

THE PHENOMENON OF ISLAMOPHOBIA IN THE MODERN EUROPEAN CULTURES

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Abstract

The purpose of my research is to examine Islamophobia in the western cultures, to analyze it and to minimize the fear of Islam which may cause clashes between civilizations.

The growth of Islamophobia, or anti-Muslim racism, has been dramatic throughout Europe and North America in recent years. There have been increased attacks on Muslims, on their mosques and community centers, and a series of laws targeting Muslims have been passed especially after 9/11 .

Theories espousing a 'clash of civilizations' have become more widespread, and Muslims have become synonymous in the eyes of some politicians and the press with 'extremists' and 'terrorists'. Now, Muslims are expected to apologize for any act of terrorism or wrong doing carried out by other Muslims, regardless of how unrepresentative of Muslims such actions are.

Arabs in TV and movies are portrayed as either bombers, in reference to Arab men being portrayed as terrorist or as wealthy oilmen and Arab women being portrayed as sex objects.

This kind of phobia does not just cause psychological harm (culture, insult) but also helps feed into actions that are physically harmful by dehumanizing a group first before attacking it.

These representations, which have been historically and predominantly negative, often have adverse repercussions for Arab Europeans and Muslims in daily interactions and in current events.

In order to minimize such phenomenon we as intellectuals suggest :

-The creation of institutions on reducing the impact of Islamophobia that approach diversity and promote an understanding of both the cultures, the East and the West.

-Encouraging the West to visit / encounter the Arab World and learn more about their culture.

-Academics should work on the removal of this fear.

Keywords: Islamophobia, extremists, civilizations, racism