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Causes of Islam growth in the european union with an emphasis on three countries (France, Germany and Britain)

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A R T I C L E   I N F O

A B S T R A C T

In recent years, the European Union witnessed a growing wave of Muslims' population growth (an increase in immigration and birth) and the tendency of people to Islam that today, it has become as one of the major current challenges of the European, so that at present in Europe, especially in three important countries of France, Germany and Britain, Islam is considered as the second religion, and Muslims have a lot of power. This case is so serious to the European that to lay down laws and regulations against Muslims and intensify their control, this issue is understood, but any pressure and restrictions of European governments against Muslims result in hatred of the West among Muslims living in Europe. In this regard, two important questions are raised: What factors are involved in the growth and expansion of Islam in Europe? And how is European governments' approach to the growth of Islam in the European Union? In this paper, it has been attempted to answer these questions through an analytical-descriptive method using library-internet resources.

1. Introduction

The European Union with 27 members and a population of over 500 million people is considered as the largest trading bloc and one of the most successful examples of regional convergence in the world. Over the past few decades, Europe followed the convergence process during meetings in Maastricht, Amsterdam, and Nice and achieved significant progress in the economic arena, but the initial challenges of the new century slowed down the motion of this union to complete convergence. One of the major challenges of Europe is Islam and an increase in the percentage of its population.

In today's Europe, Islam is the second dominant religion; Muslims are the most important religious minority in European countries. Emigrating from North Africa, the Indian subcontinent, Southeast Asia and the Middle East (which had a colonial history); some of these Muslims after the two World Wars have been living in the European countries. Muslims' residence in Europe occurred along with preserving Islamic identity; hence, the European know Muslims as the reason for creating challenges and conflicts in their community because they are considered culturally, linguistically, and racially as unshared more important than all religions.

Growing increase of Muslim population, Europeans' tendency to Islam, and terrorist incidents in Europe (that Muslims are accused of doing them) caused widespread panic and reaction of European authorities against Muslims residing in Europe and also resulted in having strict laws, regulations and control laid down against Muslims. Hence, these questions are raised: What are reasons and factors of the growth of Muslim population in Europe? And how have been policies of the European Union's members toward Muslims so far, and in what form it will be followed?

The present study type is descriptive-analytical. Considering the nature and subject of the study, data collection was performed by various methods and generally based on a library and internet method, and analysis of findings was also conducted mainly by a method of qualitative analysis.

2. Theoretical framework (power from michel foucault's viewpoint)

If the most important and fundamental issue in political science is not the issue of power, at least, it will be considered as one of the essential issues of this field. All thinkers, philosophers, sociologists, etc. have devoted an important part of their work to study the issue and also presented different definitions, descriptions, and analyses of it, but more than anyone else, Foucault's name is associated with the issue of power.

Therefore, the birth of human sciences always takes place with the establishment of power mechanisms (Fooladvand, 1997, 66). According to Foucault, different methods of the power exercise, including submissiveness and discipline mechanism generally found in "labolg methods have allowed the emergence of different fields of knowledge.

From Foucault's viewpoint, "we should accept complexity and instability of power where discourses can be as a tool, power score, barrier, slip, resistance point, as well as starting point for an opposite strategy." (Azdanlo, 2001: 59-60). He knows that power mechanisms includes efficient tools for the production and accumulation of knowledge and writes:" In most writings, power is associated with negative traits; it excludes, suppresses, censors, prevents, hides and covers." (Smart, 1997: 7) Foucault rejects such a power approach and offers a new definition of modern power. Unlike previous forms of power, Foucault considers modern power as producing, continuous, net-like, and comprehensive one influenced by a space in which the modern power has emerged. From his viewpoint, power finds a new nature making sense like the concept "it is everywhere and nowhere."

Foucault does not see power and its relations in relationship among citizens or a boundary between social classes, but knows it as an extensive network that went deep into the community and everyone in the network are more or less involved; whether rulers or subordinates are all in the deep direction of power (Sobhe-emrooz, 1999). Foucault says every social relationship is a power relationship, but it is reminded that every power relationship does not necessarily end in domination. In his opinion, power, in a modern society, is dependent on knowledge-based relations (a knowledge/power network) that holds the individual inside.

The growth of Islam and Muslims as well as their power seeking whether among people or European leaders resulted in reactions from members of the European Union. A growing tendency of European youth to Islam and women's tendency to the veil indicate the examples of Islam in Europe at the heart of the European society. There is no power relationship without the formation of a field of knowledge, nor is knowledge that does not include power relations (Dreyfus and Rabinow, 2008: 24). In Foucault's thought system, essentially, power that is usually applied like chain is analyzed. The power is never possessed by anyone; this form of power works like network and not only people turn over within fibers of the network, but also they are always in a condition that engage themselves in power and apply it. In this approach, humans are not as a sedentary purpose nor used by power any more. According to this view, power is not applied to individuals; rather, it flows through them (Khoshroozadeh, 1999). Power is not monopolized by European leaders any longer (a traditional definition of power); Muslims may engage in the status quo under circumstances; however, with the growth and power of Muslims as well as their increased number, there is no possibility of truth (Islam instead of Christianity) in Europe by Muslims.

While power is considered as a producer and applied through mechanisms such as observation, recording practices, realization and research processes, it means that power has no alternative except that to create machines in order to recognize, organize and operate. Applying power necessarily moves knowledge systems and create spaces within which knowledge is formed (Nazari, 2007). However, a figure that Foucault obtained from power does not act clearly in a "unified and centralized" manner; it is not similar to causality and not goods to exchange; rather, it is a kind of power that is spread everywhere and available in everything and everywhere. In a sense, from Foucault's viewpoint, power is more as a continuous proficiency skill than mere mastery and absolute dominance.

Foucault analyzed power more in details of social practices; that is where it exerts its influences as tiny fluid and intangible features (Nash, 2006: 39). He knows that power flows everywhere not because it embraces but arises from everything. In general, we can say that Foucault presents a new approach about power along with new methods and techniques for analysis of power concept.

In this paper, we attempt to look for Foucault's opinion about the concept of resistance to power as one of the fundamental principles of political philosophy and apply it in an analytical framework about the growth of Islam in Europe. In the book "Subject and Power" on power relation, Foucault deals with domination and resistance in a contemporary society. He argues wherever there is power, resistance is also available. In every power relation, a perfect field of "possible responses, reactions, and measures" can be observed. In fact, power merely takes place during struggles, reactions, and resistance that humans have done so as to disturb power relations; hence, attending to forms of the occurred resistance to power is considered as an inevitable necessity.

Resistance is necessary to define power and also important to study power in a methodological manner since resistance exposes power relation methods by which power is used (Nash, 2006: 44). Resistance is a real symbol of political game and also a definite reaction against institutionalized power.

Foucault knows that his goal for more accurate study and analysis is to provide a more empirical analysis of power in which forms of resistance to various kinds of power are taken into account as a departure point. Instead of analyzing power in terms of its inner rationality and monitor of reason on power (as raised at the time of Kant), he evaluates power relations based on conducted campaigns against it; hence, he selects resistance to power as his departure point as follows: women versus men, children versus parents, psychiatric patients versus psychiatrists, medicine for total population, and the exercise of state's power and its institutions over people's lifestyle (Nazari, 2007, and Aftab News Agency, 2007).
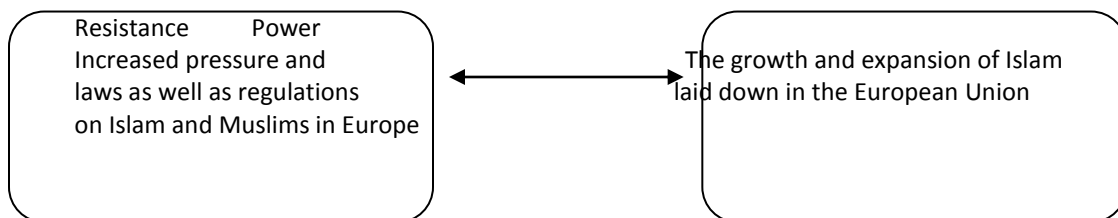
He makes a list of similarities of these oppositions with types of power in the following:

These campaigns are universal and not limited to one country.

Their goal is to criticize the effects of power itself.

They are direct, chaos-seeking, and flee from authority.

On the one hand, they emphasize individual's right to be different and on the other hand, unlawful isolation of people.

They fight against the effects of power associated with knowledge and competence.

They renounce economic and ideological violence of a government and reject an academic and administrative inquisitorial system that determines our identity (Shekouhi, 2008).

In Foucault's viewpoint, all these campaigns are focused on the fact that who we are; in other words, the goal of all these campaigns is to attack techniques and forms of power.

3. Factors affecting the population growth of muslims in europe

The occurrence of two world wars within Europe, loss of manpower, the onset of post-war reconstruction period, a shortage of labor, and the population of Muslim immigrants in search of jobs caused the attraction of immigrants from other European countries mainly Muslims. It should not be forgotten that not only Muslims migrated to Europe but also immigrants from other non-Muslim countries entered Europe.

The first wave of Muslim immigrants to modern Europe was formed more by workers from North Africa, Turkey, India and Pakistan (Zubaida and Dietrich, 2005: 8). Low-wage immigrant workers with no insurance worked in difficult conditions and the result was to the benefit of economy of a country where they migrated. Until the tide of globalization, many political, economic and scientific elites in developing communities migrated to Europe, and the European due to an aging wave of their population were more or less satisfied with the process though it was not stated (Gharemanpour, 2008); therefore, an important part the Muslim population in Europe is due to Muslim immigration, especially after World War II.

Most immigrants to escape economic and political problems and share in western life are displayed through the media around the world; they also migrate to economic centers to give financial assistance to families in their birthplace. In Stowart Hall's words, "The comfort is in the West" (Hall, 1999: 306). At the same time, countries such as Britain, France, and the Netherlands regarded as colonial powers started the acceptance of immigrants from their former colonies (Eric Lin and Arsen, 2003: 99). The majority of British Muslims belongs to the Indian subcontinent and is divided into Indians, Pakistanis, and Bangladeshis…. Until the 1980s, these communities were defined by ethnic conditions and lines. For example, the overall composition of Muslims in Britain was "Asian" and all of them were generally applied as "Pakis" [the abbreviation of Pakistani] (Zubaida and Dietrich, 2005: 8 and refer to Minavand, 2005: 2). In France, most immigrants were constituted by Algerians (Harkis who are a group of co-workers and soldiers of the French colonial administration in Algeria after the Algerian revolution, even though they were originally Algerian, had no choice to leave their own country), Tunisians, Moroccans and later, Muslims from western countries, Mali, Senegal and other Arabic countries and Turkey were added to the population. But in general, the dominant majority of immigrants in France are constituted by Algerian Muslims that most of them had come to work in French institutes and factories. Most immigrants in Germany are composed of Turks that Germany's relationship with Islam occurred largely through cooperation with Ottoman Empire during the First World War; hence, the pillar of Germany's Muslims is constituted by Turks. A large number of Turkish labor force migration into Germany took place in the framework of a formal convention between the two countries in 1962.

Changing immigration policy by European governments due to the economic recession in the years 1972-74, Islam, for the first time, became as a social issue between Muslims and host communities. In line with changes in immigration, western European governments passed a law on "joining family members together", and on the other hand, suspended simultaneously the acceptance of new male workers. Joining a worker's family members together caused an increase in communication between Muslims and European communities that as an example, it can be observed in new school children as well as the presence and emergence of most women in daily life.

But during the last two centuries, France attempted more than any other countries in Europe to attract foreigners, especially Muslims that this policy was in conflict with that of Germany and Britain. The

general approach of Germany is to return Muslims to their countries, and the British policy is to ignore them. In the meantime, it seems France is only insistent on attracting Muslims to the Christian community; and the purpose is primarily to be French and then to keep believing in Islam (Shahbeig, 2007). It can be added that France's relations with the world of Islam is so strong and an interest in Islam among the French is so developed that even a hypothesis that in the future, France will become as the global support of Islam in Europe does not seem unlikely and impossible (Tunoof, 2006).

But undoubtedly, largely due to immigration, a considerable number of Muslims are present in western cities that do not know themselves western and neither do the others; however, considering that they often come from countries that were formerly European colonies, their history should not be regarded as the western history either (Nash, 2006: 96-97). Despite the continued and lasting presence of Muslims in European countries after the Second World War, the people of those countries still consider them as immigrants.

Until recently, the presence of Muslims was not considered by European countries so much, and no one was aware that how much Islam is related with what is going on in western societies. Today, Muslim communities in all European countries have kept their relationship with cultural and religious values; this is why, their presence is more noticeable (Zubaida and Dietrich, 2005: 8). It is extremely difficult to obtain a number of Muslim populations in Europe since in spite of conducting many censuses in European countries; no action has been taken yet to get Muslim population statistics.

In total, European Muslim population is constituted by three spectra of Muslim immigrants, children born in the West, and new Muslims. The first two spectra could find themselves and take social skills as well as academic seats of universities. In the meantime, Muslims in France, Germany and Britain outstripped some other countries and in accordance to predictions, and given that the population process of Europe is nearly zero, and it is negative in some countries, the European Muslims' community is ascending. Politicians predict that in the next two decades, the majority of European young, active, elite, and educated generation is composed of Muslims (Kashani, 2008). In the following, we will consider the Muslim population in three countries, France, Germany and Britain.

3.1. France

Total population: 62.3 million people
Muslim population: 5 to 6 million people (8 to 9.4%) of the Muslim population in France are more than other countries in Europe.

Due to its historical ties with a part of the West, France has embedded the largest number of Muslims' community in Western Europe. After Catholicism, Islam is considered as the second religion in the country so that the number of Muslims is more than Protestants and Jews (Shahbeig, 2007).

Most of immigrants to France are formed by North African residents (French colonies). Many North Africa's white immigrants, writers and intellectuals were familiar with French language before arriving in France. This issue along with the acceptance of mixed marriage between a French person and an individual of Muslim immigrants accelerated their residence in the French society.

Because of illegal immigration, high birth rates, and an exception to giving accommodation rental to family members of residents, the growth of Muslim population in France continues to increase (Shahbeig, 2007). As a legacy of the Revolution of 1789, France is regarded as the ideal country for social rights that all its citizens enjoy equal rights and duties in social life. Compared to other European countries, Muslims in France have been able to establish their mosque and prayer halls.

3.2. Germany

Total population: 82.5 million people
Muslim population: 3 million people (3.6%)
Germany has the largest Muslim after France; Most Muslims in Germany are of Turkish descent. Some other came to the country from Bosnia and Kosovo during the Balkan War.

Of 3.6 percent of the Muslim population in Germany, 200 thousand people of them reside in the capital (Berlin). This matter has converted Islam into the third great religion of this country after Christianity, Catholicism, and Protestantism (Mehr News Agency, 2007). Among the German nation, the number of Islam converts has grown substantially.

With such momentum, it appears that Germany becomes as the largest Muslim country at the end of this century. The German newspaper, "Frankfurter Allgemeine" wrote in one of its reports that Stuttgart will be a city with a Muslim majority in 2040, and also Germany as a Muslim country in Europe at the end of this century. Germans convert to Islam increasingly (Towhidi, 2006). According to German researchers, conversion to Islam is very simple and comfortable, and a person becomes Muslim saying Declaration of Faith (Shahada).

3.3. Britain

Total population: 58.5 million people
Muslim population: 1.6 million people (2.8%)
After Christianity, Islam is considered as the second main religion in Britain (Daneshvar, 2005: 3), and it is the third European country that has the largest Muslim population. Muslims as the British citizens increasingly participate in local and political elections. Most Muslims in Britain include immigrants from South and Southeast Asia; they tend to maintain their social and religious customs as well as local structure more than other immigrants in Britain.

New statistics on religious movements and their development in Britain indicated that if this trend continues until 2012, then the number of people who are in mosques will be greater than the number of those who attend churches (Azarakhsh, 2006). According to Shia Online quoted from Borna, now, about 41 million Christians live in Britain that their number is declining every day. Results of research show that the number of Muslims will get more than Christian population in Britain in three decades (Nasr Harandi, 2007). British Muslims succeeded in achieving five seats in the Council of Imports. Studies and research conducted recently on Islam indicate that the religion is widely spread in British society so that in recent years, more than 14000 English people have converted to Islam (Towhidi, 2006). "Ben Wattenberg", the researcher of Enterprise Institute states: "The average number of immigrants' family members in Europe is moving rapidly toward the scale of European families. He continues that Europe is faced with a Muslim population bomb" (Azarakhsh, 2006).

Hence, in the European Union, Islam is considered as the second dominant religion; Muslims are the most important religious minority in European countries. The most important factors that result in the growth of Islam in the European Union include: increasing immigration of Muslims to the West, high birth rate among Muslims, reduced or sometimes negative growth rate of Christian population in European countries, tendency to Islam among Christian teenagers and young adults, and enhancement of Muslims' economic status. These factors have increased the growth rate of Muslims in European countries.

4. The reaction of european countries to the growth of islam

In recent years, we witnessed discriminatory behavior of European countries toward Muslims and Islamic teachings. It caused a kind of injustice and failure to meet Muslims and non-Muslims' rights against laws of member states of the European Union. On the one hand, considering the spread of violent or terrorist actions (attributing it to Muslims) in Europe resulted in serious tensions of the Europeans' relations with Muslims in a (shared house) of the European Union.

We also witnessed five important events; each of which is associated with another, and all of them are identical in form and content:
The publication of the Satanic Verses (its revised edition)
Pope Benedict XVI's lecture (that introduced Islam as a religion of violence).
Danish caricatures (offensive caricatures of the Prophet Mohammad)
Fitna (an offensive movie against Islam by Geert Wilders, the extremist representative of Dutch parliament)
Right wing extremist groups
This question comes to mind that what causes this kind of behavior from European countries? The best answer we can give to the question is the same power and growth of Islam in Europe. The growth and expansion of Islam in European countries can be assessed in line with Muslims' power-seeking. The above five behavior and adoption of anti-Islamic decisions by the heads of European countries can be considered as the reason for resisting Islam.

One reason for hostility toward Islam is a new theory about it known as the source of threat to western civilization (the theory of war between civilizations provided by Huntington in which Islamic civilization is presented and defined as the enemy and rival for western civilization) and also as a contemporary alternative to Communism, Fascism, Nazism containing warmongering and expansionist intentions. Another reason mentioned for the western's hostility toward Islam is the claim that Muslims benefit from their religious beliefs for achieving political, strategic and military objectives. Certainly, it can be said that Islam is considered as "a great threat to western civilization" in the West advertising media (speeches and interviews) as well as decisions of the Heads of Member States.

In most European countries' media, unrealistic and one-sided pictures of Muslims' face are broadcast in which most Muslims are generally introduced as violent and extremist groups that follow Jihad as their goal and no tolerance is seen toward others in their behavior.

5. Examples of western politicians and thinkers' positions toward the growth of islam in europe

In an interview with " L'Osservatore Romano " newspaper, the leader of the Catholic world stated with extreme regret: "We do not have the highest number among religions anymore, and the number of Muslims have overtaken us." (Nasr Harandi, 2007).

Georg Genzovanis, the Pope's senior consultant, in an interview with the German Newspaper "Süddeutsche Zeitung" warned about the growth of Islam and Islamization of Europe and asked the Europeans to defend from Christian roots. He believes that Europe should not ignore Muslims' efforts to present Islamic values in the West since this process is considered as the most important challenge to the European identity (Zamane Site, 2007).

"Ariel Eldad", the representative of Zionism regime wants European politicians to fight against the increasing spread of Islam in this continent. In an interview with the newspaper "Yedioth Ahronoth", he said: "With globalization, Islam is a new threat to western civilization." (Buma News Site, 2008).

Bernard Lewis, the famous Islamologist holds that "Europe will become Muslim by the end of this century." (Lewis, 2006). In addition, European right parties from four states of the European Union announced that they decide to form a new patriotism bloc throughout Europe in order to fight against "the danger of Islam". (Etemaad Newspaper, 2007).

With a discourse analysis of the above approaches that has been dominant in Europe over the past two decades, the European undoubtedly have a strategic and planned look to promote Islamophobia among people and try to reveal a coarse, radical, and Jihadist face of Muslims by unified communications. When the media, politicians and analysts in Europe are exposed to a foreign religion (Islam); know the future of Europe in line with the spread and growth of Islam and Muslims against Europe, and warn against the increasing tendency of European people to Islam, so, moves such as the publication of "the Satanic Verses" book, Pope's speech, Danish caricatures, and the movie "Fitna" can be justified, and even other actions against Islam and Muslims can also be predicted.

Foucault knows that power control, fight and resistance to it are difficult due to a lack of power understanding. Massive immigration to Europe, their resistance to digestion in the western norms and culture, emphasis on Islamic culture, doing religious practices, and the European tendency to Islam have frightened the European to death and provoked them to react; hence, on the one hand, the West attempts to rely on the Islamophobia strategy to prevent from the growth of Islam, and on the other hand, to pave the way for West culture hegemony and make Islam stay on the sidelines in Europe. But we still witness that Islam is expanding.

Creating various barriers, governments in the West want to stop the rapid spread of Islam. In European countries, political parties like National Union in Italy, National Front in France, and neo-Nazis in Germany and Austria openly oppose the spread of Islam in Europe (Towhidi, 2006).

But in Europe, a desire to learn about Islam and its teaching is increasing; signs of this tendency can be referred to as the sale of the Holy Quran and its translation into English, German, and French languages. Today, by means of satellites, Internet, and other communication tools, immigrants can remain in Europe for years without being integrated into the European community and adopting the European identity. The emergence of transnational social spaces between immigrants and their countries of origin also contributed to this trend (Gharemanpour, 2008).

In this regard, Muslim immigrants increasingly seek recognition of their religious practices; this caused the appearance of controversies within European communities and sometimes resulted in the occurrence of violent clashes between immigrants and native Europeans. Any strictness and pressure from the European lead to the formation of underground radicalism and secret streams of Muslims' behavior. It is said that fifteen suspects of London explosions were Saudi Arabian nationals and Muslim and for the other four suspects, there is evidence that they are Muslims. Subsequently, Sharm el-Sheikh explosions targeting a tourist center in the port of Sharm el-Sheikh in Egypt and occurring within one or two weeks after the London explosions indicate these controversies. These incidents caused distrust of Muslims.

Foucault admits that government is important, but power is beyond the government and argues that the government with all its power is unable to occupy all proper fields of power. On the other hand, the power of government itself is also the one working based on more original and pre-existing power relations; in other words, the government is a "superstructure" that depends on the entire power networks (Shekouhi, 1999). Discriminatory attitude of European governments toward Muslims increased after September 11. This causes the rights of Muslims and non-Muslims are not considered equal against rules since Muslims are known as potential terrorists more than others, and they are likely detained in Britain or other countries without trial. The growth of Islamophobia and its abuse to provoke extremist right parties resulted in a violation of Muslims' rights in some European countries (Bonney, 1977). Development of terrorist violent measures in Europe and elsewhere in the world caused serious tensions in European relations with their fellow Muslims at home; in addition, some remarks of extremist Muslim leaders in Europe intensified the tension and increased dimensions of concerns (Koulaei, 2006).

6. Conclusion

Europe has now become a place of growth and development of Islamic political thoughts and changes. An increase in the Muslim population in Europe represents the fastest growing religion in this continent. It is predicted that if Islam is expanding at this speed, the Muslim population in Europe will reach over 50 million people (without the entry of Turkey into the European Union) in the near future. The Europeans' emphasis on Secularism and Laicism gives rise to the emergence of forms of religious and spiritual tendencies in the continent that Islam can be considered as an alternative to fill a spiritual space in Europe.

On the one hand, Muslims living in Europe (those who are not immigrants today but are considered as other European third and fourth generations) play an important role as the population of the current economic and political life of society in Europe, making different requests and demands on social and political organizations in Europe; on the other hand, the European pressure on immigrants for the acceptance of their values and beliefs and Muslims' insistence on religious beliefs have strongly concerned European leaders to make restrictive laws against Muslims; however, with all the obstacles and problems that Europeans have created against the spread of Islam, it is still increasing in the continent.

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