



## CONTENDING RELIGIONS, IDENTITIES AND SPACE

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### ABSTRACT:

The terrorist attacks on 9/11 on the Twin Towers in New York in 2001 marked a remarkable rise of antagonism against Islam and Muslims that has been noticed in different parts of the world, particularly in the United States and Europe. The main goal of this research is not to study Islamophobia as a domestic issue; rather it is interested in examining if Islamophobia is present in the foreign policy of the European Union (EU). The main focus of this study is to examine the impact of Islamophobia as a domestic variable on the foreign policy of actors on the international arena.

With the rise of Right-wing political parties to power in various EU member states, the foreign policy of these states need to be taken into account. Furthermore, the ability of these parties to win seats in the EU Parliament as well as their capacity to form a new group in the European Parliament, particularly their use of anti-Islam propaganda promotes interest in studying the impact of their orientation, ideas, and policies on the foreign policy of the EU. Therefore, the main aim of the research is to explore and examine the social context and its impact on the foreign policy of the EU.

The main research question for this study is identified as: Is the EU's foreign policy Islamophobic? In order to be able to answer this question, two sub-questions need to be addressed. The first question is: To what extent the rise of Islamophobia as a domestic phenomenon is influential in the decision making process within the EU's institutions? As an attempt to clearly understand and fully answer the research question, the second question addresses case studies; To what extent, if any, does the phenomenon Islamophobia have influence on the EU's foreign policy in general and towards Turkey and Iran in particular?

The research intends to cover the time frame from 1991 to 2011. It is stretched over a spectrum of events, whereby the collapse of the Soviet Union stands as the start point, the 9/11 as the mid-point, and 2011 as the end point; thus, having a decade before and after the terrorist attack on the twin towers. This time frame is chosen as an attempt to observe if the trend of Islamophobia was on the rise before 9/11, and how the 9/11 affected its development, if any.

### AUTHOR'S SHORT BIO AND ACADEMIC PROFILE:

Currently, Ms. Khalil is an Assistant Lecturer in the Political Science Department. She is also a PhD candidate in the EuroMed Programme at the Faculty of Economics and Political Science, Cairo University. Prior to joining the BUE, she co-founded the Egyptian Association for Educational Resources (E-ERA), an NGO working on promoting youth empowerment, cultural understanding, civic education and ICT into education. She also worked as a Senior Programme Specialist at E-ERA. Earlier, she worked as a Programme Specialist at the International Education and Resource Network (iEARN Egypt), an international NGO working on connecting youth around the globe to make a positive difference in the world through online-based projects. Ms. Khalil is holder of an M.A. in Political Science, International Relations with a special focus on strategic thinking and security issues. She was awarded a Graduate Assistantship at the American University in Cairo (AUC), 2003 – 2009. Her undergraduate degree from the AUC was in Political Science with a minor in Journalism and Mass Communication.