and discrimination caused by globalization. Similarly, some Western political leaders and public intellectuals have politicized Islam by constructing perceptions of the "internal enemy" or "external enemy" and instrumentalizing these fears to serve their own political and societal interests. Such processes have deeply affected both the way Muslims are perceived in Western societies and how Muslims perceive the West. Particularly during times of crisis, Muslim immigrants and their subsequent generations have often been denied the presumption of innocence until proven guilty. For example, during the mass killing in Norway on July 22, 2011, the attribution of the crime to Muslims before the identity of the perpetrator was clear serves as a striking example of this phenomenon. In this case, Muslims were the first group to be blamed before the perpetrator was identified (Kaya, 2016). Such examples highlight how deeply rooted Islamophobic prejudices are in Western societies and how these perceptions can quickly mobilize during times of crisis.

In Western societies, prejudices against Muslim immigrants emerge as rising walls over time. These walls not only complicate individuals' integration processes, but also create significant obstacles to social cohesion and cooperation, laying the foundation for deeper conflicts. For example, policies such as the headscarf ban in France function as walls that limit the visibility of Muslim individuals in the public sphere and exclude them from social life. These walls undermine the integration of Muslim immigrants while further deepening fears and prejudices in host societies. Similarly, divisive and discriminatory rhetoric spread through the media hinders the building of bridges between societies, leading to the marginalization and social exclusion of some Muslims. These processes, by damaging relationships both at the individual and community levels, make structural issues that increase social conflicts more visible.

All these dynamics demonstrate how complex and multi-layered the relationship between migration and Islam is within the historical and socio-cultural context of Europe. This relationship, fueled by political, economic, and cultural tensions, is shaped by Islamophobic tendencies and practices of discrimination. Muslim immigrants continue to face significant challenges

both at the individual level and in the public sphere. They encounter difficulties in areas such as freedom of belief and various aspects of social life. Restrictions on mosque construction, headscarf bans, and barriers to accessing halal food are some of the most tangible examples of this discrimination. Practices like mandatory handshakes for Muslim students reflect insensitivity to cultural sensitivities, while religious discrimination in the workplace severely limits the economic integration of Muslims. Furthermore, physical violence against Muslims, verbal harassment, attacks on places of worship, and insults to sacred values undermine the sense of security and belonging within Muslim communities. Media and social life also serve as arenas that reinforce this discrimination, with discriminatory rhetoric frequently seen in popular cultural fields such as football. All these dynamics make it more difficult for Muslim immigrants to participate in society and integrate, while also shaping European immigration policies through religion-centered debates (Sakarya University DIAM, 2017).

Conclusion: Breaking Down Walls to Build Bridges

The migration movements to the West after World War II have become one of the most significant issues in contemporary history, acting as a multifaceted phenomenon that triggered economic, social, and cultural transformations. These waves of migration not only provided essential labor for the rapidly developing industrial and service sectors in the West but also reshaped the socio-cultural dynamics of migrant communities and the perceptions of migrants in Western societies. Particularly, the skeptical perspective toward Muslim migrant communities became more pronounced after the September 11, 2001 attacks, creating a fertile ground for the spread of Islamophobia and reshaping immigration policies in the West around religiously centered debates. The political and social impact of Islamophobia has made it more difficult for Muslim immigrants to engage in society and integrate, while also contributing to the legitimization of discriminatory policies that threaten social cohesion.

The complex relationship between migration and Islamophobia has been particularly defined by widespread perceptions of conflict between the secular norms and values of the West and the religious identities of Muslim migrants. These perceptions have fueled reductionist approaches that attempt to explain the poverty, exclusion, unemployment, lack of political participation, and integration challenges faced by Muslim individuals and communities solely through their religious identity. Such approaches, going beyond individual prejudices, have legitimized institutionalized discrimination and become a

structure that seriously undermines efforts for social equality. In this context, Islamophobic tendencies have gained strength not only through perceptions of cultural incompatibility but also through structural injustices.

The historical power dynamics between the West and the East, along with Orientalist discourses, have formed the foundational building blocks of the relationship between Islamophobia and migration. The process by which the West constructs Islam and Muslim migrants as the "Other" has not been limited to a claim of cultural superiority; it has also functioned as a tool for colonialism, the protection of economic interests, and political control mechanisms. This historical context provides a critical perspective for understanding the ideological and structural foundations of contemporary immigration policies and discriminatory practices towards Muslims. These approaches, based on the West's perception of the "Other," contribute to the creation of a framework that hinders the social integration of migrants and institutionalizes Islamophobic tendencies.

After September 11, a framework emerged where security policies intersected with Islamophobia, and Muslim immigrants began to be perceived as a "potential threat." This perception has deepened prejudices towards Islam and Muslim immigrants in Western societies, further reinforcing structural discrimination that complicates the social integration processes of migrants. These discriminations have not only limited individuals' basic living conditions and opportunities but have also caused deep, irreparable fractures in the social fabric. This process, by creating a tension between migration and security, has accelerated the institutionalization of Islamophobic rhetoric.

It must be recognized that Islamophobia cannot be viewed solely as a religious issue; it has become a structurally complex problem that encompasses various dimensions, including gender, class, and ethnic identity. For instance, the discrimination Muslim women face in the labor market and in public spaces clearly highlights the gender dimension of Islamophobia. This type of discrimination not only leads to the violation of individual rights but also hinders social participation, making it more difficult to achieve the goal of building an inclusive society. The multi-layered structure of Islamophobia poses a critical barrier to the pursuit of social justice and equality.

In order for the fight against Islamophobia to be effective, both individual prejudices must be addressed and policies aimed at structural transformation must be implemented. In this context, the development of educational and awareness programs is of paramount importance. Through intercultural education, the public should be provided with knowledge about different belief systems and cultural groups, and efforts should be made to combat

misinformation and stereotypes. Additionally, ethical publishing standards should be adopted in the media to prevent Islamophobic rhetoric, and content that highlights the integration and success stories of Muslim immigrants should be promoted. Furthermore, effective legal frameworks must be created to protect religious freedoms and combat discrimination, ensuring the basic rights and freedoms of immigrants. Encouraging intercultural dialogue is also a crucial step to strengthen empathy and understanding between host societies and migrants. Finally, global issues such as migration and Islamophobia require international cooperation to develop human rights-based solutions. These recommendations aim to not only improve inter-personal relationships but also to establish a more inclusive and just foundation for both social structures and global policies.

The solution for the future lies in adopting an approach that aims to build bridges between societies. These bridges require viewing differences not as a threat, but as an opportunity for mutual enrichment. However, in order to achieve this goal, it is crucial to first dismantle the increasingly rising Islamophobic barriers in Western societies and promote mutual understanding. Breaking down the walls and building bridges is essential not only for the social integration of Muslim immigrants but also for creating a more inclusive and solidaristic society.

In the context of migration and Islamophobia, we stand at a crossroads as societies: will we build bridges to create a unifying future, or will we deepen division by constructing walls? The future of societies depends on the dismantling of walls that feed fear and prejudice and the building of bridges that establish cultural and social connections. These bridges represent not only physical ties but also the fundamental elements of social cohesion, mutual cooperation, and peace. For a more inclusive and peaceful future, we must remove the obstacles in the way of these bridges and tear down the walls shaped by prejudice.

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CHAPTER 6

WELTANSCHAUUNG TRANSFORMED FROM A CIVILIZATION-BEARING ELEMENT TO A CIVILIZATION-DESTRUCTIVE ELEMENT: ISLAMOPHOBIA

Dr. Mustafa TURAN[1]

Introduction

Throughout history, there are two cultural structures embedded in the world map that has been shaped by wars. One is the one that destroys the humanity and culture in the geographies it conquers, and the other is the one that blends the positive cultural elements with its own culture. The first cultural formations are called hard and the second is called flexible, and Islam is among them. In fact, in addition to being adopted by very different cultures, it has not completely rejected the elements in that culture but has taken on its color. Some definitions have been made for those who remain on the other side of the fence, so to speak, opposite the geography in which war is fought. This has led to the emergence of definitions such as "barbarian", "überfremdung" or "xenophobia". Traces of this hostile attitude can even be found in mythological works. When Gaia and later Uranus (the sky) were created, they were immediately fought among themselves as soon as they were separated.

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In such an environment, when Turks and Arabs were strong, the foundations of the word Islamophobia were laid due to the disinformation and jealousy put forward by the political authority. In fact, the Prophet Muhammad was given the name of anti-christ and was depicted in hell with Hazrat Ali in Dante's works. According to Zygmunt Bauman, even if we share the same language and color with a community or group that exists outside of us, when they become rivals to "us" or when we think that they have become a threat to "us", they are not considered as individuals and are positioned as "others" for us. Because if there are "others", we become "us", and they form a group because they have the same characteristics (Bauman, 2018, p. 72). Since this concept was created by the Western world, it was produced as a softer concept compared to the concept of anti-Semitism. It was mostly discussed under the concepts of violence, other and civilization. What is interesting is that the Arabs, another Semitic tribe, were not included in this concept due to religious reasons, indicating the Judeo-Christian origin of the concept. In addition, concepts such as Sinophobia or Asiaphobia have also entered circulation in the post-Covid period.

First of all, there must be reasons for this concept to emerge. The concept that emerged as a result of the Ottoman and Arab conquests to create an external enemy for the social structure is now being mediatized even more with the September 11 attacks, occupations and Daesh, and the cultural superiority that was held is being attempted to be continued as a result of the psychological and conceptual collapse of the other side. Indeed, as a result of the recent sweeping and annihilation policy applied to Palestine, a concept such as Zionistphobia has not been produced. This situation is a manifestation of their viewing other societies as inferior or slaves. The ancient Romans also had the concept of superiority over other peoples. For example, in a speech attributed to Manius Acilius: "As you know, there were Macedonians, Thracians and Illyrians, all warrior nations, here were Syrians and Asian Greeks, the most worthless people among humanity and born for slavery." (Isaac, 2006, p. 317) These expressions were used, and later went down in history as the first examples of the treatment applied to natives and Africans. Indeed, in an era when pluralism and multiculturalism are being discussed, the reports published by Seta about the attacks on "non-of-themselves" living in Europe have gone down in history as important documents. The acceptance of past prophets in Islam and the reference to the Bible and Torah when necessary have shown that they have a broader perspective and are necessary. As Karen Armstrong points out, this has led to the establishment of a ground where Muslims, Christians, Jews and Zoroastrians have lived together for many years (Armstrong, 2002). It is

underlined that this ground has not been lost and can be formed again as it was formed before. Ekmeleddin İhsanoglu expresses the reasons for this situation as political and historical interpretation. He expresses the solutions as geographical convergence resulting from globalization, the same spiritual reference and shared values. He argues that since the mentioned religions are monotheistic, the dialogue between them will be easier. However, he expresses that since there is diversity in all religions, the participation of all stakeholders should be given importance (Ihsanoglu, 2011, p. ix).

Return to the Desert: Ethnocentrism and Modernism or the Reductionism of Seeing Things in Their Own Eyes (Equalizing to Zero)

When we look at the intellectual and cognitive foundations of the exclusionary and othering attitude, modernism, which divides the world and therefore people and perspectives, and ethnocentrism, which is an extension of this, emerge. The term ethnocentrism was published by William Graham Sumner (Sumner, 1906) on the estrangement of people's own groups and others. Sumner used this term more as pride, arrogance, and seeing the beliefs of one group as superior to those of others. As a product of orientalism, this understanding, which sees others as exotic, laboratory products or members of the zoo, is an attitude described by loyalty to a tribe, clan, lineage or similar ethnicity, and by taking one's own culture as a basis and evaluating other cultures in terms of one's own culture.

The situation that has emerged recently is presented as if it were only a problem of Islam and that it started with September 11. However, as İbrahim Kalin also stated, this situation started with cultural fascism, a type of ethnocentrism that is a product of modernism. Cultural racism stems from the uniformist concepts of religious, ethnic and cultural groups produced by a central value system that leaves almost no room for diversity or humanitarian activity. It is also produced and sustained by a series of implicit and explicit cultural hierarchies in which certain types of cultural behavior are defined as "modern, civilized, liberating and rational" while others are depicted as "retro, violent, bigoted, irrational" and reactionary (Kalın, 2011, p. 6). While all positive qualities are described by referring to the "us" called the inner circle, negative qualities are described by referring to the "other" outside the circle.

Fuat Keyman categorized and summarized the meanings attributed to the concept of the other as follows:

1. The “other” as an empirical (experimental) object: It is to explain the “other”, an object that can be understood by gathering information about it, based on so-called objective and real information.
2. The “other” as a cultural (civilized) object: As a result of essentialism, which describes the modernizing bipolar view established between the Western and the Eastern, the “other” is defined by what it is not rather than what it is, that is, with negative language. The other is presented as a cultural object lacking everything that the modern subject has.
3. The “other” as an entity: It is aimed to provide an understanding of the modern identity with the other and to contribute to the formation of the self. Although it does not go beyond modernity, the “other” is constructed as a historical object.
4. The “other” as a discursive structure: It constitutes an object of knowledge established by various discourses, structures and institutions.
5. The “other” as different: By emphasizing the relational nature of the self and the other, it allows the dependency between the exploiter and the exploited to be critically criticized. In other words, it is an approach that reduces the problem of the other to the identity/difference axis (Keyman, 1996, pp. 76-78).

In addition to alienation, the fragmenting modernist mentality that reveals the distinction between self and other has severed, fragmented, emptied and redefined the relationships between all stakeholders, including science. While “globalization”, which has brought new hope, was expected to heal the damaging effects of modernism, it has continued its oppressive and exclusionary attitude since it developed under Western guidance. Muslims have been squeezed between religious or political definitions and asked to define themselves as “French” or “German”, that is, idealized. In addition, pejorative expressions such as Islamic-fundamentalist/fascism/terrorism used by politicians have kept the person away from defining themselves within the group consciousness. This situation has been reinforced by being circulated by mainstream and social media. For example; while other violent incidents shared on social media platforms are immediately blocked as spreading false information, the same censorship is not applied to those shared from the Islamic world. If the perpetrators of the September 11 events had been people from another country, they would not have been labeled as crazy or isolated incidents and circulated by “ideological devices” for so many years.

This attitude, which has political, cultural, sociological and religious foundations, has caused them to ignore the contributions that Islam and other civilizations have made to them and to prevent their future contributions. If the contribution comes from a voice within Western civilization, they do not accept it, but see it as a member of their own civilization and at least give it the duty to make it heard. If there is to be opposition, it should be from within themselves. The identity crises experienced between the East and the West, the West seeing itself as modern and enlightened, and accusing the East of being primitive and bigoted, are based on religious exclusion. For this reason, the West does not see Muslims as "belonging to us", and perceives Muslims as the other and the enemy, and as a threat to be feared (Delanty, 2014, p. 99).

Civilization as a Challenge: The Founding and Transforming Element Islam

According to Toshiko Izutsu, the religion of Islam is expressed as a unifying challenge to break the polytheism that dominated the Age of Ignorance and to oppose the fragmentary view, and to state that Allah is the sole ruler and sole lord of the universe, together with divine revelations. Islam is defined as the duty of servitude to Allah, obedience, submission and humility. Therefore, a Muslim is described as a brave person who shows "the courage to be" by submitting unconditionally to Allah's commands and prohibitions (İzutsu, 2011, pp. 187-200). Just as it opposed in the past and not only that, it emerged as a founding element of a civilization, today it will present a holistic view in ecological, scientific and cultural terms and eliminate this Islamophobic false mental setup with a fighting spirit. Gaza is the most important example of this. Despite all the physical, psychological and economic pressures, it does not give up its civil status and succeeds in destroying the Islamophobic thought in the West, literally "conquering the castle from within."

Within the framework of the process, the "othered" side is seen as a fiction created by the "I". Therefore, the reality of the "I" is connected to the interaction established with the "other". In fact, when the relationship between the "I" and the "other" is evaluated, it is seen that what is considered important is not the differences between them, but the meanings attributed to these differences (Akpınar&Şahin, 2017, p. 331). For this reason, since the view of the other in Islam is based on a human perspective, it is seen that common aspects are emphasized rather than being excluded from the circle. It is emphasized that everyone has a share from God. A person builds himself

through the relationships he enters with others, that is, outside the group. In fact, this situation is expressed in the Quran as We created you differently so that you may know each other. Revenge-taking behaviors are prohibited for situations other than torture, expulsion from one's homeland, and killing. Even in this case, it is stated that one should not go too far. In the 134th verse of Ali Imran, it is emphasized that Allah loves those who do good and forgive. It is stated that one should approach others on a human basis as one looks after oneself.

So, as Akif Emre stated, what path should the Islamic vision that lives in "unlimited occupation maps" follow? Should it remain only apologetic, that is, defensive, or should it respond? Should the nature of this response be as in the Sufi sense, or should it be in the form of violence, as the Salafi structures do?

The religion of Islam, as its name implies, is known for guaranteeing universal values such as the right to thought, expressing, life, freedom of religion and conscience, which are called basic human rights. In Islam, discord, gossip, backbiting, and othering and exclusionary activities that cause people to have negative thoughts about each other are prohibited (Kutlu, 2018, p. 150). As can be seen, attitudes that destroy and humiliate a person's personality through tyranny and violence are not welcomed. Christians and Jews who were subjected to the Holocaust were welcomed, soldiers who came to Anatolia to fight settled and got married, and the Jewish community living in schtetels (small living areas in Eastern Europe because Jews were excluded and forbidden to live in inner Europe and Russia) in Europe and who came to Palestine were welcomed. In the Medina period, it is seen that the interlocutors were taken and agreements were made, and thus the multicultural structure was tried to be preserved.

On the other hand, when radical elements seen within every religious group emerge within the Islamic structure, the methods they use are circulated by the mainstream media as if they are supported by the entire Islamic community. The aim of this situation is to cut off the dialogue, which is the first stage of getting to know the inclusive and self-confident Islamic world and people. In addition to the ulterior motives that lead to this, if we have to make a self-criticism, it is seen that ignorance, excessive interpretation or literalism add fuel to this mill. Regarding Palestine, the bombed hospitals, places of worship, schools and children are deliberately not shown or are circulated as if they were done by the opposing group. Social media contributes to this issue and when the negativity is shared, it is blocked within seconds on the grounds that it is against the community rules. This situation is seen by the

elite, educated and conscientious segment in the West and around the world, and the purpose behind it is perceived and backfires, causing people to get closer to Islam. Despite being so far removed from basic human needs and supported by all powerful structures, the group opposing them not breaking away from the humanitarian foundation, for example feeding cats in war despite being hungry, provides gains that cannot be achieved with billions spent. Because the dialogue is not seen through us-other but through the human situation. For this reason, it should be seen that the use of concepts such as "crescent-cross conflict" (Halid, 2019), which are put forward like a rehash, contributes to this kind of negative image.

We need to change our perspective, which is the most important area, our weltanschaung. For this reason, we need education that provides "morality on the job", so to speak, with the Maturidi and Hanafi order, whose religious practice is dynamic (Sedgwick, 2012, p. 253), and the Anatolian Wisdom (Şeker, 2012) embodied by Yunus Emre and Hadji Bakhtash Veli. We need to transform our understanding of education into a problem-solving and aesthetic structure that develops the heart, mind and body as a whole. The continuation of the Renaissance that started in Palestine and the transformation from being a dhimmi (need to be protected) to a playmaker in the world system can only be possible in this way.

Conclusion

Islamophobia, which has been subject to numerous support and obstruction efforts from both us (internally) and externally (other) in our conceptual naming, has not been an easily understood concept as a natural result of this. Although there are sometimes people who are obsessed with the name and those who are obsessed with the practical structure, it should not be overlooked that these two aspects complement each other. It should not be forgotten that despite all the obstacles in the practice, change occurs as a result of the discourse with the other and that this is an endless process. It should not be overlooked that the important thing is to establish a habitus that allows the environment to be communicative enough and encourages living together. In order for the concept of Islamophobia today not to become Christo or Judeophobia of tomorrow; tradition, present and future should be utilized equally.

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CHAPTER 7

ISLAMOPHOBIA AND MEANING IN TAFSIR[1]

Asst. Prof. Dr. Hatice AVCI[2]

Introduction

Islamophobia creates prejudice and obstacles to learning and living Islam due to fear, hatred, and hostility. Fear is the nucleus of hatred, hatred is the nucleus of hostility and ignorance. The transformation of hatred into love, hostility into understanding, and ignorance into openness to learning can only be possible if Muslims understand and live the Qur'an correctly. This reveals the importance of the relationship between exegesis and representation. In particular, the fact that the Qur'an is a builder of morality requires an emphasis on how Muslims understand and reflect the bond between knowledge and deeds. In this context, our study aims to open a door of self-criticism and accounting for Muslim societies.

This study is based on the awareness that Islamophobia has a psychological and historical background. The focus is on Muslims' understanding of and correct living of Islam. Because in Islam, people are responsible for their actions, not for the groundless fears of others. The fact that correct meaning

1 This study is based on the unpublished paper titled "Meaning in Tafsir in the Context of the Construction of Morality" presented at the "VI. International Ahmed-i Khani Symposium" held at Ağrı İbrahim Çeçen University Culture and Congress Center on November 4-5, 2022.

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and correct representation are effective in erasing prejudices against Islam is only one of the gains of Muslims. After briefly touching on Islamophobia in this study, the subject of meaning in interpretation will be addressed in terms of Muslims understanding the Quran and putting it into practice in the face of the reality of Islamophobia.

Islamophobia

Islamophobia is a combination of the words Islam and phobia, and in its simplest form, it is understood as the fear of Islam. Personal observations and media monitoring will be sufficient to understand that Islamophobia includes not only fear but also hatred against Islam and Muslims. It is possible to say that Islamophobia produces and spreads hatred towards Islam and Muslims. In a study conducted in Turkey, it was found that in most of the works written in Turkey between 2000 and 2015, Islamophobia was used to express a virtual fear of Islam and Muslims. In contrast, it was used to express hatred against Islam and Muslims after 2015 (Boyraz, 2021). This shows that fear and hatred coexist in Islamophobia.

Although it is stated that Islamophobia was first defined by the Runnymede Trust in 1997 (Bleich, 2012; Boyraz, 2021; Hıdır, 2021) in the sense of fearing Islam and seeing Islam as a threat has been present since the dawn of Islam (Hıdır, 2021). The fact that the Christian church fathers were especially concerned about the emergence and rapid spread of Islam and saw the Prophet Muhammad and Islam as a threat can be considered as a background that forms the historical and cultural codes of today's Islamophobia (Hıdır, 2021). It is possible to say that Islamophobia, in its meaning, has existed since the birth of Islam and that the meaning in question has been named Islamophobia in the last quarter century.

Its historical process, Islamophobia is discussed in the context of specific historical periods such as the first Islamic society, the Andalusian Islamic society, the Crusades, and the Ottoman period (Bayyigit, 2021). Today, Islamophobia has come to the fore in connection with the Twin Towers attacks in the United States on September 11, 2001, and has been defined as a new form of cultural racism and discrimination. (Hıdır, 2017). In the aftermath of the attack, Islam was and still is equated with terrorism and violence, and portrayed as devoid of humanitarian principles such as tolerance, democracy, and equality, and this is still being done (Hıdır, 2021). It is said that in the modern period, opposition to Islam is called Islamophobia (Bayraklı & Yerlikaya, 2017). Anti-Islamism can have many reasons, including hatred and fear.

Islamophobia, which also manifests itself in Muslim societies, has created another within Muslim societies by adopting a secular understanding to modernize, suppressing Islam, and making efforts in this direction. (Bayraklı & Yerlikaya, 2017). In this context, it is possible to say that minds centered on the West, where Islamophobia is widespread, are also affected by anti-Islamism. Therefore, it cannot be denied that there are Islamophobic people in Muslim societies who are alienated from the society they live in and hate Islam and Muslims.

There are many political, cultural, economic, and religious reasons for Islamophobia, these reasons are analyzed into two groups: those stemming from the West and those stemming from Muslims (Şeker, 2023). Some of the reasons originating from the West are as follows: Fear that Islam will rule the world, creating an anti-Islamic perception by associating Islam with terrorism, and attributing the actions of terrorist organizations such as ISIS and al-Qaeda to Islam (Şeker, 2023). The reasons stemming from Muslims can be summarized as follows: Islam not being understood and reflected correctly, immigrant Muslims having difficulty adapting to the society in which they live due to their fear of moving away from their own culture, low adherence to the laws of that society (Şeker, 2023). The issue of not understanding and reflecting Islam correctly, which is considered to be one of the main reasons stemming from Muslims, constitutes the basis of the issue of meaning in tafsir in the context of Islamophobia. Because the shortcomings of Muslims in understanding and living Islam cannot be ignored. Taking this into account, Aydemir points out that Muslims are not in a good position to reflect the Qur'anic principles in their lives with the examples he presents in his study (See Aydemir, 2017). In the examples given, the attitudes and behaviors of Muslims that are incompatible with Islamic morality draw attention. For example, attitudes and behaviors such as a Muslim seller concealing defects in the goods he sells, Muslims not being trustworthy, or not adhering to the time specified for a job are themes emphasized in these examples (Aydemir, 2017). However, the Qur'an commands justice, kindness, and generosity, and forbids immorality, evil, and transgression (an-Nahl 16/90).

The ability of Muslims to understand and live Islam correctly is based on comprehending the Qur'an. The effort to understand the Qur'an is the subject of the science of Tafsir. Therefore, examining the nature of meaning in tafsir is related to conducting research based on the problems originating from Muslims, regarding Islamophobia. From this point of view, meaning in tafsir gains importance. Given the significance of this matter, it is imperative to recollect the nature of meaning in exegesis.

Meaning in Tafsir

Islamophobia creates prejudice and barriers to understanding the Qur'an because it generates and spreads fear and hatred against Islam and Muslims. This unwarranted fear and hatred leads to exaggerated reactions and distancing from Islam and understanding it. Understanding requires effort. The phobic is forced to make an effort to understand the object of one's phobia. Because of this, one doesn't get knowledge about the object of one's phobia. After all, one is the enemy of what one does not know.

Understanding Islam is possible by being aware of the essence of the Quran and the Sunnah, which are the basic sources of Islam. Trying to comprehend the meanings of the Quranic verses is the subject of the science of interpretation. Interpretation is defined as the effort to understand the divine will. So, what is the effort to understand and the correct meaning in interpretation?

The way to the nature of meaning in exegesis passes through the purpose of understanding the Qur'an. Therefore, we should express the purpose of understanding the Qur'an, which we define as the last link of revelation, and how this understanding is realized. Serinsu defines the purpose of understanding the Qur'an as "Comprehend the real answers envisioned by the Qur'an in the face of the changing aspects of life and carrying them to life." (Serinsu, 2016) and says: "The Qur'an itself supports the realization of the aforementioned purpose by asking people to read it, to think about it (tedebbür), to understand it, to explain it intellectually and practically with ihlâs and by encouraging its readers/interlocutors to do so." (Serinsu, 2016). So, the aim of trying to understand the Quran is to take the Quran as a guide to life and to accept the guidance and support of the Quran in this regard.

It is understood that comprehending the Qur'an is connected to making sense of life and "read-think-understand-live" (Serinsu, 2016) it is realized with the formula. It is possible to say that the science of Tafsir, which aims to understand the Quran, focuses on determining the correct meaning. The methods and principles of finding the correct meaning in the science of Tafsir are included in the books on "Qur'anic Sciences" and "Method of Tafsir". The issue here corresponds to what comes after finding the correct meaning. In other words, it is aimed at emphasizing "living", which is the last step in the formula "read-think-understand-live". Because it is thought that the part that needs to be emphasized in the context of Islamophobia is the "living" part. Therefore, the issue to be brought to the agenda is the deeds and ethics within the meaning.

Comprehending involves action, and meaning without action is incomplete. The unity of meaning and action is especially important when considered for the last revelation, the Quran. Prof. Dr. Burhan Baltacı has explained the practical dimension of meaning in a very simple language. Since it is directly related to our subject, it would be appropriate to summarize his article here. The example Baltacı gives about understanding the Qur'an is summarized as follows: When I say to my daughter, "Can you bring me a glass of water?" she can bring me water without saying anything, or she can say, "Dad, I understand you want a glass of water." and continue to sit in her seat. In this case, which behavior shows that understanding has taken place? (See. Baltacı, 2022). The answer to this question is the first option presented. The same applies to understanding the Quran. "When a person says, 'I have understood the Qur'an,' it means that he does what Allah says. If a person who says 'I have understood the Qur'an' in terms of knowledge is not able to perform its necessities in his life, it is impossible to talk about a complete understanding." (Baltacı, 2022).

It must be said, then, that understanding is not only intellectual but also actional. Understanding involves action. In other words, we can say that the "read-think-understand-live" formula mentioned above covers understanding as a whole. Therefore, in a tafsir activity, finding the correct equivalents of the words and sentences in the Qur'an in the language and evaluating them in the context of the environment of their occurrence corresponds to a part of the "read-think-understand-live" quartet that can be called the formula for understanding the Qur'an. Only dealing with the connection between the expressions in the Quran and the period of revelation and their linguistic equivalents would mean studying like a historian and linguist. Tafsir goes beyond this and includes what is done with the data obtained while trying to understand the verses. The main issue here is what is done with the data obtained while working to understand the verses. If the information obtained and the meaning formed in the mind can be transferred to life and turned into action, "meaning" is achieved in tafsir. If we define the transition of meaning from the mental dimension to the actional dimension as active meaning, it is possible to say that active meaning constructs the Muslim identity and creates "meaning" in exegesis.

That the correct meaning is found in exegesis and that understanding is realized is manifested in morals and deeds. The state, attitude, and behavior of the Muslims reveal whether the understanding is realized or not. In that case, first of all, it is important for the exegete who is concerned with understanding the Qur'an to act upon their Qur'anic knowledge. When the exegete applies what he understands and emphasizes the practical aspect of

the meaning, he will contribute to the achievement of the purpose of the science of tafsir. The exegete's carrying the consciousness of representation along with his exegetical activity is the first stage of being effective in the face of Islamophobic understanding, first around himself and then on a global scale. The following statements in al-Rāzī's tafsīr are noteworthy for this opinion:

"How many there are who reminded of Allah who have forgotten Allah. How many there are who frighten one out Allah, but they are daring against Allah. How many there are who draw one near to Allah who are far from Allah. How many there are who invite to Allah, but they run away from Allah. And How many there are who recite the Book of Allah, but they have turned away from the signs of Allah." (al-Rāzī, 1981). The unity of knowledge and practice touched upon in these statements can be seen as another expression of the fact that meaning also includes practice. Yunus Emre's "Those who expound on the four holy books are rebels, in truth/ Because they did not know the meaning after reading the tafsir." (2013). When this statement and the aforementioned explanations in al-Rāzī's commentary are evaluated together, it becomes clear that the unity of meaning and action is a fundamental issue. Indeed, the statement in Surat al-Baqarah, verse 44: "Do you command people to do good and forget yourselves, even though you have read the Book?" and the warning in Surat al-Saff, verse 2: "O you who believe! Why do you say what you do not do?" can be evaluated in this context. The exegete's aim to live in line with the principles of the Qur'an plays an important role in making sense of life with the Qur'an and thus in the construction of Muslim identity. The person who is engaged in the science of tafsir strives to embody the moral and practical content of the verses in his/her person, writes in his/her works, or declares it in his/her speeches. Thus, the unity of meaning-action-morality is emphasized.

The fact that meaning includes action shows that the Muslim identity will be formed with the realization of meaning. Making sense of life with the Qur'an is the basis of Muslim life and gives Muslims a conscious stance. This Muslim life and conscious stance can enable the neutralization of unwarranted fear and hatred such as Islamophobia. Today, the best example of this is the stance and resistance of the people of Gaza, who have given meaning to their lives with the Qur'an. Thanks to their firm stance, it is known that the Qur'an has been read and studied by many non-Muslims, especially since October 7, 2023. So what should be the nature of the representation that shows the realization of understanding today? Let us briefly touch upon the opinions and suggestions on this issue.

Nature of Representation

Representation is a sign of a Muslim stance. This is understood through deeds and morality. Muslims can make sense of their lives with the Qur'an by receiving education and gaining consciousness in this regard. However, this is not enough in today's conditions in terms of representation. In this age of rapid development of technology, all kinds of information, representation, and acculturation are realized through media and advertisements. Therefore, it is imperative to utilize the media in the formation of social consciousness and personality beyond individual representation. Islamophobes convey their hatred against Islam in articles, cartoons, movies, and computer games, in other words, at every opportunity (Şeker, 2023) reveals the necessity in question. In this case, the nature of representing Islam is also formed according to today's conditions and possibilities. Hıdır categorizes what Muslims should do in the face of Islamophobia today as follows (Hıdır, 2021):

1. Removing the negative image of Islam and Muslims and presenting the truth
2. The best representation of Islam
3. To catch up with the present in a traditional way, and to revise and revive it in a proper way
4. With a comparative, analytical, and wisdom method, producing works on Islam, making movies, creating websites and museums.

The basis of all the suggestions listed here is directly related to the above-mentioned understanding of the Qur'an and transferring it to life. Therefore, it can be said that it will be possible to take action against Islamophobia by knowing that meaning in exegesis involves action.

Conclusion

Islamophobia refers to unwarranted fear and hatred of Islam and Muslims. Although there are many historical, cultural, and political reasons for Islamophobia, one of the main reasons stemming from Muslims is the lack of understanding and living Islam correctly. In connection with this, determining the nature of meaning in tafsir, which is an effort to understand the Qur'an, the main source of Islam, is important in terms of examining the problems arising from Muslims, regarding Islamophobia.

Correctly determining the meanings in the Qur'an and finding their equivalents in the language is a part of the science of tafsir, but it does not

correspond to the whole of it. The transfer of the determined meaning to life as active meaning shows that understanding has been realized. In this context, the practical aspect is important in the science of tafsir. The understanding of the Qur'an is realized according to the principle of "read-think-understand-live". Therefore, understanding the divine will express tafsir and tafsir expresses the unity of meaning and practice. This indicates that exegesis also includes representation.

The meaning in exegesis includes representation is important for the formation of Muslim identity. If the Muslim identity becomes clearer, Islamophobia is likely to blur. The inseparability of knowledge and action can be considered one of the pearls of wisdom behind the Quran's emphasis on the unity of faith-morality-action. Although it is known that a Muslim's stance as a Muslim is valid and valuable in the face of Islamophobia, the correct understanding of the Quran and the nature of the meaning in its exegesis are issues that need to be emphasized in the formation of the Muslim personality that will provide this stance.

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CHAPTER 8

THE CHRISTIANIZATION EFFORTS OF ANDALUSIAN MUSLIMS: INQUISITION PRACTICES AGAINST THE MORISCOS

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Introduction

This study examines the accusations and punishments directed at the Moriscos during the 16th-century Spanish Inquisition. The Spanish Inquisition, both structurally and functionally, exhibits significant differences from the Medieval Inquisition. Rather than being an instrument of the Church, it was employed by the kingdoms as a mechanism of repression to consolidate state authority. Behaviors reminiscent of the former religions and cultures of forcibly Christianized Jews (Conversos) and Muslims (Moriscos) led to their trial in the Inquisition courts. Despite the pressures exerted by Christian clergy, political and military authorities, and the Inquisition courts, the Moriscos did not fully convert to Christianity. In fact, they continued to steadfastly preserve their Muslim identities, even at the risk of facing severe

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punishments, including the death penalty, handed down by the Inquisition courts.

This study explores the process experienced by Muslims following the loss of their political dominance after 1492, focusing on the accusations against the Moriscos, their trials before the Inquisition, the tortures they endured, and the punishments imposed upon them. Ultimately, the failure of the Inquisition's policies led to the decision in 1609 to expel the Moriscos.

The Muslim Presence in al-Andalus: An Overview

Al-Andalus is a term used to describe the region under Muslim rule on the Iberian Peninsula. It is believed that the term Andalucia' derives from ‚Vandalucia' (Carr, 2015; Özdemir, 1995; Watt and Cachia, 2012). At the time of the Muslim conquest, the region was under Visigothic control (Atçeken, 2002; Özdemir, 2012; Aschbach, 1829). The Visigoths, initially adherents of Arianism, a monotheistic doctrine considered heretical by the local population, were eventually unified under Catholicism when King Reccared converted to the Catholic faith in 587-589, making it the official religion of Spain (Vilar, 1990; Özdemir, 2012; Menocal, 2006).

With the establishment of Catholicism as Spain's official religion, the Jewish population was increasingly seen as a barrier to religious unity. As a result, Jews were faced with forced conversion or expulsion. In 694, their property was confiscated, their children were taken, and many were reduced to slavery. The Jews' subsequent loss of loyalty to the state was a key factor in their support of the Muslim conquest of the region (Atçeken, 2002; Özdemir, 2012).

An additional factor that facilitated the Muslim invasion of al-Andalus and the local support they received was the alleged incident involving King Rodrigo of the Visigoths and the daughter of the governor of Ceuta, Julian. According to historical accounts, King Rodrigo's assault on Julian's daughter Florinda prompted the governor to seek revenge by collaborating with Tārīq ibn Ziyād (Gavemann, 1850; Atçeken, 2002; Özdemir, 2012a; Aschbach, 1829; Watt and Cachia, 2012).

In 711, Muslim forces under the command of Tārīq ibn Ziyād crossed from the Maghreb to Spain with an army of 7,000 soldiers. They were later reinforced by an additional 5,000 troops. The Visigothic army, led by King Rodrigo, was decisively defeated at the Battle of Guadalete on the banks of the Barbate River (Atçeken, 2002; Bossong, 2007; Watt and Cachia, 2011; Özdemir, 2012a). Following this victory, the Muslims swiftly advanced

and took control of several cities, including Toledo, the Visigothic capital. Approximately one year later, Musa ibn Nusayr, the governor and commander of the Maghreb, crossed into the Iberian Peninsula with an army of 18,000 troops. He secured the cities of Seville and Mérida before joining forces with Tārīq in Toledo (Atçeken, 2002; Atçeken, 2011; Özdemir, 2012a).

Within a few years, the Muslims had conquered nearly the entire Iberian Peninsula and even advanced into France (714). However, their expansion was halted following their defeat at the Battle of Poitiers (732). This loss, along with internal discord, led to the cessation of further conquests and a shift toward defending their existing territories (Atçeken, 2002; Özdemir, 1995; Özdemir, 2012a).

After the Muslim conquest, those Visigothic nobles who refused to submit to Islamic rule sought refuge in the northern Asturian kingdom. From the 11th century onwards, this kingdom became the base for the Reconquista, the Christian effort to reclaim the lands conquered by Muslims (Bossong, 2007; Vilar, 1990).

Treaties were established that guaranteed the protection of the lives, property, and religious freedoms of the local population (Özdemir, 2012a). These agreements allowed the native people to freely practice their religion, and during the Muslim rule, these guarantees were rigorously upheld (Gavemann, 1850; Öztürk, 2002). The Muslim administration fostered a society where Muslims and non-Muslims could coexist in an atmosphere of tolerance and equality (Özdemir, 2012a). During this period, Jews were freed from the bondage imposed during the Visigothic era and regained religious freedom, reopening their synagogues (Özdemir, 2012a).

The environment of tolerance under Muslim rule also facilitated the spread of Islam throughout the region. During this time, al-Andalus experienced significant advancements in education and science, with many new cities, madrasas, and libraries being established. Under the Umayyad rule (756-1031), al-Andalus became one of the most important regions in the world in terms of knowledge, culture, art, and urban development (Bossong, 2007; Carr, 2015; Özdemir, 2012a; Menocal, 2002).

The collapse of the Umayyad dynasty led to the emergence of numerous smaller warring states, making the Muslim territories an easy target for Christian kingdoms. As the Muslims lost unity, they became increasingly vulnerable. To stop further losses of territory and prestige to the Christians, they sought assistance from the Almoravids (1056-1147), the rulers of the Maghreb. The Almoravids defended al-Andalus against the Reconquista and

internal strife, but they too were eventually weakened by internal conflicts and revolts (Özdemir, 1995; Watt and Cachia, 2012). The Almoravids were succeeded by the Almohads (1145-1232), who initially achieved some military successes against the Christians, but their devastating defeat at the Battle of Las Navas de Tolosa (1212) led to their rapid decline and withdrawal from the region (Ubūdi, 1996; Özdemir, 2012a; Adıgüzel, 2013).

As Muslims began to lose territory, some Muslim communities continued living under Christian rule and were known as Mudéjares. The term Mudéjar is derived from the Arabic root „d-j-n," meaning ‚to remain settled' or ‚to adapt' (Özdemir, 2006; Özdemir, 2012a). Another theory suggests it is derived from the derogatory term ‚deccal,' meaning ‚enemy of Christ' (Lea, 2011). Initially, Christian rulers promised the Mudéjares similar freedoms to those Muslims had previously granted to non-Muslims. However, they eventually imposed religious and cultural pressures on them (Watt and Cachia, 2012).

Christian efforts to expel Muslims from Spain, which began shortly after the Muslim invasion, persisted for centuries. After the Almohad period, the Nasrid Kingdom of Granada remained as the last Muslim stronghold in southeastern al-Andalus, surviving for nearly 250 years. A new phase began with the marriage of Ferdinand of Aragon and Isabella of Castile in 1469, uniting their forces. Soon after, in 1492, Granada, the last Muslim stronghold, was surrendered to the Crown of Aragon-Castile (Özdemir, 1995; Watt and Cachia, 2012). Although the surrender agreement initially provided assurances for the protection of Muslim life, property, and religious freedom, these guarantees were soon disregarded, and Muslims were forcibly converted to Christianity. These forced conversions occurred at different times across Spain, depending on the varying policies of Isabella and Ferdinand (Özdemir, 2012a; Anderson, 2002). Those Muslims who were forced to convert but continued to secretly practice Islam, while outwardly appearing Christian, were known as Moriscos. The Moriscos were expected to live as Christians, and any behavior associated with Islam led to trials and punishments by the Inquisition. Through the Inquisition courts, the state sought to suppress any religious deviations considered incompatible with Christianity. As a result, the period of Convivencia—the coexistence of different religious communities in al-Andalus—came to an end with the collapse of Muslim rule.

Despite these challenges, the Moriscos continued to contribute significantly to the country's wealth as loyal, productive citizens. In regions such as Castile, Granada, and Aragon, they worked in various trades such

as carpentry, basket weaving, textiles, mule breeding, blacksmithing, and tailoring. In Valencia and ist surroundings, the Moriscos held considerable economic power (Rawlings, 2006; Janer, 1857; Kılıç, 2015). Their economic and social status influenced their treatment by the Inquisition.

Some authors have viewed the Inquisition's efforts as a means of religious conversion. However, the coercive measures employed led to the alienation of the Moriscos rather than their integration. Juan Bautista Pérez, Bishop of Segorbe (1595), even acknowledged that the torture and persecution by the Inquisition were among the reasons why the Moriscos failed to truly convert to Christianity (Lea, 2011).

The pressures exerted through the Inquisition, rather than promoting genuine conversion, further entrenched the Moriscos‘ resistance to assimilation into Christian society. These policies left deep scars in Spanish society and fueled the Moriscos‘ determination to preserve their cultural identity. As Lea observed, the oppressive policies of the Inquisition ultimately resulted in the Moriscos maintaining their secret Muslim practices rather than fully embracing Christianity.

1. The Process of Christianization of Andalusian Muslims

The efforts to Christianize the Muslims of Granada were initiated by Cardinal Cisneros in 1501. When these efforts failed to persuade Muslims to convert to Christianity, the clergy adopted the belief that ‘good would come with hardship’ and accepted the notion of forced baptism (Carr, 2015; Lea, 2011). In accordance with this belief, while Muslims were gathered in front of the baptismal font, a priest dipped a mop into the water and flung drops over the people. The water droplets that fell from the mop were considered sufficient to baptize those standing before the baptismal font (Anderson, 2002). After this mass baptism, the Muslims of Granada were officially deemed Christians. This collective baptism was celebrated with festivities by the Christians, and those newly baptized were gradually referred to as Moriscos (Anderson, 2002; Carr, 2015; Özdemir, 2012b).

During this period, Muslims who refused to be baptized were given the option to leave the country. However, they were only allowed to exit via the Bay of Biscay, and the land route through Aragon was prohibited. Additionally, those leaving were required to leave behind boys under 14 and girls under 12 with Christian families. These conditions made it nearly impossible for Muslims to leave the country (Heine, 1984; Lea, 2011; Carr,

2015). The Strait of Gibraltar, between Tarifa and Tangier, which provided a 14-kilometer passage from Andalusia to the Maghreb, was also closed off, leaving the Bay of Biscay as the only exit. This policy can be interpreted as a means of pressuring Moriscos to stay in Spain by restricting their options for departure.

As previously mentioned, the forced Christianization policy was not implemented simultaneously across all provinces. As a first step, beginning on July 20, 1501, it was decided to prevent the Moriscos of Granada from interacting with the Mudéjares of Castile, as it was feared that the Moriscos would be influenced by them. Consequently, the entry of Castilian Mudéjares into Granada was banned. However, since the transportation of goods in the region was largely handled by Mudéjares, and a portion of Granada's wheat supply came from their neighbors, the ban could not be fully enforced. Subsequently, on February 12, 1502, a decree was issued mandating the forced Christianization of all Mudéjares across Castile (Lea, 2011; Rawling, 2006). Around the same time, rumors spread that forced Christianization would begin in the Kingdom of Aragon as well, prompting Muslims in the Valencia region to migrate to North Africa. In response, Ferdinand and the Aragonese lords, wishing to retain the skilled and hardworking Muslim laborers who worked for them, promised religious freedom to the Muslims (Harvey, 2005; Carr, 2015; Lea, 2011). However, the fact that the Mudéjares were seen as a source of income by the nobility caused discontent among other Christians. Additionally, the Christian populace and clergy in Aragon were displeased that the Mudéjares were in a better socio-economic position than the Christian population. When Charles V (Holy Roman Emperor Charles V) arrived in Spain (1517), his lack of attention to the Mudéjares led to the formation of the Germanías (Brotherhoods), a movement among the Aragonese populace. On July 4, 1521, they launched attacks on the Muslims under the slogan "Long live the faith of Jesus and death to the Saracens," giving them two hours to choose between baptism and death. While many Muslims accepted baptism, approximately 600 Moriscos were executed by beheading (Harvey, 2005; Lea, 2011; Özdemir, 2012a; Carr, 2015).

The practice of forced baptism, which began in Castile, was introduced in the Kingdom of Aragon in 1521-1522. Following the example of the Castilian Inquisition, Ferdinand enforced the forced Christianization of the Mudéjares of Valencia in 1521-1522 (Carr, 2015).

Charles V issued a decree for the Mudéjares of Aragon and Catalonia in 1525, giving them until the end of January 1526 to either convert to Christianity or leave the country. The Galician ports of La Coruna and

Fuentarabia were designated as the exit points for Muslims wishing to leave Spain. Thus, the policy of religious unification initiated by Isabella and Ferdinand in 1497 was completed by 1526, and no Muslims officially remained in Spain. However, the newly Christianized Moriscos continued to live secretly as crypto-Muslims (Kamen, 1976; Rawling, 2006).

Charles V expressed his frustration at the Moriscos' failure to genuinely convert to Christianity, stating in 1526 that not even seven true Christians had emerged among the Moriscos in 27 years (Kamen, 1976; Rawling, 2006).

The reason cited for the Muslims' failure to fully embrace Christianity was their attachment to their old culture and traditions (Kamen, 2005; Carr, 2015). Consequently, Spanish authorities decided to implement harsher policies toward the Moriscos, whom they believed had not truly converted to Christianity. Over time, the bishops came to believe that the Muslims would never truly convert (Harvey, 2005; Dressendörfer, 1971; Edwards, 2003; Kamen, 2005; Özdemir, 2012a; Carr, 2015; Perez, 2002). In addition, on December 7, 1526, Charles V issued a decree prohibiting Moriscos from giving their children Arabic names, speaking Arabic, wearing Moorish clothing, entering bathhouses, slaughtering animals according to Islamic rites, or celebrating Muslim holidays (Rochau, 1853; Özdemir, 2012b; Carr, 2015; Rawling, 2006). Furthermore, Morisco women were required to have Christian midwives attend their births, and they were forbidden from forming close ties with Christian families (Lea, 2011). However, these prohibitions were not fully enforced (Rochau, 1853; Özdemir, 2012b; Carr, 2015; Rawling, 2006).

It was believed that the Moriscos' conversion to Christianity would occur over time and through education. During this period, a Valencian faqih negotiated a 40-year agreement with the authorities, paying them 40-50 ducats annually. Under this Concordia agreement, the Valencian Moriscos were exempted from Inquisition penalties for a time, allowing them to learn and accept Christianity more fully (Rawling, 2006; Carr, 2015; Lea, 2011). As a result, during the reign of Charles V, the Moriscos were partially exempted from religious persecution due to the large payments they made. However, during the reign of Philip II, the grace period came to an end, and a new era of intense persecution began. During this period, the authorities viewed the Moriscos as spies for the Ottoman Turks. In 1560, the Suprema also decided to implement stricter supervision of the Moriscos (Dressendörfer, 1971; Carr, 2015).

King Philip II issued a new decree in 1567 imposing further restrictions on the Moriscos, banning the speaking of Arabic, wearing of Moorish clothing,

and adherence to Moorish traditions (Lea, 2011). It was also decreed that Morisco children be taken from their families and raised in Christian households (Kamen, 2005; Özdemir, 2012b). The Moriscos were also forced to pay heavy fines if they could not provide proof of ownership of their lands, and those who could not pay were forced to sell their properties. Between 1559 and 1568, approximately 100,000 hectares of land officially passed from Morisco ownership to Christians (Kamen, 2005). Additionally, after 1567, contracts that had previously been drawn up in Arabic were deemed invalid, leading to the confiscation of Morisco properties (Lea, 2011; Carr, 2015).

In January 1568, a new law was enacted mandating that Morisco children between the ages of 5 and 15 be sent to Christian schools to learn Spanish, with the aim of raising them as fully Christian subjects. However, the forced removal of their children to these schools was the final straw for many Morisco families (Rochau, 1853; Lea, 2011). As a result, in 1568, the Moriscos of Granada rose up for the second time in the Alpujarra region. This second Alpujarra rebellion resulted in significant losses on both sides (Kamen, 1976; Özdemir, 2012a). The Christian forces were only able to quell the uprising in 1570, with military reinforcements arriving from Asturias. The Moriscos living in the Morerias, or segregated districts, were able to easily unite and revolt, leveraging their demographic strength in these regions. Following the conflict, the Moriscos, who made up 54% of Granada's population, were exiled to Castile.

Christian authorities believed that by dispersing the Moriscos among the old Christians, they could better assimilate them. Consequently, 5,500 Moriscos from Granada were exiled to Seville, 6,000 to Toledo, 12,000 to Cordoba, and 21,000 to Albacete. The harsh and difficult conditions of the exile meant that one-quarter of those who set out perished along the way. In the areas vacated by the Moriscos, approximately 50,000 old Christians from Andalusia were resettled. However, one-third of the 400 towns remained uninhabited, as there were not enough settlers. The new Christian settlers, less skilled and industrious than the Moriscos, failed to adopt the advanced agricultural techniques previously employed by the Moriscos. Meanwhile, the production and craftsmanship for which the Moriscos were known became highly sought after following their expulsion (Harvey, 2005; Dressendörfer, 1971; Kamen, 2005).

Prior to their exile to Castile, the Moriscos of the region had lived relatively integrated lives with the local population. However, the Moriscos from Granada had lived in the Morerias, segregated from the Christian population,

which made them more conservative and prone to rebellion than their counterparts in Castile. The forced cohabitation of the Granadan Moriscos with the Castilian Moriscos led to tensions between the two groups. The Granadan Moriscos' resistance to adopting Christian practices contributed to the imposition of even stricter regulations on all Moriscos in the region (Dressendörfer, 1971; Maislinger, 2008). Social unrest ensued, and many inhumane practices emerged. For instance, bishops sought to shave Morisco women's henna-stained and braided hair with knives, and veiled women in the streets were forcibly unveiled (Carr, 2015). These oppressive measures were intended to eradicate the Moriscos' cultural identity.

After 1570, further assimilation programs were implemented to force the Moriscos to abandon their Islamic faith. The records of the Valencian Inquisition from 1570 to 1592 show that the year with the highest number of trials was 1591, with 290 cases. So many Moriscos were compelled to repent that the Archbishop of Ribera became uneasy with the sheer number of Moriscos attending church services on feast and holy days for repentance, as it disrupted regular church functions (Lea, 2011: 126).

Despite these efforts, the forced conversions achieved only limited success. Some Muslims did genuinely embrace Christianity. For example, a wealthy Morisco named Lucas de Molina requested to be buried in a local church, while others sought to demonstrate their sincerity by serving as interpreters in the Inquisition and assisting with the Latin translation of the Qur'an (Dressendörfer, 1971; Carr, 2015).

The relentless pressure and restrictions imposed on the Moriscos gradually eroded their religious identity. For instance, a Morisco girl named Maria de Gabriel was unable to learn the prayers required for the Islamic ritual of salat and would instead say, "My Lord is Allah, Muhammad is His Prophet, the Qur'an is my guide, and the Kaaba is my qibla" in the mornings. Many Moriscos became unable to understand the prayers they recited. With most of the religious scholars imprisoned or martyred, there were few sources from which they could seek religious knowledge (Özdemir, 2012b).

In their desperation, the Moriscos sought fatwas from North African muftis regarding their situation. The first fatwa on whether Muslims could live in a dar al-harb (land of disbelief) was issued in 1484 by Ahmad ibn Yahya al-Wansharisi of the Maghreb. Al-Wansharisi held that migration to dar al-Islam was obligatory for Muslims but allowed those who lacked the means to remain where they were (Dressendörfer, 1971; Özdemir, 2012a; Gökalp, 2010). A later fatwa by Abu Jumu'a al-Maghribi in 1504, which permitted taqiyya (dissimulation) under duress, provided the Moriscos with a means

of survival (Özdemir, 2012a; Lea, 2011). Al-Maghribi advised the Moriscos to adhere to their religious practices as much as possible, but allowed for outward conformity to Christian practices when necessary. He stated that they could perform salat by making eye movements if they could not openly pray, give alms as charity to a beggar, and perform tayammum (dry ablution) in the absence of water (Dressendörfer, 1971; Özdemir, 2012a; Harvey, 2005). Following these fatwas, the wealthier Moriscos left the country, but many remained, believing that Christian rule would eventually end or that they were bound by material and spiritual obligations to stay. These individuals continued to practice Islam in secret (Özdemir, 2012a; Carr, 2015).

Despite the Inquisition's prolonged efforts, it concluded that the Moriscos, with their Islamic heritage, could never become good Christians (Dressendörfer, 1971). As a result, after more than a century of attempts at forced conversion, the decision was made in 1609 to expel the Moriscos, and this policy was implemented.

2. The Inquisition and the Spanish Inquisition

The term „Inquisition" is derived from the Latin root inquirere, meaning „to investigate in a burdensome and oppressive manner." It conceptually refers to the ecclesiastical courts and judicial institutions of the Catholic Church. The Inquisition was a system of prosecution and punishment aimed at correcting and disciplining heretics. Established during the papacy of Gregory IX, the Inquisition spread from France to Italy, Germany, Bohemia, Hungary, Slavic countries, Scandinavia, Portugal, and Spain (Testas, 2003; Demirci, 1995; Thomsett, 2010).

The first application of the Inquisition was against the Cathars in southern France, in the regions of Albi, Toulouse, and Carcassonne, who rejected the doctrine of the Trinity and the authority of the Pope (Angenendt, 2007; Martin, 2009; Neidhart, 2013; Edwards, 2003). Later, the Inquisition became more systematic, particularly after the Council of Toulouse in 1229, when measures like denunciation, surveillance, and confiscation were developed as methods of investigation (Schwerhoff, 2009).

Queen Isabella of Castile and King Ferdinand of Aragon sought permission from Pope Sixtus IV to establish the Spanish Inquisition, which was officially founded on November 1, 1478. After the complete conquest of al-Andalus, Isabella and Ferdinand aimed to unify Spain religiously. During this process, the Inquisition became a tool for combating religious minorities (Maislinger, 2008; Prescott, 1837).

Initially, the Spanish Inquisition followed the procedures of the Roman Inquisition, but from 1480 onwards, it developed its own distinct system. It ceased to function merely as a part of the Church and became an instrument of the state (Gordon, 1870; Kamen, 1976). During this period, Muslim and Jewish communities were accused of undermining Christian unity through espionage, and it was made a condition that they convert to Christianity to remain in Spain. Those who converted were often prosecuted by the Inquisition if they were suspected of religious transgressions (Kamen, 1976).

The first tribunal of the Spanish Inquisition was established in Seville (September 27, 1480), followed by tribunals in Cordoba (1482), Jaén (1483), and Toledo (1485) (Dressendörfer, 1971; Schwerhoff, 2009; Testas, 2003; Lemm, 2005; Carr, 2015). Lorento, appointed by the Pope to oversee the Spanish Inquisition, reported that between 1481 and 1517, many people were burned alive, and over 200,000 individuals were subjected to various punishments. Most of those punished were Conversos and Moriscos (Demirci, 1995).

Christian clergy expected the Moriscos, who were presumed to have converted to Christianity under duress, to strictly adhere to the new faith. In cases of doubt, the Inquisition was invoked, and those accused of heresy were punished severely, including by burning (Lemm, 2005).

The Mudéjares (Muslims living under Christian rule), who contributed significantly to the economy and society through their skills in agriculture, architecture, and the arts, held a vital place in society, particularly among the nobility. Hernando de Talavera praised their work ethic, stating, „We should adopt their morality as they adopt our faith“ (Lea, 2011).

However, King Alfonso X of Castile (1252-1284) issued a set of laws declaring Islam a false religion and imposed restrictions on the Mudéjares‘ religious freedoms (Özdemir, 2012a). These restrictions included prohibitions on building mosques, the slaughter of animals for Eid al-Adha, Friday prayers, and public calls to prayer (Özdemir, 2012a; Carr, 2015; Kılıç, 2016).

After the fall of Granada in 1492, the remaining Muslims in al-Andalus faced even harsher conditions. The Mudéjares were no longer allowed to live as Muslims under Christian rule, forcing them to choose between conversion to Christianity or exile (Lea, 2011). They experienced severe restrictions on their religious practices and faced economic and social pressure, as well as religious and cultural persecution through the Inquisition.

In 1546-1548, Pope Paul III approved the doctrine of „Limpieza de Sangre“ (Purity of Blood), which declared that only those free from Jewish, Muslim,

or heretical blood were considered to have pure Christian lineage. This doctrine, adopted as a fundamental principle of Christianity, institutionalized social discrimination between old and new Christians. Those without pure blood were barred from holding positions in government, the military, and educational institutions (Lea, 2011; Dressendörfer, 1971; Poliakov, 1981; Carr, 2015).

3. The Process of Inquisition Practices

This section will provide detailed information regarding the referral of individuals accused of heresy to the Inquisition Courts, the judicial procedures they underwent, the sentences handed down, and the execution of those sentences.

3.1. Reporting/Witnesses

The Inquisition Court implemented a system that obligated individuals aware of or witnessing inappropriate behaviors to report them. In most cases, the informants were neighbors or close relatives of the Moriscos, and the Court took steps to conceal the identities of the informants to encourage them to testify without fear (Rochau, 1853). Generally, the arrest of an accused individual required the testimony of at least two witnesses, but in cases involving accusations against Moriscos, a single witness's testimony could suffice for an arrest.

Accused individuals were discreetly shown to witnesses behind a screen to confirm their identities. Torture was frequently employed to coerce confessions from the Moriscos. Although inquisitors were aware that some accusations might be slanderous, they were often unhesitant in delivering punishments (Montanus, 1925; Lea, 2011; Dressendörfer, 1971; Edwards, 2003; Testas, 2003). The informant system significantly disrupted social life in Spain, eroding trust among people. With the proliferation of these practices, Moriscos increasingly viewed their Christian neighbors as spies (Özdemir, 2012b).

In cases where accusations were reported to the court, the testimony of two witnesses who claimed to have heard about the incident was considered as credible as that of a witness who had seen the event firsthand, leading to the immediate arrest of the accused (Montanus, 1925). Occasionally, reports from individuals who were mentally unstable, senile, or enslaved were also accepted. In some instances, even when the account was incomplete or unclear, inquisitors coerced informants to say what they „wanted to hear." It has been suggested that the real motivation of the Inquisition Court was often

the confiscation of the accused's property, as asset seizure was a common punishment (Montanus, 1925).

3.2. Method of Summoning to Court

Upon receiving a report, the Inquisition Court would assign familiars (trusted agents) the task of summoning the accused to the court. These familiars would casually approach the accused under the guise of a coincidental meeting, saying, "Yesterday, we happened to speak with the inquisitors, and they inquired about you. They asked us to inform you that they wish to discuss a matter with you at the court tomorrow at a certain time." Postponing such a summons was not possible.

Accused individuals would be interrogated by a panel of three inquisitors, and during this process, they were pressured to either confess or accuse others. Inquisitors would attempt to keep the accused talking for an extended period. At times, they would decide not to refer the accused to trial, opting instead to release them with either a warning (amonestado) or a reprimand (repehendido) (Montanus, 1925).

Inquisitors sometimes posed trap questions to uncover guilt. By feigning trust, they coaxed the accused into making self-incriminating statements. In some instances, accused individuals were released initially, only to be closely monitored and eventually caught in the act (Montanus, 1925).

3.3. The act of accused individuals blaming others

Inquisitors operated on the assumption that a Morisco would not engage in heretical acts alone and that there must be accomplices. Thus, they frequently interrogated the accused's relatives, leading to a chain of accusations. Even if the accused confessed, they would still face pressure to name accomplices. This method often resulted in the unjust accusation of innocent individuals, and in some cases, fear of torture compelled people to betray their own families (Dressendörfer, 1971; Lea, 2011; Carr, 2015).

3.4. Arrests

Once the decision to arrest an accused individual was made, the provisor (the bishop's deputy) would oversee the process and resort to torture to extract a confession. While provisors generally cooperated with the inquisitors, disputes occasionally arose regarding the severity of the punishment (Montanus, 1925). Upon arrest, the accused's property was seized, and they were prohibited from contacting their family until the case was resolved.

This process typically lasted around three years, during which the accused and their family had no contact. The costs of imprisonment were covered by the sale of the accused's confiscated assets, and as a result, most individuals lost their entire estates upon release (Lea, 2011).

3.5. Defense Attorneys and Legal Representation

The Spanish Inquisition allowed defendants to hire court-approved attorneys for their defense. However, these attorneys were subject to the authority of the inquisitors and were prohibited from meeting with their clients privately. In practice, attorneys were more focused on extracting confessions from the accused than defending them. Attorneys who zealously advocated for the accused could be dismissed from the case. Consequently, these legal representatives primarily acted as scribes, drafting the defendants' confessions in legal language (Montanus, 1925; Lea, 2011; Edwards, 2003; Testas, 2003). The only support the accused could expect from their attorney was guidance on how to defend themselves, meaning the defendant was largely responsible for their own defense in court.

Accused individuals could escape conviction if they accurately guessed the identity of the informant and proved the accusations were motivated by personal animosity or if they could produce a favorable witness. However, while testimony against the accused Moriscos was often accepted, testimony in their defense was frequently rejected. If unable to defend themselves, the accused would be sent to trial and likely tortured (Montanus, 1925; Lea, 2011).

For example, Alonso de la Guarda, a Morisco, was accused by his wife of denying the Virgin Mary's purity. He successfully defended himself by proving that his wife was romantically involved with one of the inquisitors, resulting in his case being dismissed due to insufficient evidence. Similarly, Isabel, a twenty-year-old woman, was summoned by the Inquisition for allegedly cursing all Christians. She was able to demonstrate that the witnesses against her bore personal animosity, leading to the dismissal of her case (Lea, 2011).

3.6. Interrogation Methods

Torture, officially sanctioned by Pope Innocent IV's bull Ad extirpanda (May 15, 1252), has ancient roots, as old as humanity itself. The Inquisition Court utilized torture as a tool to „uncover the truth." Torture was typically applied when a suspect's answers were inconsistent during questioning or when partial confessions were made. Torture methods were intended not to

cause permanent injury or death (MLA, 1971; Testas, 2003). However, some inquisitors were dismissed for excessive use of torture (Güneş, 2017).

During interrogations, suspects were required to answer all questions, and two clerics meticulously recorded the proceedings. Even minute details, such as how many times a rope was wound around the wrists or ankles during torture, were noted. Inquisitors would often promise amnesty in exchange for confessions and the identification of accomplices, though these promises were seldom kept (Montanus, 1925; Testas, 2003).

Most Moriscos accused of heresy were subjected to torture. Torture typically began mildly and escalated over time. There was no distinction between men and women in its application, except for the elderly and pregnant women (Montanus, 1925; Dressendörfer, 1971; Testas, 2003). Even suspects found innocent were often kept in prison for a few days to maintain the court's authority.

The inquisitors primarily employed three methods of torture to extract confessions:

a) Garrucha (Strappado): The suspect's arms were tied behind their back, weights were attached to their feet, and their body was hoisted into the air using a pulley. The rope would then be abruptly released, and the process would be repeated until their joints dislocated (Montanus, 1925; Gordon, 1870).

b) Toca (Water Torture): The suspect was laid on a table, a wet cloth was placed over their face, and water was poured into their nostrils, causing them to struggle violently to avoid drowning (Montanus, 1925; Gordon, 1870).

c) Potro (The Rack): The suspect was tied to a torture bench, and ropes attached to their limbs were gradually tightened. If the suspect made confessions at night, they would be required to repeat and affirm them the following day. If the accused revealed no information despite the torture, they were released under heavy oaths not to disclose what they had experienced (Montanus, 1925; Dressendörfer, 1971).

4. Sentences Imposed by the Inquisition

The Inquisition Court imposed severe physical and psychological pressures on the accused, leaving deep scars on societal life. Prisoners, unable to endure the harsh treatments of trials and imprisonment, sometimes planned to escape or committed suicide. Escape or suicide was often

interpreted as an admission of guilt. In cases of suicide, the punishment was posthumous, with the body being burned. For example, an elderly man from Toledo committed suicide, and his body was subsequently burned. Another Morisco, Luiz de Guzmán, attempted to escape by setting fire to the prison, while a jurist from Valencia broke his leg during an escape attempt. An elderly man from Toledo, originally from Granada, also committed suicide, and his corpse was burned with a portrait of him placed before it (Montanus, 1925; Dressendörfer, 1971; Testas, 2003).

The Inquisition Court handed down a wide range of punishments to the Moriscos, from mild penalties to death by burning. Sometimes, the punishments were lighter than the severe tortures inflicted during interrogations. Isabel de Jaen, aged eighty, was denounced for adhering to Islam, defaming Christ, fasting on Thursdays, and performing ritual ablutions. After being tortured, her sentence was to publicly repent under oath in an auto da fé ceremony (Dressendörfer, 1971).

There were no established standards for sentencing, which often varied depending on the temperament and perspective of the inquisitors and their tribunal. Dressendörfer's examination of sentences imposed on the Moriscos by the Toledo Inquisition from 1575 to 1610 concluded that there was no consistent system in place (Dressendörfer, 1971). The same crime could receive either a light sentence (levi) or a very harsh one (de vehementi) (Lea, 2011). If individuals repented publicly and vowed not to commit the sin again, they could still face severe punishments, such as execution by burning or impalement, for repeated offenses.

Impalement was typically reserved for those convicted of severe crimes such as treason, heresy, witchcraft, or apostasy. This punishment involved the condemned being impaled either through the rectum or chest, causing them to die slowly in agony. The stake would sometimes be carefully inserted to pass through the body and emerge from the neck or shoulders. Other times, it was directly driven into the chest or abdomen. These executions were often carried out publicly to serve as a deterrent.

Burning was one of the most feared and well-known punishments of the Spanish Inquisition. This sentence was carried out in large, public ceremonies known as auto-da-fé, where individuals deemed heretics were burned alive in front of a crowd. These ceremonies began with religious rituals and prayers, followed by the trial and execution of the accused. Burning symbolized the seriousness of heresy and the consequences of deviating from the faith.

Both impalement and burning were intended to instill fear in the populace, serving as harsh warnings against falling into heresy or defying the church. Other punishments were also meted out to prisoners by the Inquisition Court.

4.1. Whipping

A common punishment in the Inquisition courts was flogging, where individuals were often sentenced to receive 100 lashes. However, Moriscos were sometimes subjected to as many as 200 lashes. For example, Lucia de Heute received 100 lashes for continuing to practice Islamic rituals (Homza, 2006). Geronima de Alquerini was sentenced to 100 lashes for performing ablutions in prison (Perry, 2005). Angela de Ambroz was flogged for sharing her confessions with other prisoners (Gordon, 1870), and Juan de Mediana received 200 lashes for refusing to drink wine and eat pork (Lea, 2011).

4.2. Galley Sentencing

Some convicts were sentenced to serve as rowers on galleys for a period of no less than five years. However, this punishment often resulted in severe health problems, and many did not survive (Dressendörfer, 1971).

4.3. Imprisonment

The inquisitors viewed prisons as places for moral correction where convicts could repent. Inquisition prisons, though varying from court to court, were generally considered more humane than secular prisons. However, the cells were far from comfortable. The Moriscos, often impoverished, were a financial burden to the Inquisition, and since they could not pay fines, their property was confiscated. For those without property, the king allocated half a real, which barely covered their basic needs (Montanus, 1925; Dressendörfer, 1971; Testas, 2003).

Prisoners would spend the first two to three days in solitary confinement in dark, narrow cells, similar to graves. However, these rules were not always enforced, and some Moriscos were held in larger cells together, where they engaged in religious discussions and communal prayers. This was likely due to guards accepting bribes. Guards also sometimes coerced prisoners into becoming informants. Inquisitors would sometimes go undercover as prisoners to spy on others. Showing mercy to prisoners was considered a severe, unforgivable offense for the guards (Montanus, 1925; Dressendörfer, 1971; Testas, 2003). In some cases, those sentenced to death could have their sentences commuted to life imprisonment if they repented sincerely (Demirci, 1995).

In general, prisons were cramped, foul-smelling, underground spaces, and much worse during the summer months. Life in prison was akin to living in a tomb. In some cases, two or three prisoners were crammed into cells so small that there was no room to move. Only a narrow slit of light entered the cells. Larger cells could be rented by prisoners awaiting sentencing or those given lenient punishments. Conversely, some cells were so small that a single person could barely fit. Prisoners were placed in different cells based on their crimes and social status (Montanus, 1925).

During the summer, guards did not provide prisoners with clothing or bedding, forcing them to sleep semi-naked on the ground. Requests for books or Bibles were denied, as the prisoners were told they should have thought of such things before falling into the court's hands. Many injustices occurred in prison, and those who attempted to report them to the inquisitors were punished by being thrown into an empty well and held there in poor conditions for two weeks before being returned to their cells (Montanus, 1925).

4.4. Sanbenito

The sanbenito or saco bendito was a garment of public humiliation worn by those sentenced by the Inquisition. This yellow tunic, bordered with red bands, bore the convict's name, the crime, and the date of their punishment. The headpiece was a black cardboard hat featuring an image of a burning man. The design of the garment varied according to the severity of the crime, and it was worn for a specified period as a form of penance (Montanus, 1925; Lea, 2011; Gordon, 1870; Dressendörfer, 1971).

4.5. Confiscation of Property

The confiscation of property was likened to the religious concept of almsgiving, where sins could be absolved by charitable acts. Similarly, in the Inquisition Court, the confiscation of a convict's property could mitigate their punishment. This practice was authorized by Pope Innocent IV in 1251. After arrest, the convict's valuable belongings were inventoried and forcibly taken. Jewelry, belts, and other valuables were seized, and those sentenced to life imprisonment lost all their assets. Confiscation was also applied posthumously, where graves were opened, corpses burned, and families deprived of inheritance (Montanus, 1567; Dressendörfer, 1971; Testas, 2003; Angenendt, 2007).

4.6. Public Shame (Vergüenza Pública)

The vergüenza pública sentence involved parading the convict through the streets on a donkey with a placard displaying their name and crime (Lea, 2011). Isabel Zacim, aged sixty, was sentenced to this punishment for possessing a Qur'an. Due to her age, she was also fined 10 ducats and required to undergo religious instruction (Lea, 2011).

4.7. Excommunication and Banishment

Individuals deemed heretics were first warned by a bishop, and if they failed to renounce their heresy, they were excommunicated. This was intended not as a punishment, but as a means of encouraging repentance (Montanus, 1925).

4.8. Burning at the Stake

One of the most severe punishments imposed by the Inquisition courts was execution by burning. Those labeled as "impenitent relapse," meaning heretics who repeated their sins without showing remorse, were punished with excommunication and death, according to the rules of the Inquisition (Carr, 2015). The burning penalty for the Moriscos was predominantly applied to their religious leaders (Dressendörfer, 1971).

Burning at the stake was divided into two categories: burning the condemned alive or burning their corpse posthumously. The former was reserved for those who openly persisted in their heresy, while the latter involved burning the body of those who had outwardly accepted Christianity but secretly adhered to their old faith. These individuals were sentenced to be burned among wood piles, either after being executed or strangled to death (Montanus, 1925; Testas, 2003; Dressendörfer, 1971).

One of the most common reasons Moriscos were reported to the authorities was their reverence for the Prophet Muhammad, which led to severe punishments. Ramiro de Placencia, a Morisco, was burned alive in 1571 for whispering, "May Muhammad close my eyes" (Homza, 2006). The Inquisition courts closely monitored the statements of Moriscos regarding Christianity. For example, in 1571, Mayor Garcia, a Morisco from Granada, was executed by burning after questioning, "How can the Virgin Mary remain a virgin after giving birth to a child?" (Homza, 2006).

In the Inquisition's sentencing, rather than explicitly stating death, the phrase "Relaxatio ad brachium saeculare" (release to secular authorities) was used to transfer the condemned for execution (Montanus, 1925). Those

sentenced to be burned were dressed in Sanbenito, a penitential garment, and to prevent them from declaring their innocence or preaching their religion, a Mordaza, a spiked wooden gag, was forcibly placed in their mouth (Montanus, 1925). Additionally, to prevent Moriscos from praying before death, they were gagged, and in the French Inquisition, more extreme measures included cutting out the tongues of the condemned (Carr, 2015).

5. Accusations Against the Moriscos (Religious Repression by the Inquisition Courts)

The Moriscos were often accused of engaging in practices or behaviors that were seen as evoking their Muslim identity. The Inquisition's activities in Granada intensified particularly between 1560 and 1568. During this period, the accusations directed at the Moriscos were largely centered around religious observances. According to Inquisition reports, the most prominent charges involved prayers or ritual prayers (Çala y oraçiones de moros) (Dressendörfer, 1971). In addition to these, other accusations were made concerning Islamic religious practices and various aspects of social life that reflected a Muslim identity.

5.1. Religious Practices

Although the Moriscos faced difficulties in congregating for communal worship, they attempted to preserve their religious consciousness by gathering in secret to perform communal prayers. According to Inquisition records, a faqih (Islamic jurist) in Deza would gather Moriscos at a farmhouse to pray in congregation and recite the Qur'an. Similarly, Fabian de Robles from Arcos would lock the door to his house to allow the Moriscos to perform ablutions and pray in congregation. Francisco Mateo was prosecuted for praying at his uncle's house. To prevent such gatherings, a decree was issued in Granada in 1526, prohibiting the locking of doors on Fridays and Saturdays. The Toledo protocols mention two cases stemming from attempts to hold communal Friday prayers, demonstrating the rigorous surveillance imposed by the Inquisition on the Moriscos (Dressendörfer, 1971; Özdemir, 2012b).

The Moriscos sought to preserve their religious knowledge by transmitting it orally. However, Christian authorities prohibited such gatherings, fearing that they could incite rebellion. Despite the restrictions, the Moriscos attempted to provide religious education to their children through clandestine meetings. Stricter sanctions were imposed to suppress these gatherings, making collective worship increasingly difficult. Maria de Naxora, a Morisca, was sentenced to life imprisonment for teaching prayers.

Hernando de Palme was tortured and received a sworn penance sentence for sharing Islamic teachings (Dressendörfer, 1971).

Fasting was also considered a major offense. The Moriscos' refusal to eat lunch and their communal evening meals were seen as evidence of fasting during Ramadan (Dressendörfer, 1971; Özdemir, 2012b). Francisco de Córdoba was reported to the Inquisition for declining an invitation to dine during Ramadan, which was interpreted as evidence that he was fasting (Carr, 2015). Bishop Perez tried to prevent the Moriscos from fasting by mandating that they eat during daylight hours. According to Inquisition protocols, the Moriscos gathered at iftar to share special sweets and colored eggs, but the prohibitions and punishments eventually made such celebrations impossible (Harvey, 2005; Özdemir, 2012b; Dressendörfer, 1971).

Florencia de Bacna, the wife of Geronimo de Mendoza, was sentenced to life imprisonment for participating in an iftar meal and for refusing to eat meat. Lucia de Jaen was reported for fasting during Ramadan and participating in Islamic rituals, resulting in a one-year prison sentence (Dressendörfer, 1971). Although accusations concerning almsgiving (zakat) were rare, they occasionally appeared in Toledo Inquisition records. Those found to have given alms according to Islamic customs were punished (Dressendörfer, 1971; Carr, 2015).

Accusations regarding pilgrimage (Hajj) were infrequent in Inquisition protocols. However, a 1530 prohibition on Moriscos residing in the southern coastal regions made it nearly impossible for them to undertake the pilgrimage. Nevertheless, a few Moriscos managed to perform the Hajj, despite the risk of severe punishment upon their return. For instance, a pirate named Francisco de Luque successfully traveled to Mecca, but upon his return, he was subjected to 200 lashes, four years of galley slavery, and a lifetime wearing of the Sanbenito garment as punishment for having made the pilgrimage (Lea, 2011).

The Moriscos continued to celebrate Islamic holidays, including Eid al-Adha, Eid al-Fitr, the Prophet's birthday (Mawlid), and the Day of Ashura, until the years of their expulsion. These holidays were significant occasions for the Moriscos. Despite the intense pressure and scrutiny of the Inquisition courts, they endeavored to maintain their Islamic rituals. The Inquisition's religious persecutions forced these acts of worship into secrecy and imposed severe conditions on their practice. Prayers, fasting, almsgiving, and pilgrimage became critical components of the Moriscos' struggle to preserve their religious identity.

5.2. Ablution and Cleanliness

According to Inquisition reports, the Moriscos placed great importance on ablution (ghusl) and ritual purity. This behavior attracted the attention of Old Christians, who were astonished that the Moriscos „bathed even in December." The ritual bath was referred to as „Guadoc," and visiting public baths for this purpose was prohibited. Even being seen washing one's hands could be sufficient evidence to summon a Morisco before the Inquisition (Dressendörfer, 1971; Özdemir, 2012b). In 1597, Bartolomo Sanchez was sentenced to three years of galley slavery and life imprisonment for practicing what was deemed „Moorish cleanliness" in Toledo. Similarly, Miguel Canete, a gardener, was reported to the Inquisition in 1606 for washing himself while working, although his trial was postponed due to a lack of evidence (Lea, 2011; Dressendörfer, 1971).

The Christian authorities considered public baths as sites of immorality, believing that they served as places for Islamic religious practices. Despite efforts by the Morisco convert Nunez Muley to argue that baths were essential for hygiene and health, these facilities remained banned (Dressendörfer, 1971; Özdemir, 2012b; Carr, 2015). Miguel Canete was tortured for performing ablution (Dressendörfer, 1971; Lea, 2011).

5.3. Adherence to Islamic Traditions

Cultural practices that reminded authorities of Islam were often considered evidence of Crypto-Islam among the Moriscos. Even non-religious cultural customs, such as the application of henna, visiting public baths, or certain wedding traditions, were grounds for accusations. The Granada Edict of 1526 prohibited the use of henna, but a Morisco woman named Mari Gomez successfully argued that henna was not religiously significant, resulting in a temporary suspension of the ban. Despite Christian women also using henna, Moriscos who practiced this custom were still summoned before the Inquisition (Lea, 2011). For example, Ysabel and Luys Hernandez were sentenced to life imprisonment for participating in Islamic ceremonies (Dressendörfer, 1971).

Morisco wedding customs also attracted the attention of the Inquisition. According to the National History Archive, Inquisition de Valencia files list several wedding traditions as indicators of Crypto-Islam, including decorating the bride's house, scattering sugar over the bedding, singing Zambra Antiqua songs, and performing traditional dances (Lea, 2011).
Traditional games played by Muslims were also considered criminal, as seen

in the case of a fifty-year-old woman who was taken from her bed at night and brought before the court for performing a folkloric dance at her son's wedding (Dressendörfer, 1971). In another case, a young man named Gabriel de Carmona was reported to the Inquisition in 1579 for singing Zambra Antiqua while traveling with friends (Lea, 2011).

The traditional clothing of Moriscos was another target of the Inquisition's prohibitions. This restriction, particularly in relation to women's attire, was considered a matter of honor and led to significant unrest, even resulting in uprisings. On the other hand, the fine fabrics of Morisco clothing in Castile were highly sought after (Dressendörfer, 1971). While Moriscos in rural areas continued to wear their traditional garments, those in cities were forced to adopt Christian styles. Moriscos argued that the veil had no direct connection to Islam and was worn by women for protection (Carr, 2015).

Marriages between relatives among the Moriscos also became a reason for prosecution by the Inquisition. Some priests turned a blind eye to such marriages in exchange for substantial bribes. The practice of early marriages and large families among the Moriscos caused unease among Christians (Dressendörfer, 1971).

Morisco women were also required to have a Christian midwife present at childbirth (Rochau, 1853). After birth, the infants were baptized and given Christian names. To prevent baptism, Morisco families would sometimes bring the same child to be baptized multiple times, thus sparing their other children. They would also attempt to annul the effects of baptism by bathing their infants with breadcrumbs in hot water and subsequently giving them Islamic names (Rochau, 1853; Dressendörfer, 1971; Özdemir, 2012b).

Circumcision was a tradition that Moriscos struggled to maintain under scrutiny, as circumcised children were seen as proof of their parents' adherence to Islam. Consequently, the practice of circumcision was difficult to carry out, and accusations related to it were rare in Inquisition records. Philip II imposed the punishment of rowing in the galleys for circumcised Moriscos. Even though the Moriscos argued that circumcision had health benefits rather than religious significance, they could not escape punishment (Dressendörfer, 1971; Poliakov, 1981).

5.4. Death, Burial, and Washing Rituals

The Moriscos were required to inform priests when their relatives were on their deathbed, as the priests aimed to ensure the dying person received Catholic rites and guidance at the time of death. Failing to notify the priests

in time resulted in severe punishments. However, the Moriscos often took the risk of not informing the authorities, believing that dying as a Muslim was necessary to enter paradise. They would often claim that the patient had died "suddenly" to avoid punishment for not calling a priest (Dressendörfer, 1971; Özdemir, 2012b; Carr, 2015).

Priests would also inspect whether the body was prepared according to Christian customs. The Moriscos were forbidden from washing their dead according to Islamic customs, applying perfumes, or performing the Salat al-Janazah (Islamic funeral prayer). As a result, they often performed funeral prayers secretly at night. In some cases, Moriscos would exhume their relatives' bodies after Christian burial and reinter them according to Islamic rites. If this was discovered, it could lead to prosecution and punishment by the Inquisition (Dressendörfer, 1971; Özdemir, 2012b; Carr, 2015). A woman named Isabel Ruiz was caught burying her husband according to Islamic rites and was fined 10,000 maravedis after being forced to confess under oath (Lea, 2011). Another woman, Companero, was accused in 1609 of conducting an Islamic funeral for a relative and having a prayer corner in her home, for which she was sentenced to death by crucifixion and burning by the Inquisition (Monter, 1990; Carr, 2015).

5.5. Speaking Arabic

The Moriscos were forced to speak Castilian and were prohibited from speaking Arabic, even within their own homes. Nunez Muley argued that Arabic was not inherently tied to Islam, pointing out that even Priest Talavera had learned Arabic and that there were Christians in Jerusalem who spoke Arabic. However, this ban was not lifted (Rochau, 1853; Carr, 2015).

Women showed greater resistance to the process of Christianization than men. According to the Informe protocol, women committed half of the recorded Morisco offenses (Dressendörfer, 1971). In response to these prohibitions, the Moriscos developed a unique language known as Aljamiado, which consisted of Castilian, Catalan, and Portuguese texts written using Arabic script. Religious texts such as Qur'anic translations, hadith collections, and Islamic legal manuals were written in Aljamiado, but these writings were also banned by the Inquisition (Özdemir, 2012b; Carr, 2015).

In some cases, confessions under torture helped individuals avoid execution or receive lighter sentences. Marta Perez, a young girl who reported many Moriscos, was rewarded with her freedom. Her sister, Ysabel Perez, was accused of receiving religious education and confessed under torture.

Another young girl, Maria de Toledo, was also tried for receiving religious instruction and, under torture, reported her own parents. Similarly, a woman named Maria de la Cruz was summoned to court for receiving religious education, but saved herself by reporting her friends. Ysabel de Naxora was sentenced to life imprisonment after admitting that she had provided her daughter with Islamic education when her daughter was on trial for the same offense (Dressendörfer, 1971).

5.6. Possession of Islamic Books

Cardinal Cisneros sought to eradicate the Moriscos' adherence to their religion and culture by ordering the burning of their books. According to the 1511 decree issued by Johannas der Wahnsinnige, Moriscos were required to obtain a certificate of approval from the Church for any books they kept in their homes. Moriscos who were literate in Arabic were among the most severely prosecuted by the Inquisition (Lea, 2011; Dressendörfer, 1971). For example, in 1607, Nofre Blanch and his wife Angela Carroz were subjected to a raid in which Arabic books were found hidden under their bed. Despite their claims that the books did not belong to them, they were tortured and sentenced to 100 lashes and one year in prison (Lea, 2011). Similarly, Isabel Xaquiza was convicted of owning Islamic books, for which she was sentenced to abjuración (formal renunciation) and fined thirty ducats. A farmer, Sebastian de Alcaraz, was also prosecuted, receiving 100 lashes, a fine of twenty ducats, and a sentence of penance (Homza, 2006).

5.7. Refusal to Eat Pork or Drink Alcohol

Slaughtering animals according to Islamic law was prohibited, though in some areas, Moriscos were granted permission to practice butchery under Christian supervision (Dressendörfer, 1971). The Moriscos' refusal to eat pork or drink alcohol was seen as evidence of their lack of commitment to Christianity. Alcohol was often used as a test for the Moriscos, and those who refused to drink were viewed with suspicion. Many Moriscos attempted to avoid eating pork by offering various excuses, but those who were believed to have deliberately avoided it faced severe punishments, including life imprisonment (Dressendörfer, 1971; Özdemir, 2012b; Carr, 2015). In one case, Isabel Garda vomited after unknowingly consuming pork and was reported to the Inquisition as a result (Carr, 2015).

5.8. Amulets/ Muska

The use of amulets by the Moriscos was regarded as a form of sorcery by the Inquisition, and their possession was seen as evidence of adherence to their former religion, leading to prosecution. One craftsman who made amulets claimed that he did not believe in Islam and was only crafting them for healing purposes, but he was nevertheless sentenced to five years of rowing in the galleys (Dressendörfer, 1971; Carr, 2015). Similarly, a merchant named Andes Munoz was reported for wearing an amulet around his neck for health reasons. Under torture, he confessed to maintaining his former faith but insisted he had been a good Christian for a long time. He was ultimately fined and sentenced to five years of forced labor (Dressendörfer, 1971).

Despite the relentless pressure of the Inquisition courts, the Moriscos continued to practice their Islamic rituals and traditions as best they could. Despite all the persecution, they attempted to preserve their religious and cultural identity through practices such as celebrating Islamic holidays and performing religious rituals. This effort to maintain their traditions was a key aspect of their struggle for identity. However, the oppressive environment forced the Moriscos to carry out their religious observances in secret and under extremely difficult conditions.

6. The Fate of the Moriscos: Exile

Despite the assimilation policies imposed on the Moriscos throughout the 16th century and the severe practices of the Inquisition, the Christians were unable to achieve the desired success. Eventually, the Catholic Church conceded that coexistence with the Moriscos was no longer feasible. By the end of the century, the Church had begun to deliberate on what should be done with the Moriscos (Carr, 2015). During these discussions, it was asserted that as long as Muslims remained in Spain, Spaniards would never be fully secure. Natural disasters, plagues, and famines in Spain were blamed on the presence of the Moriscos. Ultimately, with the approval of the Pope, the decision to expel the Moriscos was made (Rawling, 2006). This decision was sanctioned by the Church and the Inquisition courts and was implemented by King Philip III on April 4, 1609 (Kamen, 2005; Özdemir, 2012a). The decree of expulsion was first enforced in Valencia between September 22-24, 1609, followed by the expulsion of the Castilian Moriscos on January 5, 1610, and the Aragonese Moriscos on April 17, 1610 (Harvey, 2005).

The Moriscos slated for expulsion were ordered to vacate their homes within three days and await the arrival of royal commission officials. Christian

neighbors were prohibited from offering them assistance, and those caught hiding or burning the possessions of the Moriscos were threatened with the death penalty. Some Moriscos were exempted from expulsion if they could obtain a priest's certification that they were true Christians, or if their role in agricultural production was deemed indispensable. Morisco women married to Christians were also permitted to remain, although Morisco men married to Christian women were not granted the same permission (Harvey, 2005; Carr, 2015).

The Moriscos who were ordered to leave were escorted to the ports in groups of 200, where they were to board ships. However, due to a shortage of vessels, many were left waiting at the ports for days, during which time some succumbed to starvation, while others fell prey to robbers (Carr, 2015). A significant number of the Moriscos who sailed on ships traveling between Andalusia and the Maghreb never reached their destination. Some ships were wrecked in storms, others were attacked by pirates, some were plundered, and in some cases, the Moriscos were murdered by sailors. Between 1609 and 1614, a portion of Andalusia's Muslim population was exiled to Morocco, France, England, Italy, and Ottoman territories such as the Balkans, Algeria, Tunisia, Syria, and Anatolia. In total, at least 300,000 people were expelled between 1609 and 1614 (Bilgin, 2013; Carr, 2015). Thus, the Spanish sought to completely eliminate the Muslim presence within their territories.

CONCLUSION

After nearly 800 years of Muslim rule, a new era began in Andalusia with the surrender of Granada to the Christians in 1492. Although Muslims were initially guaranteed that their rights would be protected, these promises were quickly forgotten. In this new period, the Muslims of Andalusia were virtually enslaved, forced to choose between death and conversion to Christianity. As a result, all Muslims in the region were compelled to outwardly accept Christianity, though not necessarily in earnest. These new Christians, who continued to practice Islam in secret, came to be known as Moriscos. From the early 16th century onwards, the Inquisition courts punished any behavior or practice associated with Islam. Despite relentless persecution, the Moriscos managed to survive until the early 17th century.

The Christians, despite all their efforts, failed to fully convert the Muslims to Christianity. Over the course of approximately 110 years, hundreds of thousands of Moriscos were tried by the Inquisition for maintaining their allegiance to their former faith, and they paid the price for their loyalty with the harshest punishments. The Inquisition courts prosecuted the Moriscos

for their efforts to preserve their Islamic identity, particularly for acts such as showing reverence to the Prophet Muhammad, speaking Arabic, recanting their conversions, and engaging in customs and religious practices that openly demonstrated their Islamic faith. As a result of these trials, some Moriscos were burned alive in public ceremonies known as „auto da fé."

With the loss of Islamic scholars and leaders, the responsibility of religious education fell increasingly to women. Morisco women played a more active role than men in transmitting religious knowledge to their children. Despite facing severe penalties, women continued to secretly teach Arabic and provide religious instruction to their children. For generations, the Moriscos struggled to preserve their identity in the face of intense persecution and repression. Their continued resistance enraged the Christian authorities, leading them to resort to mass expulsions, during which hundreds of thousands perished along the way.

While non-Muslims were able to live in security and peace under Muslim rule, the example of Andalusia clearly demonstrates that, under Christian rule, those of other faiths were not afforded the same right to live.

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