

RISE OF ISLAMPHOBIA IN EUROPE: IMPACTS ON MUSLIMS DIASPORA

Naila Saleem*¹, Faisal Abdullah Khan²; Abdul Ghaffar³

*¹Lecturer (Leeds Girls College) Department of Political Science and IR; ²Lecturer Thal University Bhakkar(Department of Political Science and IR); ³PST Teacher (Punjab Education Department)

*¹nailasaleem7809@gmail.com; ²dhandlah@gmail.com; ³malikghaffar94@gmail.com

Corresponding Author: *

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ABSTRACT

In the contemporary globalized world where people and societies are deeply connected in socio-political and economic interactions, the use of populism and its divisive manifestation-identity politics has a potential to inflict bruises and damages in the relationship of two great civilizations, hence undermining European social order and their political relationship with the Muslim World. Muslims in Europe are suffering from hate and discrimination at different levels and in different ways. Incidents involves the burning of Holy Book Quran, attacks on Mosques, killing of Muslims, hate speeches against Muslims etc. The term Islamophobia is frequently used by the politicians and left wing leaders to gain their desired goals. Religion Islam is correlated with terrorism and terrorists with Muslims which is totally wrong. The main reason is the misunderstanding that lies in most of the Europeans and the wrong projection of Religion Islam by the western media. There is a need to address the issue and to project the true meanings of Islam to the entire world. Where post 9/11, economic crisis of 2008, populist wave, leftist leaders are causing Islamophobia, the Muslims Migrants influx has caused the rise of Islamophobia in Europe.

Keywords: Islamophobia, Europe, Muslims Diaspora

INTRODUCTION

“Islamophobia is rooted in racism and is a type of racism that targets expressions of Muslimness or perceived Muslimness.”¹It also includes discrimination in education, employment, housing, or access to goods and services. Moreover the biased role of western media against Muslims projects the hate and fear against the Muslims around the globe. There are different categories of Muslims living in

Europe. Some of them are living in the Europe from centuries mainly in Bosnia, Albania, and Kosovo where Islam was known as the basic element of their history while in other countries they were in the minority as in Romania, Bulgaria Poland and Crimea. The other form of Muslims living in Europe is students and businessman who come from the different Muslim countries for the sake of education

¹ “All Party Parliamentary Group on British Muslims Definition of Islamophobia” ,*Camden*, July 2017.

<https://www.camden.gov.uk/documents/20142/4794543/APPG+Definition+of+Islamophobia.pdf/747d5e0-b4e2-5ba6-b4c7-499bd102d5aa>

and business. Others are who came to who entered in Europe without restrictions and those who entered during 1950 and 1960 as labor migrants. Then there are a number of those Muslims who are born to migrant parents and lastly those Muslims who had seek asylum and refugees, and their count is a huge in number especially in the last decade. Muslims living in Europe is not a new phenomenon; they had ruled their empire for centuries in the Europe especially in Spain.

During the late 1960's the labour migration led to the formulation of new Muslim communities in several states of Europe. Initially these communities were composed of mainly working age males were defined primarily in terms of economic functions. Latter they were joined by their families and children because of economic restrictions in 1970. In 1980 Muslims also arrived from Afghanistan, Lebanon, Iran, Iraq and in 1990 from Yugoslavia and Somalia as refugee seeking asylum in different states of Europe. After the incident of 9/11 the narrative and perceptions of non-Muslim changed against Muslims as western media and politicians linked terrorism and violence with Muslims. They tagged Muslims as terrorist and the western media projected Muslims as terrorists and Islam as the religion which promotes and provokes violence and terrorism. After 9/11 many Muslims living in the Europe effected by a difficult climate of hate. Hundreds of Islamophobic incidents

were reported in different states of Europe. After the economic crisis of 2008 the issue accelerated as the wave of 'go back to your home' started. Media plays an important role in spreading the false and wrong image of Muslims and Islam by their biased behaviour. This paper will discuss the impacts of Islamophobia on the Muslim diaspora living across the Europe and also aims at highlighting the reasons behind this hate and policy recommendations.

Literature Review:

Mohamed Imran Mohamed Taib in his research "The Islamophobia Industry: how US war on terror sowed seeds of Christchurch killings" (2019) says, according to a 2016 report by the Council on American-Islamic Relations and the UC Berkeley Centre on Race and Gender, about 32 organizations in the United States currently form an "inner core" with the primary purpose of promoting prejudice against, or hatred of, Islam and Muslims.²

The European Islamophobia Report (EIR) is an annual report, based on the reports of 25 nations, covering the Islamophobia in every country. This report covers the work of 37 scholars. This report aims to enable policymakers and public to discuss and understand the issue of Islamophobia with the help of qualitative data.³

The Islamophobia Industry, how the rights manufacture fear of Muslims, deliberately explains the issue of Islamophobia. "In recent years, Muslim-

² Mohamed Imran Mohamed Taib, "The Islamophobia Industry: how US war on terror sowed seeds of Christchurch killings", *South China Morning Post*, March 3, 2019.

³ Bayrakli, Enes. "Farid Hafez, eds. 2016." *European Islamophobia Report 2015* (2015).

led terrorist attacks have declined yet anti-Muslim prejudice has soared to new peaks. The fear that the Islamophobia Industry has manufactured is so fierce in its grip on some populations that it drives them to do the unthinkable.”⁴

This powerful and provocative book explores the dark world of monster making, examining in detail an interconnected and highly organized cottage industry of fear merchants. Uncovering their scare tactics, revealing their motives, and exposing the interests that drive them, Nathan Lean casts a bright and damning light on this dangerous and influential network.⁵

Lean writes: "*Society has a responsibility to counter these individuals with overwhelming overtures of pluralism – and to systematically push the fear mongers out of public discourse. The consequences of inaction are grave. Just as Bin Laden had several copycats, so too may Breivik. In his closing statement, the Norway killer said that, 'My brothers in the Norwegian and European resistance movements are sitting and watching this case while they plan new attacks'.*"⁶

Said Gul in his article *History of Islamophobia and Anti-Islamism* briefly explains the rising issue of

Islamophobia and the hate against Islam in Europe. He also highlights that “how the biased attitude prevents the masses from getting true information about Islam.”⁷

Research design and proposed methodology:

The research is deductive in nature and its major part is qualitative however it also includes quantitative approach as the research will highlight the Islamophobic incident’s stats. The research uses both primary and secondary data.

Muslims migrant’s influx in Europe:

In recent years the region of Europe has suffered a record influx of asylum seekers from different Muslim countries experiencing conflicts mainly from Syria. This influx has raised a number of questions on the current and future population of Muslims in Europe. The Muslim population living in Europe is very diverse based on different sects. About 60% Muslim populations living in Europe are the migrants and their number is increasing because of natural reasons. Considering the migration, more migrants came from the Syria between mid-2010 and mid-2016.

⁴ Lean, Nathan Chapman, John L. Esposito, and Jack George Shaheen. *The Islamophobia industry: How the right manufactures fear of Muslims*. London: Pluto Press, 2012.

⁵ Ibid

⁶ Ibid

⁷ Selim, Yasser Fouad A. "Islamophobia in Early and Contemporary America: Reproducing Myths in Slaves in Algiers (1794) and Argo (2012)." *ANGLICA-An International Journal of English Studies* 25, no. 1 (2016): 255-269.

Syria and India top list of countries of origin of migrants to Europe, mid-2010 to mid-2016

Top 10 origins of migrants overall		
	Estimated count	% Muslim
Syria	710,000	91%
India	480,000	15
Morocco	370,000	100
Pakistan	280,000	96
Bangladesh	250,000	95
United States	240,000	1
China	240,000	2
Iran	220,000	97
Nigeria	190,000	23
Sri Lanka	190,000	10
Top 10 origins of refugees		
Syria	670,000	91%
Afghanistan	180,000	100
Iraq	150,000	92
Eritrea	120,000	37
Somalia	60,000	100
Iran	50,000	96
Pakistan	30,000	96
Nigeria	20,000	44
Russia	20,000	8
Sudan	20,000	91
Top 10 origins of regular migrants		
India	470,000	15%
Morocco	360,000	100
Pakistan	250,000	96
United States	240,000	1
Bangladesh	240,000	96
China	230,000	2
Sri Lanka	180,000	10
Libya	180,000	97
Iran	170,000	98
Nigeria	170,000	20

Note: Estimates do not include those asylum seekers not expected to be granted legal status to remain in Europe.
 Source: Pew Research Center estimates. See Methodology for details.
 "Europe's Growing Muslim Population"

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

The above table shows the origin of migrants to the Europe. An estimated 9 in 10 Syrian migrants were Muslims which means that 91% of Syrian migrants were Muslims. After Syria the major source of refugees is from Afghanistan and Iraq mainly affected from the conflict were mostly Muslims. India which is the second biggest source of migrants counts an estimated 15% of Muslims.⁸ There is also a count of regular migrants in which Morocco Pakistan and Bangladesh are on the top of the list. The prime destination for the Muslims refugees is observed in Germany while UK counts the largest

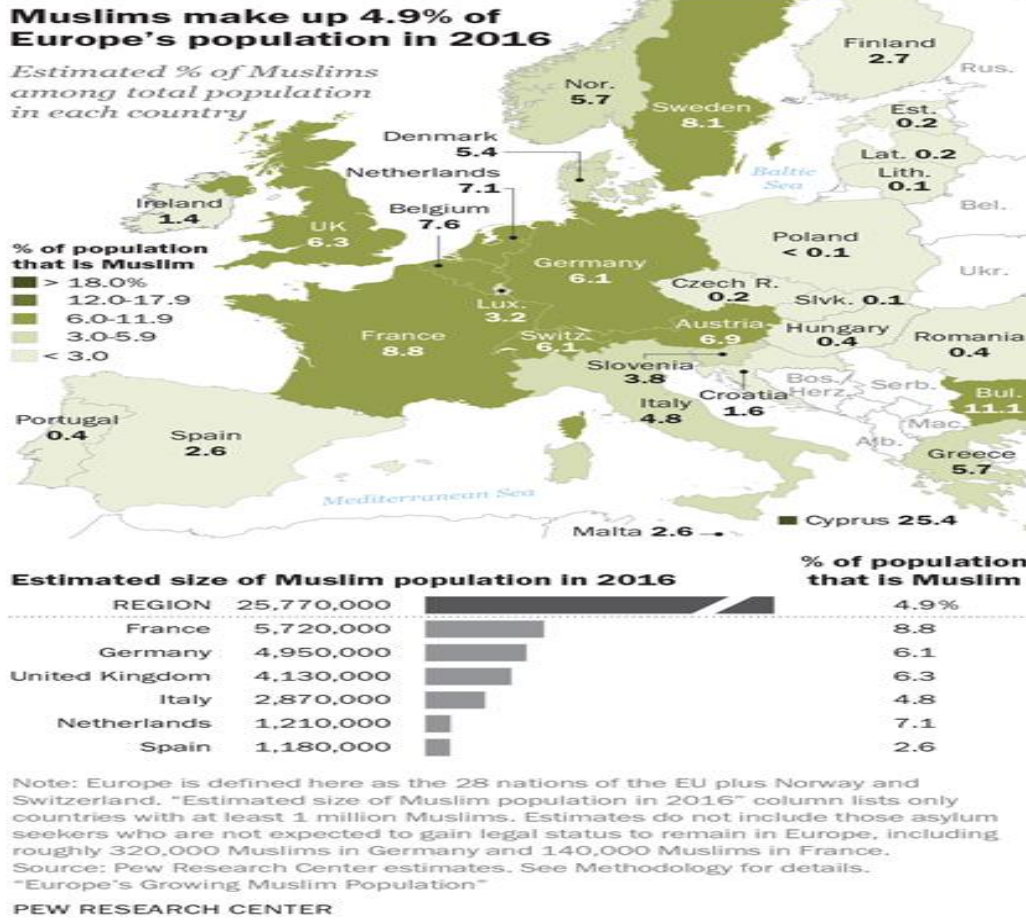
destination of regular Muslims migrants between mid-2010 and mid-2016.

According to PEW research center 86% of the Refugees between the 2010 and 2016 were of Muslims hosted by Germany. The Muslim population is expected to increase by 10 million by the year 2050 whereas if the refugees flow that is seen in the past few years were to continue in the future with the same pace then the estimated Muslim population by 2050 would be around 75 million. As of 2015 and 2016 Germany and France have the highest number of Muslims in Europe. Similarly the future stats would increase accordingly and would increase the overall population of Muslims in Europe. Children born to Muslim women will ultimately identify as Muslims. Apart from the migration aspects fertility is another aspect which will gradually increase the number of Muslims in Europe.

The vast majority of Muslims population living in Europe is mainly because of immigration or sons from the immigrants and rest of the population is the political refugees from different Muslim countries. According to the PEW research center Muslim population in Europe as of by 2010 was 44 million. As per the stats of 2016 Muslims made 5% of the population of the Europe.

Below are the stats of Muslim population given by the PEW research center

⁸ Ibid



So the Muslims migrants' influx is increasing day by day because of political asylum seekers, refugees, students and businessmen and because of the poor economic conditions and increased unemployment ratio of other countries, their citizens are looking at west. While large number of migrants was Muslims.

Rise of Populism in Europe:

Populist movements across the Europe are not coincidental, nor have they emerged out of thin air. There have been various reasons for the growth and development. But in the contemporary Europe particularly and west generally, the recent rise of populism is more related to the Islamophobia industry. Islamophobia Industry is a term coined by Nathan Lean to describe a network of communication between think-tanks, politicians, and community organizations etc., which are involved in propagation of anti-Muslim and anti-Islam propaganda. This network is not only connected in

dissemination of propaganda but also involved in funding of such programs to be carried out all over the Europe. It basically sounds like an organized global structure which is anti-Islam.

Populism or populist movements are not only related to the working and funding of these anti-Islamic organizations, but a transnational network can also be witnessed, whose structure is purely based on neoconservative agenda. In an investigative report, it was revealed that a UK based think-tank; Henry Jackson Society (HSJ) received funds from an organization of US, Abstraction Fund, run by Nina Rosen Wald. Nina is also known as the sugar-mama in the anti-Islamic circles and left-wing populist parties. It has been estimated that, she has contributed over more than \$3 million funding to other anti-Muslim organizations and programs all over Europe.

HSJ itself has been a staunch supporter of anti-immigrant policies and vehemently rejects

multiculturalism. They have also been very vocal and active in disseminating anti-Islam and anti-Muslim agendas. According to their teachings and popular slogans, Muslims and Islam are antithetical to core values and beliefs of neoliberal western democracy. This can further be cemented by the speeches made by their leaders in which they openly called for making Europe a less attractive place for Muslims. The same people have also participated in US anti-Islamic and anti-Muslim conferences showing the transnational structure of growing white supremacy or far-right white populism and the West.

Such narratives are not only isolated to these organizations and are given impetus by the politicians and the business elites as well. Some of the notable figures among the anti-Muslim hate and supporters of far-right populism are Michael Gove and Nigel Farage. The current Britain Prime Minister, Boris Johnson, himself once called Muslim women in burqa as “Letter Boxes” and “Bank Robbers”. Such statements are the realization of the British elite and politicians towing to the ever growing populist narrative.

The worst is yet to be catered, as grassroots pubs and community centers are becoming the breeding grounds for growing populist narrative among the masses. The people have brilliantly used technology and social media to their advantage by keeping their identities hidden while spreading the messages of hate and anti-Muslim slogans. With no legal ramifications and lower checks on the internet sphere, it can easily prove to be compound multiplication for the rise of populism among grassroots masses.

Lest, we should not forget the gruesome Christchurch attack in New Zealand, which claimed the lives of tens of people, while the perpetrator proudly used songs of military from the history, and took inspiration from people who also propagated upon killing Muslims as act of honor. Inaction against such people and total disregard of their messages and actions will continue to lead to more attacks like Christchurch and until these transnational structures and global network of anti-Muslim and anti-Islam organizations are not brought to justice, Populism will grow with its tentacles sharp and against Muslims.

Islamophobia in Europe:

Islamophobic occurrences rose crosswise over Europe because of the expansion in far-right developments and impact, as per a report by an Ankara-based research organization. “European Islamophobia Report 2018,” released as of late by the Foundation for Political, Economic and Social Research (SETA), concentrated in detail on the basic elements that straightforwardly bolster the ascent of hostile to Muslim prejudice in Europe. Increase of Islamophobia represented a risk not exclusively to Muslims yet in addition to the security and dependability of Europe, as indicated by the report.

The media additionally assumed a critical role in the multiplication and standardization of against Muslim prejudice, it said. “There is, very minute number of positive reports of Muslims in European communities” noticed as per the report, and included: “Islamophobic contempt is regularly spread by means of the Internet”; Hostile to Muslim feelings were additionally routinely showed in petitions, the report said. Islamophobic language by high-positioning government officials, for the most part from the extreme right, standardizes a dehumanizing and supremacist language with regards to the depiction of Muslims, it included. “Muslims are among the primary targets of the increase of far-right fanaticism in Europe, Quote; the report focused. Moreover, in order to obtain electoral gains, populist parties are legitimizing the hatred against each other. The events of violence and hatred against Islam are increasing at a very high rate. Brutal acts result from the dehumanizing philosophy of bigotry, and Muslims were progressively turning out to be exploited in light of their faith.

Let’s have a look at the facts and figures crosswise over Europe in 2018.

1. Around 70 instances of Islamophobic occurrences were recorded in Belgium, where 76% of the unfortunate casualties were female, it noted.⁹
2. In Austria, 540 instances of Islamophobic incidents were recorded in 2018, contrasted with 309 cases in 2017 – an increase of roughly 74% of hostile to Muslim bigot acts.¹⁰
3. In France, 676 Islamophobic episodes were archived in 2018 against 446 of every 2017 with a 52% rise. Among these 676 incidents, 20 included physical assaults (3%), 568 separation (84%), and 88 of them included hate speech (13%).¹¹
4. In Germany, there were 678 assaults on German Muslims, in addition to 40 assaults for mosques. Approximately 1,775 assaults were on exiles, 173 on shelter homes, and 95 on help laborers in Germany, as indicated by the report.¹²
5. In the Netherlands, 91% of an aggregate of 151 incidents of religious discrimination was reported to the police was against Muslims.¹³

Populist wave impacting Muslims diaspora in Europe:

Go back to your country, take the hijab off, don't blow yourself up, stop stealing our jobs; you're not the same as us. These are some of the slurs Muslims in Europe have had to bear over the past few years as the populist slogan of Islamophobia has taken over the States that were known for their inclusiveness and multiculturalism. The problem lies in the deep roots of US led war on terror that had, according to Mohamed Imran Mohamed Taib, sowed the seeds of Christchurch killings. This concludes that the idea of Islamophobia has long been rooted in the US led war

on terror which singled out Muslims and Islam as the sole source of global terrorism.

Professor Robert Pape of the University of Chicago, one of America's leading terrorism experts, studied every single case of suicide terrorism between 1980 and 2005, 315 cases in total and he concluded:¹⁴

*"There is little connection between suicide terrorism and Islamic Fundamentalism or any of the world's religions, rather what nearly all suicide terrorist attacks have in common is a specific secular strategic goal to compel modern democracies to withdraw military forces from the territory that the terrorists considered to be their homeland."*¹⁵

Gallup carried out the biggest poll of Muslims around the globe. Fifty thousand Muslims in 35 countries, 93% of Muslims rejected 9/11 and suicide attacks and of the 7% who didn't, they all when polled and focus groups, cited political reasons for their support of violence, not religious reasons. Then, why are the Muslims of Europe in particular and the world in general are looked down upon as the sole source of violence and terrorism?

Be it the French banning face coverings or be it the attacks on mosques and Muslims across France after the Charlie Hebdo Shooting or be it the Bærum Mosque Shooting in Norway or the countless shootings in Sweden, Italy, Greece, Switzerland or other parts of Europe, Islamophobia is a "symptom of the disintegration of human values," according to former Council of Europe Commissioner for Human Rights Thomas Hammarberg—"values such as nondiscrimination, tolerance, freedom of thought, justice, solidarity, and equality. These values are supposed to be inherent to European societies; they are values upon which the European Union and the Council of Europe were built."¹⁶ Far right politicians like the French Marine Le Pen or the Dutch Geert Wilders have played on the sentiments of the

⁹"Database 2012-2017 on anti-Muslim hatred," European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights, 2017.

<https://fra.europa.eu/en/project/2018/database-2012-2017-anti-muslim-hatred>

¹⁰ Ibid

¹¹ Ibid

¹² Ibid

¹³ Ibid

¹⁴ Pape, Robert A. "The strategic logic of suicide terrorism." American political science review 97, no. 3 (2003): 343-361

¹⁵ Ibid

¹⁶

<https://www.opensocietyfoundations.org/explainers/islamophobia-europe?fbclid=IwAR1zYt5FAW1uyhSbttXL1bXR84gEWkfghxCeMLg7RQwJm5GQTof2JYOyuSU>

common people by fuelling hate against Muslims and making them look like terrorists who are stealing their jobs and their security.

THEIR, THEM, US, OURS

This divide in civilization which some politicians lure people into committing since it's beneficial for their vested interests is undermining European social order and their political relationship with the Muslim World.

FINDINGS AND CONCLUSION:

Multiculturalism was the beauty of Europe which is curtailing day by day due to the increased wave of populism resulting in the rise of leftist parties in France Hungary and Finland and other countries of Europe. The populist wave is fabricating identity crisis and impacting the Muslims diaspora in Europe. History shows that after the 9/11 incident there was a huge increase in the hate sentiments of the Europeans against Muslims. The term terrorism was amalgamated with Islam while the tag of terrorist was incorporated with Muslims. The start of 21st century was the rise of Islamophobia in the west impacting the Muslims living in the west. The last decade registered thousands of islamophobic incidents against Muslims, in which hundreds of Muslims died and thousands of Muslims suffered injuries whereas a huge number of Muslims suffered discrimination at different levels. The economic crisis of 2008 marked the acceleration of the islamophobic incidents resulting in the movements and slogans like "go back to your country".

Where there are factors of post 9/11, economic crisis of 2008, populist wave and leftist leaders are playing another crucial role in boosting the hate against the Muslims. The term Islamophobia is now only used by the politicians as a political term to gain the desired political goals. Muslim migrants had suffered a lot from the discriminations at different levels. The issue of islamophobia was recently highlighted by the Prime Minister of Islamic Republic of Pakistan, Imran Khan at the UNGA. On one hand where Islam is rising, liberal extremism is also rising in Europe. The name Muhammad is becoming the most popular name in Europe; Islam is one of the top religions in Europe after Christianity. In contrast to that liberal extremism is also rising; there are many incidents of the burning of the Holy Book Quran by the non-Muslims and mostly recently the incident of New

Zealand is the best example which explains the hate against Muslims in Europe. Most importantly populism and the emerging populist wave is behind the rise of islamophobia in Europe, resulting in accelerating the identity politics, imposing bruises and damages in the relationship of two great civilizations, hence undermining European social order and their political relationship with the Muslim World.

The issue is very serious and needs to be addressed at every possible international forum. The issue lies in the wrong projection of Islam; most of the non-Muslims are not familiar with the true meanings and true teachings of Islam. Islam is not a religion of hate but of peace; terrorism has no religion and no religions allows or support terrorism including Islam. This is the responsibility of Muslim world leaders to project the true meaning of the religion Islam in order to remove the misunderstanding which lies among a huge number of Europeans. Once the misunderstanding is removed there will be a huge decline in the islamophobic incidents. Europeans needs to understand that most of the politicians use the term islamophobia for the political gains. Terrorism also belongs to gain the political objectives; there are no religious objectives behind the terrorism.

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