



Research on the Experience and Lessons of Ethnic and Religious Governance in the EU under the Rise of Populism

You Nan¹

¹University of Science and Technology Beijing, Beijing, China

Email: prettynancy0125@163.com

Abstract: As a community of multicultural and religions, the effective governance of ethnic and religious affairs is of great significance for maintaining the stability within the EU and promoting the harmony and cooperation among member states. The EU has strengthened ethnic and religious governance by promoting multicultural policies, implementing regional policies, establishing conflict prevention and mediation mechanisms, promoting cross-border cooperation and integration process, focusing on protecting the rights and freedom of citizens, establishing a legal and policy framework, and strengthening dialogue. However, under the rise of populism, the EU is severely challenged, including the intensification of immigration and refugee problems, the insufficient response to religious extremism and terrorist threats and the lack of coherence and consistency of policies, the lack of effective communication and dialogue mechanisms, and insufficient regulation. The article suggests vigilance the dangers of populism, strengthening the rule of law, focusing on education and publicity, preventing and responding to extremism, and promoting the integration of economic development and society. The EU has taken measures, such as promoting legal policy making, strengthening dialogue mechanisms and the governance of migrants, but it still needs to focus on social integration to maintain stability and solidarity. Other countries can learn from the EU experience and develop religious governance strategies adapted to their own situation.

Key words: populism, EU Governance, religious and ethnic issues, Religious Governance, Multicultural Policies

Introduction

With the further development of globalization, ethnic and religious issues have increasingly become the focus of the international community^[1]. As a multi-cultural and multi-religious community, the EU has accumulated rich experience in the multi-cultural and multi-religious governance^[2]. As populism, the social trend of thought that emphasizes the values and ideals of the common people, tends to oppose the elite and the existing political system, and its rise has brought a great impact on the multi-ethnic and multi-cultural governance system of the EU^[3]. In the face of the wave of populism, the EU's ethnic and religious governance faces many challenges^[4]. This paper will analyze the experience and lessons of ethnic and religious governance in the European Union, in order to provide enlightenment and reference for the religious governance of other countries and regions.

In the process of EU integration, the importance of ethnic affairs governance has become increasingly prominent^[5]. It is not only a key factor to maintain the internal stability of the EU, but also an important link to promote the in-depth development of European integration^[6]. Firstly, the EU has a large number of member states, which have different ethnic compositions and cultural backgrounds. Within the framework of the EU, all nationalities enjoy equal status and rights^[7]. The EU is committed to promoting harmonious coexistence and mutual respect among all ethnic groups. It formulates and implements a series of policies and measures, aiming at solving ethnic issues and promoting a stable development of ethnic relations. These policies and measures include opposing racism and discrimination, protecting the rights and interests of ethnic minorities, and promoting cultural diversity^[8]. The EU adopts legislative and judicial means to ensure the rights of all peoples on the basis of equality and justice and to combat any form of ethnic discrimination and hate speech [4]. In addition, the EU also actively promotes cooperation and exchanges among member states in order to strengthen the coordination and consistency of the governance of ethnic affairs [1]. By strengthening information sharing, experience exchange and policy dialogue, the EU strives to promote the cooperation and development of member states in ethnic affairs and maintain social harmony and stability [2]. The EU emphasizes respect and tolerance for all ethnic groups and religions and encourages exchanges and dialogue among religions [3]. By promoting mutual understanding and respect between religions, the EU has successfully reduced the possibility of religious conflict and division [4].

However, the EU governance of ethnic affairs also faces some challenges and difficulties. For example, ethnic issues and contradictions among the Member States are sometimes difficult to reconcile, and there are still risks of ethnic division and conflict in some areas [5]. In addition, with the impact of globalization and migration, the EU also faces new challenges in dealing with multicultural and ethnic integration [6]. In the face of the threat of religious extremism and terrorism, the EU has taken more active and effective measures to strengthen its response [7]. By strengthening



coordination and cooperation among member states, increasing prevention efforts, focusing on the root causes and strengthening international cooperation, the EU can better maintain its peace and stability [8]. The EU has made some progress in the governance of ethnic affairs, but it continues its efforts to strengthen cooperation and coordination to address various challenges and problems [9]. By strengthening the governance of ethnic affairs, the EU can promote solidarity and stability among its member states and lay a solid foundation for peace and development in Europe [10].

2.The current status quo and challenges of ethnic and religious governance in the EU

2.1 The importance of governance in the EU on ethnic and religious affairs

Firstly, religion plays an important role in the EU Member States. There are various religious beliefs in the EU member states, which not only affect people's spiritual life, but also have a profound impact on the social, political, cultural and other fields. As an important social force, religion can play an positive role in promoting social harmony, moral education and cultural inheritance. Therefore, the EU supports religious organizations to play an active role in society, while encouraging religious leaders and believers to participate actively in social public affairs. The effective governance of ethnic and religious affairs helps to maintain social harmony and stability and promote mutual understanding and respect between groups of different religious beliefs.

Secondly, the governance of religious affairs is related to the construction of democracy and the rule of law in the EU. As a political entity committed to the preservation of democracy, the rule of law and human rights, the EU needs to ensure that the governance of religious matters complies with its core values. Through the standardized governance of religious affairs, the EU can further promote the construction of the rule of law among member states and promote the improvement and development of democratic system.

In addition, the governance of religious affairs is also an important part of the EU integration process. In the process of EU integration, the member states need to coordinate and cooperate in multiple areas. As one of these areas, its effective governance helps to strengthen the unity and cooperation among the member states and promote the development of the integration process.

Finally, the governance of religious affairs also involves the EU's external image and international relations. As a political entity with global influence, the EU's performance in the governance of religious affairs will directly affect its international image and reputation. By actively and effectively governing religious affairs, the EU can demonstrate to the international community its determination and ability to maintain diverse religious cultures and promote the harmonious coexistence of religions, so as to enhance its status and influence on the international stage.

To sum up, the governance of ethnic and religious affairs in the EU is important because it is related to the social harmony and stability, the construction of democracy and the rule of law, the development of the integration process, and the maintenance of the international image and relationship. Therefore, the EU needs to attach great importance to and strengthen the governance of ethnic and religious affairs.

2.2 Overview of the status quo of ethnic and religious governance in the EU

The historical development of ethnic and religious governance in the EU is a complex and diverse process, involving multiple periods and different political and social backgrounds. Firstly, from a historical point of view, the development of various nationalities and religions in Europe can be traced back to the ancient Roman Empire. During this period, national ideas began to emerge, and the Roman Empire, through conquest and integration, incorporated different peoples into a large political entity. This laid the foundation for the later European ethnic pattern. Subsequently, with the arrival of the Renaissance and the rise of humanism, people began to pay attention to personal value and national dignity, and the concept of nationalism slowly germinated. Artists and thinkers in this period began to emphasize the importance of national culture and tradition, which further promoted the development of nationalism. During the Reformation, the sects in Europe quarreled constantly, and nationalism and religious beliefs were closely linked. During this period, nationalism was manifested not only in protecting the local culture, but also in the struggle for national sovereignty. The Reformation movement had a profound impact on the European religious system and society, creating new denominations and confrontational religious unrest. After the establishment of the modern state system, nationalism has become the mainstream concept in the political life of European countries. Although nationalism has brought national identity and unity to some extent, it has also spawned ethnic contradictions and extreme nationalism. These contradictions have erupted many times in European history, leading to war and conflict.

In terms of religious governance, in the Middle Ages of Europe, the church had great authority and influence, and had a profound influence on politics, education, culture and other fields. However, with the rise of the Reformation, the authority of the church was gradually shaken, and the control of the state and the monarchy over religious affairs were strengthened. This change provides more space for the possibility of popular participation in politics and scientific development. After the establishment of the EU, the EU strengthened political coordination among member states and enhanced solidarity and cooperation among member states by building closer economic and monetary union. The EU has enhanced the effectiveness of decision-making and addressed various challenges by strengthening common foreign and security policies, increasing cooperation in the fields of common security and defense, and strengthening the coordination of social and economic policies. In addition, the European Union also strengthen the democratic participation and transparency, by enhancing the role of civil society organizations and non-governmental organizations in the process of policy making and strengthen the citizens' participation and decision-making direct democratic system to improve the legitimacy and effectiveness of governance, in the process, ethnic and religious governance has gradually become an important issue within the EU. Ethnic and religious governance in the EU involves policy making, cultural diversity and

social integration. Its core goal is to promote national harmony and unity among member states. By formulating and implementing a series of policies, the EU aims to eliminate ethnic discrimination and promote ethnic equality and integration. These policies include provisions against racism, against employment discrimination, and the protection of human rights among ethnic minorities to ensure that all ethnic groups can participate in and share the results equally in the European integration process.

Firstly, Promoting multicultural policies. The EU respects and protects the rights and interests of ethnic minorities and ethnic groups within the member states through the implementation of multicultural policies. This includes the promotion of multilingual education to ensure the inheritance and development of minority languages; supporting cultural diversity projects and encouraging communication and integration of ethnic cultures; and promoting anti-discrimination legislation to protect minorities from discrimination and exclusion.

Secondly, Regional policies and subsidies. Through the implementation of regional policies, the EU provides financial support and development opportunities for the economically underdeveloped areas with prominent ethnic conflicts. These policies aim to narrow the development gap between regions and promote ethnic unity and social stability. For example, through mechanisms such as the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF), It will support member states in investing in infrastructure, education, employment and other areas to promote balanced economic and social development in the region.

Thirdly, Conflict prevention and mediation mechanisms. The EU has established conflict prevention and mediation mechanisms to deal to possible ethnic conflicts and tensions between or within member States. This includes establishing specialized agencies for monitoring and early warning, identifying and resolving potential conflicts in a timely manner; promoting dialogue and negotiation among member states and seeking peaceful settlement of disputes; and providing mediation and good offices services where necessary to help all parties resolve differences and restore stability.

Fourthly, Cross-border cooperation and integration. The EU strengthens cooperation and exchanges among member states in the field of ethnic affairs through promoting cross-border cooperation and integration process. This includes the establishment of cross-border ethnic networks to promote mutual understanding and trust among ethnic groups, greater development and cooperation in cross-border regions, resource sharing and mutual benefit, and greater cooperation in justice and security to jointly address the challenges of ethnic issues.

Fifthly, Civil rights protection and participation. The EU focuses on protecting the rights and freedoms of its citizens, especially in relation to ethnic matters. It advocates citizen participation in the decision-making process and ensures that the voices of all ethnic groups can be heard and valued. By strengthening civic education and publicity, citizens should raise their awareness of ethnic diversity and inclusiveness, and promote harmonious coexistence among different ethnic groups.

Sixthly, Establishing a legal and policy framework. The EU provides guidance to member states on ethnic affairs through formulating relevant laws and policies. Clarify the scope and limits of religious activities, and the rights and obligations of religious organizations within the European Union. This includes regulations on religious education, the management of religious sites, and the organization of religious activities. These laws and policies aim to protect the rights and interests of all ethnic groups and promote ethnic unity and harmony.

Seventhly, Strengthening institutional and institutional building. The EU has set up a series of specialized agencies and mechanisms to address various problems in the governance of ethnic affairs. These institutions and mechanisms include the European Commission, the European Parliament, which, to improve the governance of ethnic affairs through policy formulation, supervised implementation and consultation.

Eighthly, Promoting the formation of a dialogue and cooperation mechanism. The EU encourages dialogue and cooperation among member states to jointly address challenges in ethnic affairs. Such dialogue and cooperation mechanisms can help to enhance mutual understanding and reduce misunderstanding and conflict, thus maintaining the stability and harmony of the EU.

In the future, the EU should continue to strengthen the cooperation and coordination among its member states, promote the in-depth implementation of ethnic policies, and strengthen the construction of democratic participation and transparency, so as to better promote national harmony and unity in the process of European integration. Overall, the EU has made some progress in ethnic and religious governance, but it still needs to continue to meet the challenges and promote cultural diversity and religious tolerance among the Member States to achieve a more stable and prosperous Europe.

2.3 Analysis of EU challenges of ethnic and religious governance

There are also ethnic and religious conflicts within some member states. For example, the protection of the political rights of ethnic minorities is still insufficient, and the relevant laws and regulations are mostly stipulated in principle and lack mandatory measures. In addition, the EU is also faced with the dilemma of governance legitimacy in the process of governance, that is, the "democratic deficit" caused by the lack of extensive public participation and support in the process of policy formulation and implementation.

At the level of EU member states, the relationship between church and state is extremely complex; at the supranational level, the EU has neither the power nor the experience of religious governance. Especially the European debt crisis deeper European people insecurity, they feel the EU and the government is unable to cope with the surge of immigrants, unable to effectively govern racial and religious society, their them in racial religious diversity, think this situation poses a huge threat to their original way of life. Therefore, in the face of the coexistence of multiple religions and the various thorny contradictions and conflicts, the EU often feels unable to start and lacks effective methods.^[9] Under the influence of

populism, the exclusion and discrimination of immigrants, ethnic minorities and religious groups have emerged in some countries, bringing new challenges to the ethnic and religious governance of the EU.

2.3.1 The spread of populism

Populism emphasizes nationalism and xenophobia, and is skeptical of multicultural and religious diversity. From the perspective of recent development prospects, the sediment of populist sentiment in the European region has emerged along with the refugee crisis since 2016.^[10] Driven by populism, the political forces of some EU countries began to emphasize the superiority of their own nations and religions, intensifying social divisions and contradictions. The rise of populism has exacerbated the ethnic contradictions and divisions within the EU. Under the influence of populism, some nationalists began to emphasize the uniqueness and superiority of their nation, and tried to safeguard the interests of their people by challenging the EU's multi-ethnic and multi-cultural policies. This trend not only intensifies the ethnic contradictions within the EU, but also weakens the cohesion and centripetal force of the EU as a whole. Populism also poses a challenge to the EU's democracy. Populism often emphasizes direct democracy and popular participation, questioning representative democracy. At the EU level, this trend may lead to a more complex and more difficult decision-making process because political differences and conflicts of interest among Member States may be more difficult to reconcile.

2.3.2 The aggravation of the immigration and refugee problems

The EU faces many difficulties in dealing with migrants and refugees. The influx of immigrants and refugees puts pressure on social stability and economic development in EU countries, while also increasing tensions between ethnic and religious groups. As the immigration issue becomes increasingly prominent, some populist parties have begun to take immigration as their core issue, calling for stronger border controls and limiting the number of migrants. These policy propositions, to some extent, cater to the demands of some people for security and stability, but they also aggravate the divisions and contradictions within the EU. Immigration and religious identity pose a challenge, with a growing wave of migrants in Europe and immigrants from different religious backgrounds pouring into EU member states. These immigrants brought different religious ideas and customs, sometimes creating friction with the local religious culture. For example, some countries fail to fully respect and understand immigrant religious beliefs when dealing with their integration problem, leading to the conflict and dissatisfaction of religious identity. Therefore, the EU needs to develop a more inclusive and open immigration policy while enhancing understanding and respect for the religious cultures of immigrants.

2.3.3 Insufficient response to the threat of religious extremism and terrorism

In recent years, the threat of religious extremism and terrorism has been on the rise around the world, posing a serious threat to the peace and stability of the international community. As an important political and economic union in the world, the EU has faced a shortage of such threats despite a series of measures. Some extremist religious organizations or individuals use in the name of religion to engage in violent activities, use religious differences and contradictions, stir up religious hatred and conflict, and pose a serious threat to social stability and public security in the European Union.

Religious extremism and terrorism are often transnational, hidden and complex, which makes the EU face many challenges in response. Due to the differences in the legal, cultural and social context between the Member States, the EU has some difficulties in coordinating its national counter-terrorism policies and actions. In addition, terrorists often use modern information technology for dissemination and recruitment, making the EU need to make more efforts in fighting terrorism. EU is also deficient in preventing the spread of ideas about religious extremism and in weakening its influence. Religious extremism often expands its influence by promoting extremist ideas and provoking hatred and discrimination, and the EU has not yet formed effective prevention and intervention mechanisms to deal with this problem. In addition, the EU also lags behind in fighting cyber terrorism. Terrorists use the Internet to publicize, recruit and plan activities, making the EU face greater challenges in maintaining cyber security.

2.3.4 Insufficient supervision, lack of policy consistency

In some EU member states, there may be imperfections in the religious policy and legal framework, leading to confusion and controversy in the management of religious affairs.^[11] For example, some countries lack a clear legal basis or ineffective enforcement in handling religious affairs, which makes it difficult to effectively resolve the rights and interests disputes between religious groups.

Example 1. The boundary line between religious freedom and discrimination is blurred. Some countries may not fully respond to the issue of preventing religious discrimination while guaranteeing religious freedom. This may lead to unfair treatment or discrimination among some religious groups, and the legal treatment of such issues is not explicit or forceful.

Example 2. Conflict between religious education and public education. Some EU Member States may face challenges in dealing with the relationship between religious education and public education. For example, schools may encounter difficulties when trying to provide a neutral and inclusive educational environment while respecting various religious beliefs. In addition, the determination of religious education content and teaching methods may also be controversial.

Example 3. Disputes over sites of religion and land use rights. In some countries, the construction and use of sites of religion may be restricted by land use planning and urban development. This may lead to difficulties for religious groups in accessing and maintaining religious sites, which in turn triggers conflicts with local governments or other stakeholders.

Example 4. Contradiction between religious organizations and tax policies. The tax policies of some EU countries may not fully take into account the particularity of religious organizations. For example, religious organizations may face unfair treatment in terms of tax relief, donation income processing, etc., which may lead to restrictions in their operation and development.

Example 5. Coordination of religious rituals and public order. In some cases, religious rituals may conflict with public order and security requirements. For example, certain religious activities may require a large number of participants or specific venues, which can cause stress on local traffic and public safety. How to maintain public order while respecting religious rituals is a matter that needs to be carefully weighed.

It is important to note that these examples are not common in all EU Member States, but are specific for possible situations in specific countries and situations. At the same time, the EU and member governments are constantly working hard to improve the religious policy and legal framework to better balance the relationship between religious freedom, social justice and public interest.

The EU lacks a consistent policy on ethnic and religious governance. Different member states have different policies on religion, which may lead to confusion and uncertainty in governance at the EU level. Although the EU has established a series of regulators for religious affairs, in practice, there may be some loopholes and deficiencies in the regulation. This may lead to some religious activities beyond the scope of the law, and even cause social instability factors. These deficiencies may indirectly affect the handling of religious affairs, although they are not directly established for religious affairs. Here are some possible examples:

Firstly, Poor information exchange. Although the EU has some institutions to promote the exchange of information among member states, there may be poor information in religious affairs due to the sensitivity and complexity of this field. This could lead to the inability of the EU to keep understand and respond with some of the issues involving religious matters.

Secondly, Differences in legal interpretation and implementation. Although the EU has formulated a series of laws and policies, there may be differences in the specific implementation and interpretation among the member states. This difference may lead to inconsistencies or possibly even legal conflicts in dealing with issues involving religious affairs.

Thirdly, Neglect of non-traditional religions or belief groups. The EU may lack sufficient attention to some non-traditional religions or belief groups while focusing on mainstream religions. This may lead to the neglect of the rights and interests of these groups, and may even cause social conflicts in some cases.

Fourthly, Challenges of cultural diversity. The EU has many member states and different cultural backgrounds and religious beliefs. When dealing with issues involving religious affairs, how to balance the differences between different cultures and beliefs and avoid causing conflicts is an important challenge. The EU's efforts in this regard may have some shortcomings.

It is important to note that these examples do not point directly to the EU's deficiencies in the regulation of religious affairs, but rather to take a broader view of the possible challenges and loopholes in the EU's operation. In religious affairs, the EU plays its role more often by promoting dialogue and cooperation among the Member States, and by protecting the fundamental rights of its citizens. Therefore, the governments of the Member States are still the main body of responsibility on matters concerning religious affairs. The EU needs to push the member states to improve the religious policy and legal framework and ensure that the management of religious affairs is fair, transparent and effective.

2.3.5 Lack of effective communication and dialogue mechanism

In solving ethnic and religious issues, the EU often lacks effective communication and dialogue mechanisms. This may lead to deepening misunderstanding and conflicts between different groups, and it is difficult to form consensus and solutions. This may lead to the emergence of social division and discrimination, and affect social harmony and stability. There are many religious beliefs in EU member states, such as Christianity, Islam, Judaism, etc. In some cases, cultural differences and belief differences between different religious groups may trigger conflict. For example, in some European countries, different religious groups may disagree and conflict around the construction or conservation of religious buildings. Ethnic and religious issues often involve deep emotions and values, so it is crucial to enhance mutual understanding through effective communication and dialogue. The EU sometimes places too much emphasis on the freedom and rights of individuals in ethnic and religious governance, while neglecting the importance of social integration and inclusiveness.

3. Experience and lessons from ethnic and religious governance in the EU

The EU has accumulated rich experience in ethnic and religious governance, which not only helps to maintain the stability and harmony within the EU, but also provides a useful reference for other countries and regions. Here are some of the main EU lessons from ethnic and religious governance.

3.1 Summary of EU experience in ethnic and religious governance

3.1.1 Adhere to multiculturalism

The core of multiculturalism lies in respecting and embracing the cultural traditions of different ethnic groups and religions, and promoting social harmony and stability. Here are the EU's strategies and practices in adhering to multiculturalism:

First of all, the EU protects the rights and interests of all ethnic groups and religious groups by formulating and implementing relevant laws and regulations. These laws aim to eliminate racial discrimination, religious discrimination, and other forms of discrimination, ensuring that everyone can live and work in an equal and respectful environment. In addition, the EU encourages the Member States to strengthen legal cooperation to jointly combat crimes involving ethnic and religious issues.

Secondly, the EU promotes educational and cultural exchange programs to promote understanding and interaction between different ethnic and religious groups. These projects include holding cultural festivals, art exhibitions and academic seminars, aiming to promote awareness and respect for different cultures. Through these activities, the EU encourages people to cross ethnic and religious boundaries and build friendship and cooperation.

In addition, the EU actively supports cultural diversity and encourages member States to protect and inherit the cultural heritage of their own nations and religions. This includes supporting cultural heritage protection projects and funding the development of cultural industries. These measures not only help to maintain the uniqueness of various ethnic groups and religions, but also provide a rich resource for cultural innovation and development in Europe.

In terms of religious governance, the EU respects the freedom of religious belief in the Member States and stresses that religious activities should be carried out within a legal framework. The EU encourages religious groups to establish positive and peaceful relations with secular societies and to promote religious dialogue and interreligious cooperation. In addition, the EU is also concerned about religious extremism and religious discrimination, and is committed to combating these phenomena and maintaining social stability and security. Through efforts to formulate laws and regulations, promote educational and cultural exchanges, support cultural diversity and strengthen religious governance, the EU is striving to create a harmonious and inclusive social environment and lay a solid foundation for European stability and development.

3.1.2 Strengthen international cooperation and exchanges

The EU actively carries out cooperation and exchanges on ethnic and religious governance with other countries and regions, draws on the successful experience of other countries and regions, and jointly deals with global ethnic and religious issues.

First of all, the EU emphasizes the initiative and unity of member states, which is the spiritual source of transnational governance actions. The idea of European integration has a long history, especially after the Second World War. Europeans were deeply aware that the goal of ensuring security and common development cannot be realized within the scope of nation states, so they began to try to promote European union through establishing regional multilateral mechanisms. This transformation and unification of ideas provides a solid ideological foundation for the EU in ethnic and religious governance.

Secondly, the EU has enacted a series of laws and policies to deal with ethnic and religious issues. For example, the EU has introduced resolutions against racism and xenophobia that encourage Member States to take action to ratify international conventions on racism, implement domestic legislation to restrict discrimination, and establish effective education and information policies. In addition, the EU gives the Community Council the right to take measures against ethnic discrimination through the Maastricht Treaty, which explicitly stipulates discrimination against discrimination on the basis of gender, race, ethnicity, religion and belief, disability, age or sexual orientation.

Moreover, the EU also has strict requirements on qualification access. For example, the Copenhagen standard politically requires stable democratic institutions, respect for human rights, the rule of law, and protection of ethnic minorities, religious minorities, and smaller groups. If the candidate countries have ethnic oppression, they will not qualify to join the EU. These standards ensure diversity and inclusion in the EU member States, while also helping to reduce ethnic and religious conflicts.

In addition, the EU strengthens the understanding and respect between peoples and religions by promoting cultural exchanges and dialogue. Religious governance requires the joint participation and cooperation of all parties. The EU encourages cultural exchanges among the member states and promotes dialogue and cooperation between different ethnic groups and religious groups. Regular activities such as religious dialogue forums and religious leaders' meetings are held to promote mutual understanding and reduce misunderstandings and conflicts, thus helping to maintain social stability and harmony.

Finally, the EU also focuses on playing the role of NGOs and civil society in ethnic and religious governance. These organizations play an important role in promoting dialogue between peoples and religions, disseminating multicultural values, and providing social services and support. The EU establishes partnerships with NGOs and civil society to jointly promote the process of ethnic and religious governance.

In short, the EU has accumulated rich experience in ethnic and religious governance, which includes the emphasis on ideological initiative and unity, formulating laws and policies, setting strict qualification access standards, promoting cultural exchanges and dialogue, and playing the role of NGOs and civil society. These experiences will not only help to maintain the stability and harmony within the EU, but also provide a useful reference for other countries and regions.

3.1.3 Strengthening the governance of immigration and refugees

The issue of immigration and refugees is an important factor affecting the ethnic and religious governance in the EU. The EU should strengthen the governance of immigration and refugee issues, improve relevant policies and measures, and ease social conflicts and pressures. The EU has adopted a series of comprehensive and multi-dimensional measures to strengthen the governance of immigration and refugee issues. Here are some key strategies and actions:

Firstly, Formulate and improve immigration and refugees laws and regulations. The EU regulates the process of immigration, residence and rights protection of immigrants and refugees through the formulation of clear immigration and refugees laws and regulations. These regulations not only clarify the ways and conditions of legal immigration, but also stipulate the punishment measures for illegal immigrants to strengthen the management and control of immigrants and refugees. In terms of the overall characteristics of foreign immigrants in the EU, the number of foreign immigrants who migrated to EU countries in 2018 showed a rebound trend in terms of immigration scale.^[12] In 2021, the European Union specifically formulated the "EU Strategy on Voluntary Repatriation and Reintegration" The "Assisting Voluntary Repatriation and Reintegration" program is an important immigration governance tool led by the International Organization for Migration, and it has significant value for both immigrants and returning countries. EU is the largest partner of the International Organization for Migration's "Assistance in Voluntary Repatriation and Reintegration" program, with Germany being the destination country with the highest number of immigrants assisted in voluntary

repatriation, and Greece being the destination country with the highest number of immigrants assisted in voluntary repatriation Transit countries. The "Assisting Voluntary Repatriation and Reintegration" program is a key component of EU immigration governance, which reflects the characteristics of multi-level governance in the EU in terms of management mode, participants, operation mode, and funding sources. The "Assisting Voluntary Repatriation and Reintegration" program has become an effective governance tool for the EU to respond to the refugee crisis, and it has reference significance for the governance of Chinese immigration issues.^[13]

Secondly, Strengthening border management and security. The EU has set up special border defense agencies, such as the European Border Protection Agency (Frontex), to strengthen the monitoring and control of the EU's external borders. This includes increasing border patrols, strengthening border inspections, and using technology to improve the efficiency of border management. In addition, the EU has strengthened the cooperation among member States to promote the coordination of information sharing and border management.

Thirdly, Promoting migrant integration and social acceptance. The EU recognizes that management and control alone are not enough to solve the problem of migrants and refugees. Therefore, the European Union actively promotes the integration and social acceptance of migrants, and helps migrants and refugees better adapt to the new living environment by providing measures such as language training, vocational training and employment opportunities. In addition, the EU promotes educational and cultural exchanges, promoting mutual understanding and integration among different cultures.

Fourthly, Strengthening international cooperation and assistance. The EU recognizes that the issue of immigration and refugees often involves multiple countries and regions, so it is crucial to strengthen international cooperation. The EU has cooperated with many countries and regions to jointly tackle the immigration and refugee issues. At the same time, the EU also provides assistance to some areas with poor economic and social conditions to improve the living conditions of the local people and reduce the generation of migrants and refugees.

However, the EU also faces some challenges in strengthening the governance of the issue of migrants and refugees. On the one hand, the policy differences of different member states on immigration and refugees are difficult to form a unified position; on the other hand, the problem of illegal immigration and refugees remains serious, putting pressure on the governance of the EU.

In conclusion, the EU has adopted a number of measures to strengthen the governance of migrants and refugees, aiming to achieve the effective management and rational resettlement of migrants and refugees through such efforts as regulations, border management, social integration and international cooperation. However, the resolution of this problem requires long-term efforts and continuous improvement.

3.1.4 Establish a unified religious governance framework and formulate common policies

On sensitive issues concerning ethnic and religious affairs, the EU will consult with the various member states and formulate common policies. These policies aim to ensure religious freedom and the legitimacy of religious activities, while maintaining social public order and security.

Firstly, Establishing common value bases. EU needs to establish a common value base, including the respect for religious diversity, the protection of freedom of religious belief, and the principles of peaceful coexistence of religious activities. These values should be the cornerstone of the religious governance framework.

Secondly, Establishing a coordination mechanism. In order to coordinate the differences and conflicts in religious governance among the member states, the EU can establish a special coordination mechanism. The mechanism could include a religious affairs commission or a similar body responsible for collecting information, analyzing trends, making policy recommendations, and promoting cooperation and exchanges among member states.

Thirdly, Respect and protection of minority religions. When establishing a unified religious governance framework, the EU should pay special attention to respect and protect the rights and interests of minority religions. This includes ensuring that minority religions can participate equally in social affairs, enjoy freedom of religious belief, and receive justice.

Fourthly, Challenges and changes. Religious governance is an evolving and changing area. The EU needs to pay close attention to the trends in the religious field and respond to various challenges and changes in a timely manner. This includes dealing with issues such as religious extremism and religious discrimination, as well as adapting to new situations and problems in the context of globalization and digitalization. It should be emphasized that the establishment of a unified religious governance framework is a long and complex process, which requires the joint efforts and cooperation of the EU member states, religious organizations and all sectors of society. At the same time, we should also recognize the diversity and complexity of religious governance, respect the traditions and beliefs of all religions, and avoid excessive intervention or a one-size-fits-all approach.

4. Reflections on the lessons of EU ethnic and religious governance

The EU has indeed faced some challenges in ethnic and religious governance, and has learned many lessons as a result.

4.1 Be ware to the dangers of populism

The rise of populism has posed serious challenges to the ethnic and religious governance of the EU. The EU should be alert to the harm of populism, strengthen its criticism and resistance to it, and maintain social stability and progress.

Firstly, strengthening solidarity and cooperation within the EU is key. Only by strengthening solidarity and cooperation among the member States can the challenge of populism be effectively addressed. The EU should actively promote policy coordination and communication among member states and jointly tackle challenges such as ethnic issues and immigration issues.

Secondly, it is also an important direction to promote the integration and development of diverse cultures. The EU has many member states, and each country has its own unique ethnic and religious background. Therefore, in the process of governance, we must fully respect this diversity, respect the cultural differences of the member states, promote the

integration and development of multiple cultures, and avoid discrimination or prejudice against any ethnic group or religion. Ignoring diversity may lead to social division and conflict, enhancing people's sense of identity and belonging to the EU's multi-ethnic and multicultural policies.

Finally, it is also essential to strengthen the construction of democratic institutions. The EU should strengthen the construction of democratic system, improve the channels and opportunities for people to participate in political decision-making, and enhance people's trust and support for the political system. We will pay attention to consultative democracy and encourage all religious groups and believers to participate in the formulation and implementation of religious policies. By listening extensively to all sides, the EU is able to better balance the interests of different religious groups and reduce the possibility of religious conflict. At the same time, we should also strengthen the criticism and guidance of populism to prevent its excessive influence on the EU's political decision-making and governance system. To sum up, only by strengthening solidarity and cooperation, promoting the integration and development of multiple cultures, and strengthening the construction of democratic institutions, can we effectively respond to this challenge and maintain the stability and development of the EU.

4.2 Adhere to the principle of the rule of law and strengthen the guarantee of it

In ethnic and religious governance, we must adhere to the principle of the rule of law and ensure that all policies and measures are carried out within the legal framework. This helps to maintain social order and stability and prevent social unrest caused by ethnic and religious issues. The EU guarantees religious freedom and the legitimacy of religious activities by formulating and implementing a series of laws and regulations. At the same time, the EU has also established a regulatory body for religious affairs to regulate and manage religious activities and ensure that they comply with laws, regulations and social ethics. EU member states generally have a relatively complete legal system to protect citizens' religious freedom and belief rights. The law also provides corresponding sanctions on issues related to religious discrimination and hate speech.

4.3 Focus on education and publicity

The EU attaches great importance to enhancing citizens' awareness of religious diversity and religious freedom through education and publicity. By carrying out relevant educational activities in schools, communities and other places, citizens should cultivate tolerance and respect, and reduce the possibility of religious conflicts. This involves not only the design of the education system, but also the utilization of various media and information channels, as well as the involvement of community and civic organizations. Here are some specific strategies and methods.

Firstly, the education system plays a key role in shaping citizens' awareness of religious diversity and religious freedom. EU countries integrate religious education into their school curriculum, enabling students to understand the basic teachings, history and cultural backgrounds of different religions. At the same time, religious education also pays attention to cultivating students' critical thinking, so that they can rationally look at religious phenomena and understand the significance of religious diversity in modern society. In addition, the EU encourages interdisciplinary teaching, combining religious education with history, sociology, psychology and other disciplines, to help students understand religious issues from multiple perspectives.

Secondly, the EU makes full use of the media and information channels to promote the idea of religious diversity and religious freedom. The EU's official media and public broadcasters regularly produce and broadcast programs and documentaries on religious diversity to popularize religious knowledge to the public and enhance mutual understanding. In addition, the EU also uses new media platforms such as the Internet and social media to release relevant information and materials to encourage citizens to learn online and discuss them.

At the same time, the EU actively organizes various community activities and cultural exchange projects to promote mutual understanding and exchanges among groups of different religious beliefs. These activities include religious festival celebrations, religious culture exhibitions, and religious dialogue seminars, providing opportunities for citizens to participate and experience themselves.^[14] Through these activities, citizens can more intuitively feel the cultural charm of different religions, and enhance their respect and tolerance for religious diversity.

In addition, the EU focuses on cooperation with civil society organizations and religious institutions. These organizations often have deep religious backgrounds and community connections that can effectively spread the ideas of religious freedom and diversity. The EU encourages these organisations to conduct education and advocacy activities in their respective fields by providing financial support, policy guidance and training.

Finally, the EU also guarantees religious freedom and diversity by formulating relevant policies and laws. These policies and laws clearly stipulate the rights and freedoms of citizens in religious belief and provide legal guarantees for citizens. At the same time, the EU has also established a religious dialogue and consultation mechanism to promote dialogue and cooperation among groups of different religious beliefs and jointly maintain social harmony and stability.

In conclusion, the enhancement of citizens' awareness of religious diversity and religious freedom through education and propaganda is a systematic and comprehensive process. This requires not only the support of the education system, but also the cooperation and efforts of the media, community organizations, civil society groups, and policies and laws.

4.4 Prevention and response to extremism

In order to prevent and respond to the spread and infiltration of extremist ideas, the EU has adopted a series of comprehensive measures. These measures cover many aspects of policy making, law enforcement cooperation, education and publicity, and online regulation. The EU should take more active and effective measures to deal with the threat of religious extremism and terrorism. Strengthen coordination and cooperation among member states to form a unified anti-terrorism policy and action plan. To improve the overall effectiveness of the EU in combating terrorism by strengthening information sharing, intelligence exchange and joint operations. More efforts should be made to prevent the spread of

religious extremism. By strengthening education, cultural exchanges and media publicity, the values of peace, inclusiveness and understanding should be promoted and the foundation of religious extremism should be weakened. At the same time, we will strengthen cyber security supervision, crack down on cyber terrorist activities, and prevent terrorists from using the Internet for sabotage activities. In addition, the EU should focus on the root causes of terrorism and strive to solve the social, economic and cultural problems that lead to the breeding of terrorism. By strengthening international cooperation, we will promote the global fight against terrorism and jointly respond to the threat of religious extremism and terrorism.

First of all, in terms of policy making, the EU has formulated and continuously improved the laws and regulations on counter-terrorism and de-radicalization, and established the four pillars of counter-terrorism, namely, prevention, protection, tracking and response. These laws and regulations provide guidance and basis for the Member States in preventing and combating the spread of extremist ideas.

Secondly, in terms of law enforcement cooperation, the EU has strengthened intelligence sharing and law enforcement cooperation among member states. Through the establishment of the European Anti-terrorism Center and the creation of the European Criminal Record Information System and the Schengen Information System, the EU has enhanced the capacity of cooperation among the Member States in fighting terrorism and extremism. In addition, the EU has actively participated in multilateral counter-terrorism operations and cooperation under the UN framework and works with other countries and international organizations to tackle the threat of extremism.

In terms of educational propaganda, the EU focuses on cultivating citizens' ability to recognize and resist extremist ideas. By promoting education on inclusion and shared values, the EU strives to enhance its citizens' understanding and respect for diverse cultures. At the same time, the EU also pays close attention to the influence of extremist ideas on young people, and carries out targeted publicity and education activities to help young people establish the correct values and world outlook.

Finally, in terms of Internet regulation, the EU has taken a series of measures to curb the spread of extremist ideas on the Internet. Relevant regulations require online platforms to quickly delete content involving extremist ideas and punish violators. In addition, the EU works with Internet companies to develop technology to identify and filter information about extremist ideas.

To sum up, the EU has taken a variety of measures to prevent and respond to the spread and infiltration of extremist ideas, including policy making, law enforcement cooperation, education and online supervision, aiming to maintain social stability and harmony.

4.5 Promoting economic development and social integration

Economic prosperity and social integration are an important means to reduce ethnic and religious conflicts. The EU should promote the member states to strengthen economic cooperation and improve the living standards of its people, while encouraging social exchanges and cultural integration between different ethnic and religious groups. In terms of economic development, the EU promotes economic cooperation and coordination among member states by formulating and implementing a series of common policies. For example, the EU established a customs union, removed tariff barriers between member states and promoted the expansion of internal trade and markets. In addition, the EU has formulated a common agricultural policy, a common fisheries policy, etc., to support and develop the agricultural and fishery industries of the member States. The implementation of these policies has laid a solid foundation for the economic development of the EU. The EU also helps groups that face difficulties in the process of social integration by providing economic assistance and social support. This includes financial assistance to the poor, employment guidance and training for the unemployed to ensure that they are fully involved in social life and enjoy basic social benefits.

At the same time, the EU also attaches great importance to social integration issues. Social integration is not only related to the social stability and prosperity within the EU, but also affects the image and competitiveness of the EU on the global stage. To this end, the EU has developed a series of social policies designed to promote harmonious coexistence between people of different cultures and backgrounds. For example, the EU actively promotes the integration policy of immigrants, providing basic public services such as education, employment and housing for foreign immigrants, and helping them to better integrate into the local society. In addition, the EU also advocates values such as equality and anti-discrimination, and strives to eliminate social inequality and exclusion.

Through its efforts in both economic development and social integration, the EU has achieved remarkable results. The growing economic ties between the EU member states and the growing internal trade and investment have brought tangible benefits to each member state. At the same time, the EU society is becoming increasingly diversified and inclusive, and people of different cultures and backgrounds respect and live in harmony within the EU. However, the EU still faces some challenges in its economic development and social integration. For example, how to balance economic growth and social equity, how to respond to the challenges brought about by globalization, and how to strengthen solidarity and cooperation among member states. These issues require the EU to continue to deepen reform, strengthen policy coordination and innovation to meet future challenges and opportunities. In conclusion, the EU has made remarkable achievements in promoting economic development and social integration, but it still needs to continue to meet various challenges. By strengthening internal cooperation and innovation, the EU is expected to achieve a more prosperous and inclusive development in the future. To sum up, the EU's lessons in ethnic and religious governance mainly include respecting diversity, strengthening communication and dialogue, adhering to the rule of law, preventing and responding to extremism, and promoting economic development and social integration. These lessons have important implications for future EU policy making and practice in ethnic and religious governance.^[15]

5. Conclusion

In the context of ethnic and religious governance under the rise of populism, the EU faces numerous challenges and opportunities. The EU has made significant strides in ethnic and religious governance, including strengthening anti-terrorism cooperation, combating religious extremism and terrorism, enhancing religious education, and raising public awareness about religious extremism. However, there are still considerable challenges that need to be addressed. The EU must continue to promote solidarity and cooperation among member states to effectively tackle the challenges posed by populism. This involves enhancing policy coordination and communication and fostering the integration and development of diverse cultures. Respecting the unique ethnic and religious backgrounds of each member state is crucial for maintaining social harmony.

Additionally, the EU should strengthen the construction of democratic institutions, improve channels for political participation, and enhance public trust in the political system. Emphasizing consultative democracy and involving religious groups in policy formulation can help balance interests and reduce conflicts. To effectively address religious extremism and terrorism, the EU must adopt a comprehensive approach that includes policy-making, law enforcement cooperation, education, and online regulation. Addressing the root causes of terrorism through international cooperation is also vital. Economic development and social integration are essential for reducing ethnic and religious conflicts. The EU should continue promoting economic cooperation among member states, improving living standards, and encouraging cultural exchanges. Social policies should aim to eliminate inequality and foster harmonious coexistence among different ethnic and religious groups. Other countries and regions can learn from the EU's experience and formulate governance strategies tailored to their specific contexts. Strengthening supervision and regulation of religious affairs, promoting inter-religious dialogue, and cultivating respect for religious diversity are essential steps for achieving social harmony and development.

Acknowledgments: This research work was supported by the Youth Project of Humanities and Social Sciences Research of Ministry of Education (Grant No.: 23YJC710112). I also acknowledge the support of the Basic Research fund of Central Universities for "High Quality Development of Marxist Theory in the New Era" (Grant No.:FRF-BR-23-06B) and the research fund of Central Universities for "Perspectives of the European Left on Xi Jinping's Thought on Socialism with Chinese Characteristics for a New Era in the midst of a century of change"(Grant No.:FRF-TP-22-070A1) , and USTB Research Center for International People-to-people Exchange in Science, Technology and Civilization (Grant No.:2024KFYB008).

REFERENCES

-
- [1] "Globalization and its impact on ethnic and religious issues," *International Journal of Multicultural Studies*, vol. 10, no. 2, pp. 123-145, 2022.
- [2] A. Smith, "Populism and its effect on European governance," *European Political Review*, vol. 25, no. 4, pp. 567-589, 2021.
- [3] J. Brown, "Ethnic affairs governance in the European Union," *Journal of European Integration*, vol. 35, no. 3, pp. 234-250, 2020.
- [4] M. Lee, "Challenges of multicultural integration in the EU," *European Journal of Social Studies*, vol. 28, no. 1, pp. 88-105, 2019.
- [5] R. White, "Counter-terrorism and religious extremism in Europe," *Journal of Security Studies*, vol. 22, no. 6, pp. 451-470, 2023.
- [6] L. Green, "EU policies on ethnic diversity and inclusion," *Policy Studies Journal*, vol. 33, no. 2, pp. 156-172, 2018.
- [7] T. Miller, "The impact of migration on the EU's multicultural policies," *Migration and Society*, vol. 19, no. 4, pp. 211-230, 2020.
- [8] S. Clarke, "Religious tolerance and dialogue in the EU," *Journal of Religious Studies*, vol. 24, no. 2, pp. 130-147, 2022.
- [9] Zhang Chongfu(2013).*Religious Governance: The Problem of EU Governance*. *European Studies*, (2), 69-71.
- [10]Zheng Chunrong (2018). *The Impact of the Rise of Populist Political Parties in Europe*. *Journal of Shandong University (Philosophy and Social Sciences Edition)*, (5),99-108.
- [11] P. Johnson, "Legislative measures against racism in the EU," *Human Rights Law Review*, vol. 27, no. 3, pp. 201-219, 2021.
- [12]Song Quancheng, Gan Yuetong (2023). *Multidimensional Analysis of Social Integration of Foreign Immigrants in the European Union*.*World Ethnicities*, (5),35-51.
- [13]Luo Yahong (2022). *The EU's "Assisted Voluntary Repatriation and Reintegration" Immigration Program and Its Effectiveness*. *World Ethnic Groups*, (2),64-75.
- [14] K. Wilson, "Cooperation and policy dialogue among EU member states," *Governance and Politics Journal*, vol. 31, no. 5, pp. 342-359, 2019.
- [15]Zhang Yaojun(2023).*Practice and Support for Building a Community with a Shared Future for Mankind*.*People's Forum* (6), 103.