Societal Discrimination against Muslims in Europe: Racism and Political Opportunism

Mohammad Reza Majidi
Associate Professor, Department of Regional Studies, University of Tehran.
Mohammad Mahdi Sadeghi[*]
Ph.d Student, Department of Regional Studies, University of Tehran

Abstract
Anti-minority prejudice is a general anomalous phenomenon in Europe. Several empirical studies have shown that anti-Muslim discrimination is more serious and profound. The Muslim community is the most important minority in Europe. The question is whether racism is the reason for the social discrimination against Muslims in Europe. In this paper, to explain the areas of discrimination it is divided into: "underlying reasons" and "driving reasons". Anti-Muslim discrimination in Europe is a result of the background of various forms of racism in Europe (as a precedent cultural background) and is the effect of political opportunism (as a new phenomenon)**.** Discrimination required certain objective conditions of existence to be in place. Political opportunism is the stimulus of anti-Muslim discrimination. The political and economic interest of some political groups in Western culture, led to anti-Muslim discrimination in Europe.

Key Words
Discrimination, Racism, European Muslims, Political Opportunism.

1-Introduction

When humans have little knowledge of different culture, they naturally have less positive and welcoming feelings about it. In every country immigrants are not so welcome in public opinion. However, after a few decades the immigrants will be recognized as legal citizens. In many cases immigrants, when they retain their own customs and culture, are respectfully recognized as a minority by the host community. It is more than seven decades that the arrival of the first wave of Muslim immigration to Europe occurred. Now the Muslim immigrants have become a Muslim community in Europe and their presence in the social construction of Europe is certain. Today, Europe is inconceivable without the Muslim community, but the Europeans could not yet tolerate the presence of the Muslim community culturally and socially, or establish a positive interaction with it. European Muslims - whether they are immigrants or their parents or grandparents are ethnically of European origin - are European citizens, but are exposed to a variety of social and cultural discrimination. Anti-minority prejudice is a general anomalous phenomenon in Europe. However, several empirical studies have shown that anti-Muslim discrimination is more serious and profound. The Muslim community is the most important minority in Europe and anti-Muslim discrimination exists in Eastern and Western Europe. In this paper we briefly describe anti-Muslim discrimination in Western Europe to explore the reasons for this mechanism. The discrimination against the Muslim community in Europe consists of a social and cultural context. Various forms of racism in the history and culture of Europe have long and deep roots underlying the current social discrimination against Muslims. Racism is still a serious problem in the world and especially in Europe. In terms of race, culture, lifestyle and attitude Muslims in Europe are distinct from other European citizens. Racism in Europe is due to these differences, and because of the lack of knowledge of the culture and beliefs of Muslims there. In this paper, using the different forms of racism, we will study the relation between this approach and the social and anti-Muslim discrimination in Europe. The assumption of this paper is firstly the social discrimination against Muslims and secondly the various social trends against Muslims in Western Europe that have a social overlay. The question of this paper is whether racism is the reason for the social discrimination against Muslims in Europe. The hypothesis of the article is that the different approach of European racism as a catalyst is an opportunistic characteristic of Western Islamophobic politics which drives social discrimination against Muslims in Europe. In this hypothesis, to explain the areas of discrimination it is divided into

"underlying reasons" and "driving reasons". The purpose of "underlying reasons" is to show the "fundamental cause" and long-run, which is a prerequisite for the creation of an orientation and social status (here anti-Muslim discrimination). The purpose of the "driving reasons" is to demonstrate those factors that are direct, immediate and precipitant, which have a tendency to occur at the social and political levels, and have prepared a condition of the explosion of emotion. Every social orientation is objectified by the gradual accumulation of historical beliefs (here, racism) and is accompanied with the preparation of political factors and stimuli (here, political opportunism). Anti-Muslim discrimination in Europe is a result of the background of racism in Europe (as a precedent cultural background) and is the effect of political opportunism (as a new phenomenon). Racism is not a natural and inevitable characteristic of any nation. Social discrimination against Muslims was entirely avoidable and we should not understand it as a cultural underlying reason of Western society. Western racism has a structure of anti-Other, and does not necessarily lead to social discrimination. The Islamophobic political groups are the cause of this structure of anti-Muslim discrimination.

Nowhere in Europe is social scientific research on issues of minority and Muslims formation as dependent on government funding and on direction by politics and policy. The establishment of minority policy brought with it amounts of research money in proportions that were unheard of before (at least in the social sciences). The degree of intimacy between policy-makers, politics and science, and the ease by which government officials and university researchers would trade places was astonishing. We are suggesting that race critical research in Europe is largely an individualized matter and has not become a school in itself due partly to the lack of institutional support. While antiracism gained voice, majority researchers came up in arms against them. Racism research and more generally antiracism have been subsequently more or less silenced. For the purposes of this article, we have limited our focus foremost to research within academic antiracism papers. A complete review of the European Muslims research machinery would be a major study in itself.

2-European Muslims

From a historical perspective the new wave of Muslim immigration to Europe is considered as a fourth wave of immigration because Muslims have been living in Europe since the advent of Islam in the seventh century AD. The first wave is related to the Muslim civilization of Iberia (Andalucía); the second wave is related to the Tatars who settled in northern Oslo; and the third wave comprised the Ottomans, who moved

into the heart of the old continent and lived there until the early twentieth century. Muslim immigrants in the twentieth century can be considered the fourth wave of Muslim immigration to Europe (Erdenir 2010: 27). However, as will be discussed below, we understand that the fourth wave of Muslim migration to Europe consists of three waves. The first wave of Muslim migration to Europe was at the beginning of the years after World War II until 1970. In this wave of immigration, Muslim workers came to industrial European countries to enter the labor market. Among countries such as France, the UK and Germany, the greatest immigration came from the countries of North and West Africa, the Indian sub-continent and Turkey respectively. In this era European countries needed cheap labor in order to rebuild cities and destroyed industries, so that even in Muslim countries contracts were signed for entering labor. The second wave of immigration was in the years after the 1973 oil crisis, but with the decline of Europe's golden economic age this wave of immigration should not have happened; as in the first wave of immigration the majority of the Muslim labor force was single, in the second wave, by adding family members, a new type of Muslim societies was forming among European countries. In this period the religious, educational, and cultural involvement of the Muslim community and acquiring appropriate social position were their wishes. The struggle to gain civil rights by the impoverished minorities in European countries was extended to Muslim groups so that, in the last two decades, we have witnessed the widespread activities of Muslims in Europe to obtain increased rights and particularly the right to hold religious rituals and ceremonies. Overall, the period from 1980 to 1990 was crucial in the rise of Islam in Europe. The growth of Islamism in this period was such that by the end of 1990 there were more than 6,000 mosques in Western Europe. The third wave of Muslim immigration to Europe included the influx of Muslim refugees in the 1980s. Environmental constraints and unrest in various parts of the Balkans and the Middle East led to a third wave of Muslim immigration to Europe. In this period Germany, more than any other European country, was the destination for immigrants. Between 1980 and 1990, about 60,000 Afghan and 55,000 Lebanese entered Germany as refugees. After the immigration of the Turks, the Bosnia-Herzegovinan community is the biggest Muslim group in Germany, formed of 34,000 people (ShyrGholamy 2008: 4). In general, these waves had led Europeans to understand that Islam has become a stable phenomenon from the socio-cultural perspective. Today, the birth rate among European Muslims is three times the rate of other Europeans. Therefore Islam has

today become an integral part of the culture and the European community and its perspectives (Karlsson 2007).

There is no precise number of European Muslims in the statistics presented; in this case some significant differences are observed. We can point out the reasons for the lack of precise statistics concerning the number of Muslims in Europe: firstly, the collection of racial and ethnic data - Muslims in European countries are considered as a racial group - is prohibited in France, Belgium, Denmark, Italy and Spain. For example, according the law that was enacted in France in 1978, it is prohibited for governmental bodies to collect figures on religion (Vartouk 2002: 48). Secondly, because in some European countries there is a political and security point of view concerning the Muslim minority, one cannot find exact statistics concerning them. The Muslim community is the biggest religious minority in Western Europe and issues such as continuing Muslim migration to Europe, the high birth rate among Muslims and an increase in Islamic values among Muslims give an important position to the question of "European Muslims". Currently, although the number of Muslims in European countries is significant, it forms at least 5% of the EU population of 425 million. Forecasts show that by 2020 the Muslim population will constitute 10% of the EU population, and after 30 years European Muslims will become triple the current statistics. The following table indicates the population of European Muslims and their percentage vis-à-vis the total population of the Western European countries.

Country	Muslim Population (million)	Ratio of Muslims to the total percentage of the European population
France	4-6	6-10
Germany	3	4
UK	1/62	3
Spain	1	2
Italy	1	2
Western Europe	15	-
Total Europe	35-45	5-6

Source: (Westoff & Frejka 2007: 786)
According to the statistics provided above, the total Muslim population in Europe is estimated at 35 to 45 million, of which about 15 million people are living in Western Europe and almost 8 million in Central, Southern and Eastern Europe, and between 15 and 20 million people in the Russian Federation (Westoff and Frejka 2007: 785).

The following table shows the predicted increase in the percentage of the Muslim population in ten European countries in which the Muslim population is at the highest level according to Jonathan Laurence, Europe expert:

Country	2005	2030
France	7/8-8/3	15/2
Germany	3/9-4/3	16/3
UK	2/9	5/7
Netherlands	5/75	...
Spain	2/6	...

Source: (Laurence 2010: 126)

The following table shows the population statistics in major European countries and the statistics forecast for 2030, quoted from the same author:

Country	2007	2030
France	63/4	65/1
Germany	82/3	81/1
UK	60/9	64/4
Netherlands	16/4	17/6
Spain	44/5	45/4

Source: (Laurence 2010: 125)

As can be seen, a decline in population growth among Europeans along with the high birth rate among Muslims in Europe has become a demographic challenge. The statistics in this section are all quoted by reliable Western European sources. In such a case, the sensitivity of statistics on European Muslims and the politicization of the issue has caused the above statistics to be shown as a minimum, and it seems that the true figures are higher. On the contrary, because of the following explanation some journalistic statistics try to show the real number of Muslims as higher in order to induce Islamophobia and exaggerate about the social future of Europe.

3-Racism
Traditionally, racists are people who believe that there are similarities between physical features and psychological characteristics. With this mindset, social and cultural differences are explained in a very simple manner, regardless of their affiliation to social conditions (Wiess 2011: 58). Racism is a social construct based on idealistic assumptions of the members of the host community and may be without any objective reality (Erdenir 2010: 36).

The term of racism is practically like the word "xenophobia". It is necessary to mention the subtle difference between racism and xenophobia. Xenophobia is not necessarily a modern phenomenon and has existed in all ages. Xenophobia is the hatred of a nation or social group for the Other, but this Other is only an alien when they are outside the community. However, racism is a result of a direct confrontation between peoples and races within the national community. In another difference with the meaning of the word xenophobia, racism refers to power relations; xenophobia is the tendency of groups that do not necessarily have social power or the dominant position in power relations, and that is why xenophobia does not necessarily lead to acts of discrimination, while racism exists among the group which has social power. (Erel 2007: 367).

3-1-Historical European racism

The actual origins of Western racism go back to many years ago. Nowadays in the West, it is often forgotten that the first racist laws were enacted in Europe, not in Germany, but in Spain. These laws are called the laws of "blood purity", followed by the Christian victory over the Muslims in 1492. After the domination of Christians over Muslims in Spain, not only two religions, Islam and Judaism, but also their followers were banned in Spain. The followers had the choice between changing their religion, death or exile. And it is interesting that no-one could have assumed responsibility unless it was proved that the past four generations of his ancestors has no relation with the Jewish or Muslim dynasty there. Accordingly, we should consider 1492 as a turning point in the history of Europe because it was then that theories of racism first appeared. Without any doubt racism also existed before that date, but it was not theoretical (Grosfoguel & Mielants 2006: 2). The application of the meaning of the races took place after this period. From this period of time Western colonialism began and racist theories were validated and increased. Colonial history has always been based on racist views. After the discovery of the American continent, the European-American civilization was established, and in this way a new colonialism like the original model was born. The increased flow of white natives migrating from Europe to other continents and the need for cheap labour and possessions and an increase in the intensity of exploitation of the colonies were justified, and these theories of racism in European societies in the 18th and 19th centuries increased. The theoretical justification for slavery caused trouble for the Europeans and the theory of racism in World War II resulted in many casualties for Western civilization. During World War

II, racism became a major driving force in the West. Hitler was influenced by the work of writers like De Gobineau and Chamberlain, and placed Aryan racism on his agenda so that the whole of Europe became a scene of ethnic conflict. He argued: "Europe is not a geographical whole, but is a whole race." In Hitler's opinion, there were three different categories which were linked directly to racism: blood, people and space. Based on his understanding, race is based on the blood component, which despite the incorporation of impurities and disorder can never be integrated into races. From this perspective, despite the centuries, generations of overlap occurred; however if the innate blood exists, placing it at an appropriate environmental stimuli can clean it from impurities. Hitler thought the idea was to lead to the classification of blood types. For example, he believed that if the effects of the superior Aryan blood should remain in existence in the Czechs and Polish, they could be made German (Reynolds 2007: 165). This policy resulted in the occurrence of interracial crimes that are all well aware of and do not need further explanation, but we should point out that the racist theories based on the superiority of the white race over other human communities did not end with the end of the Second World War and the fall of Nazism in Germany. The massacre of Bosnian Muslims in Europe shows that racism has not been eradicated. Zionism today in West Asia, the crimes of white people against blacks in the United States and racism under the cover of European anti-Muslim sentiment are active agents of racism today.

4-Anti-Muslim discrimination in Western Europe
Many commentators find that racism in Europe is on the rise. While evidence in the form of official statistics is patchy or difficult to compare across countries, many antiracism NGOs believe that there is a rise in racism across Europe (Erel 2007: 361). Looking at the development of attitudes towards ethnic minorities in the EU in three surveys from 1997 to 2003, worrying trends were identified in one study:
• Resistance to a multicultural society was subscribed to by one in four Europeans living in the EU, constituting a rather stable minority over time;
• The view that there are 'limits to multicultural society' was supported by a growing majority of about two out of three Europeans living in the EU;
• there was a large but rather stable minority (of about four out of ten) that opposes civil rights for legal migrants similar to those other legal residents have;

• About one out of five Europeans living in the EU is in favour of repatriation policies for legal migrants. (Erel 2007: 361) Related to this negative attitudinal environment, when we look at the position of migrants and ethnic minorities in the labour market, a clear picture of disadvantage emerges. While this in itself is not a sufficient measure for racism, it gives a view of inequalities based on ethnicity that do interact with structural and interpersonal racism.

Although a few years ago in Europe academic research and research papers addressing the issue of racial discrimination and religious discrimination were rarely seen (Sheridan 2006: 318), today many studies introduce social discrimination against European Muslims as "racism against Islam" or "anti-Muslim racism". Anti-Muslim discrimination can be seen within various societal institutions, including education, government, finance and business, housing, and the criminal justice system. The evidence that anti-Muslim feeling in the West, especially in Europe, is a new kind of racism is numberless. The Council of Europe's Commission against Racism and Intolerance reported that Muslim communities have been subjected to prejudice and biases that may show themselves in different ways. Among these forms there can be different degrees of negative attitudes and discrimination, which will appear through acts of violence and harassment (ECRI 2000). In the report of the European Monitoring Centre on Racism and Xenophobia on the status of Muslims in the EU it is written: "Discrimination and Islamophobia are examples of residential and educational segregation across Europe" (EMCRX 2006). Finally, the report concludes that these "Muslims are going to experience different levels of discrimination and marginalization in employment, education and housing ... Moreover, they are vulnerable to hatred and bias, which may be found in different forms (from verbal threats to physical assaults on people and property)."

Islamophobia is a kind of 'new racism', which targets the culture, lifestyles and physical appearance of Muslims. Islamophobia is a phenomenon that should be searched for on the streets of major cities in Europe (Erdenir 2010: 29). Societal discrimination against Muslims is one manifestation of social Islamophobia. Most of the first generation of Muslim immigrants to Europe are living in a situation of poverty and low levels of employment, while the second generation Muslim immigrants live in better conditions and adapt better to European societies, but eventually the rest of them are still underprivileged (Westoff & Frejka 2007: 794). Also, according to a survey conducted in 2001, the British Muslim population in general are living in poor conditions and inadequate housing and suffer lower levels of education and high levels of

unemployment among their men, and the employment rate among Muslim women is also very low (Peach 2006: 637). Social discrimination against Muslims in France also has a completely racial and partially political nature. One of the authors says of the subtle structural discrimination against Muslim immigrants, particularly Algerians, in France: "The biggest obstacle for someone of Algerian descent concerns problems entering and remaining in the labour market there... These problems have remained particularly in different periods, although these problems are fewer for those of Tunisian and Moroccan descent" (Tribalat 2004).

5-Various forms of discrimination and anti-Muslim racism

5-1-Theoretical racism
The most important theoretical ideas of racism carry the phenomenon in the history of the West. These ideas seek a theoretical background for West-centricity and in exchange they pretend that non-Western societies are shown to be invalid and imperfect, which are unrealistic qualities. Writers like Hegel, Karl Jaspers, Siegfried, Montesquieu, De Gobineau, Ernest Renan, Wittfogel etc. have played a fundamental role in the formation of such ideas (Rasekhi Langroudi, 2007: 24).

Aside from the racist literature among the European elite which existed previously, today even the study of racism has become itself a form of racism. Anti-Muslim racism in Europe is strongly influenced by economic and political issues and even the financial dependency of professionals on institutions and societies has led some researchers, who before September 11 were studying racism in Europe, to announce that "racism" is an unreal issue after September 11. These researches on racism show immigrants and Muslims as a source of problems in European countries. The political opportunism of this research led to some to name this research as "the minority research industry".See below, referring to the very readable and scholarly paper (Essed & Nimako 2006).

5-2-Symbolic racism
Symbolic racism was first used to refer to African-Americans. The fact that many European Muslims' skin colour is different from that of native Europeans is the most common cause of discrimination. Muslims in France are mostly of African descent, while British Muslims mainly descend from the Indian subcontinent.Some of the political slogans in Europe are expressed in terms of symbolic racism. For example, the

slogan of the British National Party (BNP) is the phrase "rights for whites"(wilkes et al. 2007: 833). Because the new cultural climate in Europe forbids the open expression of racially-based feelings, views, and positions, the racists have developed a concealed way of their attitude. Today using words such as "Nigger" and "Spic" is seen as an immoral act. More significantly, saying things that sound or can be perceived as Racism is disallowed. And because the dominant racial ideology portends to be color blind, there is little space for socially sanctioned speech about race-related matters. Does this mean that whites do not talk in public about nonwhites? As many researchers have shown, they do but they do so but in a very careful, indirect, hesitant manner and, occasionally, even through code language (Bonilla-Silva, 2002:43). Denial of racism, in varied forms, is a key feature of modern racism (Nelson 2013:91).

5-3-Aversive racism

In aversive racism, social contact with outsiders is considered a threat or social problem. The truth is that anti-Muslim social discrimination is due, consciously or subconsciously, to racism in Western culture. To understand these trends, we should pay attention to some street sentences, in this case, when one of the police officers in the UK said: "If I was sure that I would not be arrested, I would kill an Asian, even if he was innocent" (the name of the documentary is Secret Police, which was broadcast by the BBC) (Modood 2005: 13). Such declarations of aversive racism exist among some Western officials there. For example, among the supporters of the National Front (FN) in France are those who believe that there are a group of people who are the so-called "wrong color" and must be destroyed!(Knapp & Wright 2001 :229) Racist violence across Europe in recent years has presented a serious social problem. For example, in Britain,, the British Crime Survey has revealed that racist incidents are far more extensive than the number represented by police statistics. (Ignaski 1999:129)

5-4-Biological racism

For a while, biological racism or physical anthropology was the main movement of racism. The school of biologism was for a time considered very important for sociologists and anthropologists in the West, and in a way it was one of the most important schools of Western civilization. It should be noted that there is a difference between biology and biologism; biology is a natural science which has its own principles, methods, and rules, but biologism extends these rules and theories of biology into the

field of social science, which attempts erroneously to justify and explain social phenomena and living life with their knowledge of nature and biology. And this way will lead us to biologism as an idealist movement in which racial discrimination is authorized and justifies the inhuman actions of the colonizers in waging inhumane and bloody wars and carrying out mass killings. Folk, primitive and naive racism is claimed to be the cornerstone and foundation underlying racism based on biology. This was an attempt to adapt the shape of the skull, the study of the number and quality of the brain tracks, the characteristics of the cell layers of the skin, and the dimensions of the spinal vertebrae to identify the primitive mind and heart (Fanon 1978: 51). The school of biological racism claims that there are inherent differences between ethnic groups, and in this way physiognomy tried to theorize the racial discrimination of one superior race (usually meaning Western races) against other races.

5-5-Cultural racism

One of the main forms of contemporary racism is "cultural racism", which links racism and ethnicity. Nowadays the definition of race is replacing the biological ideas and is called cultural racism which is increasingly exploring ethnicity and races (see: Iqbal 2010: 576). There is a tendency to separate racism into two groups, classical racism and cultural racism, which can be classified as old and new racism, equivalent to biological and cultural racism. Frantz Fanon has pointed out the distinction between these two types of racism and the cultural aspects of racist propaganda, affirming that "the scattered remnants of the old claims are declining, and the school of racism which claimed that it is racial and individual and is based on individual and genetic factors and distinguishing characteristics and in the reactions of the various positions and their environment has become a cultural racism, and as a result the issue of racism is not just related to the human but to their lifestyle, and finally it manifested itself as a cultural lifestyle and, referring to Western values and the famous invitation to the fight of "the Cross against the Crescent", amazingly joined together and became one." (Fanon 10978: 5152). During the past 60 years in the West, significant changes have been observed in the area of racist discourse. While the biological racist discourses have been reduced, cultural racism has become the dominant form of racism in the West. Today religion plays an important role in the racist discourses of Western culture. Expressions about people such as "wild", "barbaric", "philistine", "undeveloped", "defenders of dictatorship" and "terrorists" are used for the Other. Europeans, by focusing on the religion of the other, were able to redeem themselves from the charge of colonialism. In other words: "When we study colonial literature, we see these expressions

are repeated from the discourse of biological racism. People who are considered with an Islamophobic discourse are targets of Western colonial empires and are recalled as the "usual suspects". It is just by looking at the long-term historical ranges of cultural racism and colonialism that today we will be able to understand the relationship between Islamophobia and racism. It is really impossible to differentiate between hate and fear against Muslims and racism. Islamophobia and cultural racism are linked, and they share much common discourse." (Grosfoguel & Mielants 2006: 3)

6-The stimulus of anti-Muslim discrimination: political opportunism
Political opportunism is the stimulus of anti-Muslim discrimination. Opportune means "the opportunity" and "position"; an opportunist is someone who is seeking an opportunity. In political ideas opportunists are represented as weak-minded people, without purpose, without ideology, who will use a position. An opportunist will ignore nothing in order to attain their political and material objective. Opportunists do not adhere to any social or moral principles. An opportunist will pursue any political ideology in order to arrive at their personal interests. Groups that follow opportunist policy are the most dangerous social groups. Anti-Muslim discrimination has risen sharply after the September 11 attacks; their lateral effect caused the abuse by some European politicians and some radical groups of the post-September 11 situation. The political and economic interest of some political groups, which was hidden in Western culture, led to anti-Muslim discrimination in Europe. In the following we mention some of the political opportunists in regard to the Muslims in Europe.

6-1-Political opportunism from Muslims in order to control social protests
September 11 has reinforced the discourse of Western racism. The securitization of the social policies of the West has led to opposition groups and various NGO communities having less freedom. The strategies of the West against social opposition movements are called zero tolerance. The securitization of the social protests, the control of individual and group freedom and the militarization of policing behavior in the face of protests, are the result of the policies of the "war on terror" (Della Porta 2008: 50). In this regard the manner of confronting racial and ethnic groups, immigrants, blacks and Muslims in Europe is in the form of policing. Previously the European confrontation with the issue of immigration and ethnic and racial minorities was the "Fortress Europe" approach. Europe compared the Fortress Europe approach to a stronghold

to protect social security and racial balance that should protect its borders and immigration controls, which were closely monitored by the European Union. However, the new approach in Europe is the policy of "Panopticon Europe". In the Panopticon Europe approach migrants and ethnic minorities are strongly controlled in the streets, public transport facilities, training centres and medical centres. In fact, the border controls of immigrants have decreased and are now inside the internal and public centres of continental Europe (Erel 2007: 371). Europe's securitized immigration policy not only controls minorities and immigrants, but also second and third-generation immigrants who are legal citizens of the society are considered as home-grown terrorists. In the West, a relatively common mechanism to justify racism and discrimination with specific analysis of the distortions can be seen. On the one hand the dilemmas or problems of a European are understood as a negative form of individual behavior, but on the other hand the same case for a Muslim is taken as a structural characteristic. For example, when a Belgian is punished for beating his wife, society judges it as a negative point of his individual behavior and his violence is considered as a personal failing, and then people try to find a reason for his action (maybe he was abused as a child and his family suffered from financial problems, and so on); but when a Muslim is charged with this act, this structure disappears and beating his wife is interpreted through Islam and some verses of the Quran are referred to (Zemni & Parker 2002:236-238). The above phrases are only one of the concrete examples of Islamophobia in the West. It should be noted that these examples have become a trend and traditional analysis. Anti-Muslim racism reduces "Muslim identity" to "Muslim race".

6-2-Political opportunism of radical right parties in regard to Muslims

One of the triggers of the disease of racism in Europe is the rise of radical right characteristics of racism, populism or nationalism, are called "anti-immigrant" "extreme right" or "radical right-wing populist". Such distinctions are usually one of the favorite discussions among the party analysts and sociologists of parties in Europe. For example, neo-fascist parties, authoritarian elitist and populist parties are shown as democratic and elitist. Some others are divided among fascist, welfare chauvinist, right-wing authoritarian and populist anti-statist parties. The differences of the radical right parties on issues such as democracy, the parliamentary system and party pluralism causes these parties to be classified as neo-Nazi, neo-fascist, authoritarian xenophobic, neo-liberal xenophobic and neo-liberal populist. The main criterion for classification is their

ideological stance against immigration and racism and their position on democracy (Wilkes et al 2007: 832). Radical right political movements in Europe indicate that the social and economic fragility of European societies have turned the right-wing political movement to extremism. These movements in Europe have emphasized political, social and cultural issues such as national identity, national centralization, populism, anti-globalization, anti-immigration, xenophobia, triggering fear and hatred towards foreigners - especially Muslims, anti-Islamism and anti-Europeanism. The relationship between the radical right political parties and the personal attitudes of European citizens - such as "discriminatory" and "anti-foreigner" feelings - is certain, but the important thing is that the far- right parties provoke the feelings of citizens with their tendency of cultural racism. Some arguments of the radical right parties with their classical racism are accepted and covered by the media, but do not have any effect on these tendencies of the citizens. One of the main reasons for this phenomenon is that radical parties with the tendency of classical racism are not considered as legitimate partners in the political landscape and social dialogue in Europe (Wilkes et al 2007: 836-7). According to the theory of political opportunism, right-wing populist parties need the protest voters who suffer from physical and social insecurity for their success. These parties connect the issues of crime and immigration (Smith 2010: 1472). From the perspective of the populist right parties, multicultural societies are shown as rife with crime and chaos and immigrants are the main cause of unemployment. These parties, when in opposition, always use violent phrases when there is an election and call the political system in power corrupt, and they support socially conservative and reactionary policies; yet when they obtain sufficient votes in the elections they turn to political opportunism because they want to have the advantage of being part of the cabinet and forming a government of national unity (Luther 2011: 454). In many cases the process of gaining greater advantage is accompanied by coalitions in the second term. From this point of view the motivation of some extreme radical right parties is not to gain power, because they do not have the ability to govern alone; neither to gain the vote nor to have a mere presence in politics, but to use this presence to follow some conflicting objectives, because in the chess game of politics a moment arrives when they can obtain their share of the cake or contribution. To understand the nature of the extreme right populist tendencies we need to pay attention to some radical right groups in Western countries which are supported by football hooligans. For example, the extreme right in the United Kingdom, which has openly Islamophobic tendencies, has always tried to

absorb football fans and professional leader groups (Garland & Treadwell 2010: 22-31). However, the driving position of radical right parties in the incidence of racist discrimination against Muslims is cannot be ignored. This phenomenon should be analyzed from the point of view of social psychology. The fact is that the radical right parties are a minority in the European political system. The point is that traditional theories focus on the role and influence of the majority, while on the contrary innovative theory refers to the social transformation which appears in a relation between the majority and minority. The minority can affect the majority through disturbance; minority beliefs destroy the established convictions and the common values of societies. The special lifestyle of the minority can affect the majority. The minority can influence the majority by showing that their discussions are better, more modern, simpler and more realistic (Orfali 2006: 717). Today in Western European countries the position of the radical right parties is always alternative, but always impressive. Parties which are generally anti-immigration have had a big impact on the overall political atmosphere in Europe and this impact is contingent upon its entry into the state. Some believe that the anti-immigrant parties have a contagious effect on other parties (Van Spanje 2010: 563). Traditional and conventional left-right political parties in Europe have repeated some anti-immigrant positions of the radical parties to prevent them from high maneuverability so that they could take advantage of the situation. Perhaps the appropriation of the attractive and populist propaganda of the extreme right-wing parties shares the same characteristic as the contagious effect of their propaganda; they have been successful because their racist rhetoric has become dominant among the main parties. More specifically, the presence of xenophobic Radical Right Populist party cause an increase in racism and xenophobia because (1) it has an influence on people's frame of thought; and (2) because it has an influence on other political actors.(Rydgren 2003 :60) The paradoxical role of the radical right parties is because their effectiveness is related not only to their number of votes but to their role in the entire social-political system of European societies. The radical right parties have successfully influenced the anti-Muslim social orientation.

Conclusion
Western racism and racist tendencies have deep historical roots, and have even entered widely in the human and social science theories. Despite the fact that after World War II the radical rightists, fascism and Nazism were completely banished, the cultural roots have not disappeared and racism has been reshaped and reproduced due to the special political and

economic situation. There is a kind of historical amnesia of racism in Europe in order to forget it, and this has caused the European people to forget the era of the slave trade, colonialism and racism in the past. Historically, racism and racist tendencies have been deep-rooted in Western culture. The idea of discrimination and superiority complex is undeniable in the training methods and the work of thinkers in Western societies. Today the anti-Muslim discrimination is the most prominent discourse of racism in Europe. On the other hand, racism is not the inevitable characteristic of any nation or ethnicity. It is evident that the events of September 11 caused the increase in anti-Muslim racism and the inflammation of Islamophobia in Europe. The opportunistic side effects of September 11 are very important. The securitization of the social policies of the West has led to opposition groups and various NGO communities having less freedom. In this regard the manner of confronting racial and ethnic groups, immigrants, blacks and especially Muslims in Europe is in the form of policing. Europe's securitized immigration policy not only controls minorities and immigrants, but also the second and the third-generation immigrants who are legal citizens of the society are considered as home-grown terrorists. During recent decades, the increase of the Muslim population in European communities has attracted attention to their differences from other citizens in the fields of culture, values and identity. Although the said trend kept steadily continuing, September the eleventh and its consequent incidents have added to the significance of the issue. Instead of being "managed" or "controlled", the issues of European Muslims-as European citizens-should rather be "understood" and "analyzed".(Majidi & sadeghi 2011 :324-325)

Racism persists, but not simply or only because of fallacious beliefs held by a critical mass of people. Racism is something other and more than a collection of attitudes and its persistence cannot be explained by some deep-seated flaw in the European history. Anti-Muslim discrimination, as a systematic Racism, is the outcome of interrelationships between political-economic factors and cultural-historical legacy. Social discrimination against Muslims was entirely avoidable and we should not understand it as a cultural underlying reason of European society. To understand the nature of anti-Muslim discrimination we need to pay attention to some radical right groups in European countries and focus one their opportunistic attitude.

References

1- Bonilla-Silva, Eduardo, (2002), " The Linguistics of Color Blind Racism: How to Talk Nasty about Blacks without Sounding "Racist"", *Critical Sociology,* Volume 28, issue 1-2, pp: 40-64.

2- DellaPorta,Donatella,(2008),"EventfulProtest,Global Conflicts",*Distinktion:Scandivian Joutnal of Social Theory*,9:2,pp:27-56.

3- Erdenir,Burak,(2010) ,"*Islamophobia qua racial discrimination , Muslimophobia* " - in Europe" From: Muslims in 21st Century Europe. Structural and Cultural Perspectives, Anna Triandafyllidou (ed.), Routledge.

4- Erel,Umut,(2007) ,"Racism and anti-racism in Europe: a critical analysis of concepts and frameworks",Transfer,13(3),pp:359-375.

5- Essed, Philomena & Kwame Nimako (2006), " Designs and (Co)Incidents, Cultures of Scholarship and Public Policy on Immigrants/Minorities in the Netherlands" , *International Journal of Comparative Sociology ,* Vol 47(3–4), pp: 281–312.

6- European Commission against Racism and Intolerance (ECRI) ,(2000) , On Combating Intolerance and Discrimination Against Muslims, General Policy Recommendation No. 5, *Strasbourg: Council of Europe.*

7- European Monitoring Center on Racism and Xenophobia (EMCRX),(2006) , Muslims in the European Union: Discrimination and Islamophobia. Available online at: http://fra.europa.eu/fra/material/pub/muslim/Manifestations_EN.pdf .

8- Fanon, Frantz,(1978), A Dying Colonialism, in *persian:estemar mira* , Translated by Mohammad Amin Kardan, Enteshar Publication Company.

9- Garland,Jon & James Treadwell,(2010),"NO Surrender to the Taliban: Football Hooliganism, Islamophobia and the rise of the English Defence League", *British Criminology Conference*, vol(10),pp:19-35.

10- Grosfoguel , Ramon & Eric Mielants,(2006) , " the Long – Duree Entanglement Between Islamophobia and Racism in Modern/Colonial/Capitalist/Patriarchal world- system",HUMAN ARCHITETURE: JOURNAL OF THE SOCIOLOGY OF SELF-KNOWLEDGE, VOL(1),P:1-12.

11- Ignaski, Paul, 1999," Legislating against hate: outlawing racism and antisemitism in Britain", *Critical Social Policy,* Vol. 19(1): 129–141.

12- Iqbal, Zafar,(2010) ,"Understanding Islamophobia: conceptualizing and Measuring the Construct",*European Journal of Social Science*,vol (13),n(4),pp:574-590.

13- Karlsson, Ingmar,(2007) . "Europe is not a Christian Union"*Bulletin Foreign policy*, NO-4,april 2007.

14- Knapp, Andrew and Vincent Wright, (2001), The Government and Politics of France, Routledge, New York.

15- Laurence, Jonathan, (2010). "European Islam in the Year 1451 ''of'' EUROPE 2030"

16- Luther, kurt Richard, (2011), "of goals and own goals: A case study of right – wing populist party strategy for and during incumbency", *party politics* .vol 17(4), pp: 453 – 470.

17- Majidi,Mohammad Reza & Mohammad Mahdi Sadeghi , (2011)," Manifestations and Aspects of Islamophobia in Europe : Neo-conservative and Liberal Approaches"*Islamic Revolution Studies*,vol 8,No 24,pp:305-326.

18- Modood, T. (2005), Multicultural Politics: Racism, Ethnicity, and Muslims in Britain, Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press.

19- Nelson, Jacqueline, (2013), "Denial of racism and its implications for local action", *Discourse Society,* 24(1), pp: 89–109.

20- Orfali, birgitta, (2006), "extreme right movements: why do they re-emerge? Why are they accepted? ", *theory &psychology*, vol.16 (5), pp: 715 – 736.

21- Peach, c, (2006), "Muslims in the 2001 Census of England and Wales: Gender and economic disadvan tage", *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, 29 (4) pp: 629 – 655.

22- Rasekhi Langroodi,(2007), West and Ethnicity: an Interduction to The Dominance of Ethnisity and racism on the Thoughts of the West, in *persian: qarb va ghomiat, darami bar seitarah ghomiat vanezhadgeraie bar andishahaye maqreb zamin*, Ettelaat Publication.

23- Reynolds, Charles, (2007), Modes of Imperialism, in *persian:vojohe amperyalism ,* Translated by Seyyed Hossein Seifzade, The Institute for Political and International Studies.

24- Rydgren, Jens, 2003," Meso-level Reasons for Racism and Xenophobia: Some Converging and Diverging Effects of Radical Right Populism in France and Sweden", *European Journal of Social Theory,* 6(1), pp: 45–68.

25- Sheridan, Lorraine, (2006), .Islamophobia pre-and post-September 11th, 2001, *Journal of Interpersonal violence*, Volume 21, Number 3, march 200. 317-336.

26- ShirGholami, Khalil, (2008), "Social and Political Status of Muslims in Europe", in *persian: jaygah siasi va ejtemaie mosalmanan dar oropa*, *the Journal of Foreign Policy*. Vol 90.

27- Smitt, Jason Matthew, (2010), "Dose Crime Party? Issue Ownership, Political Opportunity and the Populist Right in Western Europe", *Comparative Political Studies*, 43(11), pp: 1471-14980.

28- Tribalat M., (2004),"An estimation of the foreign-origin populations of France in 1999" *Population*, 59(1), pp, 49-80.

29- Van spanje, joost, (2010), "anti – immigration parties and their impact on other parties, immigration stances in contemporary western Europe", *party politics*, vol 16, no .5, pp: 563 – 586.

30- Vartouk, Steven, (2002), Islam in Europe, in *persian:eslam dar oropa ,* Translated by Seyyed Kavos Seyyedemami , BAZ Publication.

31- Westoff, Charles and Tomas Frejka, (2007), "Religiousness and Fertility Among European Muslims," *Population and Development Review* 33, no. 4, pp: 785-809.

32- Wiess,John,(2011), Fascist Tradition, in *persian:sonnate fashism*, Translated by Abdolhamid Tabatabaei Yazdi, Hermes Publication.

33- Wilkes, Rima & Neil Guppy & lily Forris, (2007), "Right – wing parties and Anti – foreigner sentiment in Europe", *American Sociological Review*, vol 72, October, pp: 831 – 840.

34- Zemni, Sami & Christopher Parker, (2002)," European Union, Islam & the Challenges of Multiculturalism Rethinking the Problematique" in: HUNTER, Shireen T. (ed.), Islam in Europe: The New Social, Cultural, and Political landscape, Westport/ Washington, Praeger Publ ., pp.231-244.