

The Muslim Minorities in the West: A Socio-economic Study

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“ ...the worst evil for a state arise(s) from anything that tends to destroy its unity...citizens (are) bound together by sharing in the same pleasures and pains, all feeling glad or grieved on the same occasions of gain or loss; whereas the bond is broken when such feelings are no longer universal...disunion comes about when the words...“ another’s” and “ not another’s” are not applied to the same things throughout the community.”

-Plato, *The Republic*¹

“ Faction...agitates the community with ... false alarms.”

-George Washington²

“ the real fault line is not between Muslims and Western societies, as some would have us believe, but between small minorities of extremists, on different sides, with a vested interest in stirring hostility and conflict”.

-Ban Ki Moon³

“ ...when it comes to the question of Islam...there are many who now fancy themselves experts on this topic, but few whose voices can offer true insight. The caricatures of Islam that have breached the public consciousness serve no one but those who insist that there be a division.”

-Jende Huang⁴

“ The bright cloak of intellectual (cultural) imperialism serves to cover the sordid calculation of economic imperialism.”

-Francis Delaisi⁵

I. Introduction

In the 20th century, the Muslim population grew from 200 million to its current level of 1.5 billion.⁶ At the beginning of the century, Islam was concentrated in the Arab world and

1 Plato, *The Republic*, trans. F.M. Cornford, Oxford University Press, 1945, cited in Stebelton H. Nulle, editor, *The Ancient World*, 1980, p.198.

2 From George Washington’s farewell address in 1796, cited in *The Economist*, November 17, 2007, p.42.

3 *Jerusalem Post*, March 29, 2008. www.jpost.com

4 Jende Huang, “The Issue at Hand”, *The Humanist*, March/April 2008, p.3.

5 Francis Delaisi, *Political Myths and Economic Reality*, 1927.

6 Presently, Christians have 2 billion people. Yet many scholars predict that Islam will be the largest religion by 2050, overtaking Christianity. The Battle of the Books. *The Economist*, December 22, 2007, p.82. Recent Vatican data shows that the number of Muslims of 1.32 billion has already surpassed that of the 1.13 billion Catholics. Anshel Pfeffer, “Welcome to the Demographic Jungle”, *Haaretz*, January 4,

Southeast Asia. Now, thanks to migration, there is a large number of Muslims living in the west.⁷ About 16 million Muslims live in Europe, 0.6 – 1 million in Canada and 6-8 million in the US⁸. According to the US State Department, by 2010 the number of Muslims in the US will exceed that of Jews.⁹ Presently, the Jewish population of 6 million¹⁰ constitutes about two percent of the total American population.

i. 'Failure' of Islam

Most Muslims in the west are economic immigrants due to the lack of modernization in their countries of origin. The inability to achieve reasonable standard of living has led them to emigrate to the west in order to escape poverty. Table 1 shows gross national per capita income at purchasing power parity in different countries. Striking is the gap between the Israeli per capita income and that of Muslim nations. Israel represents a developed industrial society in the midst of essentially raw materials producing nations.¹¹

With the exception of the "oil-endowed Gulf States¹² and-to a limited degree-Turkey and Malaysia, every single Muslim country has *failed* to enter the developed world."¹³ The Arab world has one of the highest illiteracy rates with 70 million people illiterate - 20% of men and 40% of women unable to read.¹⁴ Malnutrition afflicts 40 million.¹⁵ The region still suffers from

2008, www.haaretz.com

7 Muslims in the west are hardly a new phenomenon. France, for example, has a long history of migration from its colonies in North Africa that goes back to the early 20th century. Muslims make up nearly 10 percent of the French population. Around the same time, many Yemenis went to work in north England. They played a useful role in staffing industrial factories during WWII when a good number of British men were drafted in the army. A new museum commemorating their contribution has just been inaugurated in northern England. "Culture Express", *CCTV9*, April 10, 2008. In the US, a large number of Yemenis also worked at Ford in Detroit in the 1920s.

8 The Encyclopedia Britannica gives a figure of 5 to 7 million American Muslims. The Muslim community in America is not a homogeneous group rather it is an amalgamation of individuals from the Middle-east, south Asia, as well as African Americans.

9 B.R. Gowani, "Not all Veils and Guns", February 3, 2008, *Counterpunch*, www.counterpunch.org/gowani02022008.html

10 The total number of Jews in the world is between 13 to 16 millions. Anshel Pfeffer, "Welcome to the Demographic Jungle", *Haaretz*, January 4, 2008, www.haaretz.com

11 The recent rise in the price of oil has led to a substantial jump in the per capita income of the oil exporting nations. The economic structure of the oil nations in the Middle East is still disproportionately hydrocarbon-based and viable industrialization has not yet taken root.

12 Ross argues that oil income has perverse effects on the status of women in the Gulf. According to him, delays the development of export-oriented, light industries which tend to employ more female workers. Michael Ross, "Oil, Islam and Women", *American Political Science Review*, Vol. 102, February 2008, p.121. On the other hand, given the realities of the Gulf labor market, most workers in industry and services are of foreign origin.

13 Anatole Lieven, cited in Martin Wolf's "The Economic failure of Islam", *The Financial Times*, September 26, 2001, p.17.(italics added)

14 The Battle of the Books. *The Economist*, December 22, 2007, p.82.

15 *Al Jazeera*, March 28, 2007.

tribalism, unresponsive governments, uneven income distribution and sexual inequality.

**Table 1. Gross National Per Capita Income (2000):
Dollars at Purchasing Power Parity.**

US	34260
Israel	19320
<i>World</i>	7350
Saudi Arabia	11050
Tunisia	6090
Iran	5900
Algeria	5040
Lebanon	4530
Jordan	4040
Egypt	3690
Morocco	3410
Syria	3230
Pakistan	1960
Bangladesh	1650
Mauritania	1650
Yemen	780

Source: World Bank, Freedom House.

The low socio-economic standards in Muslim lands have led to the proposition that Muslims' underdevelopment is due to Islam's "irreconcilability" with western ideas of modernization.

ii. Objective

More than any other immigrant group, western Muslims are profoundly affected by what goes on in their lands of origin. There are also two major differences distinguishing western Muslims from other immigrants:

First, some members of the Muslim community have chosen a visible Islamic way of life.

Second, the tragic 9/11 attacks have resulted in a change of western public opinion towards Muslims living in their midst.

The above factors run the risk of transforming Muslims in the West into what Edward Said calls the "Other". The difficulties faced by Muslims are the subject of this paper. In the course of the analysis, the notion that Islam is the reason behind the lack of modernization in Muslim lands will be questioned.

Part II deals with assimilation theories and realities. Part III analyzes the post 9/11 changes

in western attitudes in the religious, political, academic, and media spheres. Part IV looks at positive signs that bode well for the future of Muslims in the west. Part V represents the conclusion.

II. The Adoption of Islamic Garb

This section examines the *political* origin of the present popularity of Islamic garb, taking Egypt as a case in point. It will be shown that such attire is essentially much more of a political statement than a religious one. In the second part we deal with analysis of the *hijab* debate as it relates to the Anglo-American and French theories of assimilation. The third part considers assimilation realities in major western nations.

i. Origin of Islamic Garb

The tendency to wear different attire than the western ones is quite visible in Muslim lands as well as among western Muslims. The popularity of the Islamic garb among Muslim females has led many westerners to consider it a retreat from the 21st century to the middle ages. This is incorrect. Wearing *hijab* does not necessarily mean being anti-modern. On the contrary, the alternative explanation provided here postulates that wearing headscarves is basically an anti-western statement against the *lack* of true modernization. This proposition is based on a strong current of thinking in the Muslim world which believes that the use of western leverage against Muslim nations over the years has hindered their industrialization and prevented them from joining the modern world. This feeling, however, should be understood in terms of its specific historical context and not as an indictment of future Muslim-Western relations.

In dealing with Islamic garb, a distinction should be made between traditional *tribal* societies (e.g. Saudi Arabia, Afghanistan) and others (e.g. Egypt, Turkey) where modernization started in the 20th century or before. While it is understandable that conservative modes of dress still prevail in the former, it is perplexing to note that in the latter we witness a strong desire, even among young and educated females, to wear headscarves. The explanation presented here is at odds with the conventional wisdom in the west which considers the affirmation of Islamic identity a sign of *rejection* of modernity.

During the last century the western way of life was the model for Muslim countries which aspired to escape the “backward” ways of their ancestors. The case of Egypt is instructive. Women’s emancipation started as early as 1919 when unveiled Egyptian women actively participated in that year’s uprising against the British occupiers. Thus, nationalism was the main driver for women’s emancipation. This was a turning point in the modern history of

Egypt.¹⁶ Furthermore, in the cosmopolitan cities of Cairo and Alexandria there was a large number of foreign residents whose style of living had a powerful demonstration effect on the Egyptian society.¹⁷

From the 1919 to 1967, it was practically unthinkable for the educated women to wear anything but western attire. The proposition presented here is that the rapid spread of headscarves was an affirmation of identity awakened by the shock of the Egyptian 1967 military defeat. The affirmation was essentially a political statement and not a religious one. It expressed the country's grievances against western interferences in Egyptian affairs. Interferences which, for decades, had prevented the country's development along the path of economic modernization.

a. Egypt's Stalled Modernization

Egypt is a country that has experienced many aborted attempts at modernization. Under Mohammad Ali (1805-1849), the country was successful in launching a far-reaching industrialization program that prematurely ended with the destruction of its military power at western hands in 1841. In his feverish efforts to make Egypt a piece of Europe, Ali's grandson, Khedive Ismail (1863 - 1879) accumulated a large foreign debt which eventually ended in the British occupation (1882-1954). Under foreign domination, there was hardly any meaningful industrialization. The perception created was that the west was only interested in exploiting the country's resources, without helping it in laying the foundation of true modernization.

Shortly after gaining independence, Cairo signed an arms deal with the eastern block in the mid-1950s. Washington reacted by putting pressure on the World Bank to deny Egypt the financing of one of its most ambitious projects, the High Dam. This led Nasser to nationalize the Suez Canal, triggering the Israeli, British and French military attack in 1956. Thanks to US pressure, the foreign armies were forced to withdraw, bringing an end to the British Empire. One effect of the war was the rise of nationalism in the Middle East under Nasser's leadership.

Around a decade later the 1967 war broke up. The Egyptian defeat had a seismic impact on the whole region. It became clear that nationalism was not able to achieve rapid modernization. The loss of faith in nationalism led to an Islamic *revival*¹⁸, more in form than

16 Both Muslims and Copts (Egyptian Christians) joined hands to resist the British occupation. The harmonious relationship between members of Islamic and Egyptian Christian communities in the 1919 revolt was appreciated by Mahatma Gandhi. On a visit to Egypt, the Mahatma told Mustafa El-Nahas Pasha, then Egyptian Prime Minister, that such unity has deepened his understanding of the desirability of creating similar harmony among the various sects in India.

17 In Egyptian villages, the veil has never been popular among farm women who have to work in the fields.

18 In the Yom Kippur 1973 war with Israel, the Egyptian army distinguished itself on the battlefield.

in substance.¹⁹ One of its most visible expressions was that many women started to adopt the headscarves.²⁰ This voluntary movement²¹ caught on like fire. It spread among different classes, rich and poor, educated and uneducated, pious and impious.

While there is no denying that the adoption of some aspects of the traditional attire has an element of religious symbolism, it is by no means a return to the middle ages.²² The message of the Islamic garb was that despite the technological superiority of the country's adversaries, the people were determined to face up the daunting challenges, seeking strength from their own roots. In that light, the wearing of *hijab* is not modernization having gone backwards. On the contrary, it is a sign of deep dissatisfaction with the stalling of the modernization process.

b. China, Iran, Turkey

The above invites comparison with other countries which also underwent major changes in the style of their national attire. China and Iran went through drastic changes after the 1949 Mao revolution and the 1979 Khomeini revolution respectively. Both regimes had a long list of grievances against the west. The new rulers imposed new codes of dress befitting the communist environment (i.e. Mao's uniform) in the former and the Islamic (i.e. *chador*) in the latter.

Again, that phenomenon is best understood through the prism of modernization. Just as *hostile* western policies were responsible for the popularity of non-western codes of dress, *friendly* western policies could move it in the opposite direction. China provides strong evidence of this proposition. Once the west gave a green light to China to join the global trading system, the country's industrialization took off rapidly. In no time at all, the Mao's uniform had practically disappeared. The Chinese case might give us an inkling of the future of *hijab* in the Middle East.

Another country where *hijab* is experiencing a revival is Turkey. Like Egypt, the wearing

The partial victory achieved was credited to the fact that the war took place in *Ramadan*, the holy month of fasting.

19 In reality this did not mean that the people have undergone a real spiritual transformation. For most, their social behavior continued to be essentially the same.

20 Around the turn of the 20th century, Islamic reformers such as Jamal al-Din Afghani, Mohammed Abduh as well as secular leaders such as Qasim Amin and Huda Shaarawi were pioneers in calling for modernity.

21 One factor that should also be taken into consideration is what Serif Mardin, one of Turkey's leading political scientists, calls "neighborhood pressure". This is the case where religious strictures are imposed on social behavior. Vincent Boland, "An unblinking gaze upon a new horizon", Turkey (Special Report) *Financial Times*, June 10, 2008, p.1.

22 The wearing of headscarf is usually combined with other western style clothing (e.g. jeans).

of the headscarf in Turkey is a voluntary act that started to gain popularity in 1970.²³ More than half of Turkish women now cover their head.²⁴ This might be an act of defiance against the west, triggered by the European Union's resistance to accepting Turkey as a member. The country has been a member of NATO even before Germany. During the cold war, its army had been the largest in the west. Turkey formally applied for full membership on April 14, 1987. Yet it is "the only candidate ever to have been obliged to start accession talks on the basis that it may *never* be granted full membership, even if it passes every test".²⁵ It has been noted that the EU members "constantly (keep) raising the bar to entry."²⁶

c. Headscarves in the West

For long decades after they started to emigrate to the west, Muslim immigrants earnestly tried to blend in the host countries. Family pictures of that period show women in western dress. It was only recently that Muslim women have started to assert their cultural identity by wearing headscarves. This is particularly true among modern-day *educated* young women- to the exasperation of their mothers. The mothers, who never "wore the veil (and) actively fought to be liberated from it"²⁷, have difficulty understanding how their daughters have chosen to adopt a more traditional style of dress. The new trend challenges one of the basic assumptions of economics development. It is *inconsistent* with the notion that education and westernization go hand in hand. Two reasons might be advanced to shed light on this phenomenon.

1. Looking or behaving in a way that does not conform to the mainstream is typical of minority groups that feel put upon. Muslims living in the west, especially in Europe, feel a sense of powerlessness due to the marginalization of their communities. In the meantime, Muslim nations in the Middle East find themselves vulnerable to geopolitical pressures. With Muslims at home and overseas experiencing lack of leverage, some females articulate their empathy through wearing Islamic fashion that is popular in the countries of their ancestors. In that sense the *hijab* is a symbolic act of protest, not representing an exaggerated sense of religious transformation.
2. The western Muslims' pride in their own cultural heritage could also be attributed to the fact that globalization has brought with it a rise in ethnicities.

ii. Assimilation Theories and Western Reactions to Islamic Garb

23 Interview with an ex-Head of Turkey's *Anayasa Mahkemesi* (High Court), *Al Jazeera*, June 26, 2008.

24 *The Economist*, May 3 – May 9, 2008, p.60.

25 Willam Horsely, "Turks cool towards 'unfaithful' Europe". *BBC News*, November 06, 2006.

26 "Turkey's secularist coup must crumble", *Financial Times*, July 3, 2008, p.8.

27 Islam in France: "All over an inch of flesh", *The Economist*, October 25, 2003, p.45.

The west prides itself on having a secular society. In order to understand the different western reactions to the Islamic garb, it is important to study the basic differences between the French and Anglo-American theories of secularism.²⁸ The French *republican* ideal refers to setting neutral institutions, unmarked by signs representing allegiance to a particular group. The Anglo-American *liberal* ideal tolerates signs of group allegiance. To a great extent, the present assimilation strategies tend to reflect past colonial policies with Britain following a multi-cultural policy and France rejecting it. The US, which historically has never had a European-style imperial legacy²⁹, has followed the multi-cultural approach³⁰.

a. Anglo-American

Under this system, the ideal of “neutral secularity” accommodates signs of group allegiance. Civil virtue requires respect of individual *private* commitments and toleration of differences. The Anglo-American liberal tradition, “minimizes demands on individual citizens in the area of private commitments. Citizens must respect the rights and liberties of others without adopting any state-wide definition of what constitutes the good life or the good person.” In the Anglo-American system, there is room for mediating institutions between the state and people to represent *particular* groups within society. As far as schooling is concerned, the major principle is equal accommodation of the private within the public life of this school.

The Anglo-American model calls for a pluralistic multi-cultural society. The present Anglo-American attitude towards the wearing of Islamic attire, whether inside or outside school, is much in tone with the writings of Adam Smith. The prophet of free market capitalism considered visibility in public places of minority members with social differences a precondition for self-respect. Any policies that deny minority groups the freedom to affirm their identities and “*appear in public without shame*”³¹ is a violation of individual rights.

b. French School

The French model respects all religious, political, and cultural traditions. It is committed to neutrality for governing the public identity of citizens. The French concept of neutral secularity refers to “*active* neutrality” which means the creation of a neutral institutional space unmarked by signs of group allegiance.³² This is neutrality by “exclusion” which sacrifices political liberalism to the Republican ideal of “equality”. The French system does not allow for mediating institutions to represent particular groups within society. The centralized

28 This section draws heavily on Robert Carle’s work. Robert Carle, “Hijab and the limits of French secular Republicanism”, *Society*, September/October 2004, p.68.

29 The US occupied the Philippines from 1898 until 1945.

30 Robert Carle, *op.cit.*, p.68.

31 Robert Carle, *op.cit.*, p.68.

32 Sarah Wayland, *Ethics and Racial Studies*, July 1997.

French system insists on an *individualist* relation between the state and people. In this system, people's differences do *not* enter the public square. The stress is on the creation of a meritocracy where everyone has an equal opportunity to ascend the social ladder.

The wearing of headscarves has become a hot national issue in France. The debate is raging between those who look at it as an affront to French national values, condemning it as "aggressive religious particularism" and others who celebrate *le droit a la difference*³³ (the right to be different).

iii. Assimilation Realities

In this section we look at Muslim difficulties with regard to *hijab* and illegal immigration. This is followed by a bird's eye view of Muslim economic and social conditions in the major western nations.

a. Muslim Difficulties in France

The 2005 immigrants' riots and the wearing of scarves by some female students have led anti-immigrant quarters to question whether Muslims in France have problems living with "modernity". A more realistic assessment of the situation, however, has been noted by a French politician who stated that the riots have proved that our "social elevator is blocked".³⁴

France is home to 5-6 million residents of mostly North African origin, representing 10% of the population. The presence of a Muslim *underclass* stands in contrast to the French ideal of color-blind equality. The French constitution prevents any question with regard to ethnicity or race which means that the society does not recognize its "visible" minorities.

In the bleak ethnic ghettos that encircle Paris which officials call "sensitive urban zones", the 2005 youth unemployment rate was 40%. In addition 70% of the few available jobs are of temporary nature and 50% of them last less than a month.³⁵ The situation is made worse for young Muslim men who feel depressed by their failure to get jobs like their sisters.³⁶ Their role models tend to be sports stars and entertainers.

Many consider that with 50% of the country's prison population being Muslims and the unrest in French cities³⁷ to be signs that the country's model of integration has *not* succeeded.

33 Norma Moruzzi, "A Problem with Headscarves: Contemporary Complexities of Political and Social Identity", *Political Theory*, November 1994.

34 *The Economist*, November 12, 2005, p.25.

35 *The Economist*, November 12, 2005, p.24.

36 In applying for employment, some Arab Muslims adopt French names to increase their chances of landing a job.

37 In the first seven months of 2005, around 21,900 vehicles were torched across the country. *The Economist*, November 12, 2005, p.25.

The “Republican equality” model has been criticized for paying only lip service to the plight of its immigrants and stigmatizing minority groups through the separation and disengagement of their private and public identities.³⁸ It represses cultural and religious identities as private identities are swallowed up by a public life.

In western countries with large Muslim populations there have been heated debates about Muslim women not following the accepted western styles of dress. This runs the gamut from wearing a simple headscarf covering the hair to being completely *Mohajaba*, covered head-to-toe.³⁹ In reality, extreme forms of *hijab* are rarely found in the west. It is the covering of heads by scarves that has been a subject of heated debate.⁴⁰ In France where the schools are governed by the principle of equal *exclusion* of the private from the public, the students are expected to leave their private commitments at the school door in order to enter as equals the “public square” of the school. They are forbidden from requesting school absences to attend religious obligations or festivals.⁴¹ Wearing ostentatious symbols of religious affiliation is also prohibited. Thus, the role of the school is to mold students into a “homogeneous”, “unitary”, “national” community in order to reinforce French national identity.⁴²

The *hijab* debate brings into focus Islamists’ critique of western norms regarding gender and sexuality. Anti-*hijab* forces claim that women covering their bodies is a form of oppression. It is an act that stands in contrast to the egalitarian definition of modernity and is a direct challenge to western values. In defining cultural fault lines between Islam and the west, *hijab* stands as a symbol that forces upon the westerners the *otherness* of Islam.

On the other hand, *hijab* advocates state that it is no different than Jews wearing the yarmulke, or Christians wearing a cross. In maintaining the boundaries between the sexes, some Muslim women see it as a protection from predatory male(s).⁴³ A Turkish sociologist,

38 Robert Carle, *op.cit.*, p.68.

39 In the Middle East, popular forms of female dress include wearing the *abaya* (*burqa*), a coat-like garb made out of light material that many women wear, over contemporary western attire. The faces of most women wearing the *abaya* are not veiled. In Arabic, *hijab* and headscarves denote different ways of dress, with the first confined to head-to-toe garb. A common mistake by westerners writing on Islamic issues is the indiscriminate use of the term *hijab* to also include the veil and headscarves. In this paper we follow the western convention.

40 The arguments here are based on Robert Carle, *op.cit.*, p.63.

41 The banishment of religion from public life and the refusal to recognize differences goes back to the French revolution, Republicanism, and Jacobianism.

42 French schools teach history in terms of universal ideas as opposed to hyphenated histories of differences and individualism favored in the American system.

43 In the rough suburbs of France where minorities live, “rape and violence are on the increase, the headscarf sends a protective message to ward off harassers”. “Islam in France: All over an inch of flesh”, *The Economist*, October 25, 2003, p.45.

Niloufer Gul, states that clothing fulfills a moral function in preserving the honor of women.⁴⁴ According to feminist Siham Andaloussi, “most girls who wear headscarves are excellent students. They get A’s and become model members of society.”⁴⁵ This is similar to the Asian students in the US being part of a “model minority”.

b. Hijab in the US

In general, Muslims in the US have no difficulty when it comes to the wearing of *hijab*. This, however, does not mean that things would always run smoothly. Typical is the recollection of a young American Muslim woman who, in the bus, heard a voice coming out of the crowd “take that rag off!”⁴⁶ According to her, she “wanted to explain to this man the significance of what he dismissed as a ‘rag’. He didn’t understand the one thing I cherished most, the thing that I took so much care in making sure I did right-my religion...wearing *hijab*...serves to check my modesty...being observant...doesn’t make me less ‘American’... values such as charity, tolerance, and respect are...the same ones that Muslims, American or not, are taught to uphold in their daily lives. As an American-born Muslim, it is easy for me to follow these values...I have big dreams for work; I play sports; I love to run. I cringe at the word extremist....And I thank God that I am both Muslim and American at the same time.”

c. Illegal Immigrants

Illegal immigration is a thorny problem facing western nations. In the US the major source is Latin American. For southern Europe, it is illegal entry of Arabs and Sub-Sahara Africans⁴⁷ from the south Mediterranean ports in countries such as Libya and Maghreb. The reasons cited for leaving their countries are: population explosion, shortage of job opportunities⁴⁸ and unresponsive governments. These are the typical three D’s representing push factors as they relate to demographics, development⁴⁹ and democracy.

Smuggling costs around 1,000 Euros per person. The human cargo crossing the Mediterranean faces great risks. Over-crowded boats and tough weather conditions cause many boats to capsize.⁵⁰ The ones that make it to European lands face hardships for the following

44 Robert Carle, *op.cit.*, p.63.

45 Robert Carle, *op.cit.*, p.65.

46 Shireen Khan, “What It Means to be American-and Muslim”, *Time*, April 4, 2008, <http://www.time.com/time>, pp. 12.

47 The Arabs are mostly from the Algeria, Morocco and Tunisia. Africans come from countries as far as Sudan (Darfur), Niger and Cote d’Ivoire.

48 The rate of unemployment in Algeria alone hovers around 30% in 2007. “Viewpoint”, *Al Jazeera*, May 14, 2008.

49 The Arab Labor Organization has estimated that one million jobs are needed to be created annually, in order to provide employment to countries in Arab Maghreb. “Viewpoint”, *Al Jazeera*, May 14, 2008.

50 It is not unusual for a 5-meter rubber boat to accommodate 60 individuals.

reasons:

1. They are mostly unskilled. This makes it difficult to find employment, especially in a time where the rate of European unemployment is relatively high.⁵¹ The few jobs available tend to be menial ones.
2. Europe favors temporary immigration.
3. There is now a preference for the immigrants from Eastern Europe, who possess better skills.

To combat illegal immigration Europe has toughened its policies. The European Union has set up multi-national coastguard operations. Bi-national coast guard operations (e.g. Arab and European nationals) are also carried out.⁵² For illegal immigrants caught, they are now subject to longer jail terms. Despite all these efforts, it is still hard to effectively reduce the illegal inflow of labor to Europe.⁵³

One justification for the 2008 Sarkozy French proposal to create an economic union, between countries bordering the Mediterranean Sea *Union méditerranéenne* is to improve the economic conditions in the Muslim Mediterranean countries. The hope is that this would reduce the flow of illegal workers. As of now, it is too early to judge the efficiency of this proposal.⁵⁴

iv. Socio-Economic Conditions

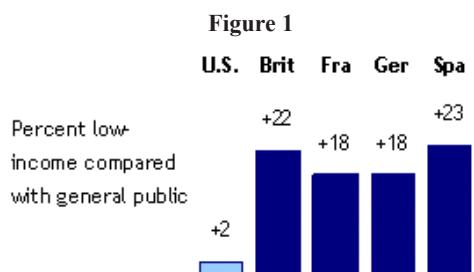
In this section we provide a bird's eye view of the actual conditions of Muslims in the US, Britain, France, Germany and Spain. Socio-economic indicators are used to gauge the levels of satisfaction in the Muslim Diaspora.

51 French unemployment hovers around 3.5 million in 2008.

52 Of the Maghreb nations, Tunisia is the strictest in guarding its coasts.

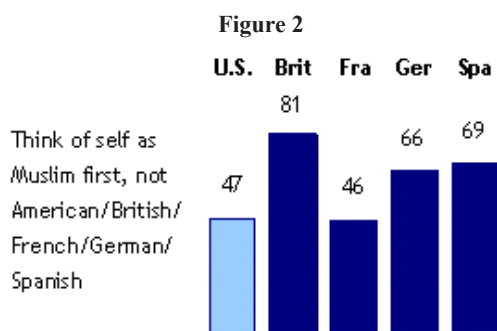
53 The UK also has a large number of illegal immigrants. The Home Office admitted that thousands of them have been "working in the UK as security guards, some of them guarding sensitive locations including the garage where the prime minister's car was repaired." Michael Skapinker, "Governments miss the point on immigrants, *Financial Times*, November 20, 2007, p.13.

54 The original proposal did not have the support of Germany and Turkey. The former objected to its exclusion from the trading benefits of the Union. The latter's resistance was that it might be an alternative to its EU membership. These differences have been largely ironed out now. Libya, on the other hand, is against the union of Mediterranean nations on the basis that it disrupts Arab unity and might lead to the atrophy of Arab nationalism.



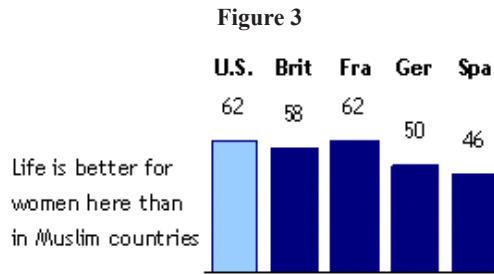
Source: *Pew Research Center for the People & the Press*, May 22, 2007

Figure 1 shows that in Europe almost around one Muslim in five is a member of the underclass. On the other hand, US Muslims enjoy a much more privileged economic position due to their entrepreneurial talents and higher level of education. This is reflected in higher level of income.



Source: *Pew Research Center for the People & the Press*, May 22, 2007

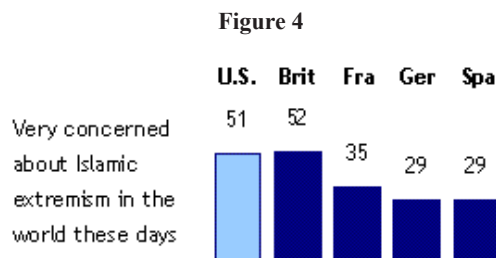
Figure 2 indicates the strength of Islamic identity. The hypothesis we present here is that there is stronger religious identification among groups with relatively low income/education as well as among recently arrived immigrants. Both these factors explain the British situation. In the US the higher level of income trumps the recent arrival factor. On the other hand the relatively weak number for France might be due to the history of extensive North African emigration to France started much earlier than others.



Source: *Pew Research Center for the People & the Press*, May 22, 2007

Figure 3 shows a relatively high rate of satisfaction among Muslim women living in the west. Multiculturalism and economic opportunity for females might explain the American and British cases. In France, economics is an important factor - it is easier for Muslim females to find a job than males. The relatively low figure for Germany might be due to the conservative nature of Turkish immigrants with a countryside background. In Spain the low figure is explained by the fact that immigration is a relatively recent phenomenon. A large percentage of employment is in the male-dominated construction sector, reflecting lack of job opportunities for females.

According to Pew research, “Muslim Americans reject Islamic extremism by larger margins than do Muslim minorities in Western European countries.”⁵⁵ Figure 4 shows that in countries that suffered from terrorist attacks, the Muslim concern of extremism tends to be relatively high as the American and the British cases indicate. The Spanish situation is an exception. One reason might be that the formation of a liberal government after the 2004 train bombings, somewhat helped to assuage Muslim anxieties.



Source: *Pew Research Center for the People & the Press*, May 22, 2007

55 <http://people-press.org/reports/print.php3?PageID=1151>

III. 9/11 and Western Muslims

The conflict between the west and Islam is imprinted in the cultural memories of the medieval Crusades, the Ottoman wars in Europe, western colonialism, anti-colonial struggle, and the increase in the price of oil. No modern event has caused a seismic shift in the relationship between the west and the Muslim as that of 9/11 terrorist attacks against the US. This was followed by other acts of violence perpetrated by Muslim extremists in Madrid, London and Amsterdam.⁵⁶ These attacks have hardened western attitudes towards Muslims. Fear of the rise of *Jihadism* and Islamic fundamentalism and has made Muslims in the west the object of intense suspicion.

i. Definitions of *Jihadists* and Fundamentalists

Certain terms such as *jihadists*⁵⁷ and fundamentalism, used when discussing Islam, lack precision and give rise to confusion and misrepresentation of the facts. It has been noted that “fundamentalism... (is) so broad. It cannot explain the particular historical conditions that have given rise to a variety of groups and parties. Islamist groups span the gamut from the moderate Islamist Justice and Development Party in Turkey, to the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt, the *Jihadi Salafists* in Pakistan, and Hamas and Hezbollah. Each of these groups was born of different circumstances and have different politics, tactics, and strategies. Some are fundamentalist, others are not.”⁵⁸

The word *Jihad* is historically and culturally a loaded word, commonly mistranslated as “holy war”. It comes from the Arabic root word *Jahada* which means to struggle or strive. There are two kinds of Jihad, the *major* one (*al-Akbar*) and the *minor* one (*al-Asghar*). The first refers to the struggle of self against evil-doings; the second refers to fight in order to preserve life and property. In Islam there are strict rules to govern armed conflicts. For example, it is absolutely forbidden to harm civilians or use tactics, such as scorched earth, which disturb the ecological balance.

56 Belgium and Holland represent two societies where racism has been raised to a high degree, especially after the 2004 murder of filmmaker Theo van Gogh. Antwerp and Rotterdam, where large Muslim communities live, are cities that have witnessed an escalation of clashes. Similarly, in France, especially Corsica, menacing racist acts are on the rise. W. Hutton, “Tackling Resurgent Racism”, *Japan Times*, November 27, 2004.

57 During the days of Arab nationalism, many persecuted Islamists were welcomed in the west. After the Russian invasion of Afghanistan, the CIA armed the Afghan *Mujahideen* in their struggle against the Russian invaders. The term *Jihad* at that time did not have the same negative connotation that it has now.

58 Roundtable discussion facilitated by Paul Eckstein, “The Deepening Crisis: Islam and the Structure of Global Power”, *The Humanist*, March/April 2008, p.19.

To distinguish the broad spectrum of Islamist groups, Omar Ashour has advanced the following definitions. *Moderate* Islamists, also called reformists, pluralists, or modernists, aim for *gradual* changes in the society, work within the established state institutions, and accept electoral democracy. *Radical* Islamists, also called revolutionaries, extremists, or exclusivists, *refuse* to work within the established regimes and use violence to achieve their goals. There are two kinds of radicals, those who treat violence as a means to an end, and those who treat it as a “sacred” end. It must be kept in mind, that Islam prohibits not only the killing of women and children but also unarmed combatants.⁵⁹ Terrorists are those who resort to the killing of civilians and unarmed persons.⁶⁰ Takeshi Negishi considers that while suicide bombings must not be sanctioned, certain military activities must not be labeled as acts of “terrorism”. For example armed Palestinian resistance should be treated as “movements for democratization.”⁶¹

ii. Origin of 9/11

It was the non-state military actors that carried out the tragic 9/11 attacks. The religious dogmas of these actors have exercised influence on few misguided youth living in the west. It is for this reason that we need to examine certain aspects related to the rise of militant Islam. In the year 1979 two important events took place in the Middle East and Central Asia. The first was the Iranian revolution and the second was the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan. The former led to the rise of the Shiite regional influence confined to Iran, Iraq and south Lebanon. It was the latter event that eventually led to the rise of the global *nihilist Jihadists*.

The geopolitical rivalry between the US and the former Soviet Union characterized the post-1945 world. The Russian invasion of Afghanistan led to swift American intervention to support the resistance. This gave the opportunity to many extremists from Saudi Arabia, Egypt, and the other Muslim nations, to join the *jihadists*.⁶² The *Wahabi* ideology was extensively used to motivate the resistance against the “atheist” Soviets. During the war, the *jihadists* became adept at using many advanced military technologies.

After the withdrawal of the Soviet army and the departure of American advisers, the

59 In the Middle Ages, the exposure of Europeans to the Muslim warfare code of honor gave birth to the word *chivalry*, derived from the Arabic *ferousiyya*.

60 Omar Ashour, “Lions Tamed? the De-radicalization of the Egyptian Islamic group”, *Middle East Journal*, Middle East Institute, Volume 61, No. 4, Autumn 2007, pp.598-599.

61 Takeshi Negishi, “Fundamentalism and Democracy”, *Keio Journal of Politics*, Keio University, 2003, p. 33.

62 The increase in the price of oil after 1973 enabled Saudi Arabia to use a part of the newly-acquired wealth to spread *Wahabi* teachings overseas. Around the same time, there was an important development in the most populous Muslim country in the Middle East, Egypt. Pre-1970 Nasser’s Egypt was basically a socialist, secular, and strongly nationalistic country. After Nasser’s death, many jailed members of the Muslim Brotherhood were set free by Anwar Saadat, in order to strengthen his hands against socialist foes. His reign witnessed the growth of radical groups who eventually were able to assassinate him.

vacuum in Afghanistan was filled by angry extremists. Their grievances stemmed from the presence of foreign groups in Islamic Holy Lands, Israel's creeping annexation of Jerusalem and the West Bank, corrupt Middle East leaders, the use of torture against Muslim activists and the lack of unity among Muslim states. It is in this environment that some nihilist *Jihadists* self-appointed themselves as defenders of the Islamic world. They are emboldened by the outcome of the Afghan war. With strong belief in their irreversible ascendance, they are convinced that just as they were able to defeat the Soviets they could do the same to the remaining military superpower.

The 9/11 tragedy was a turning point for the Muslims living overseas. Right after the attacks, more than any time before, Western perception of Muslims could not be separated from the causes of political upheavals in the Middle East and the Afghan-Pak borders. Now, being the objects of suspicion, derision and antagonism, they felt under siege. Bigotry seemed to flourish, mosques were subjected to attacks and women wearing Islamic headscarves verbally abused. Talk shows were flooded with anti-Muslim calls.⁶³

Muslims living in Europe and the US face serious challenges. The following analysis takes an institutional focus to explain the post 9/11 responses from the western religious, academic, political and media quarters. All of these have been instrumental in the shaping of public attitudes towards western Muslims.

iii. Religious Response

a. Importance of Religion in Europe and the US

The strict separation between the secular and religious spheres is a major pillar of the modern European society. Prior to the Enlightenment, European history was afflicted by religious wars. The US experience, on the other hand, is not ready to concede the separation of church and state to the same degree as that of Europe. Thus, religion plays a larger role in the American society than European societies. A noticeable phenomenon is that religious attendance is more in the former than the latter. American attendance hovers around 41% between the years 1999 and 2003.⁶⁴ In the case of Britain, even though 70% identified themselves as Christians in the 2001 census, very few attend services more than once a year, or indeed at all.⁶⁵ In fact, more Presbyterians go to church in Ghana than in Scotland. In England the number of practicing Muslims might be the same as those of practicing Anglicans.⁶⁶ This needs an explanation.

⁶³ Anti-Muslim sentiment was also noticeable in Australia after the Bali bombings in October 2002. "Tough on Muslims", *The Economist*, November 30, 2002, p.38.

⁶⁴ http://www.religioustolerance.org/rel_rate.htm

⁶⁵ Census Sensitivity. *The Economist*, December 22, 2007, p. 99.

⁶⁶ "The Battle of the Books", *The Economist*, December 22, 2007, p.80.

The US is a country of immigrants. The earliest ones were the Puritans who fled the religious persecution in Europe. In America, the constitution is the glue that binds different groups together. Because America is a young country consisting of heterogeneous groups, its citizens find in religious practices⁶⁷ an *affirmation* of their identities.⁶⁸ In Europe, on the other hand, there is more homogeneity in each country. One major factor in determining one's specific identity is blood. Thus, Europeans do not need religion to emphasize their identity.

b. American Evangelists

In general, Europe does not have the fanatic religious organizations that dot the American scene.⁶⁹ One of the most hostile anti-Muslim groups is the evangelical American movement. The US has 80 million evangelical Christians. Many of these conservative Christians have bonded with the hawkish pro-Israel lobby to form an anti-Muslim alliance.⁷⁰

At the turn of the 19th century, evangelical missionaries looked at the Middle East as a virgin area to spread their faith.⁷¹ The United States' evangelicals support more missionaries, more broadcasting organizations and more global publishers than any other country. They are fixated on what they call the 10/40 window - the vast swathe of the Islamic world in Africa and Asia⁷² that lays between latitudes 10 and 40 north of the equator.⁷³ Favorite activities of the

67 Despite the fact that in the US constitution "no religious test shall ever be required as a qualification to any office or public trust under the US", religion is still relevant in determining voters decisions. In the US, political candidates speak openly about their faiths. Attempts to label a presidential candidate of the democratic party, Obama, a Muslim implied that a non-Christian cannot be a good President.

68 Mario Cuomo (former New York state governor), remarked "They called the United States the melting pot for the newcomers. Presumably a melting pot was supposed to somehow boil away their cultural distinctions and produce some kind of bland uniformity...I always thought that the better analogy would be to the mosaic, a church window.", Chrystia Freeland, "No poetry without prose", *Financial Times*, March 22, 2008, Life & Arts, p.3.

69 The televangelist, John Hagee, believes that the European Union is headed by the Anti-Christ who will unleash the war leading to Apocalypse. The rabid Rev was until recently a major backer of John McCain, the presumptive republican candidate. Hagee's remarks forced McCain to disown him. Gideon Rachman, "On Israel and the campaign bus", *Financial Times*, May 27, 2008, p.11.

70 The conservative Christian groups also have close connections with private security firms that are active in Iraq. The family that owns Blackwater has given hundreds of thousands of dollars in donations to the Republican Party. In turn, the firm "has been the beneficiary of \$ 1 billion in federal contracts, including a no-bid contract with the State Department worth hundreds of millions." Muareen Dowd, "Sinking in Blackwater", *International Herald Tribune*, October 4, 2007, p.9.

71 In 1819, the evangelical board that sent the first American mission to Lebanon was confident that in the new frontier "the great pillars of the Papal and Mahommedan impostures are now tottering to their fall." *The Economist*, December 22, 2007, p.81.

72 The Southwest Baptist Theological Seminary in Texas has even created a masters degree to train missionaries in the art of converting Muslims." *The Economist*, December 22, 2007, p.81.

73 Not to be outdone, Pope Benedict XVI has made conversion a top Vatican priority. He personally converted to Catholicism Magdi Allam, a journalist of Egyptian origin currently residing in Italy. The Pope performed the baptism at Saint Peter's Basilica in Rome during the 2008 Easter midnight mass. Adi Schwartz, "The Gospel According to Allam", *Haaretz*, March 29, 2008, www.haaretz.com

Christian right include attacking the Muslim religion and producing counterfeit Korans that are designed to “plant doubt in Muslim minds.”⁷⁴

Active American evangelical conversion activities stand in contrast to the relatively passive Muslim ones. Despite its oil wealth, the Koran’s heartland is behind in the conversion game.⁷⁵ Islam’s expansion in the 20th century has been a result of migration and population growth, not conversion. Islamic missionaries try to reinvigorate the faithful, rather than winning new converts.⁷⁶

There is a curious similarity between Muslims and mainstream Americans.⁷⁷ For the two groups, general religiosity is judged to be a foundation to good citizenship. Active participation in religious activities, however should not be confused with real theological knowledge. For example, though an American home has four bibles on average, their knowledge of Christianity is judged to be “abysmal”.⁷⁸ Lack of knowledge, albeit to a lesser extent, also applies to the Muslim community. Only 20 % of the more than one billion Muslims speak Arabic as their first language. The high-flown Arabic verses of the Koran are beyond the comprehension of many non-Arabs.

European anti-Muslim incidents are not based on theological grounds.⁷⁹ There are two differences between Europe and US: First, in both regions there are anti-foreign feelings directed at the presence of large number of immigrants, especially those with low level of skills. Thus, in the US, hostility is directed primarily at Hispanics (e.g. Mexicans) but does not affect the relatively well-educated American Muslims. By the same token, one of the

74 “The Battle of the Books”, *The Economist*, December 22, 2007, p.81.

75 With regard to conversion to Judaism, an Israeli writer notes that “Many Jews seem to believe, and are even proud of, the historically mistaken notion that Judaism resists converts. Yet this resistance only became dominant about 130 years ago...the fact that Jews have lost the desire to welcome newcomers is the most telling evidence that we have lost our sense of purpose as people...when we rediscover our purpose of affecting the world directly by example...we will...transform the current vicious cycle of decline into a virtuous cycle of growth”, Saul Singer, “Interesting Times: Let the Pope be Pope”, *Jerusalem Post*, March 29, 2008.

76 “Muslim missionaries are bringing the faith to previously untouched areas. The Tablighi Jamaat (“the group that propagates faith”) is a global network of part-time preachers who dress like the Prophet, in a white robe and leather sandals, and travel in small groups to spread the Word. Their annual gatherings in India and Pakistan attract hundreds of thousands.” Contributions to Muslim charities have fallen and many Islamic missionary organizations are under scrutiny by Western Intelligence services for fear they may be fronts for *Jihadist* activities. *The Economist*, December 22, 2007, op.cit. p.81.

77 After the 1960s, faith shed some of its significance for social order in the US.

78 A Gallup survey found that 70% of Americans do not know who delivered the “Sermon on the Mount”(the evangelist Billy Graham is a popular answer) Sixty percent cannot even name half of the ten commandments and 12% think that Noah was married to Joan of Arc. *The Economist*, December 22, 2007, p.81.

79 Political parties with religious sounding names like the Christian Democrats are part and parcel of the mainstream.

major reasons for the European right-wing politicians' anti-Muslim rhetoric is the presence of a large number of unskilled Muslim immigrants. Furthermore, when it comes to freedom of speech there is a curious difference between the two regions. Mass media hostility in Europe is basically confined to the printed media and documentary film making. These are usually the works of few artists who are always ready to defend their right to free speech. In the US, hostility tends to be the preserve of airwaves where there is an incessant flow of talk shows that are strongly backed financially. This topic will be covered in the section dealing with media.

iv. Political Response

The political response in the post 9/11 attacks is characterized by American preference for using hard power policies. This was in contrast to European preference for soft power tactics. Before analyzing the two approaches, it is useful to look at three factors that are of particular importance in the political decision-making in the west: money, think-tanks and the degree of turnover among policy makers. In this regard, the institutional differences between the European and the American situations are of particular interest to western Muslims.

a. Role of Money

One major difference between Europe and the US is the dominant role that money plays in the latter. American politicians need far more funds to run their political campaigns. It is becoming more important than ever to amass a large war chest of political contributions as the time lag between the beginning of the campaign and election date is much longer now than in the past. This is definitely not the case in Europe where the lag is far shorter.

More than any other country, one of the peculiarities of the American system is that "all politics are local". As a result, well-funded American pressure groups exercise strong influence over the determination of American foreign policy.⁸⁰ Outstanding examples of these groups are the anti-Muslim AIPAC (The American Israel Public Affairs Committee) and the Conference of Presidents of Major Jewish Organizations. Both are fervent supporters of right-wing Israeli policies.⁸¹

80 In Henry Kissinger's words, "what is presented by foreign critics as America's overweening quest for domination is very frequently a response to domestic pressure groups." "A Special Report on American and the World", *The Economist*, March 29, 2008, p.16.

81 One major financier with close links to the Israeli right is Sheldon Adelson. The publicity-shy Las Vegas casino mogul is America's third richest man behind Warren Buffet and Bill Gates. After one of Bush's closest advisors, Karl Rove, left the White House, he has been hired as a part-time consultant by the Freedom Watch organization, setup by Adelson. "Influence Game, Betting Man", *National Journal*, May 10, 2008, p.40. Rove appears frequently on the conservative Fox Channel.

b. Think-Tanks

Think-tanks are a fact of political life in the west. They are advocacy groups or organizations that play a role in conducting research and charting policies. The basic idea behind think-tanks is that they provide vision of the future and expands public debate on controversial issues. Some of them however, have been accused of generating self-serving scholarship.

In Europe, countries like Germany⁸², France, Italy and Denmark have think-tanks. Similarly, in the US, there is a plethora of conservative and liberal think-tanks. But, think-tanks have a more powerful presence in American political life than in Europe.⁸³ They act as incubators for future appointees as well as sanctuaries for ambitious individuals bidding their time until the political environment changes in their favor.

One of the major sources of anti-Muslim hostility is the American Enterprise Institute (AEI) which was instrumental in charting the muscular foreign policy of the Bush administration after 9/11. The initial Bush/Cheney doctrine favored the adoption of *hard power* policy. This took the form of preference for pre-emptive attacks, warrantless surveillance, unlawful indefinite detention of “enemy combatants” and torture.⁸⁴ Certain aspects of these policies have been criticized for running against the grain of American values.

Europe, on the other hand has tended to use a *soft power* approach in dealing with terrorism. The reasons are:

1. The Europeans lag considerably behind the US in military muscle.⁸⁵
2. There is a larger number of Muslims living in Europe.
3. The attacks on mass transit systems had exposed European vulnerability.
4. European low-key approach has its roots in the continent’s past dealings with its radical groups. They believe that while it is prudent to be vigilant against those who wish ill upon their countries, one should also guard against the danger of exaggerating the power of the enemy.

82 Each political party in Germany has its own think-tank.

83 During the cold war, the RAND Corporation was the premier think-tank. Its theorists pioneered many inventions such as the reconnaissance satellites, the internet and intercontinental ballistic missiles.

84 Dick Cheney, a proponent of the “One Percent Doctrine”, stated that if “there was a one percent chance that a threat was real, the US should act as if it were a racing certainty”. On the other hand, not all members of the Bush administration are on the same page. For example, Condoleezza Rice favors closing the Guantanamo Bay facility.

85 The ratio of defense spending to GDP is 4% in America but less than 2%, the minimum target set by NATO, in Europe. Ron Suskind, *The One Percent Doctrine*, Simon and Schuster, 2007.

c. Turnover of Policy Makers

One major difference between European and American systems is with regard to the degree of turnover among decision-makers. A cabinet change in a European nation does not lead to the massive resignation of top officials. This is the opposite of the American case where a change in administration results in the replacement of thousands of high level appointees. Thus, one difference between the two regions is that the potential for policy changes in Europe is not subject to wide variations as in the US.

d. Convergence of American and European Approaches

Despite past foreign policy differences there seems to be a recent trend pointing to convergence of European and American policies. The high cost of the Iraqi war has dimmed the prospects of further American entanglements overseas. The quagmire in Iraq has brought about a decline in the neoconservatives' influence in policy making. In order to restore American prestige overseas, future administrations should be more faithful to American core values of tolerance, respect for human rights, and rule of law which implies complying with international conventions.

After 9/11, all western governments have tightened security measures, increased surveillance, and tightened visa requirements. In the meantime both Europe and the US have exhibited similar measured approaches⁸⁶ which call for the use of appropriate terminology that avoids incendiary language to preserve social peace. In England, post-Blair foreign policy under Gordon Brown eschews the global "war on terror" terminology. In commenting on the bombings in London and Glasgow, the British prime-minister denounced the attacks as simply "acts of criminality."⁸⁷ In the US, Robert Zalikow, then a US state department official, experimented in 2005 with alternatives like "global struggle against violent extremism."

Presently, the Department of Homeland Security has maintained the same cautious tone of the State Department. In a recent memo, titled "Terminology to Define Terrorists", It was advocated that⁸⁸:

The word Islamic is out because it potentially "[concedes] 'the terrorists' claims that they are legitimate adherents of Islam." Use of the word jihad is said to "glamorize terrorism." Islamist — a neutral and broadly accepted term for those who espouse Islam

86 Convergence is also noted in inter-party policy comparisons in Europe and the US. The gap between the solutions offered by mainstream parties has been narrowing over time.

87 Philip Stephens, "In search of coherent British foreign policy", *Financial Times*, November 20, 2007, p.13.

88 Bret Stephens, Homeland Security Newspeak, *Wall Street Journal*, May 27, 2008, p. A19.

as a political system — is frowned upon because “the general public...may not appreciate the academic distinction between Islamism and Islam.” Using the word Salafism, the religious variant of Islam espoused by al Qaeda, may have the unfortunate effect of demonizing those Salafists who aren’t violent. The term moderate Muslims may include those who aren’t religiously observant, and thus offend those Muslims who are. “Mainstream Muslim” is supposedly better ... the word ‘liberty’ (was) rejected ... because many around the world would discount the term as a buzzword for American hegemony.

The above changes represent the outcome of a constructive dialogue between the leaders of the American Muslim community and American officials.

v. Academic Response

The US is well-known for the superior quality of institutions of higher learning. However, the state of knowledge on contemporary Islamic issues in American academia is judged to be rather poor. According to *The Economist*,

(American universities) have...been slow to respond to the problem of militant Islam. America’s two top ranked political science departments, Harvard and Stanford, do not employ a single tenured faculty member who specializes in the Islamic world ... (these universities) have been less impressive in analyzing the threat of radical Islam than they were in dealing with Communism. Some people in important jobs in American industries are not pulling their weight.⁸⁹

The above vacuum in knowledge of Islam has left the field open to few scholars, some of whose writings reflect a dogmatic anti-Muslim ideology. After 9/11, books on the subject have become a growth industry. Two authors have been extremely influential in shaping public opinion and influencing decision makers. They are Raphael Patai and Bernard Lewis.

89 “A Special Report on American and the World”, *The Economist*, March 29, 2008, p.12. It was noted that there was only a total of just six undergraduate degrees in Arabic granted by all American colleges and universities. *9/11 Commission Report* 2002. The 2006 *Iraq Study Group* revealed that the American embassy in Iraq was employing only six fluent Arab speakers. “A Special Report on America and the World”, *The Economist*, March 29, 2008, p.12.

a. Raphael Patai

The basic theme of Patai's book *The Arab Mind*⁹⁰ is that "Arabs *only* understand force".⁹¹ The work analyzes the supposed personality defects of the "west-hating" Arabs using a sex-related focus. It goes on to state that their biggest weakness is "shame and humiliation". The 1973 work is still used as a textbook for American officers at the JFK special warfare school in Fort Bragg. It has been described by a top military brass as "probably the single most popular and widely read book on the Arabs in the US military".⁹²

In terms of scholarship quality, Patai's work is completely debunked by American universities. It is discredited for its racist statements and outrageous suspect generalizations. The idea that "200 million people, from Morocco to the Gulf, living in rural village, urban metropolises and (vary rarely these days) desert tents, think some sort of single, collective mind is utterly ridiculous."⁹³

Despite biased scholarship, it was used in the immediate years after 9/11 as a handbook by the top civilian leadership at the Pentagon. The book was "the bible of the neocons on Arab behavior".⁹⁴ Its attraction to them was in providing academic respectability to hard-line policies. Patai's work justified the agonizing methods of punishments meted out to Arab prisoners⁹⁵ (e.g. Abu Ghraib jail in Iraq).

The presence of self-serving scholarship in American academia invites comparison with a quotation made by Francis Bacon who in his criticism of an older metaphysician likened him to

a spider spinning cobwebs, could draw out of himself materials from which to construct both comprehensive cosmography and a detailed code of conduct without needing to fear that the gossamer threads by which the weightiest conclusions were sometimes supported would be broken by any rude blows from (reality).⁹⁶

b. Bernard Lewis

The second influential scholar is the British-born Bernard Lewis. He has taken it upon himself to educate the American public on the nature of Islam. His influence extends far and

90 Raphael Patai, *The Arab Mind*, Scribner 1973.

91 *The Guardian* <http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2004/may/24/worlddispatch.usa> (italics added).

92 <http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2004/may/24/worlddispatch.usa> non-fiction cultural psychology book.

93 *The Guardian* op.cit.

94 *The Guardian* op.cit.

95 <http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2004/may/24/worlddispatch.usa>

96 Joseph Wood Krutch, *The Modern Temper*, A Harcourt Brace & Company, 1929, p. 136

wide, including advising top policy makers on the necessity of adopting a hard policy approach towards Muslims.⁹⁷ The core of Lewis's ideas is a strong belief in an inherent *conflict* between Islam and modernization. He writes:

ultimately, the struggle of the fundamentalists is against two enemies, secularism and modernism. The war against secularism is conscious and explicit...the war against modernity is for the most part neither conscious nor explicit, and is directed against the whole process of change that has taken place in the Islamic world in the *past century* or more.”⁹⁸

The word “fundamentalists” used in the above quote is a fuzzy term that does not make a distinction between extremists (e.g. Taliban in Afghanistan) and moderate Islamists (Justice and Development Party in Turkey). Furthermore, part II discussion on hijab has shown that the above dichotomy between Islam and modernity is an artificial construct which belies historical evidence.

Next we take a critical look at a favorite comparison of Lewis, the one between South Korea and Egypt. He heaps praise on the former for its fast economic growth and belittles the latter for the stalling of its economy.

c. The Fallacy of Egypt and Korea Comparison

Korea has the third largest economy in Asia. It is also a member of the OECD. Egypt on the other hand is still struggling to feed its population. Yet, blaming Egyptian underdevelopment on Islam's incompatibility with modernization is too simplistic. An understanding of the real reasons behind the different development paths of the two nations requires going far beyond the narrow secular – religious narrative of Lewis. His *one-variable* model is devoid of relevant historical support. An examination of the modern political and economic history of the East Asian and the Middle Eastern nations would reveal that Lewis' assertions are incorrect for the following reasons:

1. Making Islam a major barrier to modernization conveniently pushes under the rug the fact that western colonial policies had for long stunted the industrialization process in Egypt. In contrast, Korea's industrialization started in earnest during its colonial period. Afterwards, South Korea's success was due to the export-

⁹⁷ Lewis was a frequent visitor to the American vice-president Dick Cheney before the launching of Iraq war.

⁹⁸ “The Roots of Muslim Rage”, *The Atlantic*, 1990, www.theatlantic.com/issues/90sep/rage2 (italics added)

promotion policies instituted by General Chung-Hee Park. The architect of the Han miracle followed the Japanese model of development.⁹⁹ S. Korea also benefited from the American efforts in the creation of a modern army as well as the transfer of industrial technology from Japan. No similar pro-modernization influences were present in Egypt. When Nasser was forced to deepen Egypt's military and economic ties with the socialist camp, the country was practically disconnected from the western free trade system.

2. Unlike Southeast Asia which has not faced military threats, Egypt was not as fortunate. For decades after gaining independence, the resource-poor country had to devote a vast amount of resources to arms.¹⁰⁰
3. Muslim countries of Malaysia and Indonesia have succeeded in building viable industrial sectors due to their "Look East" policy. Material improvement in their standard of living has taken place without compromising their religious principles.
4. Malaysia and Indonesia are lucky to have the dynamic entrepreneurial talents of the overseas Chinese. Before 1961, Egypt had her share of entrepreneurs of foreign origin.¹⁰¹ Some students of the Middle East claim that the foreign community in Egypt had the potential in the 1930s to play a pioneering role in industrializing the country.¹⁰² It is extremely doubtful that these entrepreneurs could be put in the same rank as the overseas Chinese. The group whose activities stand comparison with the foreign community in Egypt was the Indian traders in East Africa.
5. One country that is coming up fast is Vietnam. After the 1986 liberalization reforms, again following a "Look East" policy, the Vietnamese economy has achieved a high rate of economic growth. This is "in stark reversal of fortunes, the Philippines – once Asia's *second richest* country recently had to beg Vietnam to sell it rice for its hungry millions..."¹⁰³ Could one then hold Catholicism responsible for lack of modernization in Philippines?

99 Khairy Tourk, "Letter to the Editor", *Foreign Affairs*, May/June 1997, pp.154,155.

100 Another advantage that southeast Asian nations have is that, lacking rich oil fields, they were not subject to great power machinations which have bled many Middle Eastern economies. In a path-breaking paper, Kaoru Sugihara provides an analytical framework which focuses attention on the large amount of money spent in the region on arms. Kaoru Sugihara, "East Asia, Middle East, and the World Economy: Further Notes on the Oil Triangle", Working Paper No.9, 2006, Afrasian Center for Peace and Development Studies, Kyoto, Japan.

101 After the 1961 Egyptian nationalization measures, most numbers of the foreign community left the country.

102 Robert Tignor, *State, Private Enterprise and Economic Change in Egypt, 1918 -1952*, Princeton University Press, 1984.

103 "Vietnam, Asia's other miracle", *The Economist*, April 26 – May 2 2008, p.16. (italics added)

d. Guy Sorman

Recent writings of many Europeans, including several respected commentators,¹⁰⁴ show that Lewis's ideas have made inroads in the continent. A case in point is the French philosopher and economist Guy Sorman who shares Lewis' misgivings regarding Muslims. For him, the west is a mindset, and Muslims do *not* have the state of mind to blend in the western world. He observes that "There is no map of the West. No map can work when some Asian nations are Western (Japan, Taiwan), when *non-Western* groups (Muslims in Europe) live in supposedly Western countries."¹⁰⁵

What reverberates in Sorman's writings is that a subset of world population, consisting of most Muslims and Chinese, do not have the western capacity for self-criticism. This is because "A true Muslim or Chinese scholar cannot be defined as a true Chinese or a true Muslim by being critical of his own world."¹⁰⁶

The above narrative could be criticized on two grounds. First, carried to the extreme, the classification of European Muslims as a distinctly inassimilable group is a dangerous idea. It brings to mind the treatment of Jews in Nazi Germany.¹⁰⁷ Second, to state that Japan and Taiwan now possess a "western" mindset is, even if true, a phenomenon that has taken place *after* both achieved a certain per capita threshold. This could not have been predicted earlier at the start of their industrialization.¹⁰⁸ Their economic success refutes Sorman's own argument. There is no reason to expect that the Muslims and the Chinese would follow a different path than the one traveled by Japan and Taiwan once they have achieved a relatively advanced level of modernization.

e. Paul Samuelson

Lewis' writings have exercised a strong influence on many in the American academia. His tendentious conclusions are echoed in Paul Samuelson's views on western Muslims. Recently, the Nobel Laureate economist has bemoaned the incapability of Muslim immigrants to melt in modern societies.¹⁰⁹ He writes, "at the sociological level, *both* Europe and North America are *afflicted* with tensions between Muslim immigrant populations and the native populations.

104 Martin Wolf's "The Economic failure of Islam", *The Financial Times*, September 26, 2001.

105 Guy Sorman, "What exactly is the West?", *The Japan Times*, May 1 2008.

106 Students of Russian civilization recognize the derisive description of Russians as people "who have always lived upon the frontiers of Europe, (as) ... a *primitive* race, since European culture has never been for them more than the exotic diversion of a small class." Joseph Wood Krutch, *The Modern Temper*, A Harcourt Brace & Company, 1929, p. 162 (italics added)

107 Hitler's hatred against the "Jewish mind", is reflected in his writing that "it is characteristic *mental makeup* of his race which renders him *impervious* to the process of assimilation" quoted in Abir Taha, Nietzsche, *Prophet of Nazism: The Cult of the Superman*, Author House, 2005, p.119 (italics added)

108 G.B. Sansom, *The Western World and Japan*, Alfred A. Knopf, 1968

109 Paul A. Samuelson, "Still room for Keynesian push", *The Nikkei Weekly*, January 21, 2008, p.25.

Islamic co-religionists in France and Britain and *even* in the US do not blend¹¹⁰ into the historical melting pot.”¹¹¹

Samuelson’s narrative does not provide any evidence to substantiate the making of such sweeping generalizations. His assertions do not take into consideration the differences between the conditions of Muslims in the US and those in Europe. While, there is no denying that in the latter, a sizeable majority of immigrant families still experience integration difficulties, this is by no means the situation of the successful Muslim community in the US.

In the year 2000, the US average household income was \$ 42,158 per year.¹¹² The following data shows that American Muslim households are *more* affluent than their mainstream counterparts with 66% earning over \$ 50,000 per year and 26% over \$ 100,000 per year. (Table 2).

Table 2: Affluence of American Muslims

Annual Income	% Households	Cumulative
Under \$25,000	13%	100%
\$25K-\$50K	21%	87%
\$50K-\$75K	22%	66%
\$75K-\$100K	18%	44%
\$100K-\$150K	14%	26%
\$150K-\$250K	7%	12%
Over \$250K	5%	5%

Source: Cornell University April 2002, <http://www.allied-media.com/AM/>

Two theories have been expounded to explain the flourishing of the American Muslim Community. First is the neoconservative explanation which states that they have become part of the one American culture, a distinct one that requires strong commitment to specific values.¹¹³ The second theory extols the benefits of multiculturalism, which is the very

110 The supposed inability for migrants to assimilate is not a new argument. In the 19th century, the French considered the *religious* and uneducated newcomers from Italy incapable of assimilating in the secular republic. Some Italians were killed in race riots. Later, Polish, Portuguese, and Jews were also deemed unable to integrate into French society.

111 Paul A. Samuelson, “Still room for Keynesian push”, *The Nikkei Weekly*, January 21, 2008, p.25. (italics added)

112 The American GDP per capita in 2000 was \$34,759. <http://economics.bestmanagementarticles.com/Article.aspx?id=8710>

113 Jonah Goldberg “The unspeakable American culture” Los Angeles Times, October 2, 2007. www.latimes.com/news/opinion/la-oe-goldberg2oct02,0,2138895. For a different view on American Muslims, see Mark Steyn’s *America Alone: the End of the World as We Know It*. Regenery Publishing, 2008. Both Jonah Goldberg and Mark Steyn work for the National Review, the mouthpiece of neoconser-

foundation of the American society. The US is a country where, at least theoretically, all cultures are equal. The welcoming American environment gives rise to a Muslim community which lives in harmony with communities of other cultures.

While the second theory aptly describes the situation of most immigrant groups in the US, by itself it is not enough to explain Muslims' success. For example, another country that also practices multiculturalism is Britain. Yet, the situation of British Muslims is different than their American brethren. The major explanatory variable that helps to explain the difference between the two situations is education.

Table 3: Level of Education among American Muslims

Maximum Education	American Muslims* ¹	American Muslims* ²	Total Americans* ³
Advanced Degree	42.7%	32.1%	8.6%
Bachelor's	35.2%	30.0%	35.1%
Some College	9.5%	19.4%	32.3%
High School	10.1%	14.1%	18.9%
No HS Diploma	2.4%	4.7%	4.7%

*1 Cornell University

*2 Zogby International, August 2001

*3 Statistical Abstract of the U.S. 2001

Source: <http://www.allied-media.com/AM/>

Table 3 shows that American Muslims represent a highly educated group. This stands in contrast to their less educated British counterparts. Table 4 shows the relatively low level of socio-economic indicators attainment among Muslims in England.

Table 4: Socio-Economic Indicators for British Muslims

	Muslims	British* ¹
No qualifications (ages 16-49)	34%	16%
Long-term unemployment* ² (ages 16-74)	24%	4%
Police searches (per 1000 population)	27% (all Asians)	15%

*1 includes Wales.

*2 Never worked

Source: *The Economist*, January 8-2005, based on Home office; ONS data.

Now, with education being the over-arching consideration in explaining the income disparity between the two groups, the question that poses itself is why wide differences in the level of educational attainments exist. The answer lies in immigration laws. Most Muslims

vative thinking.

that immigrated to Europe to rebuild its shattered economies after 1945 were uneducated. In contrast, the majority of Muslims that arrived in the US were a result of the 1965 changes in the Immigration and Naturalization Services Act. The new changes gave preference to educated applicants.¹¹⁴ The high level of education has led to better paying jobs (Table 5), which in turn has made it easier for the relatively well-to-do American Muslims to integrate than their low income European brethren. Most of the former live in integrated communities whereas the latter still live in segregated ones and suffer from overt discrimination.¹¹⁵

Table 5: Top 10 Occupations of American Muslims

Rank	Occupation	Percent
1	Student	20.2%
2	Engineer	12.4%
3	Physician/Dentist	10.8%
4	Homemaker	10.0%
5	Programmer	7.0%
6	Corporate Manager	6.4%
7	Teacher	6.4%
8	Small Business Owner	4.4%
9	Researcher	4.1%
10	Admin. Assistant	2.8%
	Total	84.5%

Source: Cornell University April 2002, <http://www.allied-media.com/AM/>

f. High and Low Barriers to Integration

The next discussion sheds more light on the differences between European and American Muslim communities.

1. One of the major barriers to integration in Europe is the high school drop out rate. In contrast, the majority of Muslim immigrants in the US have acquired education in their countries of origin. As is true everywhere, the offspring of educated parents are more likely to be college educated.
2. Unlike Europe, the US has more flexible labor market. The ease of starting new businesses explains the relatively high rate of Muslim participation in the American private sector where 12% of employed Muslims are entrepreneurs.
3. In the Euro-land, the prerequisites for attaining full acceptance by the mainstream are more stringent than in the US. For example, German citizenship for long has been based on bloodlines. The French put more emphasis on culture. On the

¹¹⁴ The 2007 average Asian family income in the US is \$75,000 which is considerably higher than the \$55,000 national average.

¹¹⁵ Unlike the segregated suburbs of north England and France (e.g. Paris, Lyons), there is no spatial segregation in Germany.

other hand, a belief in the American constitution is the only factor that determines citizenship.¹¹⁶ It has been noted that “America’s Muslims worship free and respect (the country’s) secular constitution—a success the United States should make more of in its foreign policy.”¹¹⁷

4. American Muslims have done well in the US meritocratic society. In contrast Europe does not seem to accept those who have achieved much on merit to the same degree. According to recent studies by the OECD “Germany’s students from immigrant families have fewer opportunities than those living in any other industrialized nation.”¹¹⁸ The German situation is so worrisome that the UN has sent the special *rapporteur* on the right to education, to investigate.¹¹⁹
5. Former imperial powers in Europe still carry excess baggage in dealing with immigrants from their ex-colonies. There is no such legacy for the US which has not been a traditional imperial power.
6. Unlike most of their counterparts in France and England, American Muslims are not confined to ghettos which could be breeding grounds for crime.¹²⁰
7. Jewish-Muslim relations in the US are rather interesting. Many Muslim shopkeepers have replaced Jewish groceries in serving disadvantaged neighborhoods. In addition, several Muslim families have settled in areas that are adjacent to Jewish neighborhoods or live in their previous dwellings. At a

116 In dealing with Muslims in Europe, most of the difficulties they face are also shared by other non-Muslim immigrants (e.g. Christians with south European features are mostly treated like Muslim Turks). Continental Europe is certainly not a melting point like Canada or the US where identity is not linked to race, religion, or national origin. National identity is taken seriously by Europeans. For example there is a strong current in Germany to keep *Leitkultur* as the ‘leading culture’. In the case of multi-cultural UK, some circles make a distinction between being British and English. The first category includes anyone that carries a British passport, while the latter is reserved for those of white English descent.

One should guard, however, against exaggerating the extent of prejudice faced by *Ausländer* in Germany. Many foreigners recount cases where they experienced unexpected German generosity and helpfulness. Yet, it must be admitted also that there is a need for new policies that would help better socialization of immigrant children and provide them with suitable employment opportunities. For an interesting discussion of foreigners’ experiences, see www.spiegel.de/international/germany/0,1518,529947,00.html

David Crossland, Spiegel Online editor, explained that part of German difficulties in dealing with immigrants might be “German’s romantic yearning for purity and cleanliness, for a *Heilie Welt*, a ‘Perfect World’, that renders them prone to collective xenophobia... This nation of dog lovers goes for pure breeds.” “German Xenophobia as Our Readers See It” www.spiegel.de/international/germany/0,1518,529947,00.html

117 “The new wars of religion”, *The Economist*, November 3 2007.

118 www.spiegel.de/international/germany/0,1518,druck-527694,00.html

119 *www.spiegel.*, *op.cit.*

120 The rate of violent crime committed by German youth with foreign backgrounds is disproportionately high. Charles Hawley, “When It Comes to Integration, Silence is Golden”, www.spiegel.de/international/germany/0,1518,druck-527694,00.html

It has been noted that “(German) migrants have starring roles in crime, poverty, and now terrorism, both as perpetrators and as victims. ... (Their families) account for 36% of the population at or near the poverty line and for 29% of the unemployed”, *The Economist*, April 5, 2008, p.32.

grass-roots level, there are no barriers hindering human and business interactions. Economic factors in the *laissez-faire* American economy have paved the way for the two groups to have mutually beneficial transactions. Among professionals (e.g. academia, health workers), relationships based on respect, and in some cases, friendship, tend to be the norm rather than the exception. This is made easier by the fact the views of the Jewish majority tend to be more moderate than the hawkish pronouncements of their leaders.

g. Campuswatch

Unlike European academia, The US has an unusual organization called Campuswatch whose actions represent a flagrant disregard of academic freedom. The well-funded vocal watchdog organization seeks to dominate and, if needed, censure the debate on Islamic issues. Scholars who do not share its vision (e.g. west is at “war” with Islam) face harassment, intimidation, slander and even the risk of ruining their careers (e.g. denying tenure). Foreign scholars that do not toe the line are also demonized. It is not uncommon for Campuswatch to launch organized campaigns calling for the rejection of their visa applications.¹²¹ The writings of Campuswatch leaders appear regularly in right-wing American and Israeli press.

Groups with similar agenda are also active in American academia. For example, the Freedom Center, designated an “Islamofascism Awareness Week” in October 2007. It called on American campuses to “break through the barriers of politically correct doublespeak ... (in order) to help our brave troops who are fighting the Islamofascists abroad”.¹²² College students were encouraged to distribute pamphlets against Islamofascism. Students were also urged to stage sit-ins outside women’s studies departments offices to protest “the silence of feminists over the oppression of women in Islam”¹²³

vi. Media Response

a. Western Media Industry

Presently, Muslims do not enjoy a positive image in the west. The intensity of media attacks against them has increased after 9/11. To a large degree, the nature of attacks vary between the US and Europe. In America, anti-Muslim propaganda stresses the lack of democracy and low economic achievements in the Muslim world. As seen before, Evangelical

121 A case in point is Tariq Ramadan, a Swiss Muslim scholar who believes in the compatibility of modernization and Islam. His writings celebrate Muslim citizens’ loyalty to the western countries they live in. Ramadan was denied a work visa in the summer of 2004. That prevented him from teaching at the University of Notre Dame. The legal grounds behind the visa rejection are given at <http://www.danielpipes.org/article/2043>. Another case is the pending tenure decision regarding Joseph Massad who teaches at the Middle Eastern Studies Department, Columbia University.

122 Maureen Dowd, “Rudy roughs up Arabs”, *International Herald Tribune*, October 18, 2007, p.9.

123 Maureen Dowd, *op.cit.*

Americans pay special attention to theological disagreements between Islam and Christianity. Their pro-Israeli stand stems from deep conviction that what is presently happening in the Middle East brings the world closer to the apocalypse and the second coming of Christ.¹²⁴ On the other hand, Europeans elevate freedom of expression over religion. Secular Europe focuses on the high crime rate, and 'Islamic' social evils such as female mutilation, and honor crime. Europeans are also repulsed by the slaughtering of animals in the kitchen. Furthermore, the profligate spending by the rich Middle Easterner visitors does not command much respect.

In comparing the American and European media, the latter is largely free of the self-censorship that afflicts the former. Generally speaking, European hostility towards Muslims emanates from ultra right-wing politicians who exploit voters' fears, and few artists who are vocal in defending their right of free expression¹²⁵ - even if it hurts Muslim sensibilities.

The American media does not present a balanced viewpoint of issues related to Islam. The industry is characterized by the presence of an oligopolistic market and the prevalence of cross-ownership of alternative outlets.¹²⁶ The media depends on advertising income for its survival. This makes it 'sensitive' to the wishes of advertisers and in the process runs the risk of losing sight of its true mission of keeping the public truly informed. The printed media in the US also suffers stiff competition from alternative media outlets (i.e. television, internet). Many newspapers, lacking resources and manpower, have been forced to close their overseas offices. This has made them dependent on few mainstream sources (i.e. *The New York Times*, *The Wall Street Journal*, *Washington Post*) for overseas coverage.

The above constraints give ample room for determined groups with copious financial resources¹²⁷ to peddle misinformation to the public¹²⁸. That is particularly true in the

124 The well-funded evangelical and other anti-Muslim organizations take their cue from the pro-Israel pressure groups (e.g. AIPAC).

125 In a survey conducted with around 3000 respondents across 10 countries in Asia and the west. It was found that easterners give much higher rankings than westerners to harmony, respect for authority, and orderly society. Clint Laurent, "Values Revisited", *Far Eastern Economic Review*, September 1996, p.45. It is also true that Americans prefer openness whereas the Chinese put a premium on having a more formal structure that is conducive to harmony.

126 Typical mega-media conglomerate is Clear Channel, which owns 1,200 radio stations, featuring conservative talk show hosts. Ron Walters, "Radio Killing Us Loudly, Talk radio and the degeneration of free speech", *Opportunity Journal*, 2007 p.50.

127 In the US, 70 % of 8,000 talk show hosts strongly identify with conservative causes. They receive sizeable funding from the Richard Mellon Scaife Family Foundation, the Olin Foundation, the Bradley Foundation, and the well-known beer company, Coors. Ron Walters, "Radio Killing Us Loudly, Talk radio and the degeneration of free speech", *Opportunity Journal*, 2007 p.50.

128 Political correctness is a code that accords subordinate groups dignity and respect when they are referred to publicly. One of the main characteristics of the American broadcasting media is the presence of "shock-jock" radio which rejects such code. This has enabled the airing of outrageous anti-Muslim programs in the name of free speech.

conservative media¹²⁹ which insists on creating an environment of fear based on the “danger” that Islam poses to the Western way of life. Articulating a balanced narrative is made more difficult for the following reasons:

1. The media narrative is practically monopolized by self-appointed pundits who feed slanted views to a gullible public. Worrying is the conspicuous absence of true expertise. Muslims are almost completely excluded, from the debate.¹³⁰ In the rare cases where a handful of individuals with Muslim background are allowed to have a seat at the table, they are cynically chosen for their ability to foster the views of the pundits. These individuals constitute a fringe group of apostates, converts, and radical feminists.¹³¹ Their predictable narratives present a caricatured version of Islam.
2. The views presented suffer from double standards. For example, when it comes to human rights, it is politically acceptable to publicize the misfortunes of the refugee crisis in Darfur. However, to shed light on the plight of Arab refugees is taboo.¹³²
3. The American public is not avid readers. They mostly depend on passive acquisition of news through television. Relying on TV as the primary source of information¹³³ gives the media a strong influence and makes the viewers’ knowledge of Islam vague and fuzzy.
4. The media unreservedly support the Israeli agenda.¹³⁴ Many scholars are perplexed to note that the Israeli press enjoys the freedom to criticize its own government while the American public is largely kept in the dark.
5. Muslims are underrepresented in the media and legal professions (Table 6). Thus, the great difficulty confronting the right-wing rhetoric.¹³⁵

129 One of the most conservative and popular outlets is the Fox channel which is part of the Rupert Murdoch media empire.

130 Naomi Klein considers it a dangerous narrative that is taking root because there are not enough stories to counter it. James Harkin “It wasn’t just about brands” Interview with Naomi Klein, *Financial Times*, September 29/September 30 2007, Life and Arts, p.3.

131 Prime example is the Somali-Dutch legislator Ayaan Hirsi Ali.

132 When a writer raised the issue of “taboos and double-talk applied to Middle East policy” in the US with an adviser of Mrs. Clinton’s close circle, the latter “just shrugged and laughed. That subject was apparently too controversial even to touch.” Gideon Rachman “The real problem with Power” *Financial Times*, March 11, 2008, p.15.

133 Radio and cable network talk shows have a tendency to cater to the prejudices of their audiences.

134 The way the conservative American media has dealt with the Iraqi invasion is typical of its penchant to twist the facts. It celebrated the occupation of the country as a great victory in the fight against global terrorism. In reality, the occupation. Most experts, including the former head of the Federal Reserve, Alan Greenspan, agree that the Iraqi war has nothing to do with terrorism. It was launched for economic reasons, namely oil.

135 David Miliband, the new British foreign secretary stated recently that to be politically persuasive “You’ve got to try and tell a story to people...in the end stories are not about policies they are about ideas.” Gideon Rachman “Overseas Intelligence”, *Financial Times*, March 1/ March 2, Life and Arts, p.3.

Table 6. Under-Represented Occupations for American Muslims

Occupation	Percent
Journalist/Editor	1.1
Attorney/Lawyer	0.8
Director/Producer/Actor	0.6

Source: Cornell University April 2002, <http://www.allied-media.com/AM/>

b. Spreading Fear in the US and Europe

Conservative authors, broadcasters and TV pundits in the US have made a profession out of warning the west against the danger of Muslims living amongst them. They incessantly infuse their reports with inflammatory terms such as “Islamic terrorism” and “Islamofascism”. The same media organs support the use of harsh measures including torture against jailed Islamists.¹³⁶ The fear campaign does not confine itself to American audience but extend to Europe as well. The grim message is that the Islamic “virus” has already spread into the European social fabric, threatening the continent’s own survival.

Anti-Muslim forces are voracious opponents of multiculturalism. They stubbornly resent the view popular in some European quarters that, “multiculturalism (is) the *cure* for the social rift between Muslims and Christians on the Continent.”¹³⁷ A stalwart figure in the neoconservative movement, Norman Podhoretz, predicts that West Europe will be conquered from within by “Islamofascism”.¹³⁸

Mark Steyn, another neoconservative, foretells in a recent best-seller¹³⁹ that Muslims are bound to take over Europe in this very century. He contrasts the aging European population¹⁴⁰ with the high fertility rates of Muslim arrivals.¹⁴¹ Furthermore, he bemoans that the continent’s

136 From the days of the Roman empire, torture was extensively used to coerce confessions. Even in Western democracies, the use of torture has always been a fact of life. The democratic Italian republics (i.e. the city-states of Venice and Florence) adopted some techniques of the inquisitors of the Roman Catholic Church. In modern times, it was practiced during the colonial era by the French in Vietnam and Algeria, the Americans in the Philippines, the British as recently as the 1970s fighting the IRA in Northern Ireland. After the Philippine insurgency in the early 20th century, decommissioned soldiers transferred torture techniques to police stations, especially in the American south. Darius Rejali, A Painful History “Why have modern democracies been such important innovators of torture?”, *The Chronicle Review*, January 25, 2008, p.7, B8.

137 Adi Schwartz, *Haaretz* “The Gospel According to Allam”, March 29, 2008, www.haaretz.com (italics added)

138 Norman Podhoretz, *World War IV: The Long Struggle Against Islamofascism*, Doubleday, 2007.

139 Mark Steyn, *America Alone: The End of World as We Know It*, Regnery Publishing 2008

140 Spreading fear of a Muslim biological (population) bomb in Europe mirrors similar concern in Israel.

141 According to unofficial statistics, Muslims constitute between 5-8% of the total population of

cultural distinctiveness will be lost due to the hedonistic way of European life versus strong Muslim adherence to their values.¹⁴² Steyn warns that Europeans should not be surprised if they soon awaken to the Muslim call to prayer soaring from the minarets of European mosques. He considers the latter, centers to recruit *ihadists* in secretive cells. For him, the 2004 Madrid explosions and the murder of the Dutch director Theo Van Gogh are the first shots in a European civil war. The Christian convert Egyptian journalist, Magdi Allam, who lives in Italy subscribes to the same views. He warns of the danger of radical Islam which according to him is “lying in wait for democratic and liberal Europe”.¹⁴³

The above campaigns strike fear in the hearts of western Muslims. The detrimental effect on their image makes them worry that being the subject of hatred, Shakespeare’s prediction that “In time we hate that which we often fear”,¹⁴⁴ would hold true for them. History points to the de-humanizing effect of stereotyping as tarring a weak minority runs the risk of creating a sub-human “other”.¹⁴⁵

vii. Positive Developments

Tensions between the Muslim world and the west are widespread. There is the age-old Christian fear of Islam and the fact that Islamophobia has now risen to new heights¹⁴⁶ Europe’s feeling of insecurity has its roots in being “surrounded by an arc of instability, from North Africa to the Middle East, from the Balkans to the Caucasus”.¹⁴⁷ The 9/11 attacks have shaken American feelings of security which was predicated on being surrounded by oceanic moats. Yet, present antagonism should be tempered by the fact that there have been many significant positive developments that bode well for western Muslims. They are:

Europe. A case in point is Germany which has 3.2 - 3.4 million Muslims, of whom 2.6 million are Turks. In large cities with more than 200,000 inhabitants, 45% of the children under 15 have a “migration background”. For the country as a whole the proportion is a third. The country has few Turkish millionaires and artists with *Kebab* being Germany’s favorite fast food. Of Turkish students, 45.4% end up in *hauptschulen* which prepare them for simple trades. *The Economist*, Apr 5, 2008, pp. 32, 37.

142 In Germany, for example, 29% of adult Muslims attend mosque regularly and 85% call themselves believers and 50% consider their religion more important than democracy. *The Economist*, Apr 5, 2008, p.33.

143 Adi Schwartz, op.cit.

144 http://www.quotationspage.com/quotes/William_Shakespeare

145 In Nazi Germany, by painting the Jew as the “other” and despising him as the typical *Untermensch*, a “non-being”, paved the way to the horrendous acts of the extermination of those who, in the words of Nietzsche, did “not belong to humanity” and were “creatures *outside nature*”. Friedrich Nietzsche, *Beyond Good and Evil*, pp. 195-6, cited in Abir Taha, Nietzsche, *Prophet of Nazism: The Cult of the Superman*, Author House, 2005, p. 133. (italics added)

146 Kishore Mahbubani, “Europe is a geopolitical dwarf”, *Financial Times*, May 22, 2008, p.13

147 Kishore Mahbubani, op.cit.

a. Learning from History

The Muslims living in western countries have fared relatively better than was widely feared in the immediate period following 9/11. Western responses to extremist acts have been somewhat measured. It seems that the west has learned valuable lessons from its past. For example, English long-standing history has given the country self-confidence in dealing with the threats of Muslim extremists. The country has been a master in practicing the age-old policy of divide and rule, not only in its colonies but also among its Celtic fringe (Irish, Welsh, Scotch). Another factor that helps to explain the lack of hysteria after 7/7 is the experience London acquired in its many years of fighting with the IRA.

Shameful episodes such as the Nazi holocaust and the US mistreatment of Japanese-Americans have also played an important role in sensitizing the west against repetition of violent backlashes against minorities.¹⁴⁸ Europe in particular has not treated the conflict between radical Islamists and itself as an existential threat. In the US, it was to President Bush's credit that after the attacks he paid a visit to the Islamic Center in Washington D.C. and used the pulpit to commend the patriotism of American Muslims.

Yet, one should not infer that Muslims in the US are completely out of the woods. The detention measures of Japanese-Americans¹⁴⁹ were not far from the thinking in security circles after the 9/11 attacks.¹⁵⁰ Furthermore, technological advances might have played a role in not keeping Muslims behind barbed wires. Given the development of modern electronics, it is easier now to keep an eye on suspected groups without physically rounding them up.

One difference between the Japanese-American and Arab-American cases is that when the Pacific war ended in 1945, it brought to *closure* the enmity between Japan's *Yamato-damashii* and the industrial might of the rising American superpower. As things stand now, no one expects a speedy closure in the struggle between radical Islam and the West.

148 In England, right before the Nazi invasion, the British arrested "unreliable" individuals which included local fascists and around 11,000 German Jewish refugees. "Immoral Equivalence", David Pryce-Jones, Book Review of Nicholson Baker "Human Smoke: The Beginnings of WWII, the End of Civilization", *Commentary*, March 2008, p.80.

149 One thing that Muslims in the US can learn from the Japanese experience is that the US census bureau was instrumental in the internment of Japanese-Americans as it passed their names and addresses to the secret service during the Second World War. Census Sensitivity. *The Economist*, December 22, 2007, p. 98.

150 The Los Angeles Police Department (LAPD) sought to identify "'at risk' communities and enclaves ... in order to keep an eye on Muslims". These actions invite comparisons with the post-Pearl Harbor policies, which led to the incarceration without charge of nearly 120,000 Japanese and Japanese-Americans living on the west coast and Hawaii. Floyd Cheung, "A site of sorrow and strength", *Smith Alumnae Quarterly*, Winter 2007-2008, p.29.

b. Winning Respect through Moderation

Western Muslims have experienced a learning process which has led to a sea change in their behavior. The change has astonishingly taken place in a short-time span. In 2006, the Danish cartoons which depicted Muhammad's image in a negative light had caused an immediate outrage in the Muslim community. Loud demonstrations by western Muslims did not sit well with the European mainstream. It was one year later that an anti-Muslim Dutch movie released. The film *Fitna* (Ordeal) employed "elements and symbols calculated to offend Muslims". It portrayed Islam "as a ticking time bomb aimed at Western democracy."¹⁵¹ This time the reaction of western Muslims was quite different compared to their previous fiery response. The film provided them with an opportunity to try a more restrained approach.¹⁵² The new moderate stance prevented the polarization of society and was quite effective in gaining them the respect of their fellow citizens. It has also won Dutch Muslims the admiration¹⁵³ of their government.¹⁵⁴

c. Voting Power

Muslims have just started to exert some influence in western politics. The larger the number of people adhering to a specific faith, the more important their voting patterns are to politicians. The rapid growth of the Muslim population in Europe is expected to lead to an increase in their political clout. Germany, for example, has three million Turks who constitute a potentially strong voting bloc. The same could be said about France with nearly six million Muslims of mostly North-African origin. For Muslims in the US, the picture is more complicated. Though not as numerous as their counterparts in Europe, their votes might be important in the case of tight elections. It is no exaggeration to state that during the 2000 election, the American Muslim community may have made the difference in making George W. Bush the 42nd President of the US. One of his closest advisers, Karl Rove, was quick to take note of the fact that the conservative culture of many American Muslims makes them natural republicans. His strategy was based on the understanding that in the non-homogenous US society, there is no one America but there are a hundred Americas. Ironically, in engineering

151 "Anti-Islamic film removed from website", *Jerusalem Post*, March 29, 2008. www.jpost.com

152 A leader of the large Moroccan immigrant community in the Netherlands, Mohammed Rabbae, commented that the film was "less bad" than anticipated. Calling for calm, he stressed that "harming Dutch people harms us". All previous quotations relating to the Dutch film are from "Anti-Islamic film removed from website", *Jerusalem Post*, March 29, 2008. www.jpost.com

153 The Dutch Prime Minister, Jan Peter Balkenende, remarked "I want to pay tribute to Muslim organizations and the way they have reacted: Moderate reactions despite totally disagreeing with its (film) contents. The Cabinet is proud - proud of people who react in this way". *Jerusalem Post*, March 29, 2008. *op.cit.*

154 The Dutch government took a firm stance against the film while admitting that it did not have the authority to stop its release. Another objection came from an unexpected source. Kurt Westergaard, the Danish artist whose cartoon created an outrage in the Muslim community. The cartoonist objected to the use of this image in the film, claiming other than violating copyright laws, it has been "taken out of original context and used in a completely different one". *Jerusalem Post*, March 29, 2008. *op.cit.*

the President's second bid for the White House, it was the same Karl Rove who exploited American public fear, making the "War on Terror" the major platform of the Republican campaign.

One major difference between Europe and the US is that the nature of the political system of the former has allowed few Muslims to occupy high profile positions. In England, some Muslims are members of the Parliament and the House of Lords.¹⁵⁵ In France, the minister of justice is a female Muslim.¹⁵⁶ Brussels, the capital of European Union, has a Muslim acting mayor.¹⁵⁷ This is in contrast to the US, which does not have a single Muslim congressman and senator with an immigrant background.¹⁵⁸

d. The Obama Factor

No European nation has the fluidity of the American system which has propelled Barack Hussain Obama to be the 2008 presumptive nominee of Democratic Party for president. To allow someone with a mixed ethnic background to have a real shot at reaching the apex of the political hierarchy is a watershed in US history. The implications for American Muslims of his possible election are rather positive for the following reasons:

First, *Protection*: while recognizing that the negative reactions to the Muslim community of another 9/11-like attack might be "ugly", he promised that he would do everything to "protect" them.

Second, *Sensitivity*: On June 15 2008, when two females wearing headscarves were denied the opportunity to appear behind the democratic presidential candidate for the TV cameras, Muslim supporters at the Detroit rally were deeply offended. On hearing about the profiling snub, Obama quickly issued an apology and made a point of being photographed with a group of supporters that included a woman wearing a *hijab*.¹⁵⁹

Third, *Dialogue*: in 2004 Obama declared readiness to address a major Islamic conference to declare that the US is not at war with Islam. Given his immense credibility, this would go a

155 The British parliament has ten Muslim MPs, 4 in the House of Commons and 6 in the House of Lords.

156 While this is a welcome development, so far the Minister of Justice has not been provided with enough resources to make a difference.

157 One fourth of the labor force in Brussels are Muslims. The acting mayor, Faouzia Hariche, is of Algerian origin. <http://www.brusselsjournal.com/node/671>

158 An African American Muslim, Keith Ellison has been elected to the House of Representatives in 2006. He is a member of Judiciary Committee which has oversight on judicial and constitutional matters.

159 Christi Parsons and Katie Fretland, "Obama workers snub 2 Muslims", *Chicago Tribune*, June 19, 2008, p.5.

long way in winning the hearts and minds of Muslims everywhere.¹⁶⁰

Fourth, *Middle East*: The announced contours of Obama's foreign policies regarding the Middle East seem to promote peaceful solutions¹⁶¹ rather than military confrontations.¹⁶² This applies to withdrawing from Iraq¹⁶³, reaching a compromise with Iran regarding the nuclear issue and the promising to act as an honest broker to find a solution to the thorny Israeli-Palestinian conflict early in his administration.¹⁶⁴

Fifth, *Fairness*: funds for the Obama campaign have come from small contributors. Not being beholden to donors representing major pressure groups, gives him more freedom to chart objective policies. This would particularly address Muslim concerns regarding what they consider double standards in American foreign policies. That change in perception would signal an America that is being admired for its ability of self-examination and recasting itself as a source of hope.

For Muslims in the US, the Obama phenomenon brings to mind the analogy of the cup being half empty or half full. On one hand, any identification with pro-Arab or pro-Muslim positions still has negative consequences¹⁶⁵ in American politics.¹⁶⁶ In the 2008 presidential race, the republican plan is to make the forerunner democratic candidate, "look like an Arab-Islamist sympathizer and appeaser of terrorist groups". Obama has responded to "accusations" of his Muslim heritage as if he was warding off an incurable disease... (he) has spent much time, energy and resources fending off the accusations, even starting FighttheSmears.com to

160 *Dubai TV*, June 9, 2008.

161 Anthony Lake, who was the National Security Advisor under Clinton, is one of Obama's close circle of advisers. Lake is of the view that democratically elected Islamic parties do not necessarily pose a threat to the west.

162 The Republican presidential candidate John McCain considers radical Islam to be the greatest threat to the west. According to him "the absolute gravest threat is the struggle that we're in against radical Islamic extremism, which can affect, if they prevail, our very existence. Another successful attack on the United States of America could have devastating consequences." *Fortune*, June 28, 2008. On the other hand, former German Chancellor Helmut Schimdt believes that "the greatest strategic challenge in the 21st century is *not* terrorism but rather the population explosion and the growing cultural conflict between and Islamic part of the world. These problems could produce mass migrations and possibly even wars." "Cold War Interview with Ex-Chancellor Schimdt", *Spiegel Online*, June 26, 2008, www.spiegel.de/international/europe/0,1518,druck562315,00.html

163 Robert A. Pape of the University of Chicago wrote "We must understand that suicide terrorism results more from foreign occupation than Islamic fundamentalism and (thus) we must conduct the war on terrorism accordingly." Robert A. Pape, "The Growth of Suicide Terrorism", *Chicago Tribune*, September 11, 2006.

164 Obama's fresh approach to the Middle East is already under attack by AIPAC.

165 The neoconservatives call Obama's middle name, Hussein, the new "dirty word" in American politics.

166 Obama accuses Bush of 'attack on foreign soil', *Financial Times*, May 16, 2008, p.3.

prove that he is not a Muslim”.¹⁶⁷

On the other hand, the success of Obama to be the presumptive nominee of the Democratic Party raises interesting issues for American Muslims.¹⁶⁸ For large segments of the US population voting for an African-American, with Hussain as his middle name, is something that would have never been possible even one decade ago. The deepening of American democracy shows that the country is capable of making drastic behavioral changes in a short period. Equally interesting is that around 50% of the American public believes that Obama is a Muslim.¹⁶⁹ The fact that a relatively large number of mainstream voters, have chosen to vote for a person they (falsely) believe to be a Muslim is something worth meditating on.

e. Convergence of Visions

The vision of doctrinal orthodoxy elaborated by Muslim radicals is at odds with the vision that Western Muslims have for themselves and their children. Muslim families appreciate the educational opportunities that the West offers their children¹⁷⁰, opportunities that many of them were denied in their lands of origin.¹⁷¹ Most Muslim females admire the equal status for women in western societies. The prevailing attitude is gratitude for the improvement in their economic well-being.

Muslims in Europe and America are also beneficiaries of western religious tolerance and respect for civil liberties. Public attitude after 9/11 towards Muslim minorities was less hostile than initially envisioned.¹⁷² American Muslims appreciate the sense of fairness in the application of security rules which are applied uniformly across all segments of the population.

167 Ramzy Baroud, *The Japan Times*, June 26, 2008.

168 AIPAC has launched a campaign to discredit Obama. Furthermore, the fear of potential assassination has led to early assignment of government protection. In a scenario aired on radio waves by a self-appointed neoconservative ‘expert’ on Islamic *Sharia*, he predicted that eventually Obama might be killed by a militant Islamist. According to his understanding of the *Sharia*, having a Muslim father makes Obama a Muslim too. The fact that he is now a Christian makes him an apostate, who must face death by killing! *WGN Radio 720 Chicago*, June 10, 2008.

169 *BBC News*, June 4, 2008.

170 Despite Middle East tensions, a large number of Muslim adolescents are still disposed to all things American and curious about life in the US. For those who want to improve their economic well-being, going abroad for graduate studies and landing a job in the US is still the dream of many educated youth.

171 Holland has 37 Islamic schools which, following the Dutch tradition, are state-financed. Like the situation in the Middle East, Muslim girls in Holland often do better at school than boys. “Fortuynism without Fortuyn”, *The Economist*, November 30, 2002, p.44. In France, secondary education is the responsibility of the central state.

172 The pragmatic American public, is not inclined by its very nature towards taking extreme positions. Muslims that live in the US have experienced several acts of kindness on the part of their American neighbors. For example, after 9/11 it was not unusual for these neighbors to volunteer to accompany Muslim ladies wearing Islamic headscarves while shopping.

The reluctance to “profile” is seen at American airports in the random inspection of travelers that includes Caucasian grandmothers and pensioners. Policies that call for stereotyping and torture are considered an anathema to the majority of Americans. Furthermore, the majority of Jews and Christians do not share the extremist views of the ultra right-wing groups.

f. Resilience of Western Institutions

Western political institutions are quiet robust. Of recent, to aid social cohesion the Bishop of Canterbury, Dr. Rowan Williams, has favored the inclusion of some parts of the Islamic *Sharia* under a parallel jurisdiction to secular law. Others disagreed, claiming that it contradicts the principle of equality under the law, which might destroy social cohesion.¹⁷³ Since 9/11, the west has been facing the dilemma of striking the right balance between security and individual freedom.¹⁷⁴

The locking up of suspects indefinitely and the mistreatment of prisoners whether it was Abu Ghraib in Iraq or in Guantanamo Bay in Cuba have irked human rights advocates and shocked the vast majority of the American public.¹⁷⁵

The fundamental right of *habeas corpus* has been a part of American tradition for centuries. Fortunately, the US system is remarkable in its ability to acknowledge its mistakes and, through open criticism, find solutions to temporary lapses that deviate from its core values of fairness and equality.¹⁷⁶ The detention policies of locking up terrorist suspects indefinitely violate one of the major principles of America’s Founding Fathers. A case in point is the decision by the US Supreme Court which stated that Guantanamo detainees have a constitutional right to *habeas corpus* meaning that the executive branch cannot arrest and detain them without a legitimate legal reason.¹⁷⁷

g. Public Admiration

Loyalty Most Muslims are dedicated citizens doing their best in a difficult environment.

173 *TimesOnline*, February 08 2008, <http://www.timesonline.co.uk/tol/news/uk/article3335026.ece>

174 In England, after 7/7/2005, 80% of the public supported holding individuals suspected of terrorist acts without trial for long periods. The British parliament however took a more restrained approach extending the period from 15 to 28 days. As of June 2008 the labor government is pushing for 42 days.

175 Physicians for Human Rights, a Boston-based human-rights group has issued a report on June 18, 2008, detailing the first extensive medical examination of former detainees in US military jails. The assessments of 11 men corroborated the prisoners’ claims of physical and psychological abuse which included beatings, electric shocks, shackling and at least one case of sodomy. “Report: Exams show detainee abuse”, *Chicago Tribune*, June 19, 2008, p.4. Recently, the US supreme court has upheld the right of detainees under the US constitution to court trial.

176 The civil rights movement which accelerated the integration of minorities is an example of the resilience of American institutions.

177 James Ross, “Supreme Court to Bush: You’re not above the law”, *salon.com*, June 13, 2008.

Acts like the community standing shoulder to shoulder with other Britishers in the condemnation of the 2005 London bombings as well as the firm anti-terrorist stand in France have helped to garner the admiration of mainstream natives. There is also a group of pioneering young Muslim scholars living in the west who emphasize the importance of western Muslims' loyalty to the nations they live in.¹⁷⁸

Work Ethics The correlation between having a culture of work ethics and social acceptance is particularly strong in advanced economies. It is for this reason that the American public holds Muslim professionals in high regard. In Holland, for example, 6% of the population is Muslim comprising of Turks, Moroccans, with others from Dutch Antilles, Surinamese, and some West Africans.¹⁷⁹ In this group, the Turks have a good reputation, due to their higher level of education and hard work.¹⁸⁰

h. Friendly Voices

Voices of moderation have also been heard from liberal US clergy (e.g. Presbyterians, Episcopalian). The American World Council of Churches¹⁸¹ has recognized that "extremism is a problem for most religions and needs to be countered through inter-religious dialogue".¹⁸² In addition, the dominance of conservative media does not necessarily imply that the public blindly trusts its slanted message. A recent poll in the US has shown that the American public's confidence is highest with doctors and nurses, but lowest for the mass media.¹⁸³ It is also true that many serious writers are now openly challenging the wisdom of extremist position.¹⁸⁴

178 Most prominent in this group is the Swiss scholar Tariq Ramadan.

179 Minorities are quite visible in large cosmopolitan areas. In Holland, they constitute 30% of Rotterdam's population. "Fortuynism without Fortuyn", *The Economist*, November 30, 2002, p.44. Australia has about 280,000 Muslims. More than 50% of them live in Sydney. "Tough on Muslims", *The Economist*, November 30, 2002, p.38.

180 Turks seem to be more adaptable than, say, Moroccans who generally have come from village communities. Too many Moroccans live off drugs in Holland. In 2001, 80% of those jailed for street crimes in central Rotterdam were ethnic minorities. The major source of crime, however, is neither the Moroccans nor the Turks, but the non-Muslim Antilleans. "Fortuynism without Fortuyn", *The Economist*, November 30, 2002, p.44.

181 *The World Council of Churches* criticized the Dutch film *Fitna* for not distinguishing between extremism and mainstream Islam. Similarly, the *Council of Europe* described the film as a "distasteful manipulation" aimed at spreading fear. *Jerusalem Post*, March 29, 2008. www.jpost.com

182 An example is Minnesota's *Talking Hearts* program which brings people from the Twin Cities' metro-area churches and mosques together. Many participants are pleasantly surprised to find out that they share similar perspectives on many topics. *The Muslim Observer* Volume 10, Issue 6; February 1-7, 2008, p.13.

183 <http://english.people.com.cn/90001/90780/6385665.html>

184 President Jimmy Carter explains the apartheid realities in the Middle Eastern region in his book *Palestine Peace Not Apartheid*, Simon and Schuster, 2006.

A second book, penned by two realist political scientists Stephen M. Walt and John Mearsheimer, analyzes the huge influence of the most powerful lobby in the US. The nucleus of the work was an original paper on the Israeli lobby, commissioned by the *Atlantic Monthly* in 2002. Given the sensitivity of the

Efforts to bring closer the values of the material west and the spiritual east have been articulated by Prince Charles of England, who stated that:¹⁸⁵

During the past three centuries, in the western world at least, a dangerous division has begun in the way we perceive the world around us. Science has tried to assume a monopoly-even a tyranny-over our understanding. Religion and science have become separated...I believe Man is so much more than just a biological phenomenon resting on what we now seem to define as the "bottom line" of the great balance sheet of life...Islamic culture in its traditional form has striven to preserve...integrated spiritual view of the world in a way we have not seen fit to do in the recent generations in the west. There is much we can learn from that Islamic view in this respect.

There are many ways in which mutual understanding and appreciation can be built. Perhaps, for instance, we could begin by having more Muslim teachers in British schools, or by encouraging exchanges of teachers...But in the West, in turn, we need to be taught by Islamic teachers how to learn with our hearts, as well as our heads...I hope we shall not ignore the opportunity this gives us to rediscover the spiritual underpinning of our entire existence.

i. Affable Images

The presence of respected famous western Islamic personalities enhances the image of peaceful Muslims. A case in point is the ex-singer Yusuf Islam (*ne* Cat Stevens), who converted to Islam and is now one of the leaders of the Muslim community in England. For him, the heart of Islam is helping the individual to live at peace with himself and achieve harmony with the rest of humanity. Emphasizing the ability of his adopted religion to shape

subject, the article was summarily rejected. With no American outlet willing to take the risk of printing it, the authors were forced to go overseas to have it released in the *London Review of Books* in 2006. An expanded version was put on the web site of the Kennedy School of Government. Shortly afterwards it was published in a book form, *The Israeli Lobby* Farrar, Straus and Giroux 2007. It became an instant bestseller.

In a third book, Tony Judt, *Reappraisals: Reflections on the Forgotten Twentieth Century*, Penguin Press, 2008, the liberal academician regards the all-powerful Israeli lobby in America as one that "squashes debate and is pulling both (the US and Israel) towards disaster" The quotation was cited in *The Economist*, April 19-25, 2008, p.104.

185 "Prince Charles Praises Islam", *Al Ummah Newsletter*, January 1997, Volume 1, number 4. <http://www.sunnah.org>.

good character, he eschews the use of religion for political purposes.¹⁸⁶ A notable trend in the US is the presence of budding Muslim artists that are starting to gain popularity as comedians and actors.

viii. Future of Muslims

a. Short and Long Term Prospects

Muslims have a sizeable presence in Europe. European nations are mature societies with declining populations. Given the continent's proximity to the Middle East, a good number of jobs have been staffed by Muslims. Since the early 1990s, however, there has been an anti-immigrant movement. If one takes into consideration the fact that large segments of the population resent the Islamic culture, it is not a surprise that a good number of Muslim immigrants have suffered the brunt of European hostility. Acts of beatings and vandalism¹⁸⁷ are not uncommon in continental Europe. Reprehensible as they are, they constitute by now the maximum level of violence that Muslims in Europe are expected to face.

Rationality also requires that both Europeans and Muslims have a compelling economic interest in making the immigrant experience a positive one. That is because the two important engines that drive the modern world are demography and technology. Technical progress alone cannot completely substitute for the population decline. The latter shrinks the tax base and increases the cost of health care. In the near to immediate term, Europeans who now resist Muslim workers on cultural grounds have no choice but to accept them on economic grounds¹⁸⁸. This would be a win-win solution to the pressing needs of both.

Muslims living in the US have so far been spared the kind of violence that afflicts many European Muslims. In general, they have led relatively content lives. The question that poses itself is whether this happy state of affairs would continue in the future or suffer a disruption. In a society where pressure groups are important in decision-making¹⁸⁹, American Muslims' lack of leverage puts them in an extremely disadvantageous position.¹⁹⁰ Despite the fact that

¹⁸⁶ Yusuf Islam is also presently active in providing advice to Media City in the UAE.

¹⁸⁷ French vandals recently defaced 148 Muslim veteran graves and scribbled the name of the Muslim Minister of Justice along with other anti-Islam slogans. The French President condemned the attack as a "hateful act." and the "most inadmissible kind of racism". 6 April 2008. <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/europe/7333344.stm>

¹⁸⁸ For a grim assessment of the European situation, see Robert Shapiro, Under Secretary of Commerce during the Clinton second term administration, *Futurecast 2020: A Global Vision of Tomorrow*, Profile Books, 2008.

¹⁸⁹ The American system is a strong believer in the saying that "The wheel that squeaks that gets the grease".

¹⁹⁰ For example, the anti-Muslim message of Rupert Murdoch, the media mogul, is continuously hammered all over media spectrum. It is said of him that "as his empire grows, his voice gets louder, potentially drowning out the agendas of others." The concentration of ownership in the mass media is a serious matter that violates the basic principles of a democratic society. It is even more serious for

they are law-abiding citizens, not having committed a single act of terrorism, their exclusion from positions of power makes them quite vulnerable and defenseless. Their future is less certain to predict than their European counterparts, especially in case there is another hideous attack on American soil - an attack which is well within the realm of possibility.¹⁹¹ However, the restraint demonstrated by ordinary Americans during past crises such as the 1979 Iran hostage crisis, the two Gulf Wars, and even the heinous 9/11 attacks might provide some measure of reassurance to American Muslims.

In the long run the situation might be less grim. If a solution to the Israeli-Palestinian problem is reached, it would have salient effects on reducing terrorism - reflecting positively on Muslims in the west.¹⁹² Furthermore, as Muslim countries start to climb up the technological ladder, chances are that some western Muslims would go back to their countries of origin. In that sense they would be following the same path of Taiwanese, Chinese and Indian expatriate scientists and entrepreneurs who returned back to enrich the emerging economies with knowledge acquired in the west.

b. Winning the Hearts and Minds of Muslims

Radical Islamists are brainwashed to believe that only they possess the true spirit of Islam. The electronic revolution has made it possible for their ideology to freely float across political boundaries.¹⁹³ As the movement is not restricted to a specific nation with well-defined borders, it is difficult to expect a militarily victory against non-state actors, at least in the short term. Thus, it is incumbent on the free world to try to win the hearts and minds of Muslims. Respect for the law “rather than riding roughshod over it”¹⁹⁴ is necessary to make the west safe against acts of terrorism. In order to credibly deal with radical Islamism and terrorism, “the main precondition (for the west) is to regain the moral high ground. The poisonous effect on global public opinion of Guantanamo and torture, and question marks over the use of Geneva Conventions have damaged the west’s image considerably. Only if the west unequivocally

Muslims in the US not only for being the victims of slanderous reporting and stereotyping, but also for their inability to respond.

191 The US is the country where extremist groups “are determined to follow September 11 with something spectacular, and they believe that America will not be able to tolerate large-scale casualties.” “A Special Report on American and the World”, *The Economist*, March 29, 2008, p.11.

192 According to Sir Ronald Cohen, a private equity veteran, “politicians are generally skeptical about the economics in peacemaking”. The experience of Northern Ireland shows that there is a strong negative correlation between Catholic employment and the number of terrorist attacks. Two decades of investment has reduced unemployment from 17% to 4%. To realize peace between Israel and Palestinian, we “need to bring economic forces into play”. Michael Skapinker, “Nothing ventured ...”, *Financial Times*, April 12, 2008, *Life and Arts*, p.3

193 Llewellyn D. Howell, “Playing the Goat”, *USA Today Magazine*, March 2008, p.65.

194 James Ross, “Supreme Court to Bush: You’re not above the law”, *www.salon.com*, June 13, 2008.

renews its commitment to international law can we hope to defend and enhance the universal acceptance of our common-western-values.”¹⁹⁵

In the battle of ideas, foes must be defeated through appeal to reason and fairness. True understanding does not pit “western” values against “Islamic” values. It should aim at emphasizing the similarities in the ethical codes (e.g. social justice, human dignity, equal opportunity, liberation from oppression, right to vote¹⁹⁶) of all faiths¹⁹⁷, and helping to find solutions to current spiritual challenges. Western and Islamic values should complement rather than compete with each other. The area of cultural dialogue is one where Muslim intellectuals living in the west could be a valuable asset in helping the West to understand the Muslim world.

IV. Conclusion

Presently, Muslims do not enjoy a positive image in the west. 9/11 has shattered the sense of security that Europe and US had taken for granted. After the terrorist attacks, fear was also experienced by Muslims living in the west. The verbal and physical abuse that some western Muslims were exposed to heightened the sense of tension. Stepping out as a Muslim, especially for those wearing *hijab*, suddenly turned to be a real ordeal. Furthermore, riots in Muslim neighborhoods are being treated as clear signs of Muslims’ inability to assimilate. The prevailing wisdom popular in many quarters in the west is that Muslim violence, whether imported from Muslim lands or home-grown, is motivated by a desire to reject modern western values.

The core of popular narrative is to blame economic underdevelopment in the Muslim nations as well as integration difficulties of western Muslims on the ‘failure of Islam’. Unfortunately, that model is too simple to explain reality. The situation is made worse in the US by the fact that the one-variable model is used to support the one-sided agenda of the ultra

195 Wolfgang Ischinger, “Europe has much to offer the White House”, *Financial Times*, May 5 2008, p.9. Mr. Ischinger was Germany’s ambassador to London and now serves as a chairman of the Munich Security Conference.

196 Democracy is not solely a western concept. Sen has shown that *different* cultures are capable of providing fertile soil for the rise of democracy. Amartya Sen, Democracy Isn’t “Western”, *Wall Street Journal*, March 24 2006. see also Sen’s *Development as Freedom*, First Anchor Books, 2000. (italics added)

197 On June 27, 2007, President Bush delivered a speech at the Islamic Center of Washington. He announced the appointment of a special envoy to the Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC), which is a group of 57 mostly Muslim nations. In his speech, he stated that “our special envoy will listen and learn from the representatives from Muslim states and will share with them America’s views and values.” Explaining the lack of popularity of the west in the Middle East, he opined that “for decades, the west abandoned the Muslims in the Middle East to tyrants, terrorists, and hopelessness (which made the Middle East) an incubator for terrorism and despair”.

conservative right. In Europe where xenophobic sentiments are on the rise, it is politically expedient to apply the same logic to tarnish the image of the Muslim community.

One of the great difficulties facing the ability of western societies to understand Muslims is the deplorable state of knowledge among those who have the power to shape public opinion. Unlike past conflicts such as communism where there was an in-depth knowledge about its ideological underpinnings, the situation is different when it comes to Islam. There is a pressing need for objective inter-disciplinary studies that deal with contemporary Islamic issues.

The analysis in this paper has attempted to discredit the notion that uses religion as the major explanatory variable to diagnose the ills afflicting Muslim communities. A phenomenon like the revival of headscarves, considered by many a return to the middle ages is in fact a statement of protest against western policies that, consciously or unconsciously, have prevented Muslim nations from joining the modern world. In addition, the real explanation behind the Muslim riots is not cultural but economic. The youth that rioted did not call for the application of *Sharia*. They were simply calling attention to their plight in not being able to find employment opportunities in the advanced modern European economies. An interesting question is why violent acts have been committed by European Muslims and not American Muslims. The answer has nothing to do with the Islamic culture. It has a lot to do with the disparity in the level of education. With the latter group being better educated, it is able to secure well-paying jobs.

The danger of using ‘failure of Islam’ as a major contributory cause of assimilation difficulties has serious consequences. By treating most of the world’s Muslims, living at home or in the west, as a single entity tormented in its struggle to modernize because of its cultural values, paves the road for a clash of civilization scenario.¹⁹⁸ That stands in stark contrast to today’s reality of an interconnected world. Cultural conflicts tend to disintegrate into a struggle between two *absolutes*, which if turned violent assume the acute brutality of religious wars.¹⁹⁹

Fortunately, for western Muslims there are positive factors that make the likelihood of the above scenario an unlikely prospect. Shameful chapters in the modern history of Europe and America combined with the presence of resilient western institutions have increased awareness of the futility of inhuman treatment of its minorities. Moreover, Europe has never bought the

198 It is ironic that Samuelson, one of the apostles of neo-classical economics, has reached a conclusion with regard to Muslims in the west, that Adam Smith, the prophet of classical liberal economics, would have found objectionable.

199 Unlike struggles over *material* disputes, there is no room to compromise; the fight here is to the finish. The long conflict between France and Germany during WWI was framed in cultural context rather than a struggle over spheres of influence. Of that he wrote that “from 1914 to 1918 millions of men were killed in the defense of a national *culture* with which they were often acquainted only by hearsay”, Francis Delaisi, *Political Myths and Economic Reality*, 1927.

neoconservative argument that the struggle against terrorism is an existential battle. Even in the US, while it is too soon to write off terrorism, policy-makers are realizing that the threat must be put in context.²⁰⁰ They no longer consider it a strategic threat. At present, the security issue is off the radar of the American public which now gives top priority to economic issues.

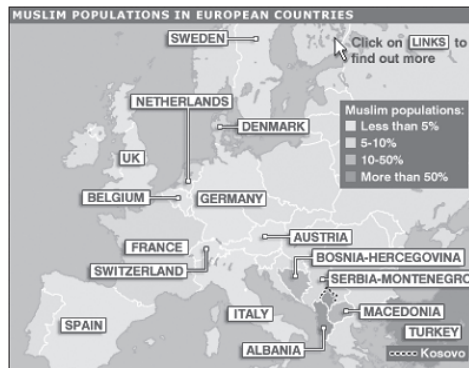
In order to tackle the scourge of present-day terrorism, there is a strong need to be vigilant and improve effective surveillance methods. Nevertheless, the application of these measures must not violate the Western principles of human rights, democracy and the rule of law. Tough measures alone, however, are not enough to win the battle. Soft power approach specifically designed to win the hearts and minds of Muslims everywhere, must be pursued. In that regard, Western Muslims could play a constructive role in prescribing a public policy that would go a long way in eradicating terrorism – only if given a chance.

Appendix

Muslims in Europe: Country guide

Islam is widely considered Europe's fastest growing religion, with immigration and above average birth rates leading to a rapid increase in the Muslim population.

The exact number of Muslims is difficult to establish however, as census figures are often questioned and many countries choose not to compile such information anyway.



200 According to Michael Sheehan, former deputy commissioner responsible for counter terrorism at the New York City Police Department, “There could be an attack tomorrow, but an attack every 6 ½ years in the US does not constitute a strategic threat”. The same assessment has been supported by a British study on national security published last March: “While terrorism represents a threat to all our communities and an attack on our way of life, it does not at present amount to a strategic threat. But it is qualitatively and quantitatively more serious than terrorist threats we have faced in the past, and it is likely to persist for many years.” Stephen Fidler, Down but dangerous How al-Qaeda has been pushed to the defensive, *Financial Times*, June 10, 2008, p.7.

ALBANIA

Total population: 3.1 million

Muslim population: 2.2 million (70%)

Background: Religious worship was banned in Albania until the transition from Stalinist state to democracy in the 1990s. Islam is now openly recognised as the country's major religion and most Albanians are Sunni Muslim by virtue of the nation's history: The Balkans has had centuries of association with the faith as many parts of it were part of the Turkish Ottoman Empire. While the empire is long gone, the culture remained in place. Significant populations of Albanian Muslims exist in a number of other European countries.

Sources: Total population - Albanian Institute of Statistics, 2005; Muslim population - UK Foreign Office.

AUSTRIA

Total population: 8.2 million

Muslim population: 339,000 (4.1%)

Background: Large numbers of Muslims lived under Austrian rule when Bosnia-Herzegovina was annexed by Austria-Hungary in 1908. Many of Austria's Muslims have roots in Turkey and others arrived from the Balkans during the 1990s wars - partly because of historical ties. Islam has been recognised as an official religion in Austria for many years, meaning that it has a role in the religious teaching in schools. Vienna has historically been regarded as the point where the Islamic world reached its most western point, a critical battle in Austria in the 16th century marking the beginning of the decline of the Turkish Ottoman Empire.

Sources: Total population - Statistics Austria, 2005 figures; Muslim population - Statistics Austria, 2001 figures.

BELGIUM

Total population: 10.3 million

Muslim population: 0.4 million (4%)

Background: Islam is one of seven recognised religions in Belgium, a status that brings it a number of subsidies and official roles, such as providing teachers. Despite this there have been complaints of discrimination. Unemployment and poor housing have been one such cause of tension. There have also been claims of discrimination against women in traditional dress. A majority of Belgium's Muslims are of Moroccan or Turkish origin; many others are from Albania. (Citizenship is available after seven years).

Sources: Total population - Statistics Belgium 2001; Muslim population - US State Department.

BOSNIA-HERCEGOVINA

Total population: 3.8 million

Muslim population: 1.5 million (40%)

Background: Bosnia-Herzegovina is still recovering from the bloody inter-ethnic war of 1992-95. Around 250,000 people died in the conflict between Bosnian Muslims, Croats and Serbs. Almost 8,000 Muslims were killed by Bosnian Serbs at Srebrenica in 1995 - Europe's worst atrocity since World War II. Many Muslims were displaced, as were members of other communities. A peacekeeping force remains in the country, whose frontiers have long been considered the western borders of the Islamic faith in Europe.

Sources: Total population - Agency for Statistics Bosnia and Herzegovina, 2003 figures; Muslim population - US State Department.

DENMARK

Total population: 5.4 million

Muslim population: 270,000 (5%)

Background: In the 1970s Muslims arrived from Turkey, Pakistan, Morocco and the former Yugoslavia to work. In the 1980s and 90s the majority of Muslim arrivals were refugees and asylum seekers from Iran, Iraq, Somalia and Bosnia. Access to housing and employment have been sources of concern for Muslims in Denmark. (A minority have citizenship).

Sources: Total population - Statistics Denmark, 2004 figures; Muslim population - US State Department.

FRANCE

Total population: 62.3 million

Muslim population: Five to six million (8-9.6%)

Background: The French Muslim population is the largest in western Europe. About 70% have their heritage in former north African colonies of Algeria, Morocco and Tunisia. France favours integration and many Muslims are citizens. Nevertheless, the growth of the community has challenged the French ideal of strict separation of religion and public life. There has been criticism that Muslims face high unemployment and often live in poor suburbs. A ban on religious symbols in public schools provoked a major national row as it was widely regarded as being a ban on the Islamic headscarf. Late 2005 saw widespread and prolonged rioting among mainly immigrant communities across France.

Sources: Total population - National Institute for Statistics and Economic Studies, 2004 figures; Muslim population - French government estimate.

GERMANY

Total population: 82.5 million

Muslim population: 3 million (3.6%)

Background: The majority of the Muslim population is Turkish, with many retaining strong links to Turkey. Others arrived from Bosnia and Kosovo during the Balkan wars. Until recently Muslims were considered “guest workers”, who would one day leave the country - a view that is changing. Racist violence is a sensitive issue, with the authorities trying a range of strategies to beat it. Steps are being taken to improve integration.

Sources: Total population - Federal Statistical Office, 2004 figures; Muslim population - Federal Ministry of the Interior estimate.

ITALY

Total population: 58.4 million

Muslim population: 825,000 (1.4%)

Background: The Muslim population is diverse, the largest group coming from Morocco. Others are from elsewhere in North Africa, south Asia, Albania, and the Middle East. Most arrived from the 1980s onwards, many of them as students. Italy is working to formalise relations between the state and the Muslim community. Up to 160,000 Muslims are Italian born. Most Muslims have the right to reside and work in Italy, but are not citizens.

Sources: Total population - Italian National Statistical Institute; Muslim population - UK Foreign Office.

MACEDONIA

Total population: 2.1 million

Muslim population: 630,000 (30%)

Background: Macedonia’s largest religion is Macedonian Orthodox, but almost one third of the population describe themselves as Muslim. Macedonia was spared the inter-ethnic violence that affected much of the Balkans following the break-up of Yugoslavia. But in early 2001 rebels staged an uprising demanding greater rights for the ethnic Albanian minority - a group which includes most Muslims. With EU and Nato support a deal was reached offering them greater rights, although some have been unhappy with the pace of change. The US State Department suggests that religious freedom is generally respected and that “societal discrimination is more likely to be based upon ethnic bias” than religion.

Sources: Total population - UK Foreign Office; Muslim population - UK Foreign Office.

NETHERLANDS

Total population: 16.3 million

Muslim population: 945,000 or 5.8%

Background: The integration of Muslims remains a concern for the Dutch government, particularly after a film-maker critical of Islam was murdered in 2004 by a radical Islamist. Further tensions surround the view held by some that there is a high level of crime among Muslim youths and a problem with unemployment. In the 1950s Muslims arrived from the former colonies of Suriname and Indonesia. One of the most important groups is the substantial Somali minority. Others are from Turkey and Morocco. The Netherlands favours multiculturalism, essentially the accommodation of different groups on equal terms.

Sources: Total population - Statistics Netherlands, 2005 figures; Muslim population - Statistics Netherlands, 2004 figures.

SERBIA AND MONTENEGRO(WITH KOSOVO)

Total population: 10.8 million (including Kosovo); 8.1 million (excluding Kosovo)

Muslim population: Serbia and Montenegro - 405,000 (5%); Kosovo - about 1.8 million (90%)

Background (excluding Kosovo): Within Serbia and Montenegro the predominant religion is Serbian Orthodoxy. Islam is the second largest faith, with Muslims accounting for about 5% of the population, rising to about 20% in Montenegro. The Muslim community is considered one of seven “traditional” religious communities. Religion and ethnicity remain closely linked across the country and discrimination and tensions continue to be reported.

Kosovo background: The late 1990s saw devastating conflict after the Kosovo Liberation Army, supported by the majority ethnic Albanians - most of whom are Muslim - came out in open rebellion against Serbian rule. Yugoslav President Slobodan Milosevic began “ethnic cleansing” against the Kosovo Albanian population. Thousands died and hundreds of thousands fled. Nato intervened between March and June 1999 with a 78 day bombing campaign to push back Serb forces and Kosovo remains under UN control. The ethnic Albanian community has expressed frustration at the length of time being taken to decide Kosovo’s future status. Attacks against Kosovo’s remaining minority Serb population have caused concern.

Sources: Total population - UK Foreign Office; Muslim population - US State Department.

SPAIN

Total population: 43.1 million

Muslim population: 1 million (2.3%)

Background: Almost eight centuries of Moorish rule over Spain came to an end in 1492, providing the country with a strong Islamic legacy, particularly in its architecture. The modern Muslim population started to arrive in significant numbers in the 1970s. Many were Moroccans coming to work in tourism and subsequent growth came when their families joined them. The state recognises Islam, affording it a number of privileges including the teaching of Islam in schools and religious holidays. There have been some reports of tension towards Muslim immigrants. Spain was shaken in 2004 when terror attacks by suspected radical Islamists killed 191 people on Madrid commuter trains.

Sources: Total population - Spanish National Institute of Statistics, 2005 figures; Muslim population - US State Department.

SWEDEN

Total population: 9 million

Muslim population: 300,000 (3%)

Background: The Muslim population is broad - with significant groups from Turkey, Bosnia, Iraq, Iran, Lebanon and Syria. The size of the Muslim population is such that representative bodies receive state funding. Sweden favours multiculturalism and immigrants can become citizens after five years. Sweden prides itself on its tolerance, but there has been criticism that Muslims are too often blamed for society's problems.

Sources: Total population - Statistics Sweden, 2005 figures; Muslim population - US State Department.

SWITZERLAND

Total population: 7.4 million

Muslim population: 310,800 (4.2%)

Background: Official figures suggest the Muslim population has doubled in recent years, but some sources say there are also about 150,000 Muslims in the country illegally. The first Muslims arrived as workers in the 1960s, mostly from Turkey, the former Yugoslavia and Albania. They were joined by their families in the 1970s and, in recent years, by asylum seekers. (Comparatively few have citizenship.)

Sources: Total population - Swiss Federal Statistical Office, 2003 figures; Muslim population - Swiss Federal Statistical Office, 2000 figures.

TURKEY

Total population: 68.7 million

Muslim population: 68 million (99%)

Background: Although Turkey is a secular state, Islam is an important part of Turkish life. Its application to join the EU divided existing members, some of which questioned whether a poor, Muslim country could fit in. Turkey accused its EU opponents of favouring a “Christian club”. Membership talks were formally launched in October 2005, with negotiations expected to take 10 years. Most Turks are Sunni Muslim, but a significant number are of the Alevi branch of Shias.

Sources: Total population - Turkish State Institute of Statistics, 2003 figures; Muslim population - US State Department.

UNITED KINGDOM

Total population: 58.8 million

Muslim population: 1.6 million (2.8%)

Background: The UK has a long history of contact with Muslims, with links forged from the Middle Ages onwards. In the 19th Century Yemeni men came to work on ships, forming one of the country’s first Muslim communities. In the 1960s, significant numbers of Muslims arrived as people in the former colonies took up offers of work. Some of the first were East African Asians, while many came from south Asia. Permanent communities formed and at least 50% of the current population was born in the UK. Significant communities with links to Turkey, Iran, Iraq, Afghanistan, Somalia and the Balkans also exist. The 2001 Census showed one third of the Muslim population was under 16 - the highest proportion for any group. It also highlighted high levels of unemployment, low levels of qualifications and low home ownership. The UK favours multiculturalism, an idea shared by other countries which, in general terms, accepts all cultures as having equal value and has influence over how government engages with minorities.

Sources: Total population - Office for National Statistics, 2001 figures; Muslim population - Office for National Statistics, 2001 figures.