



The Impact of the Rise of the European Far Right on the Issue of Immigration

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1. INTRODUCTION

Migration and asylum issues are one of the most important problems in the international arena today, in light of the escalating crises in the Middle East region in Syria, Yemen, Iraq and even Afghanistan. Despite the interpretations and solutions offered by the politics of international law and the development of political and legal frameworks in an attempt to understand and codify the mechanisms of dealing with the refugee crisis through political decisions and international agreements and treaties, there are aspects that are difficult to deal with that have to do with political psychology and conflicts in international relations, especially if the crisis is based on many of what are called "misperceptions". Therefore, this study seeks to investigate and analyse misperceptions by focusing on the European position, especially in light of the growing role of far-right parties within the European Union, towards the problems of migration and asylum and the rise of the far-right in Europe, and the impact of these stereotypes on European policies.

2. CONCEPTUAL AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Misperception is a flexible term that is difficult to define. There are two general approaches to define it, the first one treats it as an outcome and the second one treats it as a process, since it is an outcome, misperception is the difference between perception and reality, which means the difference between the world as perceived by the decision maker and the world as it is in reality. As it is a process in which the decision maker deviates from the standard rational model of information processing. Hans Rosling, in his book *Factfulness*, pointed out a number of psychological and cognitive biases that form the basis of poor perception of the world. As we tend to understand the world through simple and intuitive thinking through exciting and simplified stories, as the gap instinct or the tendency to perceive the world as a struggle between good and evil and to consider controversial issues through division into two camps, without considering areas of agreement between the two parties.

Misperceptions affect interactive relationships (cooperative and conflictual) between individuals, also affecting international relations on three levels: The first level: states and countries' official relations and their foreign policies are affected by how each country perceives the actions of other countries and then creates interactions characterized by conflict, cooperation or neutrality. The second level, the level of peoples, as the mental images that people form of each other create a mental image of each of the peoples towards other peoples, which negatively or positively affects the social, cultural and trade relations between peoples, being heavily influenced by decision makers in priority and choices available to them according to public opinion trends. As for the third level, it concerns non-state actors, where poor knowledge or its quality plays with their view of the world and then with their thoughts and beliefs, ending with the pattern of behaviour to achieve goals.

Foreign policy includes all interactions of individual nation-states with other states. In the wake of globalisation, in the 21st century it is particularly important because of the interdependence of states. With the advent of international society and globalization, the implications of foreign policy for each nation-state are much greater. In International Relations, foreign policies form the basis for international interactions between individual states, and the decisions of a state do not just affect the

participating countries. In the case of the EU, even the influence and connection are more pronounced because they are bound by many treaties within the EU, and have an obligation to act together on issues that affect their societies, among them, is the major issue of migration which is directly linked to security, crime and terrorism.

Among the various misconceptions related to immigration and asylum are perceptions of the character of migrants, perceptions of their intentions, and the evil image of migrants often used by far-right parties in their political discourse directed at their supporters, and characterised by a lack of empathy.

3. STEREOTYPES IN THE MIGRATION ISSUE

Psychologist David Schneider defined stereotypes as beliefs built up about people or a group, for example, there are stereotypes about cars or trees. Thus, the stereotype that arises in individuals may be the result of experiences with the other party, which leads the individual to adopt the idea of generalization, which in turn is one of the forms of the phenomenon of "misperception". The stereotype about another party may have other causes such as socialization, education and the role of religious institutions, which resort to presenting a false stereotype about different groups for them.

Sociologist Norbert Elias presented a study on the mechanisms of social exclusion and how societies use stereotypes and rumours, in addition to reinforcing identity to elevate it, for example, through so-called historical heritage, in exchange for the degradation and marginalization of other societies, while Erving Goffman studied how one group stigmatizes another group for their physical differences, for example skin colour, ethnicity, having distinctive characteristics, physical disability or belonging to a different and different religion.

Social scientists have created three different approaches to the study of stereotypes: the first approach is the statistical approach, where it considers that stereotypes are a manifestation of discrimination between groups according to the rational formation of these images, which means that this approach shows that stereotypes are rational expectations and therefore stereotypes can be changed according to statistical methods. The second approach, is the social profiling approach and views stereotypes as false and inherently incorrect generalizations of group characteristics, reflecting the underlying biases of the stereotype or other internal motivations. For example, social groups that have been historically abused, such as racial and ethnic minorities, still suffer from bad stereotypes, which may be at the grassroots level (public opinion) or perhaps because the decision-maker wants to perpetuate false beliefs about him or her. The third approach, is the social cognitive approach, which has its roots in social psychology, and this approach gained momentum in the eighties of the twentieth century, and sees social stereotypes as special cases of schemas or cognitive theories. Consequently, these theories are axiomatic generalizations that individuals routinely use in their daily lives, arguing that stereotypes are cognitive representations of real differences between groups that allow for easier and more effective processing of information. Although stereotypes are selective, focusing on the characteristics of the group that make it stand out among different groups, these stereotypes are based on certain empirical data and are therefore useful, but may include many exaggerations.

The most common stereotypes about migrants today that influence people's thinking and behaviour are crime and terror. The most serious concern about immigration today is the fear that immigrants bring crime and terror to the new country. The spread of the anti-immigrant meme and the concomitant rise in hate speech and violence towards immigrants are part and parcel of a new culture of intolerance and prejudice. The dehumanization of immigrants and the stigmatization of their children and anti-immigrant narratives that portray new arrivals as criminals, drug dealers, human traffickers and terrorists. While the power of this meme is extraordinary, it is largely devoid of data: the preponderance of evidence suggests that immigrants are far less likely to commit crimes than comparable samples of non-immigrants. The role of stereotypes, prejudices and discrimination in shaping opinions creates negative consequences for migrants and their children, as well as negative consequences for civil society. Stereotype threat is a psychological condition with detrimental effects on the performance of migrants. Thus, reducing the negative influence of stereotype threat could help close the achievement gap. Stronger cognitive performance and educational success can increase immigrants' opportunities to participate in the societies they inhabit. Moreover, closing the immigrant achievement gap could be an important key to the future prosperity of societies. Many countries in the

northern hemisphere will soon face shortages of competent labour due to ageing populations and inadequate education, and in order to sustain economic growth as well-educated personnel become increasingly scarce, and countries will need to be creative in identifying underdeveloped talent pools.

4. THE EUROPEAN POSITION ON MIGRATION AND ASYLUM

2015 recorded the highest rate of refugee arrivals in Europe, with the number, according to UNHCR statistics, exceeding one million refugees. On the other hand, in the French capital, Paris, there was a series of violent attacks in November 2015, which posed a major challenge to the countries of the European Union in the handling of this event, and raised many questions about the role of the Union. Countries had to handle this crisis by balancing security with the humanitarian and common human values that distinguish them.

That increases the depth of the crisis is the trends of public opinion in Europe and what the European media report on the dangers of the flow of refugees and their integration into European society and its reflection on economic, social conditions, while security issues are represented by the spread of terrorism, the sharpening of the concept of Islamophobia, the change in demographic homogeneity within European countries, the threat of a pattern of terrorism and the increase in the number of crimes and others.

Refugee flows are a global phenomenon that underwent a remarkable transformation at the beginning of the twentieth century and has been perceived as a global phenomenon whose victims number in the millions, and although Africa has experienced the largest influx of refugees, recent trends of forced migration have begun to increase and proliferate in regions and countries, as has been the case in Iraq, Syria and Yemen. The refugee issue has taken up a lot of space in many regional and international meetings and discussions lately, and this is due to its growing size, exacerbation and spread in many countries, and the negative impact on host countries in terms of political, economic, security and demographic impacts.

In recent years, European migration policies have focused on the security dimension and management through cooperation with Southern Mediterranean countries to prevent the flow of illegal migration waves towards the European Union, as well as on the monitoring of smuggling networks. In addition, the policies of European countries in managing illegal migration have focused on tightening controls at the external borders of the European Union and operating security patrols in the Mediterranean to prevent migrant ships from proceeding to the European continent. During the current refugee crisis, which is one of the main elements of all EU plans.

Dealing with migration is based on the policy of each country in Europe separately, which means that there is no unified policy from the European Union on the decision-making process for dealing with it, which explains the conflict between the countries of first reception due to their geographical location (Spain - Italy - Greece - Cyprus - and Malta) with the countries of the North, such as: (France - Britain - Germany - Austria - Germany - Austria, and others). The European Union's plan is based on the principle of sharing the burden of crisis management among all Member States. The growing power of the far right, especially since 2014, have become a significant popular weight, with stable parties in the electoral equations and now have influence in shaping European public opinion, which is growing, especially after the spread of illegal immigration and the waves of terrorism that hit European cities.

It is worth noting that the concept of right-wing parties, especially the far-right, is one of the vague concepts. Where there is no agreement among researchers on what the concept means, and the French researcher Pierre-Andre Taguieff, defined the far-right concept as "xenophobic nationalism or racial nationalism with an ethnic basis, based on race, culture or history", and xenophobia is one of its most obvious manifestations.

5. THE PILLARS OF THE RIGHT-WING PARTIES' POLICIES

First: hostility towards foreigners. When far-right parties adopt extremist policies against the other, based on the dimension of identity in their political discourse and considering that foreigners have no place in Europe, this current also promotes the idea that the constant flow of immigrants will lead to the disappearance of the original European identity. Therefore, these parties take a hard line against immigration on the idea of Arab or Islamic terrorism and the danger to European national security

interests, and because these conditions give power to the far-right discourse, they increase their popularity in the public, which increases their chances of gaining more political power and influence.

Second: populism, where the rise of far-right currents in European countries led to the development of the concept of "populism", which is based on the extreme simplification of issues and promises to achieve the highest aspirations of peoples through policies characterized by simplicity, attractiveness and ambiguity, and the tyranny of emotional dimensions focusing on the state of polarization and division within the state and feeding feelings of anger towards the other. This adds to the fact that populist discourse promotes false information as part of deliberately deceiving the public to maintain their support. Populism divides society into two morally conflicting groups and adopts a political discourse of protest against 'corrupt ruling elites' and existing conditions. It also examines the political arena between them and us or the people and the enemy. As a result, they find mobilization policy and influence public opinion, especially on issues that concern them, which, they argue, have been ignored by politicians for a long time, such as the public interest, social policy advocacy or violent crime. or opposition to the construction of mosques or local asylum centers. We can say that these parties play the role of representing and defending the issues concerning the indigenous peoples of Europe. It is noted that the recent parliamentary elections in European countries indicate the escalation of "introversion" trends and the existence of a situation of popular rejection of the effects of globalization and openness to the outside world politically, economically and culturally and the growing calls for return alone. policies, the promotion of national interests, the strengthening of nationalism and the retreat of multilateral policies.

There is no doubt that the idea of European integration is in great difficulty and is threatened with cracking and collapse, especially in the light of the growing forces of the far right in the countries of the Union, which is calling for dismantling, isolation and the imposition of protectionist measures to restrict freedom of trade and combat immigration policies. On the one hand, they represent an economic burden for the states and, on the other, they threaten national identity. The exploitation of economic and social fears, distrust of the political class and the rise of Islamophobia in public discourse are the main tools that lead to the flourishing of the far right.

6. ORIENTALISM

Edward Said defined Orientalism as an attempt to build, dominate and control a new East, i.e., an attempt to understand the other of Islam, and this understanding was built on the negative stereotypical image of Islam. Where we find that vocabulary such as: (terrorists - extremists - intolerant - oppression of women - uncivilized) is the vocabulary associated with the stereotypical mental image of Muslims, as opposed to Western culture, which is characterized by democracy, human rights and civilization. Said argues that Orientalism was and is a reason in which the West's knowledge of the East is inextricably linked, and according to him, the relationship between the West and the East is one of power, domination, and complex hegemony, while he argues that, the West defines the East as less powerful and poses a direct contrast between two cultures.

Islamophobia is the term most commonly used to describe prejudice, negative feelings and hostility towards Islam and Muslims. Islamophobia can be based on ideas about Islam as a religion and ideas about Muslims as a cultural and ethnic group. Anti-Islamic ideas portray Islam and Muslims as an existential threat to non-Muslims. It was not until the late 1990s that the term Islamophobia became popular, with the British Runnymede Trust's report, *Islamophobia: A Challenge for Us All*. According to the report, the term Islamophobia refers to unfounded hostility towards Islam. The Trust acknowledges that although the term is not perfect, it is a useful concise way of stating Islamophobia or hatred of all or most Muslims. Since then, the term has been used in both the political and academic communities.

Over the last two decades, many far-right parties have created an anti-Islamic ideological reorientation and Islamophobia has been described as one of Europe's biggest challenges at the political level. With the development of modern technology and information media, modern media is no longer just a tool for communicating knowledge and delivering news or an event to people or even just a means of entertainment, it is now influencing people, and much of the success that European far-right parties have had in recent years is due to an active campaign to reach and influence their target group of people, using direct and networked means of independent and anonymous.

The values and cultural differences between Islam and the West clash to define their relationship to a large extent, and the extent of the conflict is based in part on deep cultural differences rooted in history. Samuel P. Huntington presents the theory of clash of civilizations in his book *Clash of Civilization*. Where he focused on Islam considering that, its borders are bloody, referring to the conflicts of Muslims with other religions, such as: the conflict in Sudan and its south, and between India and Pakistan, and the conflicts within India itself between Muslims and Hindus. In Europe, he referred to immigration problems, the rise of racism in Germany and Italy against North African immigrants, as he defined the conflict between the Christian world with its secular values on the one hand and the Islamic world on the other.

Moreover, it can also be said that an important part of this conflict is based on the conflict of interests between Islam and the West. However, the West appears to be ready to accept a moderate Islam that guarantees its political and economic interests and does not threaten it. On the other hand, research examining anti-Muslim and anti-Islamic attitudes has produced mixed results. While surveys show widespread opposition to Muslim immigration and some anti-Islamic attitudes, people in secular and liberal societies are, on average, more tolerant of Muslim citizens and Islam than people in more religious countries. However, in these secular countries, the people with the strongest anti-Muslim attitudes are among the non-religious, and this intolerance is based in part on cultural understanding of liberal democratic values. The outright rejection of Islamic practices has nothing to do with Muslims, but rather with how their practices are perceived as deviating from the norms of society. Similarly, studies comparing attitudes towards Muslims and Christian conservatives in Western Europe have shown similar levels of prejudice towards both societies. However, extensive studies of conspiratorial thinking that is openly hostile to Islam have found that a significant minority hold such views. Moreover, anti-Islamic attitudes have been found to be associated with certain personality traits, such as an orientation toward social dominance.

7. RELATIONS BETWEEN ISLAM AND THE WEST AND INTERCULTURAL DIFFERENCES

The relationship between the West and Islam is a tense and fluctuating one, beginning in the Middle Ages, where the conflict between two worlds: the Christian and Muslim worlds, which became evident between the 8th and 12th centuries. The events of September 11, 2001, in which the United States launched a war against Islam and distorted its image in all ways and in different parts of the world, and began to classify its allies as countries of good, and led to a change in the image of the whole world, as Arabs and Muslims were subjected to a campaign of humiliation and association with terrorism.

The intercultural differences between the West and Islam have a direct impact on human relations and cause mixed feelings in the societies involved. For example, the cartoon mocking Muhammad, the ban on the public use of the burqa for Muslim women, and other restrictions on headgear or religious symbols and eating if it is halal in school lunches. Aggressive responses such as: banning the call to prayer, attacks on mosques, desecration of Muslim cemeteries, attacks on Muslim communities, verbal abuse of women wearing headscarves, and the complexity of the procedures for obtaining permits for mosques and Islamic centers are issues that may seem sharp in Europe. Dealing with growing cultural heterogeneity has been challenged in Europe, with defined policy choices with assimilation at one pole and multiculturalism at the other. Taylor's theory of identity politics proposes to ensure the continued survival and vitality of minority cultures into the indefinite future with respect, to rights, and in doing so, multiculturalism seeks to allow members of the minority group to live an authentic life within the social culture.

8. CONCLUSIONS

Migration issues are complex and complicated. They are also considered one of the most important issues of international dimension, especially in the light of the growing sources of conflict in many regions of the world, particularly in the Middle East, which is geographically closer to the European Union. Among the multiple approaches to the study, the misperception by the countries of the European Union, either at the level of governments or at the level of peoples, cannot be omitted.

There is no doubt that the rise of far-right forces in the European Union has contributed to the deepening and attempt to link economic, security and social crises with migration. Therefore, the problem of Islamophobia does not escape the context known as the fear of the other, and it is a very

difficult issue, especially with the spread of terrorist attacks. In fact, the issue of Islamophobia is not related to the fear of Islam as a religion as much as it is related to a group such as immigration, high crime rates, violence, unemployment and economic crises, which have led to the complexity of this issue and the multiplicity of its levels. Therefore, we can say that we are not dealing with individual orientations or minorities, but with an ideological and theoretical framework that has become the source of inspiration and motivation for political parties.

Tackling Islamophobia, and the far right, is a complex and complicated process, and local religious institutions in Western countries together with international Islamic organizations should play their role in bringing societies together rather than dividing them, and should work to change the stereotypical image of Muslims, to renounce religious exclusion and discrimination on the basis of race and religion, and to teach a culture of diversity and respect for other opinions.

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