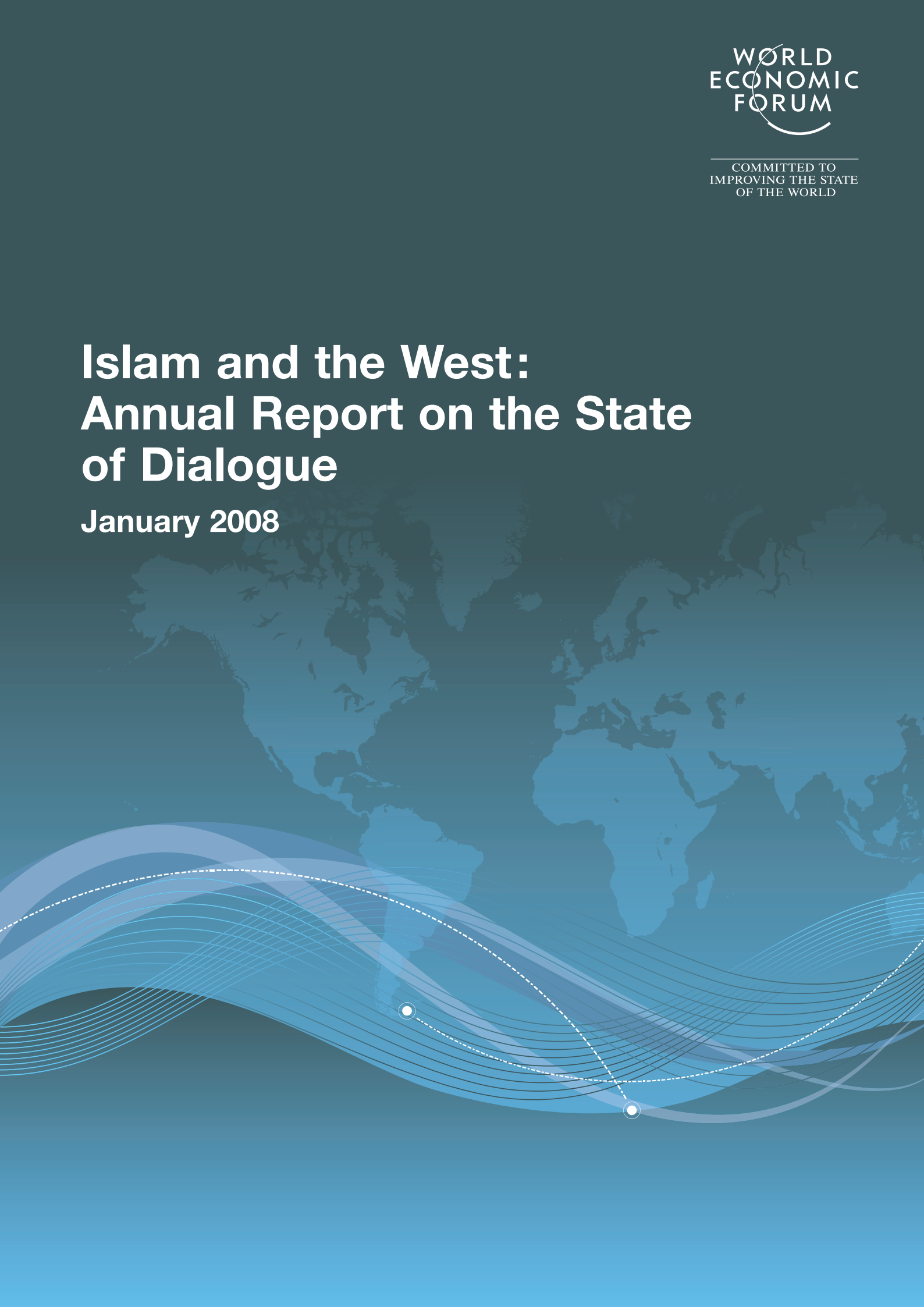
WORLD ECONOMIC FORUM

COMMITTED TO IMPROVING THE STATE OF THE WORLD

Islam and the West: Annual Report on the State of Dialogue

January 2008



At the World Economic Forum:

Klaus Schwab	Executive Chairman
Rick Samans	Managing Director, World Economic Forum
Fiona Paua	Head of Strategic Insight Teams
Sherif El Diwany	Director, Head Middle East and North Africa, West and Islam Dialogue Community (C-100)
Saman Ahsan	Global Leadership Fellow, Manager, West and Islam Dialogue Community (C-100)
Alistair Macdonald-Radcliff	Senior Adviser, West and Islam Dialogue Community (C-100)

Editors:

Nancy Tranchet	World Economic Forum
Dianna Rienstra	Phoenix Ink Communications

Creative design:

Kamal Kimaoui	World Economic Forum
EKZE	Geneva

The views expressed in this publication do not necessarily reflect those of the World Economic Forum.

World Economic Forum
91-93 route de la Capite
CH-1223 Cologny/Geneva
Switzerland
Tel.: +41 (0)22 869 1212
Fax: +41 (0)22 786 2744
E-mail: contact@weforum.org
www.weforum.org

Report Partners

Islam and the West: Annual Report on the State of Dialogue is a project of the World Economic Forum Community of West and Islam Dialogue (C-100). The Forum, a not-for-profit foundation based in Geneva, Switzerland, is the global community of the formost business, political, faith, media and thought leaders addressing global challenges. The Community of West and Islam Dialogue (C-100) brings together Forum members and partners working together to promote dialogue and understanding across segments of society.

President John J. DeGioia of Georgetown University is serving as lead author for the annual report. Located in Washington, DC, Georgetown University is a global leader in the interdisciplinary study of religion and the promotion of interreligious understanding. Two of its research centres have provided academic oversight for the report project: The Berkley Center for Religion, Peace, and World Affairs; and the Prince Alwaleed bin Talal Center for Muslim-Christian Understanding.

Islam and the West: Annual Report on the State of Dialogue 2008 was produced in Partnership with:
- HRH Prince Hussam bin Saud bin Abdulaziz al Saud
- Gallup Organization, USA
- Kingdom Foundation, Saudi Arabia
- Middle East Center for Peace and Economic Cooperation, USA
- Xenel Group, Saudi Arabia

Contents

List of boxes

Letter of Introductio

Foreword

By Klaus Schwab,
Executive Chairman

The remarkable feeling of proximity between people and nations is the unmistakable reality of our globalized world. Encounters with other peoples' ways of life, current affairs, politics, welfare and faiths are more frequent than ever. We are not only able to see other cultures more clearly, but also to see our differences more sharply. The information intensity of modern life has made this diversity of nations part of our every day consciousness and has led to the centrality of culture in discerning our individual and collective views of the world.

Our challenges have also become global. The destinies of nations have become deeply interconnected. No matter where in the world we live, we are touched by the successes and failures of today's global order. Yet our responses to global problems remain vastly different, not only as a result of rivalry and competing interests, but largely because our cultural difference is the lens through which we see these global challenges.

Cultural diversity is not necessarily a source of clashes and conflict. In fact, the proximity and cross-cultural encounters very often bring about creative change – a change that is made possible by well-organized social collaboration. Collaboration across borders is growing primarily in the area of business and economic activity. Collaborative networks for innovation, production and distribution are emerging as the single most powerful shaper of the global economy.

Trust is an essential currency of social collaboration. Our success in addressing the global challenges of economic well-being, political relations and social peace is a function of the degree of trust that nations and cultures are able to sustain internationally.

While many nation states have made a great deal of progress in building institutions of trust within their borders, regrettably the level of public trust in global institutions is far from satisfactory. The current levels of international conflict, the persistent perception of economic and security threats, and the scale and level of violence all point to a severe deficit in trust internationally.

Perhaps the most specific and severe instance of this deficit in trust is found between the Western and Muslim communities. This deep division between Islam and the West is captured by the low level of optimism reported in the 2007 Gallup Organization Survey of Population Perceptions and Attitudes. The average score for the 21 countries surveyed is 37 (where 100 is the most optimistic), reflecting an alarmingly low level of optimism regarding dialogue between Islam and the West. In all but two countries surveyed (Bangladesh and Pakistan), a majority believed the interaction between Western and Islamic communities is getting worse.

This annual report, *Islam and the West: Annual Report on the State of Dialogue*, published by the World Economic Forum Community of West and Islam Dialogue (C-100) is the first effort of its kind aimed at benchmarking the state of this dialogue. Its scope covers five dialogue agenda items: international politics; citizenship

and integration; religion, ethics and ideology; education and intercultural understanding; and economic and social development. It draws on a population perception survey, a dialogue activity survey and a media content analysis.

The Forum trusts that this benchmarking study can bring to bear an intensification of efforts by global leaders from government, business, religion, media and academia to address the most pressing issues that will help to shape the dialogue positively.

The finalization of this annual report came at a period of time when a sense of optimism surfaced following a number of exchanges between Muslim and Christian scholars. Vatican officials responded positively to the invitation to dialogue issued by Muslim scholars. A few days earlier, the King of Saudi Arabia held a historic meeting with the Pope at the Vatican. The significance of these exchanges stems from their emphasis on the value of expressing respect toward the "other."

Such developments are particularly important given the "asymmetry in respect" detected by the Gallup Organization's survey of Population Perceptions and Attitudes. The survey notes that while on average 65% of respondents in Muslim majority countries say Muslims respect the West, 60% feel that the West does not respect Muslims. On average, 60% of Americans and Europeans agree. Continuation of such confidence building exchanges is therefore certainly needed to improve the state of the dialogue between the Western and Islamic communities.

An important finding worthy of our close attention is the advent of the citizenship and integration issue as the second most powerful shaper of the state of dialogue between the West and Islam after international politics. The potency of the citizenship and integration issue is especially clear in Europe. An overwhelming majority of the surveyed populations in Europe believe that greater interaction between Islam and the West is a threat. This is in contrast to the US, where the opposite view is held by 70% of its population.

International politics remain the single most visible issue shaping the dialogue between Islam and the West. However, citizenship and integration in Europe appear positioned to rapidly gain equal influence on the dialogue. More reporting on citizenship and integration was detected in Europe than in any other country or region covered by the media content survey conducted in 2007. The role of European governments in granting citizenship rights, enforcing the law and uniting diverse communities is visibly reported in the European media, accounting for 62% of the coverage of this issue.

The combined effects of the agenda setting impact of media and the demographic shifts in Europe are bound to propel the issue of citizenship and integration to the centre of West-Islam dialogue in the coming years. The percentage of Muslim population in the EU-15 is expected to rise from 4.3% in 2006 to approximately 10% to 15% by 2025, with a higher concentration in urban areas of up to 30% in countries such as France, Germany and Holland. By inference, any deterioration on the international political front, or dispute on the other agenda issues, will be felt most severely in Europe.

The World Economic Forum believes that like all other global challenges, it will take the collaborative effort of all stakeholders from government, business, religion, media, academia and civil society to pre-empt any crisis, create alliances and find solutions. Over the course of 2008, the Community of Islam and the West Dialogue will invite leaders from various walks of life to engage in a concerted dialogue and debate of the most important issues, in particular the area of citizenship and integration.

This first *Islam and the West: Annual Report on the State of Dialogue* has clearly helped to define in more precise terms the issues that are shaping the dialogue. The World Economic Forum is most grateful to all the partners who have made this achievement possible, but especially to Dr John J. DeGioia, President of Georgetown University, who has taken the lead as its principal author.

Preface

John J. DeGioia, President, Georgetown University, Washington, DC

Today, dialogue at the intersection of the West and the Muslim world is a vital and expanding enterprise at the international, national and local levels. But our knowledge of its evolving contours remains inadequate. *Islam and the West: Annual Report on the State of Dialogue* aims to elevate the global visibility of dialogue efforts and to promote greater understanding and cooperation at a critical juncture in history.

This report is designed to be a global reference for leaders across multiple sectors, including government, business, media, education, civil society and faith communities. It seeks to advance communication and promote collaboration around global challenges, including combating extremism and violence, building peaceful and vibrant civil societies, and furthering economic and social development. *Islam and the West: Annual Report on the State of Dialogue* also includes an in-depth analysis of public opinion and a detailed assessment of trends in media coverage across 24 countries.

The explosion of dialogue initiatives in the years since 9/11offers much hope – but also presents a picture of some confusion.

Political leaders routinely refer to the importance of better ties between the West and the Muslim world, lacing their speeches with calls for greater intercultural and interreligious understanding. International, national and local dialogue initiatives range from long-term efforts with a global scope to pragmatic responses to specific community problems. At the same time, media coverage of issues at the intersection of Islam and the West has surged.

Unfortunately, the proliferation of dialogue efforts has had a disappointing impact so far. Monologue often dominates over dialogue. Initiatives and programmes often compete and overlap. Awareness of parallel efforts is weak and opportunities for synergies are missed. The media and public opinion focus too often on violence and terrorism and reinforce polarised perspectives and crude stereotypes.

The fragmentation and low visibility of dialogue efforts is exacerbated by deep-seated and long-standing knowledge gaps, evident at the level of international diplomacy, as well as in national and local affairs.

Many dialogue efforts are designed to demystify, enlighten and build knowledge of the unfamiliar. Others seek out areas of common ground anchored in core religious and civic values. Some involve pragmatic, material efforts to identify and help address specific problems. Common to many of them is the vision of a common future grounded in ideals of equality and respect.

In mapping the many different kinds of dialogue unfolding around the world, this report emphasizes the diversity behind the terms “Islam” and the “West”. If the West and the Muslim world were coherent, self-contained entities, dialogue would be impossible. Because they intersect and overlap in multiple ways, dialogue presents an opportunity.

However, a better future for Muslim-West relations at a global level and within national societies depends on more than dialogue. It demands progress on outstanding conflicts, including an Israeli-Palestinian peace that combines security with self-determination. It also demands greater stability, prosperity and democracy throughout the Middle East, Africa, and South, Central and Southeast Asia.

A better future necessitates equal citizenship for Muslims and non-Muslims in Europe, North America and around the world, marked by broad-based economic growth, upward mobility and access to education and healthcare.

Dialogue is no substitute for political leadership and practical problem solving. But the dialogue efforts outlined in this report – efforts oriented to action around social, political and economic agendas – have a vital, still underappreciated importance. Dialogue can increase knowledge and trust, point to both commonalities and differences, and frame joint efforts to address the pressing global challenges of the new millennium.

Introduction

1

Introduction

Muslim-West dialogue is critical in today's world. Terrorism and anti-terrorism efforts, the US occupation and sectarian violence in Iraq, the enduring Israeli-Palestinian conflict, European Union efforts to integrate a growing Muslim minority, and the prospects for democracy in the Middle East – these and other issues involve complex strategic, political and economic calculations. At the same time, such issues demonstrate the importance of dialogue together with greater understanding, mutual respect, and sustained cooperation in the service of peace.

None of these issues or other controversies juxtaposes a uniform West and a monolithic Islam. In some respects, a West that includes the United States and Sweden is no more cohesive than an Islam that unites Indonesia and Saudi Arabia.

This inherent diversity has led some observers to reject terms such as "Muslim-West dialogue" as both vague and inaccurate. Others object that the terminology reproduces the broad and misleading oppositions, popularized by Samuel Huntington's Clash of Civilizations thesis.

These criticisms miss the mark. Whether we like it or not the concepts "West", "Western world", "Islam", "Muslim world", and others are here to stay. Similar to other contested terms, such as "human rights" and "globalization", they are part of our political vocabulary. We must do our best to define and deploy them, while remaining fully aware of the complex and multifaceted reality they describe.

"The affirmation and realization of universal human principles is a challenge that goes beyond Muslim-West relations to encompass the state of the world as a whole."

Lord Carey of Clifton

Islam and the West Dialogue of The World Economic Forum

The World Economic Forum represents a diverse constituency, including leaders from government, business, media, education, religious communities, and civil society. Each has the responsibility – and the opportunity – to contribute to deepening dialogue between the West and the Muslim world.

Politics: Political leaders have clear responsibilities to address the major areas of tension among and within nations. Through both traditional diplomacy and sophisticated public communications, they are uniquely placed to build crosscutting alliances that bring together both Muslims and non-Muslims to address concrete problems.

Business: In addition to fostering economic growth and enhancing job opportunities, business leaders can advance corporate cultures attentive to growing cultural and religious diversity in both Muslim majority and non-Muslim majority countries. As active corporate citizens, business leaders bring a vital, results-oriented philosophy to the challenges of Muslim-West dialogue.

Media: In the context of globalization, the media have emerged as critical shapers of public and elite opinion concerning the West and the Muslim world, as well as interactions across them. Newspapers and magazines, radio, television and the Internet purvey the news, opinion, images and analysis that frame national and international debates. The need for reasoned and balanced coverage has never been higher than it is today.

Faith communities: Religious leaders are actively engaging in dialogue, supporting civic values and mediating to defuse explosive community tensions. These efforts belie the widespread view that extremists are drowning out constructive voices. But the persistence of that misperception underscores the need for a greater visibility and coordination of dialogue efforts.

Education and culture: Education professionals at the secondary and post-secondary levels are especially well positioned to foster dialogue that addresses knowledge gaps and prepares citizens for a world marked by cultural and religious diversity. Youth exchanges, curricular reform and literacy drives are among the most important means to achieve this. Arts and sports also provide opportunities to strengthen intercultural and interfaith understanding.

Civil society: To be effective, dialogue between the West and the Muslim world must reach deep into civil society to engage women, ethnic and racial minorities, and professions including education, law and medicine. Communication is critical. Bringing together leaders of local initiatives to share their experiences and coordinate events and calendars enhances the overall impact of dialogue efforts.

Defining the "West" and "Islam"

In this report, the "West" refers mainly to Europe and lands of significant European settlement, primarily North America, but also Australia and New Zealand. The definition is geographical-historical rather than cultural. Today, Christianity, Judaism, liberal democracy, free markets, individualism and consumer culture, while part of a European legacy, are increasingly transnational and global phenomena. To identify them exclusively with the West, as Samuel Huntington and others do, is no longer valid. A geographical-historical definition of the West makes sense for another reason: throughout much of the Muslim world, the West is still viewed through the lens of the colonial and post-colonial European and American global preeminence.

The term "Islam", in this report refers to a religion that finds diverse cultural expression around the world. There is no single overarching "Islamic civilization". For the purposes of this report, the "Muslim world" denotes both Muslim majority countries and a transnational Muslim community that includes growing minorities within Western and other countries.

This transnational community is incredibly diverse. Muslims – some more pious, others more secular – differ by race, ethnicity and social class, and are active citizens in very different national contexts. What binds a diverse Muslim world together is a shared religious identity based on monotheism, the prophethood of Muhammad, and the revelation of the Qur'an, however differently understood and lived.

By this definition, the West, Islam, and the Muslim world are not mutually exclusive categories. Muslims who live in Western countries are Western Muslims, as well as members of a global religious community who – in the case of immigrants – may maintain cultural ties to countries of origin. Non-Muslims in Muslim majority countries are part of the Muslim world, even if they are not affiliated with its majority religious tradition. They may or may not be citizens of, or identify with, Western countries.

This report does not focus exclusively on the external dimension of West-Muslim relations. Its title *Islam and the West: Annual Report on the State of Dialogue* is broad enough to encompass dialogue within the West and the Muslim world. Debates within the West about religious pluralism, tolerance, citizenship, and integration have a direct bearing on Muslim-West relations. So do conversations among Muslims within the West and around the world, as well as the efforts of governments of Muslim majority countries to engage their Muslim and non-Muslim citizens.

Defining "Dialogue" and the "State of the Dialogue"

The term "dialogue" carries several meanings, including everyday conversation among neighbours, structured negotiations between labour and management, theological and philosophical exchanges among scholars and religious leaders, and debates among activists and community leaders. This report defines "dialogue" as engagement with the ideas and experience of others that is oriented to action. Dialogue so defined includes communication among leaders and citizens in civil society, as well as at state and international levels.

Such communication often has a strategic dimension; it can deceive, intimidate or advance narrow agendas. But public discourse should not be viewed solely as cynical manipulation. It is also a means to articulate ends, means

Box 1.1

West-Muslim Dialogue: A Critical Challenge

Lord Carey of Clifton

Lord Carey was the 103rd Archbishop of Canterbury from 1991 to 2002, having previously served as Bishop of Bath and Wells and Principal of Trinity Theological College. He serves on the Foundation Board of the World Economic Forum and is Co-Chair of the Forum's Community of West and Islam Dialogue (C-100).

The relationship between the West and the Muslim world is a critical dynamic of our time. The factors creating tension, doubt and misunderstanding are many and varied, as are those who would exploit them. Yet, there is nothing inevitable about this state of affairs. All our authentic religious traditions uphold the value of peace. History has shown it is quite possible to live with a diversity of cultures and religions and that societies can be enriched rather than threatened as a result.

Today, peace and stability are critical for the economic growth and opportunity necessary to meet human needs in a sustainable fashion on a global scale. It is quite clear that we face real challenges. Harmony requires work! Fortunately, people, organizations and governments around the world are addressing tensions at the intersection of Islam and the West through dialogue and collaboration directed at concrete policy problems.

Until now we have not had a full or adequate picture of these efforts, of what is working, and what is not. This makes this annual report on the state of dialogue so timely. It will serve as a vital resource for leaders from government, business and civil society working to build coalitions across cultural and religious divides to address concrete problems.

The Community of West and Islam Dialogue of the World Economic Forum involves leading figures, from government and the media as well as business, academic and religious leaders – all critical partners in ongoing dialogue efforts. This report is the first of a series sponsored by the Forum that will chart dialogue activities and explore best practices across a range of issue areas, including international politics, citizenship, ethics and ideology, education and development.

If we are to achieve results adequate to this challenge, the dialogue needs to reach all sectors and every age group in our societies. By providing an overview of the an overview of the terrain, this report will help to disseminate knowledge essential to building new partnerships and exploring new areas for collaboration at the intersection of Islam and the West.

The fact that the current work has engaged multiple partners and sources of input, led by Georgetown University, is important. This reflects the unique capacity of the World Economic Forum to bring people and knowledge together for the achievement of insights that can frame the future global agenda. This also reflects the need of the business community for accurate information upon which to base its engagement.

It is a strength of the Forum to involve business in multi-sector partnerships that bring about real change. But for this to happen will require knowledge of the key facts and what is effective. Every organization has to know how and where it can make a real difference if it is to justify the effort involved. We have to know not only how things are, but also what must change and who needs to be reached for that change to occur.

This is where the partnership with the Gallup Organization has been so important in helping to assess and chart key attitudes, as is the input from Media Tenor International in bringing out how the media has played a role in shaping key perceptions.

We all share a common humanity. We must build upon this commonality even as we better understand and address our real differences. The affirmation and realization of universal human principles is a challenge that goes beyond Muslim-West relations to encompass the state of the world as a whole.

Box 1.2

The Meaning of Dialogue

Karen Armstrong

A leading expert on the Abrahamic faiths, Karen Armstrong has written extensively on the opportunities and challenges posed by interfaith dialogue. Her most recent book is *The Bible: A Biography*.

Writing shortly before the 1956 Suez Crisis, the late Wilfred Cantwell Smith issued a warning that was prophetically prescient. Unless Muslims managed to come to terms with Western society, it would be impossible for the religion that was so necessary for their spiritual well being to flourish. But Christianity and the West also suffered from a "fundamental weakness" – "an inability to recognize that they share the planet not with inferiors but with equals." If this impasse continued, he argued, Muslims and Westerners would both fail the crucial test of the 20th century.

The atrocities of 9/11 and their disastrous aftermath show that neither had learned these essential lessons. If we continue in this failure to accommodate each other, we are unlikely to have a viable world to hand on to the next generation.

Compassionate and respectful dialogue is essential. But what exactly does dialogue require? I suggest three disciplines for encounters between the various faith traditions.

First, dialogue can never be simply a matter of expressing our own views to ensure that they and they alone prevail. We must also listen. We are not very good at listening in our chronically talkative society. In parliamentary debate or televised panel discussions, participants do not engage fully while their interlocutors are speaking, but concentrate instead on their own clever riposte. This is not dialogue; the alternative viewpoint simply becomes a foil for our own argument.

Listening means that we not only hear the words of our partners in dialogue, but that we attend closely to the underlying pain or confusion that informs what they say. This is essential when our own nation or faith may have been responsible for inflicting this distress. There can be no progress if the crimes, atrocities and prejudices of the past are systematically denied in order to buttress our own traditions, institutions and policies.

Second, we cannot enter dialogue in order to win. We inherited the inherently confrontational, agonistic tenor of our modern discourse from the ancient Greeks, whose democratic courts and assemblies were unashamedly competitive. There is no point in dialogue if we are not prepared to change our minds, alter our preconceptions and transcend an orthodoxy that we have long ceased to examine critically.

In the past, despite lamentable failures in coexistence, Jews, Christians and Muslims often learned from one another. In Islamic Spain, for example, Jews and Christians found that the encounter with Islam gave them new insight into their own religious traditions; scholars from other parts of Europe came to al-Andalus to study with Muslims, who helped them to recover the classical learning that they had lost during the Dark Ages. They thus transformed Western society. Dialogue aims not to convert our partners to our own point of view, but to cooperate with them in creating fresh insight.

Finally, dialogue must not degenerate into a cosy colloquy between like-minded people. As in Northern Ireland, a way must ultimately be found to include those who hold views that we find unacceptable. We can never condone cruelty, bigotry or criminality, but leaving extremists out of the conversation, while we speak only to the converted, is surely not the answer either.

and values, as well as to listen and to learn. It is a way to persuade others of the rightness of one's cause and to build coalitions around common, practical projects. Dialogue can be transformative. It can promote new perspectives that either ease or exacerbate conflict – not in isolation, but in combination with broader political, economic and social forces.

> ***"There is no point in dialogue if we are not prepared to change our minds, alter our preconceptions and transcend an orthodoxy that we have long ceased to examine critically."***
>
> Karen Armstrong

Dialogue as the exchange of ideas oriented to action involves communication among individuals and groups, public and private, religious and secular. Such exchanges may include face-to-face encounters or an exchange of views at a distance. They engage a variety of participants, including religious leaders, elected officials, civil servants, representatives of non-governmental organizations, scholars, members of the professions of law and medicine, the business community and other citizens.

Over time, dialogue within and across these groups has the potential to increase knowledge and understanding, build relationships, establish trust and foster collaboration. But it can also lead to nothing – to mere talk or, even worse, to exchanges of accusation and counter-accusation that make relations worse.

Dialogue does not take place in a power vacuum. Dialogue between the West and the Muslim world is conditioned by military, political and economic asymmetries. The material predominance of the West too often tends to shape the dialogue agenda. The implication, stated or unstated, is that the Muslim world should become "more like us". Any dialogue – including Muslim-West dialogue – will often involve efforts to change the other, consciously or not. People with strong ethical convictions, religious or secular in inspiration, try to build a world more in keeping with those convictions.

But efforts to transform the world, however peaceful, never take place on a completely level playing field. Any analysis of dialogue between Muslims and non-Muslims must take into consideration power asymmetries and how they shape agendas and frame issues. To give one example: many dialogue efforts pose the question whether Islam is compatible with democracy. The question whether and how democracy measures up to the ideals of Islam rarely frames the debate.

"State of the dialogue" in this report title refers not just to dialogue activities. It also encompasses perceptions of the state of West-Muslim relations in global public opinion and in the global media. In an era of globalization and instant communications, public opinion polls followed closely by elites in politics, business and civil society reproduce widespread views of the Western and Muslim "other" and their interrelationship.

Television, radio, newspapers, magazines and the Internet depict topics related to Islam and the West with varying frequency and with both positive and negative evaluations. This report draws on original polling data and media content analysis to discern national trends in the perception and representation of Muslim-West relations.

Dialogue Around Five Issue Areas

This report focuses on dialogue around five issue areas:

- International politics.
- Citizenship and integration.
- Religion, ethics and ideology.
- Education and intercultural understanding.
- Economic and social development.

International Politics

Dialogue at the intersection of Islam and the West is informed by the critical international political issues of the day. The balance of military and economic power and the

dominant position of the United States framed critical political questions in 2006-2007. How to achieve a just and sustainable peace in the Middle East? How to end the war in Iraq and maintain stability in the region? How best to combat terrorism and advance the cause of democracy and human rights around the world? How to limit nuclear proliferation? How to create and sustain a just international legal regime that respects the national interests of both the weak and the strong?

This report notes acrimonious exchanges around these and related questions, but also highlights efforts to bring people together in a cooperative spirit to discuss and debate policy challenges and advance solutions in practice. It also examines how these dialogue efforts are portrayed in the media and public opinion.

"The promise of a world of peace and prosperity will depend as much on our norms and principles as upon formal rules and institutions. Universal principles inform basic ideals of universal brotherhood and compassion for all humankind…"

HRH Princess Lolowah

Citizenship and Integration

In the context of globalization, with its increased migration flows, issues of citizenship and integration have moved up the Muslim-West agenda. Growing Muslim minorities in Western Europe and the United States are playing increasingly active roles in civil society and government. At the same time, some Muslim majority countries are facing an influx of new people and cultures. Different societies are grappling with the same question: how best to combine national identity and social cohesion with respect for minorities?

This report details government-sponsored efforts to bring Muslims and non-Muslims together, in Western Europe in particular.

It also covers dialogue efforts centred within civil society in other parts of the world. Public opinion and media analysis both highlight the salience of the integration issue, particularly in the Western European context.

Religion, Ethics, and Ideology

Many dialogue initiatives aim to further understanding around basic religious, ethical and ideological issues. Knowledge of the basic tenets of Islam and its teaching on basic ethical questions remains weak in the Western world. Conversely, Muslims often lack a basic understanding of Christianity, Judaism and the secular ideologies that first emerged in the West. Critical questions at issue include: When is violence justified? Are there permissible limits to freedom of speech or freedom of religion? What are the rights of women? How can traditional views of community be reconciled with global trends towards democracy and individualism?

Dialogue that focuses on these questions has taken place primarily in interreligious forums and in academic settings. They have revealed divergent areas of difference and commonality, as well as varied responses to the critical issue of whether and how to bring extremists into the conversation. Media surveys and public opinion also highlight a wide range of positions on these issues.

Education and Intercultural Understanding

Dialogue initiatives often aim not only to further understanding for active participants, but also to generate knowledge resources for educators and citizens that can contribute to higher civic aspirations. The role of both formal and non-formal education is thus a critical area for both reflection and action. Muslim views of the West and vice-versa are shaped both by educational institutions and by the images and narratives proffered by the national and global media. They are influenced, often in profound ways, through cultural media, including religious music, TV soap operas or film.

An increasing range of programmes and events worldwide seek to increase understanding of the historical evolution and contemporary complexity of other traditions. These activities build on efforts to engage religious, ethical and ideological issues by addressing yawning knowledge gaps. They encompass efforts to reform curricula, promote greater cultural awareness and understanding in the media, and combat anti-Semitism and Islamophobia.

Economic and Social Development

Muslim-West dialogue goes beyond ideas and politics to address concrete challenges of economic and social life. Given the context of economic and social imbalances that have deep historical and institutional roots, development agendas have emerged involving both contest and cooperation. Key questions include: What is the best way to assure greater equity and economic growth? What will offer hope and opportunities to the large populations of young people in Muslim majority countries? How can the issues facing the poorest states best be addressed? How can international economic competition go hand-in-hand with wider access to education, healthcare, shelter and economic opportunities?

The report tracks dialogue efforts that address these and other economic and social issues. Because Muslim-West relations are so bound up with practical development questions at the national and international levels, they are featuring more prominently in dialogue and, to some degree, in public opinion surveys and national media coverage.

Sources

This annual report draws on data provided by three World Economic Forum Partners – a survey of activities conducted by Georgetown University, the Gallup Muslim-West Dialogue Index, and media content analysis carried out by Media Tenor International. The report also includes short essays by scholars and practitioners working at the intersection of the West and the Muslim worlds.

Georgetown University Survey of Activities

The survey of activities maps significant statements, programmes and events at the intersection of Islam and the West. The survey captures public diplomacy – efforts to communicate in the public sphere through the use of major media – by bringing in statements by key groups and individuals at the level of international organizations, national governments and civil society. It also tracks government-supported initiatives that engage minority populations, in both the West and in Muslim majority countries.

In Europe, where these efforts are most fully developed, they include various commissions and outreach activities designed to give a voice to Muslim populations, to represent their interests, and to incorporate them into the public sphere and the democratic process.

The survey also includes the activity of religious and secular non-state organizations that sponsor events and programmes designed to foster dialogue among Muslims and non-Muslims and to advance collaboration around economic, social and political challenges. These programmes and events are organized at the local, national and international level.

Numerous dialogue activities at the intersection of the West and the Muslim world took place in 2006-2007. An annual report cannot track them all. However, this report aims to feature the most significant efforts that captured the most media attention and framed political, social, and economic agendas.

This report does not highlight only the large-scale activities, such as those of the United Nations, the Organization of the Islamic Conference and the United States. It also points

Box 1.3

The State of West-Islamic Dialogue

HRH Princess Lolowah Alfaisal

HRH Princess Lolowah Alfaisal is Vice Chairman of the Board of Trustees and the General Supervisor of Effat College, Saudi Arabia. She is Co-Chair of the Forum's Community of West and Islam Dialogue (C-100).

There is no nation in the world today, regardless of its level of advancement, which is homogeneous. Everywhere we find social groups made up of people of different backgrounds; a vast variety of languages, cultures, ethnicities, socioeconomic classes, races and religions.

People from diverse backgrounds do not lead separate lives. They are part of social groups that interact in complex ways in culture and society and in economic and political life.

The rapid increase of Muslim populations in many countries around the world, especially in Europe and North America, have created great interest in better understanding and addressing current tensions between Islam and the West. With this in mind, the 100 leaders of the Community of West and Islam Dialogue of the World Economic Forum (C-100) have in recent years sought to promote basic human values as a starting point for creating mutual understanding, tolerance and respect.

The promise of a world of peace and prosperity will depend as much on our norms and principles as upon formal rules and institutions. Universal principles inform basic ideals of universal brotherhood and compassion for all humankind, and are expressed at the core of the great world religions. Of the verses that emphasize these principles in the Qur'an, this is the most well known:

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم
يا أيها الناس إنا خلقناكم من ذكر وأنثى وجعلناكم شعوبا وقبائل لتعارفوا إن أكرمكم عند الله أتقاكم إن
الله عليم خبير

"O mankind! We have created you as male and female, and made you into nations and tribes, that you may know one another. Verily, the most honorable of you with Allâh is he who is most pious. Verily, Allâh is All-Knowing, All-Aware."

Our differences, this critical verse suggests, can be a catalyst for learning, cooperation, and respect – not a cause for strife. Only in this spirit of mutual respect can human beings effectively apply universal principles to specific problems and challenges. Nowhere is this spirit more important than at the intersection of Islam and the West.

To give one concrete example of the magnitude of the change: a vital area for Muslim-West engagement is the protection of the natural environment. Sustainable economic development can solidify bonds of cooperation across the West and the Muslim world. Efforts to preserve natural resources and share new technologies will help to sustain balanced global economic growth, prosperity and opportunity into the future.

This report aims to overcome some, but not all, of the conceptual and methodological problems that plague discussions of Islam and the West. Who represents Islam, Judaism and Christianity? How can neutral language capture the dynamics of interreligious and intercultural understanding?

The report provides some useful, if necessarily contested, definitional markers. Its efforts to track, record and systematically analyse stakeholders, programmes, and events is of course incomplete. But it marks a first, serious effort to map Muslim-West interaction across a range of issue areas.

With this annual report, the World Economic Forum and the C-100 hope to make a vital contribution to intercultural dialogue and understanding in years to come. The report will not shy away from critical and controversial areas at the intersection of Islam and the West, even as it explores and maps new areas for collaboration around concrete policy challenges and sparks reflection on how shared human values can promote peace and justice in practice.

to lesser-known activities with excellent content and/or significant impact at a local, regional, or national level.

In covering this terrain, this report aspires to be representative but cannot be all-inclusive. It highlights international as well as national and some local organizations, programmes, and events that address different issue areas and support divergent agendas.

Learn more about the activities mentioned in this report and about many more that are not mentioned at: http://islamwest.org.

Gallup Muslim-West Dialogue Index

The report draws upon an original survey provided by the Gallup Organization that explores public popular perceptions of the state of Muslim-West dialogue and its future prospects. The Gallup Organization asked a series of questions of at least 1,000 adults in each of the following countries: Bangladesh, Belgium, Brazil, Canada, Denmark, Egypt, Indonesia, Iran, Israel, Italy, Malaysia, Netherlands, Pakistan, the Palestinian Territories, Russia, Saudi Arabia, Singapore, Spain, Sweden, Turkey and the United States. The responses to the questions are elaborated in a summary section and in a dedicated chapter. They serve as building blocks for the Gallup Muslim-West Dialogue Index, a measure of perceptions of the state of dialogue in 21 countries.

Media Tenor Content Analysis

Analysis conducted by Media Tenor International provides an overview of media coverage of Muslim-West issues in 24 countries, half of them Muslim-majority: Egypt, Indonesia, Iran, Jordan, Lebanon, Malaysia, Morocco, Palestinian Territories, Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, Turkey, United Arab Emirates, Brazil, Denmark, France, Germany, Israel, Italy, Namibia, Russia, South Africa, Spain, United Kingdom and the United States.

The content analysis is based on a fifteen-week examination of three TV news shows in mid-2007, three print publications and one business publication from each of the countries. Findings about the tone and salience of media coverage are analysed across the five issue areas considered by the report as a whole.

Short Essays

Short essays are interspersed across the five issue chapters. Contributors include scholars, public officials and religious leaders from across traditions, as well as thought leaders from within the worlds of media, culture and business. The essays provide specific examples of Muslim-West dialogue – what works and what does not – and a range of perspectives on the challenges now facing the West and the Muslim world. Taken together, they represent a wide range of voices and experiences, areas of agreement and disagreement, and practical suggestions on how to advance dialogue in practice.

"The driving force behind all initiatives has to be the belief that actions really do speak louder than words. Therefore, the challenge to all joint statements issued by religious or political leaders will be the question 'So what?'"

John L. Esposito

Box 1.4

A Dialogue for Results

John L. Esposito

John L. Esposito is University Professor and Founding Director of the Prince Alwaleed Bin Talal Center for Muslim-Christian Understanding at Georgetown University. He is the author of many books on Islam including, most recently, *Who Speaks for Islam? What a Billion Muslims Really Think*.

Muslims and Christians have engaged in dialogues for several decades. Post-9/11 the UN, World Economic Forum, OIC (Organization of the Islamic Conference) and many governments have been conducting interreligious and inter-civilizational dialogues globally. Such attention signals a new, more comprehensive role for religion in international affairs: in war and peace, democratization, civil society, educational and economic development.

As the stakes for interreligious understanding rise, it's crucially important to focus our dialogues by asking: How can we better target the problems? What resources do we need to address them? What strategies can get results?

Peter Berger, one of the "fathers" of secularization theory, has observed: "We made a category mistake. We thought that the relationship was between modernization and secularization. In fact it was between modernization and pluralism." Ironically, in a world of globalization when pluralism and tolerance have never been more important, hegemonic and exclusivist ideologies and theologies are ascendant.

Appealing to religion (al-Qaeda) or denigrating it (the Danish cartoons) has become a way to express or legitimate grievances. However, "preachers of hate" – Muslim and non-Muslim, from the political and religious far right – are as motivated by identity politics, anti-immigrant policies and socioeconomic conditions as by theology. Threats to national identity and security in the West and political grievances in the Muslim world are primary catalysts.

To respond to their charges and build bridges of understanding and respect, we need more effective terminology and more powerful counter narratives. Phrases such as "Muslim world and the West", "West-Islamic", like their counterpart – "clash of civilizations" – fail to adequately reflect a complex, multifaceted reality that is political and economic as much as it is religious or cultural.

They fail to counter the growth of Islamophobia and concepts such as Islamofascism that say so much and do so much harm. Once respectable terms such as "tolerance" need to be replaced or transformed from the notion of "sufferance" or "endurance" of "the other" and reinforced by terms that promote mutual understanding and equal respect.

There is a culture war out there. The forces of bigotry and confrontation have powerful resources and access. The driving force behind all initiatives has to be the belief that actions really do speak louder than words. Therefore, the challenge to all joint statements issued by religious or political leaders will be the question: So what? How are statements linked to action plans that penetrate the fabric of our societies?

Conferences and interreligious and inter-civilizational dialogues remain important, but so too are programmes training foreign service officers, teachers and clergy, as well as the next generation. Popular culture initiatives: movies, TV programmes and music promoting and reinforcing religious and cultural pluralism also remain critical. The power of media which tends to feature bad news (conflict and controversy) can also be used to demonstrate the positive realities of the mainstream. Workshops should be offered for local newspaper reporters who influence the general public. Prominent media moguls need to be reached by equally prominent leaders who challenge their content and promote more balanced coverage.

The Internet has become a major tool for information or misinformation as well as diatribe by militant anti-Muslim and anti-Western websites and blogs. A West-Islamic blog is needed that tracks, reports on and responds to the anti-religious, racist and anti-immigrant hate speech on both sides.

For those who think this is just a wish list or an insurmountable challenge, the sobering reality is that preachers of hate already have the financial and human resources – the websites, media access and political commentators. So what's our choice?

2

Measuring the State of the Dialogue between the Muslim and Western Worlds

Authors:
Dalia Mogahed and Ahmed Younis

Research Team:
Dr. Richard Burkholder, Dr. Rajesh Srinivasan, Dr. Bob Tortora, Neli Esipova, Dr. Zsolt Nyiri, Dr. Frank Newport and Dr. Gale Muller

How do people around the world view relations between the West and the Muslim world? Do they see cooperation or conflict? Where there are problems, who do they think is at fault? Are they optimistic or pessimistic about the future? Answers to these questions shed light on the state of Muslim-West relations and the state of the dialogue agenda. The Gallup Muslim-West Dialogue Index measures perceptions of the state of dialogue in 21 countries. It combines responses to nine questions about the state of Muslim-West relations and ranks countries in terms of their citizens' optimism about the state of dialogue The higher the score the more optimistic, with a possible score of 100.

Table 3.1 **The Gallup Muslim-West Dialogue Index**

OVERALL	**37**
BANGLADESH	50
SAUDI ARABIA	46
NETHERLANDS	44
CANADA	44
SINGAPORE	43
IRAN	43
ISRAEL	42
BELGIUM	42
INDONESIA	40
USA	40
THE PALESTINIAN TERRITORIES	39
EGYPT	39
MALAYSIA	39
SWEDEN	38
ITALY	37
DENMARK	37
TURKEY	36
SPAIN	33
PAKISTAN	30*
BRAZIL	26*
RUSSIA	25*

* Indicates a high percentage of "Don't know responses"
100 points = Most optimistic

Key findings from the 2007 survey

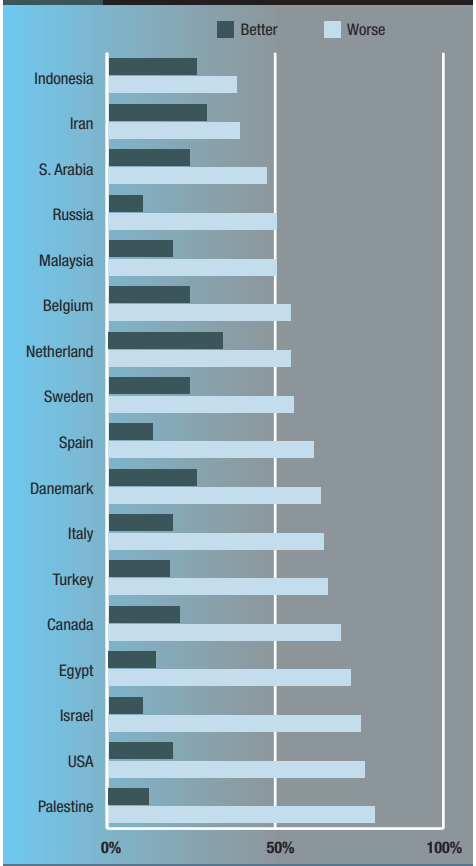
Wars and Worldviews

Majorities in populations around the world believe that violent conflict between the West and the Muslim world can be avoided, but they also share a great deal of pessimism about the state of the relationship. Americans, Israelis and Palestinians are among the most likely to say Muslim-West relations are worsening, reflecting the acute conflicts currently raging in Iraq and the Palestinian territories. This underscores the importance of their resolution to the state of the dialogue.

With tensions between Iran and the United States intensifying, one might expect the Iranian public to be among the most pessimistic about the future of Muslim-West relations. It is therefore worth noting the relative ambivalence among the Iranian public on this question.

Iranians may be drawing a distinction between disliked US policies directed at their country and the overall state of the Muslim-West relationship, especially because some US actions in the region are considered positive by many Iranians. Hostile to Saddam Hussein's regime, Iranians

Figure 3.1 **Do you think the interaction between the Muslim and Western World is getting better or worse?**



have held less negative opinions of the invasion of Iraq than have residents of other Muslim majority countries[1], for example.

At the same time, Iran's relatively favourable trade relationship with some European nations may make Iranians less prone to regarding the United States as a proxy for the West. The majority of Iranians also believe that tension between the West and the Muslim world is due to political, not underlying cultural or religious factors. This may make them less pessimistic than one might expect about Muslim-West relations as a whole.

The Reality-Perception Gap

Among both Muslim majority and non-Muslim majority nations, the proportion who say they think the "other side" is committed to better relations rarely rises above a minority. However, majorities of residents in nations around the world say that better interaction between the Muslim and Western worlds is important to them.

Three-in-four US residents say the Muslim world is not committed to improving relations with the West; an identical percentage of Palestinians attribute the same apathy to the West. At least half of respondents in Italy (58%), Denmark (52%), and Spain (50%) agree that the Muslim world is not committed to improving relations. Israelis represent a notable exception; almost two-thirds (64%) believe the Muslim world is committed to improving relations.

Among the majority-Muslim nations surveyed, we see roughly the same pattern; majorities in every Middle Eastern country studied believe the West is not committed to better relations with the Muslim World, while respondents in majority-Muslim Asian countries are about evenly split.

Despite low levels of confidence in the commitment of those on the "other side", majorities in most nations surveyed in both the Muslim and Western worlds say that the quality of interactions between the two is important to them. In some Western countries, including Denmark, the United States, Belgium, Italy, Israel, Canada and Spain, the percentage who say the issue is important to them is even higher than the percentage who give the Western world credit for commitment to improved relations. In other words, some respondents believe their personal level of concern is higher than that of their own leadership, not to mention the leadership of the "other side".

In the Middle East, Iranians are most likely to say the interaction between the West and the Muslim world is important, at 70%, followed by Turks at 64%. US-imposed

1 *According to a 2005 Gallup World Poll, 57% of Iranians say the invasion of Iraq did more harm than good, compared to more than 90% of Egyptians for example.*

Figure 3.2 **Is the quality of interaction between the Muslim and Western Worlds important to you?**

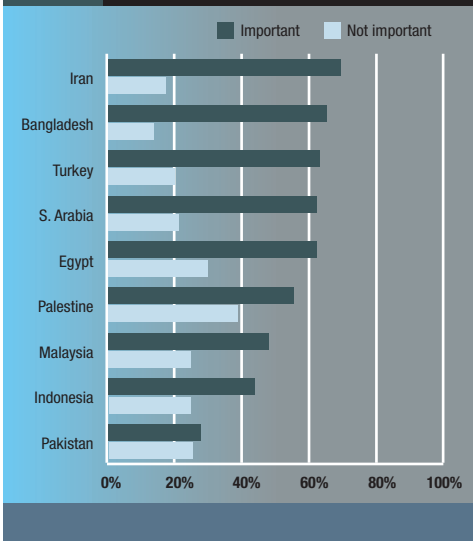


Figure 3.3 **Is the quality of interaction between the Muslim and Western Worlds important to you?**

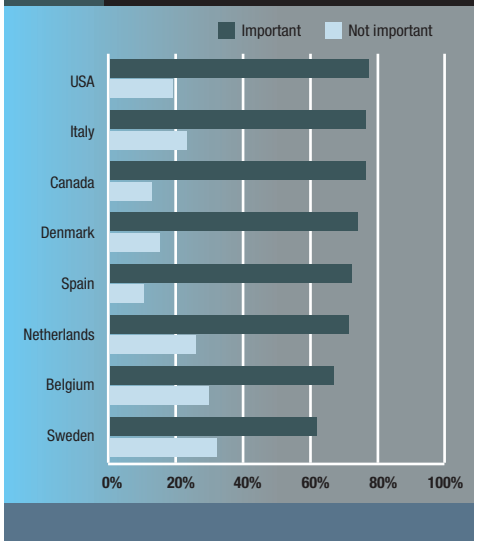


Figure 3.4 **Do you think the Western World is committed to imporving the interaction between the Western and Muslim World?**

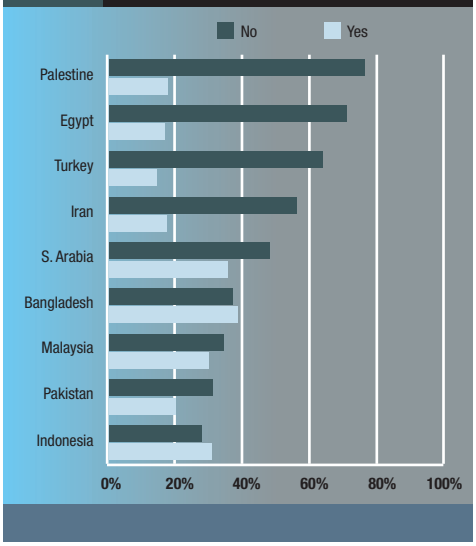
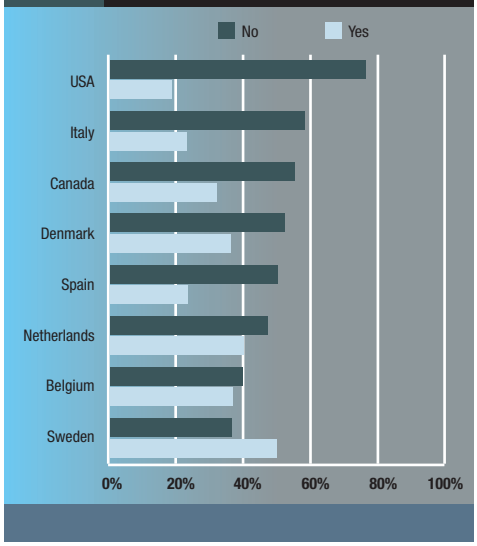


Figure 3.5 **Do you think the Muslim World is committed to imporving the interaction between the Western and Muslim World?**



sanctions, as well as the threat of a US-led attack, make better relations with the West a vital priority for Iranians. Turkey's geographic and economic ties with Europe, as well as its bid for EU membership, make improving relations an imperative there as well. The implication is that residents in these countries are most likely to see potential for positive or negative change in their individual and regional realities stemming from the actions and policies of the West.

Asymmetry in Respect

Although most Muslims say the Muslim world respects the West, many of them feel that the West does not respect the Muslim world. Many Americans and Europeans agree.

In 2005, the Gallup Organization asked residents of several Muslim majority countries to explain in their own words what the West could do to improve relations with the Muslim world. The most frequent response, from countries as different as Turkey and Saudi Arabia, can be summed up with this statement: "Show greater respect for Islam and stop regarding Muslims as inferior."

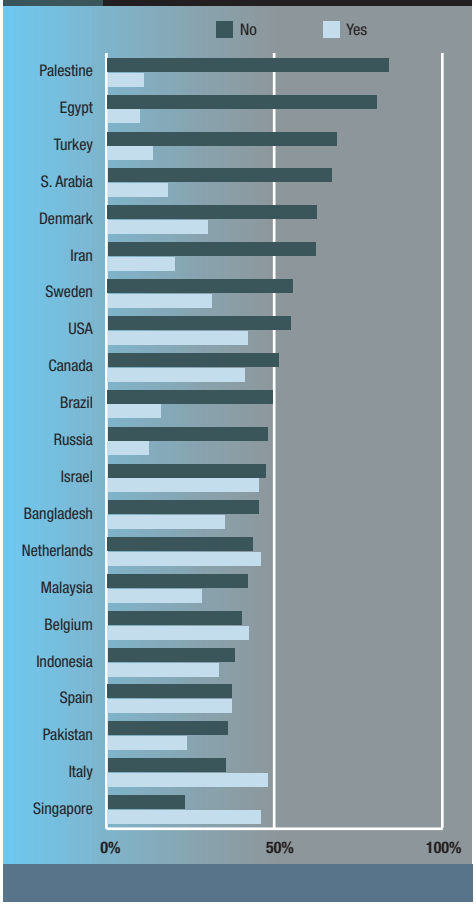
The Gallup Index on Muslim-West Dialogue showed that many Muslim populations believe that the Western world lacks respect for the Muslim world. The vast majority of Palestinians (84%) and Egyptians (80%) say this is the case, while the numbers from Turkey (68%), Saudi Arabia (67%) and Iran (62%) are only somewhat lower. These findings illustrate a consistent sense of being disrespected across nations that have very different economic, political and geo-strategic relationships with the West.

Do residents of Western nations believe the Western world respects Muslim societies? In some cases, the answer is no; fewer than half of those in Denmark (30%), the United States (42%), Sweden (32%) and Canada (41%) believe the West respects the Muslim world. In Israel and the Netherlands, the numbers are somewhat higher (45% and 46%, respectively), though still below half.

In contrast, most residents in all but one majority-Muslim nation believe that the Muslim world respects the Western world. Two-thirds of respondents in Indonesia (65%), the country with the world's largest Muslim population, believe that the Muslim world respects the West; similar numbers are seen in Saudi Arabia (72%), the Palestinian territories (69%) and Egypt (62%). On this question, as on others within the Index, non-Arab nations of the Middle East diverge from their Arab neighbours. In Iran, the percentage who say the Muslim world respects the West is somewhat lower at 52%, while Turkey is the only country in which this figure represents less than a majority, at 45%.

However, while most respondents in almost all Muslim-majority countries say the Muslim world respects the Western world, majorities of those in Western countries – and Israel – disagree. Eighty-two percent of Americans and 73% of

Figure 3.6 **Do you believe the Western World respects the Muslim World?**



Israelis believe that the Muslim world does not respect the West. Similarly high figures are seen in Spain (63%), site of the Madrid terrorist bombing of 2004, Denmark (69%), where the international firestorm over the Danish cartoons depicting the Prophet Muhammad originated in 2005, and the Netherlands (55%), where the 2004 killing of a Dutch filmmaker by a young Muslim has sparked controversy. However, the Index reveals that even in the nations studied with no obvious conflicts or significant dysfunction with local Muslim minority communities – such as Italy (70%), Canada (67%) and Sweden (54%) – high percentages of respondents feel the West is disrespected.

If residents of Muslim majority countries mostly say their society respects the West, why do Westerners feel disrespected? A possible explanation is that Westerners

may conflate negative opinion of the United States common in the Muslim world with a rejection of the West and its values as a whole. This perception is intensified by cultural firestorms such as the Danish cartoon controversy, which leave some Westerners feeling that Muslims do not respect "Western values" of free speech, and therefore do not respect the West. For example, nearly 1 in 2 Danes say they consider Islam to be incompatible with democracy[2], and a slight majority said in 2006 that they believed the Danish newspaper Jyllands-Posten was right to print the controversial cartoon of the Prophet Muhammad with a bomb in his turban as a demonstration of free speech[3]. While most Americans (61%) said they believed it was irresponsible to print the cartoons, the same percentage blamed Muslims' intolerance to other points of view rather than Western disrespect for Islam for the controversy[4].

In other words, many Westerners regarded the reaction of some Muslims to the printing of the cartoon as disrespectful to Western values, just as many Muslims saw the wide distribution of the caricature as an assault on their tradition.

Data suggest, however, that Muslims' unfavourable views of the United States are more often driven by resentment of its perceived policies than by rejection of its values. Data also suggest that the diverse reactions to the Danish cartoons observed across the Muslim world were much more complex than simply a rejection of free speech. Often incited by local factors and aggravated by long standing seemingly unrelated political grievances with Western powers, the actions of a violent and vocal minority in response to the caricature do not represent populations who oppose liberty. In reality, the vast majority of Muslims support the value of free speech in principle. For example, 94% of Egyptians and 92% of Iranians say they would guarantee the right of free speech if they were asked to draft a constitution for a new country[5]. Many Muslim-world respondents also cite freedom of expression as among the qualities of the West that they most admire.

Yet, the Danish cartoon was clearly offensive to many Muslims who felt it violated the boundaries of free speech. Some Europeans agreed – 30% of the German public, 45% French and a majority (57%) of the British public said in 2007 that printing the cartoon was not protected by freedom of speech.

Although Europeans were split about the acceptability of printing the Danish cartoon, there was broad consensus rejecting other expressions. Strong majorities said that newspapers should not be allowed to print racial slurs, child pornography or jokes about the Holocaust. For example, more than 8 out of 10 of the German public said that racial slurs and jokes about the Holocaust were not protected by free speech[6].

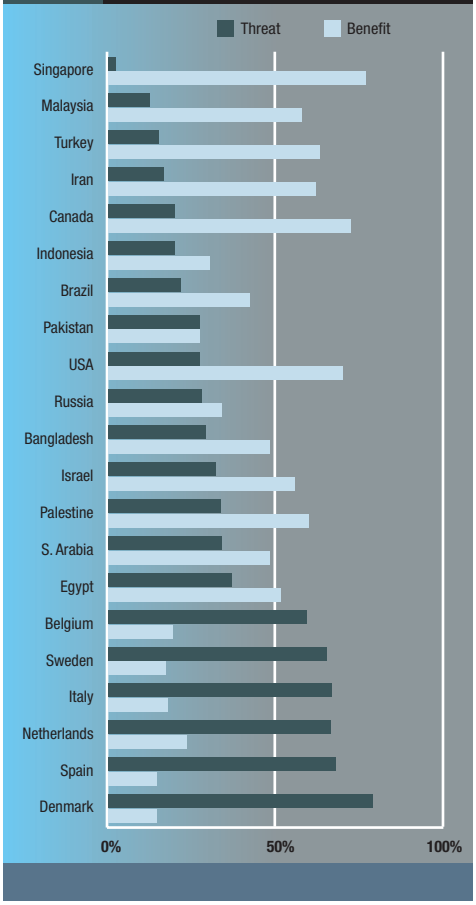
These trends suggest that while Western and Muslim communities both claim free speech as a value, each society creates what it considers are appropriate limits to this freedom, sometimes differing even among societies that share a common faith. Discriminating between a more manageable difference in cultural definitions and an insurmountable clash of basic values is essential to moving the dialogue forward.

European Particularism

European populations surveyed are much more likely to believe that greater interaction between the Muslim and Western worlds is a

2 *AFP, 4 September 2006*
3 *Associated Press, 30 September 2006*
4 *Gallup Poll: Public Critical of European Newspapers Showing Muhammad Cartoon But says controversy reflects Muslims' intolerance, 14 February 2006 by David Moore*
5 *Gallup World Poll Special Report: Islam and Democracy by Dalia Mogahed*
6 *Gallup World Poll in UK, Germany and France, January 2007 referenced in Who Speaks for Islam? What a Billion Muslims Really Think, by John L. Esposito and Dalia Mogahed*

Figure 3.7 **Greater interaction between Muslim and Western Worlds is a...**



threat rather than a benefit. This appears to reflect widespread anti-immigration sentiment within the European Union.

Clear majorities in all European countries surveyed see greater interaction between the West and Muslim worlds as a threat. This is true of 79% of the population in Denmark, 67% in Italy, 67% in the Netherlands, 68% in Spain, 65% in Sweden and 59% in Belgium. This corresponds to a growing fear among Europeans of a perceived "Islamic threat" to their cultural identities, driven in part by rising immigration from predominantly Muslim regions.

A recent poll found that only 21% of Europeans supported Turkey's bid for EU membership[7]. Nicolas Sarkozy's successful presidential campaign in France included strong opposition to Turkish EU membership[8]. A 2006 poll found that the main reason Germans opposed Turkey's membership was "fear of a growing influence of Islam in Europe"[9].

Although some might expect the United States, Israel and the Middle East to be more likely than Europe to feel threatened by the "other," the opposite is the case. In the United States (70%), Canada (72%) and Israel (56%) majorities say that greater interaction is a benefit. Similarly, residents of Saudi Arabia, Egypt, the Palestinian Territories, Malaysia, Turkey and Iran were more likely to feel that greater interaction between Muslim and Western worlds is a benefit rather than a threat.

These findings are supported by a 2005-2006 Gallup world poll that found Americans favoured greater cultural interaction as a way to improve relations with the Muslim world. The same study revealed that the two statements Muslim-world residents most frequently associate with the Muslim World are:

- "Attachment to their spiritual and moral values is crucial to progress."
- "Eager to have better relations with the West."

These results suggest that many Muslims do not regard religious devotion and cross-cultural cooperation as mutually exclusive.

The Ranking

The relative placement of each country in the ranking reflects a complex combination of socio-economic, political and cultural factors. Bangladesh, the highest-ranking nation in the Index and one of the poorest in the world, is home to some of the most optimistic people on earth. For example, although Bangladesh is among the poorest of nations, 62% of Bangladeshis say they are satisfied with their standard of living – comparable to South Korea, where 60% express this sentiment, and much higher than Romania's 37%, despite Romania's considerably higher per-capita GDP.

Bangladeshis are also not directly affected by acute conflicts involving Western powers, which may explain why more of them believe the West and the Muslim world are getting along well and that the relationship is improving than those who believe the opposite. Roughly 2 in 5

7 *http://www.bloomberg.com/apps/news?pid=20601085&sid=az3mrvNAaUFY&refer=europe*
8 *http://acturca.wordpress.com/2007/01/15/sarkozy-launches-presidential-bid-with-anti-turkey-stance/*
9 *http://www.expatica.com/actual/article.asp?subchannel_id=26&story_id=31208*

Bangladeshis also believe the West is committed to better relations with the Muslim world and 35% believe the West respects Muslims – the highest portion of people holding these views among Muslim-majority countries surveyed.

Unlike Bangladesh, some might expect Saudi Arabia and the Netherlands to be among the most pessimistic about Muslim-West dialogue. They were both directly affected either by military or cultural conflicts between Muslim and Western communities. However, they rank second and third respectively in the Index. More Saudis believe greater interaction between Muslim and Western societies is a benefit than those who believe it is a threat, and they are among the most likely majority Muslim countries to give the West credit for commitment to better relations. Saudis are also most likely to express confidence in Muslim good will toward the West, with roughly 7 in 10 saying the Muslim world respects and is committed to better relations with the Western world.

In addition, Saudis are among the most likely to say the relationship between the two communities is of personal concern. These perceptions may reflect a general optimism among Saudis, encouraged by their current economic boom. In 2007, 87% said they were satisfied with their current standard of living. For reference, this compares to 82% of Americans who express similar contentment.

Roughly 1 in 3 residents of the Netherlands believe the relationship between Muslim and Western communities is getting better, second only to Bangladesh. The Dutch are the most likely to believe the Western world is committed to improved relations with Muslim societies (72%) and among the most likely to say they are personally concerned with this issue, though less than half (46%) believes the West respects the Muslim world. Like Saudi Arabia, the Netherlands is the most likely Western country to trust in the other community's good will; 2 in 5 say the Muslim world is committed to better relations and 1 in 3 say it respects the West. Like the other European countries surveyed, the majority of the Dutch see greater interaction between Western and Muslim worlds as a threat, but their relative optimism in other dimensions pushed them into third place.

Pakistan, Brazil and Russia rank last on the Index due more to a lack of a positive response than the prevalence of negative responses. All three nations had a high percentage of "don't know" and "refuse" responses to several questions. For example, 1 in 3 in Brazil refused to answer when asked if relations between the West and the Muslim world are improving, while 43% of Pakistanis said they were unsure. When this many respondents answer this way, it usually means one of two things – either they are uncomfortable with the topic or they lack interest in it.

In the case of Brazil and Russia, this may be due to the lack of personal relevance many respondents feel about the relationship between Muslim and Western communities – less than half say Muslim-West relations are important to them. This is not surprising, as neither country would historically be considered a member of either the West or the Muslim world. It is interesting to note that both Brazil and Russia, as sort of "third party observers", give the Muslim and the Western worlds low marks for commitment and respect of the other. In both countries less than 1 in 5 say the Muslim and Western worlds respect each other, while roughly half say they do not and a third

are unable to answer. It is less clear why so many respondents could or would not answer questions related to Muslim-Western relations in Pakistan, but it could be due to a general feeling of uneasiness in the country due to recent instability.

Dalia Mogahed and Ahmed Younis are respectively Executive Director of and Senior Analyst at the Gallup Center for Muslim Studies. Mogahed also directs the Muslim-West Facts Initiative (www.muslimwestfacts.com). With John L. Esposito, Mogahed is co-author of *Who Speaks for Islam? What a Billion Muslims Really Think*.

Index Calculation

The State of Dialogue Index is constructed from aggregate responses to nine questions.

- Do you think the Muslim world and the Western world are getting along well with each other today?
- Do you believe the Western world respects the Muslim world?
- Do you believe the Muslim world respects the Western world?
- Is the quality of the interaction between the Muslim and the Western world important to you?
- Do you think the interaction between the Muslim world and the Western world is getting better or getting worse?
- Do you think the Muslim world is committed to improving relations between the Western and Muslim worlds?
- Do you think the Western World is committed to improving relations between the Muslim and Western worlds?
- Is greater interaction between the Western and Muslim worlds a threat or benefit?
- Do you think violent conflict between the Muslim and Western worlds can be avoided or not?

For Index calculation purposes, each of the items is scored as "0" for a negative (or unfavourable) response and "1" for a positive (or favourable) response. Those scores are then summed, producing a total of 0, 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, or 9 for each respondent. The sum is then divided by 9 to produce a final individual-level Index score ranging from 0 to 1 that is then aggregated to produce a country-level Index score.

An average weighted by the size of the population over 15 years of age is used to produce an Index score for each category (Muslim, West and overall). The country-level Index score for all countries in each category is multiplied by that country's total population over 15 years of age, creating a weighted Index score. The weighted Index scores and the population totals are then summed across the relevant countries. Finally, the sum of the weighted Index scores is divided by the total population for the category, producing one weighted Index score for the entire category.
For more on the Index and the conduct of the poll, see Annex 1.

3

International Politics

International conflicts at the intersection of the West and the Muslim world dominated headlines and diplomacy in 2006-2007, including the United States occupation and civil war in Iraq, the Israeli war in Lebanon, instability within the Palestinian territories, international terrorism and efforts to combat it, and the US-Iranian confrontation over Teheran's nuclear programme. Other flashpoints included the Sudan, Somalia, Nigeria and Pakistan. Each international controversy had political, economic, and strategic stakes. But each also had a religious and cultural dimension. Political leaders, whether religious or secular in orientation, often framed conflicts in the context of West-Islamic relations.

Over the past several years, the **Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC)**, a grouping of 57 mainly Muslim-majority countries, has emerged as a major voice in international affairs. Under its Secretary General Ekmeleddin Ihsanoglu, the OIC has highlighted the interests and concerns of Muslims and charged the West with not being adequately responsive to them. Around the time of the September 2006 meeting of the UN General Assembly, Ihsanoglu told a group of OIC foreign ministers that "most of the world's hot-bed areas of conflict and tension involve Muslim parties or Muslims' concerns." He continued: "The suffering in Iraq, the denial of rights in Palestine, Kashmir and Cyprus, the state of lawlessness in Somalia, the security situation in Afghanistan, and the situation of Muslim minorities in the Philippines, southern Thailand, Myanmar and elsewhere in the Diaspora cries for justice and recognition of rights." Ihsanoglu called for political action, but also for dialogue to counter what he termed the "lack of real political will on the part of officials, media, academics and legislators in the West."

In the midst of international crises centred on the Middle East, United States President George W. Bush acknowledged the importance of dialogue on many occasions. In June 2007, the US appointed a special envoy to the OIC for the first time. Bush used that occasion for dialogue to defend vigorously American foreign policy as consonant with Muslim interests and concerns. "For decades the free world abandoned Muslims in the Middle East to tyrants, and terrorists and hopelessness," he argued. "This was done in the interests of stability and peace, but instead the approach brought neither. The Middle East became an incubator for terrorism and despair, and the result was an increase in Muslims' hostility to the West."

"Every organizer should make an extra effort to enlist some politicians in their work. The dialogue circuit is too full of people too far from decision-making."

Jan Petersen

Other Western leaders, including then Prime Minister Tony Blair of the United Kingdom and Angela Merkel of Germany, drew connections between the struggle for democracy and the struggle against terrorism. On the fifth anniversary of 9/11, Merkel declared: "Our fight against Islamist terrorism will only succeed if we

Box 3.1

Three Simple Questions

Jan Petersen

Norway's Minister of Foreign Affairs from 2001 to 2004, Jan Petersen is a member of the Norwegian Parliament. He led the country's Conservative Party from 1994-2004.

It is a crowded field. Countless seminars, meetings, working groups, reports and articles deal with interfaith, intercultural and West-Islamic dialogue. This is hardly surprising as some of today's most fundamental challenges are linked to the topics at issue: the integration of Muslim communities into western societies, tolerance and understanding, violent fundamentalism and historical injustices.

What has surprised me, as a long-time elected politician, is how little impact all of this dialogue has on the political agenda and how little of the vast knowledge and wisdom benefiting those who participate in dialogue gets through to a wider public.

Why is this? Some answers may lie with three simple questions.

First, why do I meet so few fellow decision-makers in dialogue meetings? Politicians are not easy to engage simply because their schedules are too full. But they hold the keys to public awareness and to political action. Every organizer should make an extra effort to enlist some politicians in their work. The dialogue circuit is too full of people too far from decision-making. In this way, decision-makers will pick up facts that are vital to understand the challenges, such as how diverse Islam really is.

Second, why do I come from dialogue meetings with so few ideas for concrete action? Participating has been a wonderful learning experience for me. But still, I am frustrated by so much vagueness, so many academic details, so many fine theological points – so little I can use when I get home to my parliament. Do not expect decision-makers to attend just for the pleasure of some new knowledge. They need that and something they can use – now!

It should not be that difficult to focus on issues closer to the political agenda – human rights principles, rule of law, the rights of the individual and democracy, for example. Or perhaps concrete exploration as to why so many in the Muslim world see themselves as victims.

Third, interfaith dialogue is an indispensable part of the dialogue, but is it overshadowing the other aspects? Religion is a fundamental part of who we are, but perhaps we have a tendency to let religion explain more than it can and should. We politicians – and religious leaders as well – should be much clearer on when religion ends and where politics begin.

Box 3.2

Rethinking Moderates and Extremists

HRH Prince Hussam bin Saud bin Abdulaziz al Saud

HRH Prince Hussam bin Saud bin Abdulaziz al Saud is Prince, Saudi Royal Family, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. He is a member of the Executive Committee of World Economic Forum Community of West and Islam Dialogue (C-100).

It is a regular complaint from governments, scholars, political commentators in the media and others that "moderate" Muslims do far too little to make their voices heard in the debate about extremism. The argument is that if only the "moderates" would speak up, we might marginalise extremism and create a foundation for a more constructive dialogue between the West and the Islamic world.

This argument is wrong. The proposition that "moderate" Muslims are responsible for ebbs and flows in the tidal wave of extremism assumes that the root cause of the extremism lies within Islam itself – a fundamentally mistaken assumption.

That proposition also skews the way that many so-called "moderates" are viewed within the Muslim world. Take the example of Palestine. The border of the Jewish state has been affirmed as inclusive of sites that are holy to other faiths. For most Muslims, those who advocate "moderation" in the context of the Palestinian issue are promptly regarded as having betrayed the sanctity of the holy Muslim sites – a cause for which many fellow Muslims are dying.

On the popular level – on the "Muslim street" – moderates are seen, rightly or wrongly, as pursuing an agenda that is an anathema to legitimate Islamic claims. The popular interpretation is that all these "moderate Muslims" are doing is pursuing an agenda that is not so different from that of the powerful Western nations.

The vast majority of Muslims are happy to co-exist, to welcome visitors to their countries, to do business, to travel and live globally. The problem arises when this "moderation" within the Islamic world finds itself in conflict with forces from beyond the Islamic world that do not respect the way of life of Muslims – a way of life that has evolved over many centuries.

It is inevitable that for "moderate" voices to be an effective force in driving dialogue, they must acknowledge the grievances of and injustices suffered by fellow Muslims. It should be understood that if all the "moderate" voices within the Islamic world were to condemn the points of view of all the "extremist" voices, it would – in the current, highly charged context – be seen simply as marking a disregard for the injustices that are being committed against Muslims.

Why so? Because the difference between the "moderate" and the "extremist" is often not an issue of belief, but a matter of action. The purpose of dialogue is to restrain violent action, not dilute belief. Muslims share the same beliefs about the most contentious issues facing them; where they differ is in how to deal with them. But if the "moderates" were seen simply to be pursuing the agenda set by the West – and it is the West that is most prone to define some as "moderate" and others as "extremist" – it would mean that the West's dialogue would be with Muslims who were not representative of general Muslim opinion. Thus, it would be unlikely to bring results.

Ultimately Muslims stand up for themselves – because they believe it is right and because the Holy Qur'an teaches that it is right that they should. When this position leads to violence, it is a sign of how dreadful a situation has become and how intense the sense of injustice has become. Acts of violence will only stop if the injustice ceases in the first place.

In the meantime, the question that requires deeper dialogue is: How in the above context can the "moderates" begin to make a difference, and seize back the initiative from the "extremists"?

strengthen democratic and economic development in the relevant crisis regions and ensure greater respect for human rights." In light of the unpopular war in Iraq and in the wake of revelations about prisoner abuse, Merkel did strike a slightly different tone than Bush. "Even the fight against terrorism cannot justify any means," she argued. "Our actions should be guided not just by determination and international solidarity, but also by international law, tolerance, as well as respect for other cultures."

Public Diplomacy and Public Opinion

Ihsanoglu, Bush and Merkel all acknowledged a current of hostility towards the West in the Middle East and throughout much of the Muslim world. They located that hostility not primarily in cultural or theological differences, but in the experience of war, oppression and inequality, even as they placed the blame differently. In 2006-2007, US public diplomacy failed to communicate the official US position persuasively. According the Gallup World Poll, between 2001-2005 the percentage of citizens in key Muslim-majority countries holding an unfavourable opinion of the United Stated increased markedly – from 64% to 79% in Saudi Arabia, for example, and from 33% to 62% in Turkey. A parallel BBC World Poll discovered sharply negative assessments of the United States: 58% in Lebanon, 57% in the UAE and 59% in Egypt.

"It is inevitable that for 'moderate' voices to be an effective force in driving dialogue, they must acknowledge the grievances of and injustices suffered by fellow Muslims."

HRH Prince Hussam bin Saud bin Abdulaziz al Saud

Interestingly, animosity to the United States is clearly not limited to the Muslim world. In a BBC poll, negative ratings of the US were even higher in Western Europe – 69% in France, 74% in Germany and 57% in the UK. None of these poll results pointed to a structural chasm between the US and the rest of the world. Perceptions of US society and culture remained predominantly positive both in Europe and in Muslim majority countries. But opposition to US policies in the Middle East and around the world was pronounced.

Among Muslims worldwide, antipathy towards the United States and its foreign policy was not matched by broad support for al-Qaeda or terrorism. According to the 2006 Pew Global Attitudes Survey in Great Britain, only 12% of Muslims say that many/most of their fellow Muslims support al-Qaeda, the same number as in Spain and Germany. Similar low numbers predominate in the Muslim world: 13% in Turkey, 18% in Jordan, and a slightly higher 22% in Egypt.

When Muslims were asked directly if they support al-Qaeda's attacks on Americans, a similar picture emerges. An April 2007 poll by World Public Opinion found that 9% of those polled in Morocco, 15% in Indonesia and a 25% in Egypt supported al-Qaeda attacks on Americans. When the question was posed more in terms of support for terrorism in general, the numbers are even lower. In response to the question, "In your opinion, what is the position of Islam regarding attacks against civilians?", small minorities answered "supports" or "certainly supports" – 10% in Indonesia, 4% in Egypt, and 2% in Morocco.

In the context of war, terrorism and the efforts to combat it, the obvious distinction between Muslims and terrorists was often lost on Western publics. Anxieties reinforced by 9/11 and subsequent bombings in Madrid in March 2004 and London in July 2005 reinforced a popular association of Islam with terrorism. In the United States, for example, a March 2006 Washington Post/ABC poll found that hostility toward Islam had increased markedly over the previous four years: 46% of those polled expressed a generally unfavourable view of Islam, almost double the January 2002 level.

In the same poll, 58% of Americans held that there were more violent extremists within Islam than in other religions – a jump of 20%. Interestingly, though, in a July 2007 New York Times/CBS Poll Americans appeared increasingly opposed to the notion that an activist foreign policy in the

Box 3.3

Public Dialogue

Marc Gopin

Professor Marc Gopin is the Director of the Center for World Religions, Diplomacy and Conflict Resolution at George Mason University. He is author of many books, including *Holy War, Holy Peace*.

Dialogue is a too little used art of diplomacy that offers critical tools for addressing West-Islamic tensions. Blending culture and religion with diplomacy and conflict resolution, while difficult, can add to the power of dialogue. Public dialogue can sometimes, in a short moment, have dramatic impact for thousands of people.

My May 2006 visit to Aleppo, Syria, was one such moment. I, an American Rabbi, had a public encounter with thousands of followers of an influential Mufti. The visit unfolded without a script and took unexpected turns. It began with a private talk before Friday prayers where the Mufti revealed his concern about dangerous roles of extremists in both politics and religion.

The Mufti then introduced me to a tall young man and recounted his story: He was Iraqi. He was in Abu Ghraib for eight months, then released without charge. His two brothers were picked up but not heard from since. He spent 22 days living in a coffin. American soldiers took him out at meal times, and then shackled him back inside the coffin.

While the Mufti turned to other topics, the young man from Abu Ghraib and I stared at each other. I broke the formal decorum, stood up and walked across the hall to him with the interpreter following nervously. All eyes turned toward us as I spoke quietly to the young man, telling him how deeply sorry I was for what had happened. I apologized in the name of the American people. We embraced. I held back tears at the confused look on his face.

After the private session, the group proceeded into the larger chamber of the mosque where the service had ended. The Mufti, before some 3,000 people, invited the “man of religion” from America to come forward and speak – he did not then let it be known that I was a rabbi. Standing beside the Mufti, I cited Biblical teachings on love of neighbour, on the sin of hatred in the heart, and on avoiding doing to others what is hateful to you.

The Mufti told the crowd about my embrace of the man from Abu Ghraib, challenging them to respond as I had done. As the Mufti, the young man from Abu Graib and I stood together, people in the front rows began videotaping us on their cell phones. I heard later that President Assad remarked that this incident at the mosque “was worth more to me than a hundred speeches by the American President.”

There was a shift that day as the Mufti showed his followers that you can advance politically by honouring guests – even those considered enemies – and accepting apologies with grace. America can be dealt with without brinksmanship or flirtations with religious radicalism.

Middle East was the right way to address the perceived threat. When asked: "In the long run, will the US be safer from terrorism if it confronts the countries and groups that promote terrorism in the Middle East," or "if it stays out of other countries' affairs in the Middle East?", 38% affirmed the first option and 54% the second.

Iraq and Iran

Iraq represented the most obvious failure of dialogue in 2006-2007, both domestically and internationally. Successful democratic elections in December 2005 gave rise to a new government committed to national unity. But interest-conflict within and among the Shia majority and Sunni and Kurdish minorities, each with its own regional base of support, prevented the implementation of effective political and economic reforms. The bombing of the Samarra mosque by Sunni extremists in February 2006 led to an escalation of sectarian violence that further deepened political divisions. The US troop build up dampened the level of violence over the course of 2007.

Dialogue among Iraq's religious and political factions to arrive at compromises that might ensure stability and facilitate an eventual US withdrawal did not materialize. Efforts at the level of civil society have also had limited impact. The **Iraqi Institute of Peace**, for example, is working under difficult conditions to foster dialogue among Muslims and the Christian minority and to engage the media in an effort to strengthen civil society. At the level of international diplomacy, effective dialogue and negotiations have yet to take place. The Bush administration initially rejected the recommendations of the December 2006 *Report of the Iraq Study Group* to bring Iraq's neighbours – Iran in particular – into a dialogue about the situation in Iraq and the region.

It was around Iran and its nuclear programme that the mix of dialogue and confrontation with the West was the most explosive in 2007. While the issues were international in scope – for example, Iran's obligations under the Non-Proliferation Treaty – the major players were Teheran and Washington. The Bush administration insisted that Iran halt its programme and accept international controls as a precondition for bilateral dialogue. Iran, under its President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, pressed for talks without preconditions.

In an open letter dated May 2006, Ahmadinejad invited Bush into a dialogue based on shared Abrahamic principles. "All prophets speak of peace and tranquility for man – based on monotheism, justice and respect for human dignity," he wrote. "Do you not think that if all of us come to believe in and abide by these principles, that is, monotheism, worship of God, justice, respect for the dignity of man, belief in the Last Day, we can overcome the present problems of the world – that are the result of disobedience to the Almighty and the teachings of prophets – and improve our performance?"

US Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice, noting that the letter did not address key strategic issues dividing the two countries, dismissed it as "very philosophical." The administration later criticized Columbia University for inviting Ahmadinejad to speak on campus in October 2007, and the next month Bush evoked the spectre of World War III if Iran's nuclear ambitions went unchecked.

"Blending culture and religion with diplomacy and conflict resolution, while difficult, can add to the power of dialogue. And public dialogue can sometimes, in a short moment, have dramatic impact for thousands of people."

Marc Gopin

Over this period, European efforts to advance dialogue with Iran to help prevent a possible US-Iran war over the nuclear question came to very little. In 2003, Iran had cancelled its Comprehensive Dialogue with the European Union in protest against efforts to advance human rights within the country. Ahmadinejad's subsequent references to the destruction of Israel and his vocal denial of the

Holocaust further soured relations. "A president that questions Israel's right to exist, a president that denies the Holocaust, cannot expect to receive any tolerance from Germany," Merkel underscored.

European frustration culminated in the 2006 Paris Statement setting out strict conditions on inspections and transparency that must be met before diplomatic ties between the EU and Iran could resume. Among European leaders, Italian Prime Minister Romano Prodi has been less critical of Iran's nuclear programme, while at the same time insisting on curbing any military applications. At an October 2007 meeting on the topic in Rome, he emphasized "dialogue as the only tool" for calming tensions between the Iran and the West.

As official dialogue with Iran was faltering, parliamentarians and members of civil society in both Europe and the United States promoted open lines of communication. A first inter-parliamentary meeting took place in Brussels in October 2006 between members of the European Parliament and a delegation of their Iranian counterparts. Topics of discussion ranged broadly, including the war in Iraq, trade relations, human rights, the fight against terrorism and the status of Iran's nuclear programme.

A high profile religious delegation from the US sought out the Iranian leadership for dialogue in February 2007. The group, which included representatives from the Mennonite, Quaker, Episcopal, Catholic and United Methodist communities, and the National Council of Churches, met with Ahmadinejad, former President Mohammad Khatami and with Iranian Muslim and Christian leaders. The delegation called for direct, face-to-face talks, an abandonment of "enemy" images in descriptions of the other, and more people-to-people exchanges at the level of civil society. The trip had a modest press echo, however, and was not coordinated in any way with the US administration. Khatami's visit to the US and address at the National Cathedral in September 2007 also had no appreciable impact on the tense bilateral relationship.

The Israeli-Palestinian Conflict

The same mixture of official deadlock and non-governmental activism was evident around the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. The January 2006 victory of Hamas in contested democratic elections in the Palestinian Authority and the Israeli refusal to recognize the new government that emerged effectively ruled out progress towards a territorial settlement.

"Our analysis of the current world crisis needs to move from discourse about Islam versus the West to an analysis of power and knowledge and the interrelationship between them. Religious discourse, particularly, has been used to obscure the 'greater business of plunder.'"

HH Sheikha Mozah Bint Nasser Al-Missned

The Israeli war in southern Lebanon in July and August 2006, justified as an effort to liberate captured Israeli soldiers and disarm Hezbollah guerrillas, was viewed by Lebanese and throughout the Arab and Muslim world as an attack on Lebanon itself. A further blow to the peace process was the conflict between Hamas and Fatah that broke out after the Israeli withdrawal from Gaza, and culminated in Hamas taking full control of Gaza and Fatah seizing back control of the West Bank.

Box 3.4

West-Islamic Dialogue: What it is Really About

Her Highness Sheikha Mozah Bint Nasser Al-Missned

HH Sheikha Mozah Bint Nasser Al-Missned is Chair of the Qatar Foundation for Education, Science and Community Development. In 2005 she was selected as a member of the United Nations High Level Group of the Alliance of Civilizations.

Author Franz Fanon once noted that "the business of obscuring language is a mask behind which stands out the much greater business of plunder." If we truly want to assess the current state of dialogue between "Islam" and the "West", we need to begin by noting that dialogue itself is a mask that obscures very real material and political conflicts.

The real conflict is the ongoing battle for supremacy among the leading world powers, played out in the form of economic and technological expansionism or globalization. The great powers impose conditions on the less powerful, and these conditions are, naturally, met with resistance in most societies.

When this happens in Middle Eastern countries, the conflict is spun as a West versus Islam clash. Consider, for example, why the current conflict between Russia and the United States has not instigated a similar kind of debate? Or tensions between the West and China? The framing is different because the clashes involve equally powerful actors who respond with an equivalent propaganda offensive.

The Middle East is a much less powerful adversary, much less capable of gaining the upper hand in technological battles or propaganda wars. Therefore, the struggles for power across the region are almost always referred to in terms that obscure the unequal balance of power – as an ideological and eternal cultural and religious conflict.

So where does that leave those of us with our feet firmly planted on the earth? Unfortunately, those of us on the ground are still arguing within the terms that have been constructed for us. Instead of examining the relationship between monopolies of knowledge and monopolies of power, we are discussing the current world crisis in terms of culture wars and civilization clashes.

While lip service is given to the promotion of knowledge societies, powerful countries actively support an unequal relationship with developed societies as the producers and the developing world as consumers of knowledge. As long as knowledge and development lie in the hands of a select group of powerful nations, the rest of the world is at their mercy for their security.

Our analysis of the current world crisis needs to move from discourse about Islam versus the West to an analysis of power and knowledge and the interrelationship between them. Religious discourse, particularly, has been used to obscure the "greater business of plunder." In both Muslim and non-Muslim countries, religion has entered the political debate as a way to manufacture public support for diverse political agendas.

The so-called war of ideas, or culture war, is thus not a war between Western democracy and medieval Islam, but a conflict of interests between those who wish to obscure the truth and those who wish to unveil it. For people to see it like it is and generate hope for the future, we need to look to the stars in more ways than one. As Albert Einstein once remarked, "we can't solve problems by using the same kind of thinking we used when we created them."

In this context, the Arab League, under the leadership of Saudi Arabia, put forward a blueprint for a final peace settlement based upon secure borders and self-determination. In the spring and summer of 2007, the Bush administration began to press hard – for the first time – for high-level, multilateral meetings to achieve a just peace marked by security for Israel and sovereignty for a Palestinian state.

Outside of official state diplomacy, there were several important efforts to advance dialogue around the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. The UN-based **Alliance of Civilizations** was perhaps the most significant. The November 2006 Report of its High Level Group, which brought together leaders from government and civil society from across major religious and secular traditions, argued that progress depended on advance towards a just peace. "Israel's continuing occupation of Palestinian and other Arab territories and the unresolved status of Jerusalem – a holy city for Muslims and Christians as well as Jews – have persisted with the perceived acquiescence of Western governments and thus are primary causes of resentment and anger in the Muslim world toward Western nations."

Against this backdrop, the Report recommended a White Paper on the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict that might offer dispassionate analysis and juxtapose competing national narratives on both sides as a foundation for future peace negotiations. When asked during his farewell press conference in December 2006 what international issues posed the most serious challenge to the success of Muslim-West dialogue, Secretary-General Kofi Annan underscored that "one crisis that has impact well beyond its borders on people far away from the conflict is the Israeli-Palestinian issue."

A widening circle of civil society institutions has become increasingly active in public diplomatic ventures. **Search for Common Ground**, a Washington, DC-based NGO active around the world in support of conflict resolution, is among the most prominent. In January 2007 the group was among the co-sponsors of the Madrid+15 Conference on the peace process that featured government representatives from Spain, Egypt, Israel, Lebanon, Jordan and Syria, their counterparts from the US, the EU, and Russia, and a variety of civil society actors. Held to coincide with the 15th anniversary of the 1991 Madrid Middle East Peace Conference, the event was also sponsored by the **Toledo International Centre for Peace**, the **Fundación Tres Culturas del Mediterráneo**, **FAFO** and the **International Crisis Group**. Participants reached broad agreement on the requirements for a lasting peace and the importance of international support for local initiatives. Norwegian Minister of Foreign Affairs Jonas Gahr Støre articulated a common perspective: "The road to renewed political efforts towards peace and security for all can only be found through strong commitment to engagement in dialogue."

A significant multi-sectoral dialogue event involving prominent public and private sector figures was the February 2007 *US-Islamic World Forum*, sponsored by the **Brookings Institution** and hosted by the Government of Qatar. The meeting, the fourth in an annual series, brought American leaders from government and civil society together with their counterparts from some 37 Muslim-majority countries.

The 200 participants, drawn from multiple sectors, addressed the topic Confronting What Divides Us, and touched on issues including the Palestinian-Israeli conflict, Iraq, Iran and Lebanon. The organizers combined

Box 3.5

The West and Islam: Challenge for a Meaningful Dialogue

HE Sheikha Haya Rashed Al Khalifa

HE Sheikha Haya Rashed Al Khalifa of Bahrain is an eminent legal scholar. In June 2006 she was elected President of the 61st session of the UN General Assembly.

"Clash of civilizations" or "dialogue among civilizations" are terms that seek to capture West-Islamic relations. While they risk over-generalization, each has some validity. Islamophobia is on the rise in many Western countries, and there is a comparable increase in several Islamic societies in labelling non-Muslims as infidels, and dismissing their traditions and ways of life. Calls for tolerance, coexistence and dialogue between the Islamic and Western worlds proliferate on both sides.

To be meaningful, such dialogue will have to extend beyond elite and intellectual circles. It is vital to move from mere rhetoric to action that creates the appropriate social and political environment for tolerance and coexistence to flourish. The main challenge is to recognize that we face problems on both sides.

Most Muslims see a state of crisis within the Islamic World. Nationally, societies face identity crises, political instability, corruption, and economic inequalities – not to mention rival claims of religious legitimacy. Regionally, intra-state relations are characterized by competition and suspicion.

Internationally, relationships between the region and the West are seen as dominated by economic, political, military and ideological weakness and dependency. A collective feeling of injustice and prejudice is fuelled predominantly by the unresolved Palestinian question.

Faced with this constellation and with the failure of secular ideologies once applied within a Muslim context, such as Marxism and liberalism, more and more Muslims have come to see Islam as the ultimate way to transform the status quo. The end result is a challenge that views universalism with suspicion and places struggle within an historic, nationalistic and religious framework.

Western circles rarely recognize these complex cultural, historical, and religious realities. They tend to view Muslim conduct in isolation from the global crises that have wracked the Middle East and to focus narrowly on political Islam and the stereotype of its resistance to modernity.

We are entering a vicious cycle marked by Muslim-West divisions, a crisis of universalism in which reactions on both sides feed nationalism and isolation. Each side needs to work harder to understand the "other" and accept that engagement in a constructive dialogue requires a willingness to criticize the "self" and alter behaviour accordingly. A modest attitude, with no state or civilization claiming ideological hegemony, is essential.

The West needs to revise current policies toward the Middle East. The Muslim world needs to revive and encourage schools of thought that interpret doctrine on the basis of reason and in light of contemporary global challenges. The relationship between an overbearing state and a passive society in many Muslim-majority countries must be recalibrated.

These are prerequisites for a constructive dialogue that can move beyond the elite level, overcome mutual suspicions and lay foundations for peaceful coexistence.

off-the record task forces, which allowed for frank exchanges around key topics, with plenary sessions that brought core issues out into the open. At one session a leading Sunni cleric, Youssef al-Qaradawi, levelled a jeremiad towards US policy in the Middle East and unconditional support for Israel. "The billions you are spending to build up military power in the Middle East are not going to gain anything for you, which is clear from your failures in Iraq and Afghanistan," he charged.

"To be meaningful, such dialogue will have to extend beyond elite and intellectual circles. It is vital to move from mere rhetoric to action that creates the appropriate social and political environment for tolerance and coexistence to flourish." HE Sheikha Haya Rashed Al Khalifa

A rich array of dialogue efforts at the level of civil society has sought to lay foundations for a durable peace in the region. Perhaps the boldest is the **Alexandria Process**. A historic meeting of religious leaders in the Holy Land culminated in 2002 in the *Alexandria Declaration*, a pledge to work for lasting peace in Israel and Palestine based on the principles of security and self-determination. Lord Carey of Clifton, then the Archbishop of Canterbury, chaired the first Alexandria conference, in which Palestinian Authority President Yasser Arafat and Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon both participated.

The process of interreligious consultation continued quietly, and not without difficulty, over subsequent years. In 2006 several local centres were set up in Gaza, Northern Israel and Jerusalem to broaden participation in the Alexandria Process. In March 2007, a Christian-Muslim-Jewish working group was formed to foster practical grassroots projects in support of under-privileged communities and the goal of reconciliation. According to Canon Andrew White of the **International Centre for Reconciliation**: "Nobody involved was naïve enough to think the Alexandria Declaration would provide the solution to the crisis, and although the cycle of violence continues, the Alexandria Process remains a significant channel of Israeli and Palestinian engagement."

A wide and growing variety of other dialogue efforts focused on the goal of a just and lasting peace in the Middle East have taken place at the level of civil society. Among the organizations in this space are **Combatants for Peace**, a group of former Israeli and Palestinian soldiers committed to bringing an end to the use of force through a two-state solution, and **Women to Women for Peace**, which brings women and mothers from various Jewish and Muslim communities in the US and UK together to "nurture the seeds for peace." The **Abraham Fund**, which centres its efforts on Jews and Arabs living in Israel, sponsored a conference, *We Were Born to Live Together*, in July 2007. It was designed to raise awareness about the complexities underlying the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, especially in the Jewish-Arab mixed region of Galilee. Speakers brought to light new thinking on government and grassroots "coexistence activities."

For Rajmohan Gandhi, a scholar of South Asian and Middle Eastern Studies – and Mahatma Gahdhi's grandson – these widely different and independent peace initiatives suggest the possibility of a "wall of peace" that can join different communities together.

Box 3.6

Excerpts: Address at the Annual Meeting of the World Economic Forum, January 2007

Tzipi Livni, Vice-Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs, Israel

[…] For a better future, we must stick to the vision of two states – two states living side by side in peace – and examine, even in the most difficult times, what are the best ways to achieve or to advance this goal.

It is true that in both of our societies, there is sometimes deepest criticism about the possibility to end the conflict and to achieve peace. Looking back at past experience I can understand it. We tried almost everything.

We tried what is called a step-by-step approach in the Oslo Accords, and the agreements which were signed afterwards. The idea was to create confidence, but, unfortunately, it produced a lack of confidence. We tried the end game – at Camp David 2000 – where the idea was to try and end the conflict. It produced no agreement, but led to frustration and this is also part of our reality. And we tried a unilateral step – the disengagement plan – in which Israel dismantled settlements and took our forces out of the Gaza Strip. This in order to give the Palestinians the message that Israel means business; that we are willing to remove settlements; that we would like to live in peace and to give the Palestinians an opportunity to transform Gaza into a success, into the first part of a Palestinian state. But, the result is that Gaza now, is a terrorist nest, controlled by Hamas, by terrorist organizations.

[…] I believe that a political horizon is vital to both our peoples – on the one hand, to provide a clear understanding of the vision of a Palestinian state, and the understanding that a Palestinian state is not an illusion; it is feasible, it is there, and it is achievable; and, at the same time, to give Israelis the assurance that the concessions will not threaten their lives.

[…] Now, in order to realize this vision, we must take into account also the battle which is taking place in the region, between moderates committed to the vision of the two state solution, and extremists who are committed to destroying it.

[…] Moderate leaders must provide answers to the new threats in the region, but there are also new opportunities; because we share the same goals and the same vision with all the moderates in the region. Talking about Israel, about moderates in the Palestinian Authority, about moderate Arab and Moslem leaders, the international community, and the free world – it is not a zero sum game. To support Israel is not to be anti-Palestinian and to support the moderates is to fight for the same goals that we all believe in. So, these are the challenges and I believe that this is the role of the international community: to disempower the extremists and to empower the moderates - these need to be simultaneous. One the one hand, to empower, to encourage, to strengthen the moderates and, on the other hand, to disempower, to maintain the pressure and the requirements, and to de-legitimatize the extremists.

[…] I would like to negotiate, to speak, to meet, to talk with Palestinians because I believe that this is part of the need to share ideas, to find out what are the common denominators, to see what we can achieve. I would like to hear your concerns and I also like to share our concerns with you.

Source: http://www.mfa.gov.il/MFA/Government/Speeches+by+Israeli+leaders/2007/FM+Livni+participates+in+discussion+of+Israel-Palestinian+conflict+in+Davos+25-Jan-2007.htm

The idea that resolving the Israeli-Palestinian conflict might lead to a breakthrough in overall Muslim-West relations is not universally shared. At the January 2007 Annual Meeting of the **World Economic Forum**, Israeli Foreign Minister Tzipi Livni expressed her scepticism. "Since our establishment we have been on the frontlines of a conflict that many perceive to be a major flashpoint between Islam and the West," she noted. "Some believe – mistakenly in my view – that resolving this conflict is the key to restoring harmony between Islam and the West." She pointed instead to deeper problems, in particular the struggle between Muslim moderates and extremists. In her view, the latter were exploiting the Israeli-Palestinian conflict to mobilize their supporters. The core political issue, Livni insisted, was the willingness of Israel's neighbours to respect its right to exist within secure borders.

Whatever its centrality to broader Muslim-West relations, the Israeli-Palestinian conflict remained high on the international agenda through 2007. In November 2007, the Bush Administration convened the Annapolis Conference, during which both parties agreed in a joint statement to "immediately launch good faith, bilateral negotiations in order to conclude a peace treaty resolving all outstanding issues, including core issues, without exception." The discussions and potential negotiations that ensue into 2008 will shed new light on the interrelationship between the Israeli-Palestinian conflict in particular, and West-Islamic relations in general.

International politics is a critical framework for Muslim-West dialogue. None of the major issues of 2006-2007 – the challenge of terrorism, the war in Iraq, US-Iranian relations and the Israeli-Palestinian conflict – pitted a monolithic West against a uniform Muslim world. The economic and security interests of states, not the clash of entire religions, cultures, or civilizations, remain the main fault lines in world affairs in the Middle East and elsewhere. Concerns about national sovereignty, political stability and access to oil – the lifeblood of the world economy – inform the major conflicts explored here.

At the same time, geopolitical and territorial conflicts are shaped by religious and cultural identities. In 2006-2007, widespread anxiety about Islamic extremism and considerable antipathy toward the United States and the West characterized public opinion. Media analysis featured in this report both reinforced – and were reinforced by – international political conflicts. Against a backdrop of war, violence and the clash of interests, dialogue within and across national contexts necessarily has a limited global impact.

Despite its limitations, dialogue has the potential to foster understanding and trust, change domestic political dynamics and build political support for peaceful collaboration across a multiple issue areas. The balance of this report explores dialogue efforts outside of – but not unaffected by – geopolitical contexts, where the challenges and opportunities are different.

4

Citizenship and Integration

Over the past several years, citizenship and integration issues have become more prominent in Europe, North America, the Middle East, Africa and Asia. Controversies about democracy and minority rights are increasingly common in multicultural societies. Here, in the domestic national context, the terms "West" and "Islam" must be applied most carefully.

Western countries encompass secular institutions, Christian majorities (many with a secular outlook), and citizens of many other faith traditions, including Judaism and Islam. In both Western and Muslim majority countries, Islam is a cultural as well as a religious identity. It can be a force in civil society, an element of national identity or, as in Iran and Saudi Arabia, a foundation for political institutions. Muslim majority societies are home to non-Muslim minorities who may or may not identify with Western countries. These overlapping meanings of West and Islam create a complex picture.

The European Scene

It would be a mistake to downplay the concept of Muslim-West dialogue in light of this complexity. It matters in national contexts because in Western countries in particular, Islam is an important emerging political issue. This is most clear in Europe where the continent's Muslim population has been growing steadily. For example, in Germany and the UK Muslims comprise about 3% of the population. In France the figure is about 9%.

Europe's Muslims are a diverse group, comprised mainly of the children and grandchildren of immigrants from Turkey, North Africa and South Asia. Some have made great economic strides and enjoy social and political rights, while many others remain mired in poverty on the margins of European society. The growth of the Muslim minority in and of itself does not explain the rise of Islam-related issues on the political agenda. This is due more to popular anxieties about Islam and the perceived threat it poses to national identity and security.

The bombings in Madrid in 2004 and London in 2005 heightened fears of Islamic extremists, while the headscarf controversy in France in 2004-2005 and the cartoon controversy of 2005-2006, pointed to cultural differences. The vast majority of European Muslims reject violence against civilians and are more concerned with economic opportunities and social services than with religious symbolism. Nevertheless, Muslim minorities in West Europe have often emerged as an "other" in anti-immigrant domestic politics.

Public opinion trends bear this out. In May 2006, a Motivaction/GPD Poll found that 63% of Dutch citizens viewed Islam as incompatible with modern European life. A Transatlantic Trends Report that same year, posing the question of Islam's compatibility with democracy, found comparable negative results in Germany (67%), Italy (62%) and Spain (62%). When the Gallup Organization asked residents of Germany, the United Kingdom and France in 2006-2007 whether they consider Muslims living in their countries to be loyal to the country, only between 35% and 45% responded affirmatively.

These anxieties about Muslims' commitments to democracy and national identity contrast with

egration

the views of European Muslims. In the Gallup poll, large majorities expressed support for democratic institutions and higher approval ratings for the government than did non-Muslim citizens. Just fewer than three-quarters of Muslims maintained that Muslims are loyal to the countries they live in. This last figure can be read in two ways. It is almost double the percentage of non-Muslims who view Muslims as loyal. At the same time it suggests that one quarter of Muslims interviewed have doubts about the minority's identification with the countries they live in. Either way, the figure suggests a political fault line within Europe around questions of citizenship and integration.

"The three Abrahamic faiths all came to Europe at times and by paths that we can pinpoint. All are equal in belonging to Europe. Europe must understand that we are here as indigenous Muslims."

Mustafa Ceric

Public opinion has shaped and been shaped by the discourse of political elites. If far-right parties are openly hostile to Islam, most centrist European leaders have sought to reach out to Muslims, and the left has been most proactive. Mainstream political rhetoric typically contrasts concern about the extremist minorities with faith in a peaceful majority well integrated in and supportive of democratic institutions. "Muslims overwhelmingly want to play a full part in the complex and diverse societies in which they find themselves," then Prime Minister Tony Blair asserted just before leaving office in May 2007. "Most seek to play a part as loyal citizens of their countries and as loyal Muslims."

Muslim leaders in Europe, including Tariq Ramadan, often echo such sentiments, with a somewhat different emphasis. Ramadan, a Swiss scholar based at Oxford University, insists on the compatibility of Islam with democracy and human rights and on the contribution of Muslims to Western society. At the same time, he has criticized European leaders for exaggerating security concerns and, through policies of racism and economic and social exclusion, violating the rights of the Muslim minority. "Rather than insisting that Muslims yield to a 'duty to integrate', society must shoulder its 'duty of consistency'," Ramadan wrote in June 2007.

Within this volatile political context, European governments have sought to institutionalize dialogue with Muslim citizens and residents. Commissions and consultations have proliferated, with either direct or indirect state support, to engage different forces in civil society in a productive discussion of how best to combine cultural and religious diversity with national identity and social integration.

The **French Council for the Muslim Faith** (CFCM), created in 2003 as a forum for consultations between the Muslim community and the state, proved to be the forerunner of a series of national dialogue efforts. Following the London bombings, the British government created a taskforce with Muslim participation, **Preventing Extremism Together**.

In September 2006, the German government created the **German Conference on Islam**, "to improve religious and social integration of the Muslim population in Germany." The conference seeks to promote "an understanding of integration which recognizes cultural and religious differences, while requiring the complete acceptance of Germany's liberal democracy." At its second plenary session in May 2007, the conference set out an agenda for two years around several themes, including the German social system and value consensus, religious issues and the German understanding of the constitution, media and the private sector as bridge builders, and security and Islamism.

As early as 2003, Italian Interior Minister Giuseppe Pisanu proposed the creation of a Council of Muslims, similar to the French model. The **Consulta Islamica** (Islamic Consultation) was set up in 2005 to facilitate dialogue with Muslim leaders on pressing issues.

Civil society organizations have also been active in Italy. The **Unione delle Comunita de Organizzazioni Islamiche in Italia** (Union of the Committee of Italian Islamic Organizations) has served since 1990 to offer a collective Muslim voice in dealings with the Italian state. The community claims to represent 80% to 90% of Italy's Muslim mosques and associations. Its conferences debate and present conclusions, several in the form of formal statements, on issues relating to citizenship and integration. Following major events in Muslim-European relations, such as the death of John Paul II and the London bombings, it has helped to craft constructive national responses. Another Muslim organization, the **Centro Islamico Culturale d'Italia** (Islamic Cultural Centre of Italy) brings together representatives of mosques and Islamic associations across central and northern Italy around issues of common concern.

Dialogue efforts at the level of civil society have flourished in other countries as well. In Spain, numerous projects tackle the social controversies linked to the integration of Muslim minorities. The **Atman Foundation for Dialogue among Civilizations** hosts a biannual *Atman Encounter for International Debate*. It brings international leaders and intellectuals to Madrid to discuss key issues such as immigration, freedom and respect.

At the local level, the **Unión de Comunidades Islámicas de España** (Union of Islamic Communities of Spain) represents a broad range of local Muslim communities and facilitates cooperation between the government and the Muslim minority. It also sponsors workshops designed to build the capacity of Muslim communities to engage more actively and constructively with local government.

Denmark was the venue for the November 2005 Conference on *EU-Citizenship and Religious Identity*, sponsored by the **Islamic-Christian Study Centre of Copenhagen**. The conference convened both Christian and Muslim leaders. The three-day event addressed issues such as the admission of Turkey into the EU, the identities of Muslim communities in secular Europe, and Muslims' and non-Muslims' perceptions of each other within European society.

"Our famous tolerance has degenerated into indifference. This makes people feel excluded – sometimes literally because they do not speak the language – so that they retreat into their own bastions and cultivate their own truths."

Maria J.A. van der Hoeven

In the Netherlands, a country wracked by tensions in the wake of the 2004 murder of Theo van Gogh, the **Islamic University of Rotterdam** sponsored the fourth annual meeting of the *Union of NGOs of the Islamic World* in June 2007. The meeting, a first in Europe, brought together more than 50 representatives of NGOs from 15 countries. It was preceded by meetings with Dutch NGOs, which saw pragmatic discussions about running non-governmental organizations and enhancing cooperation.

Box 4.1

Islam in Europe: Ideals and Realities

Mustafa Ceric

Mustafa Ceric has served as Grand Mufti of Bosnia-Herzogovina since 1999. In 2007 he received the 2007 Theodor Heuss Foundation award for his contribution to spreading and strengthening democracy.

The history of Islam in Europe is full of useful insights for dialogue today, especially about memory and understandings of identity. We may believe that we have freedom today to create our identities, but more often they are created by others and profoundly shaped by our past.

Yet, humans fall into two categories: those whose identities and the memories on which they are founded are locked in the past and those whose memory draws from history but looks to the future. Europe's debates about its religious identities and the memories on which it is founded are a case in point. We would do well to recall the facts of history to build our future.

Like the sun, all the revealed religions originated in the East. The great prophets and messengers all came from the East, and none from Europe. The three Abrahamic faiths all came to Europe at times and by paths that we can pinpoint. All are equal in belonging to Europe. Europe must understand that we are here as indigenous Muslims. We are not the ghosts. We are the hosts of Europe.

Islam arrived in Europe by two main gates: the gate of the Iberian Peninsula in the 8th century and the gate of the Balkan Peninsula in the 14th century. Eight centuries of Islamic presence in Andalusia, Spain produced a unique tradition of religious and cultural tolerance as well as academic freedom, which helped propel Europe on its way to humanism and renaissance. This ideal of the Andalusian tolerance, sadly, did not survive the European history. Why Islam did not survive in Andalusia, but did in Bosnia is a legitimate question to ask.

One result of the withdrawal of Islam from the Iberian Peninsula was the forced migration of 70,000 Jews to the Balkans, especially to Sarajevo. Before World War II there were 11,000 Jews in Sarajevo, today there are fewer than 1,000. They are the Sefars, and their manuscripts (the Sarajevo Haggada) are carefully preserved in a museum in Sarajevo; a Muslim family twice saved them. In 2012, a conference in Sarajevo will celebrate the Sephardic Jewish history and their salvation by the Ottomans.

Islam has been indigenous to Europe for five centuries, with deeply engrained traditions and five centuries of memories. In June 2007 Bosnia celebrated 600 years of Islamic tradition in the Balkans.

There are three kinds of people: those who remember, those who think and those who dream. Most people remember the past, fewer people think, and the least numbers of people dream or create new values of life. We need more people who dream that our future will be better than our past.

Municipalities have also been engaged in efforts to promote Muslim-West dialogue. Events in the UK city of Bradford are a case in point.

In a community that had witnessed two major riots sparked by disaffected Pakistani Muslims in 2001, the Bishop of Bradford set out to build bridges between the city's Muslim and non-Muslim communities, which were leading largely parallel lives. With support from a host of international organizations, Bradford piloted the **Intercultural Communication and Leadership School** (ICLS) that works to impart basic knowledge about different religious traditions to young professionals who might serve as role models for youth. Eight seminars have followed the first one held in April 2002, and more than 100 young professionals from Christian, Muslim, secular and other cultural and religious backgrounds have participated. Some credit the ICLS network in Bradford with helping to maintain calm in the community in the wake of the July 2005 London bombings. The European Union has supported a continuing effort to extend the ICLS model to other European cities, including Lyon, Berlin, Rome and Rotterdam.

Mixed reactions have greeted these and other efforts to promote Muslim-West dialogue in Europe. European Muslims have generally welcomed greater recognition as citizens with a stake in society, but often decried the tendency for dialogue to focus on Islam to the exclusion of broader economic and social agendas. Tariq Ramadan and others raised have questions about pitfalls in the explicit focus on Islam as an identity marker and cautioned against "Islamizing" other issues. "We have social problems, we have economic problems, and we have urban problems," he wrote in June 2007. "They have nothing to do with religion. They have to do with social policies."

Other Muslim leaders in Europe have echoed this perspective. At a conference of European and American officials discussing the integration issue, Dr. Lale Akgün, a member of the German Bundestag, emphasized the importance of equality and opportunity over narrowly religious issues. "Youngsters in France do not want to live in an Islamic society with the Sharia," she contended, referring to the urban riots that shook the French suburbs in late 2005. "They don't want their sisters to all wear head scarves – they want to have a real chance to belong to the French society, to find jobs and houses and to start a family."

The Cartoon Controversy

Tension between Muslim minorities and wider European society have complex economic and social roots and are compounded by racism, but they also have a religious and symbolic dimension. This was evident during the cartoon controversy of 2005-2006 and the headscarf controversy in France that happened earlier. The publication of cartoons linking Prophet Muhammad with terrorism in September 2005 in the Danish newspaper *Jyllands-Posten*, and the subsequent republication of the cartoons across Europe, revealed deep cultural divides overlaid by issues of economic and social exclusion.

In essence, Muslim reverence for Prophet Muhammad clashed with norms of free speech. While Western leaders in Europe – as well as North America, Australia and New Zealand – criticized the decision to publish deliberately offensive cartoons, none were prepared to restrict freedom of expression. Danish Prime Minister Anders Fogh Rasmussen, at the heart of the storm, spoke for many in February 2006 with his claim that "freedom of expression and freedom of the press are the very cornerstones of any democratic society." He also insisted "freedom of expression should always be combined with freedom of religion and respect between religions and cultures."

Box 4.2

Respect

Maria J.A. van der Hoeven

Maria J.A. van der Hoeven is the Minister of Economic Affairs for the Netherlands. She has also served as Minister of Education, Culture and Science.

In the Netherlands, 15 November is celebrated as the Day of Respect. It is a day on which politicians, religious leaders and business people visit schools to talk to young people about how we treat one another; a day on which we consciously consider respect as a value.

I view this day, in all its simplicity, as a wonderful example of the Muslim-West Dialogue. As in so many Western and other countries, there are people living in the Netherlands who have come from other countries and brought their own cultures and characteristics. This all happens quite harmoniously in some cases, but it can also produce tensions and uncertainties. That is the reality of a globalising world.

Do we solve everything by organizing a Day of Respect once a year? If only it was that simple! But respect certainly is crucial. In my view, it is perhaps the most important value we have in our diverse society. Respect is accepting people as they are, irrespective of their religion, culture, gender or background.

I have recently been noticing that everyone wants respect – in some cases they even demand it – but not everyone is prepared to show it to others. That will not work. Respect has to come from both sides. Of course, respect does not entail approving of everything everyone does. Unlawful behaviour is and remains simply unacceptable.

Respect and diversity belong together. The Netherlands has a long history of integration marked by people who came to live in our country from all corners of the world and are now part of our society. Until a few years ago, the Netherlands was known as a tolerant country, in the sense that everyone was welcome and it was taken for granted that everyone would retain their own language and culture.

My assessment is that we have taken this a bit too far. Our famous tolerance has degenerated into indifference. This makes people feel excluded – sometimes literally because they do not speak the language – so that they retreat into their own bastions and cultivate their own truths.

What that leads to can be read about in newspapers every day: unrest in our big cities, assembly bans for youths of Moroccan descent, an increase in the sense of insecurity, changes in the political spectrum, and so on. It is understandable – but nonetheless sad – that the majority of well-intentioned Muslims are sometimes blamed for the deeds of a small minority. In response to this stigmatization, certain groups – mostly youths – turn their backs on society and become receptive to the ideas of fundamentalist leaders. This is a path we must reject.

To promote integration and mutual respect, we are:
- Teaching children about citizenship from a young age.
- Making experience in non-profit or voluntary organizations part of the curriculum so that young people learn what it feels like to do something for other people altruistically.
- Putting efforts into identifying and dealing with at-risk young people.
- Investing in social cohesion initiatives in run-down areas.
- Incorporating language as a threshold for newcomers in The Netherlands, as there can be no dialogue without communication.

This list is certainly not exhaustive. But it points to activities that can promote respect 364 days a year, leaving one day to celebrate our successes.

Box 4.3

Civic Values

Ismail Serageldin

Ismail Serageldin is the Director of the Library of Alexandria. His long career includes current service as an Egyptian Senator and leadership in international organizations. He speaks and writes on wide ranging topics, including the value of science to society.

The Muslim world, stretching from Morocco to Indonesia, comprises a young and growing population of 1.4 billion people. In many parts of this vast world people feel challenged and victimized by hegemonic Western powers and by the ineptness of many of their governments.

Some would lead this world into a vision circumscribed by prejudice and ruled as a theocracy. Others would promote the values of pluralism, free speech, rationality and respect for the law. This battle for the hearts and minds of a whole generation will determine the future of the Muslim world and will affect the many millions of Western citizens who are Muslims.

As this struggle unfolds, we demand adherence to a core set of civic values. Of these, two principles are fundamental. First, equality of all citizens before the law for men and women, Muslims and non-Muslims. Second, laws are drafted by the elected representatives of the people, not by some scholar reviewing some text, somewhere. These are the cornerstones of any democratic system.

We who believe in democracy and in liberty are going to win. The fanatical Islamists are standing against the irrevocable march of history. Like King Canute standing against the tide, they cannot stop the tides of change and progress. The last 400 years have been a global march towards liberating the human mind from the shackles of dogma. It has also been a march towards liberating the human condition from oppression and despotism, to where democratic government is not an exception, but the norm. Setbacks are momentary, mere blips in the sweeping march of history.

These powerful societal forces of democracy and human rights are like the deep, unseen ocean currents that govern the climate and shape our destiny. Many people focus on events, grab the headlines and generate intense debate, but they are like surface storms that can sink ships and drown people. They are undoubtedly important, but they lack the staying power, the lasting effect that real societal change is based on.

The core values of personal freedom, rationality, pluralism and civic participation will ensure that lasting progress is rooted in the societies of the Muslim world. At the Library of Alexandria, we are dedicated to supporting these values. Strong with our enlightened traditions, armed with the best in modern science and technology, we oppose the forces of obscurantism, fanaticism and xenophobia. These intolerant pseudo-religious forces are incompatible with either the freedom of expression that democracy demands or that scientific inquiry requires.

These values that we stand for, that the enlightened visions of modern Muslim leadership across the Muslim world represent, are the values that can provide youth with a sense of a higher purpose than mere material gain. They undergird the dignity of the individual and the mutual respect so necessary for civilized discourse. Such values allow our children to grow in the belief that the ideals of truth, goodness, liberty, equality and justice are more than empty words. It is these values that promote a culture of humanism and a culture of peace.

I have full confidence that the Muslim world will be on the right side of history – from a glorious past to a brilliant future.

The controversy placed European Muslim leaders in a difficult position. Almost all were critical of the cartoons. Some argued that government censorship to protect the feelings of religious believers was necessary and already in place, for example in the case of blasphemy laws designed to protect Christianity from defamation. Others argued that Muslims should learn to live – even with some discomfort – with deeply established norms of freedom of expression embedded in Western democracies, even as they criticized the cartoons as a dangerous provocation.

Turkish Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan, for example, argued in March 2006 that attacks on Muslims "serve the interests of a culture of conflict at a time when we're trying to establish an alliance between civilizations." Along the same lines, the **Federation of Islamic Organizations in Europe** argued in a July 2006 statement: "Muslims in Europe working to achieve positive integration in their European societies through good citizenship" looked for interaction "within the frame of justice, fairness and equality," which would "enhance and deepen their belonging to their European societies."

The cartoon controversy spurred local and national dialogue efforts across Europe that often were explicitly aimed at fostering both religious and cultural sensitivity and an appreciation of norms of free speech and expression. The most immediate response came from the epicentre of the controversy. In July 2006 Denmark hosted a conference, *Muslim Leaders of Tomorrow*, which brought together religious leaders from more than 16 countries to discuss strategies and solutions for the advancement of Muslims in Europe. The conference was presented as a forum aimed at fostering tolerance and mutual respect, in tandem with respect for freedom of expression. Flemming Rose, the Danish editor responsible for the printing of the cartoons, was the keynote speaker.

The aftermath of the cartoon crisis also spurred dialogue within the media, as a number of prominent European cartoonists gathered in April 2007 at the French Ministry of Culture for a panel entitled *Cartooning for Peace*. The issue at hand was how to deploy the universal reach of their medium in support of peace and greater intercultural understanding.

"These values that we stand for, that the enlightened visions of modern Muslim leadership across the Muslim world represent, are the values that can provide youth with a sense of a higher purpose than mere material gain." Ismael Serageldin

Dialogue around Issues for Women

Women's rights were another prominent issue in West-Islamic dialogue in Europe in 2006-2007, and a source of continuing debate. Controversy centred less on workplace discrimination than on the symbolic politics of the headscarf. French legislation banning headscarves and other conspicuous religious signs in public schools had placed the issue on the European agenda in 2004. Supporters of the ban often charged that the wearing of headscarves was an indication of women's subjugation. Prohibiting headscarves in schools and other public spaces was viewed as a means to uphold ideals of equality.

In contrast, critics of the ban insisted that it violated religious freedom and, more broadly, that the choice of clothing was individual self-expression that should be beyond the reach of state power. Both approaches to women's rights – the right to be free from subordination within a religious community, on the one hand, and to be free of state coercion, on the other – structured a complex debate overlaid by popular anxieties about the growth and visibility of Muslim minorities.

As the debate ebbed in France, it emerged more strongly in other European societies. In Sweden, for example, Nyamko Sabuni, the Minister for Integration and Gender Equality, advanced a proposed ban along French lines in November 2006, saying that the headscarf "is a means of isolating the girl from her surroundings." When Tony Blair called the veil a "mark of separation" in October 2006, he earned a sharp rebuke from Muslim leaders. A representative of the **Muslim Council of Britain** commented upon the "relentless barrage" of criticism on how to behave.

Box 4.4

The Imperative of Integration

Daniel Sachs

Daniel Sachs is CEO of Proventus, a privately held Swedish investment company. In 2007 he became a member of the European Council on Foreign Relations, a pan-European think tank.

The future of European prosperity and democracy depends on whether we can create a new industrial base and successfully integrate new Europeans, including the continent's growing Muslim minority. If we are not able to extend prosperity to the many, we risk a backlash against our open society. If we do not succeed in integrating minorities, the result will be radicalization and polarization between them and the majority populations. The breeding ground for extremist, racist and protectionist ideas is, unfortunately, more fertile than it has been in a long time.

In the US, the difference in income between the highest paid and the average wage earner is now at the same level as in the 1920s, and social mobility is decreasing. The same trend towards socio-economic segregation is visible in Europe, but we are not prepared to accept such great differences, and in reality choose unemployment in preference to wages that are too low.

The challenge is to find a level that renders entry into the labour market easier without at the same time abandoning the European tradition of equality. In any case, with a strong industrial base, the prerequisite for avoiding polarization is better.

The majority of immigrants in Europe come from adjacent regions and many of them are Muslims. The relationship between Muslim minorities and the majority populations is characterised by distrust. A recent poll conducted by Harris Interactive for the *Financial Times* shows that 30 % to 40 % of the population of the major European countries regard Muslims as a security threat, and would object if their children wished to marry a Muslim. We regularly witness clashes between the secularized principles of European societies and Muslim minorities.

To reduce tensions and facilitate integration, we must clarify what it implies to be a European. Europe is far more than a geographical determination. It is an enlightened and secular idea – even if it has religious roots – with liberal and democratic values at its core. European communities are full of historical traditions and cultural codes, but integration should mean integration into an idea rather than into a specific culture.

Freedom of expression, the equal value of all individuals, and the right to openly question and criticize – these principles must always overrule particular cultural practices or interpretations of the word of God.

To succeed at integration, a society has to make it possible for the citizen to belong to the minority and the majority at the same time. On the one hand, all Europeans must have equal opportunities and the unquestionable right to exercise their culture and nurture their uniqueness. On the other hand, the individual must have the equally unquestionable responsibility of sharing and respecting the fundamental democratic, liberal and humanistic values that have formed the contemporary European idea.

We should always strive for integration, rather than assimilation into a dominant majority or the formation of enclaves by minorities. But integration is an encounter that presupposes motivation on both sides. Without strong mutual motivation, minorities and majorities alike risk facing a less prosperous, democratic and humanistic Europe.

The status of women within Islam and in the West was the topic of several dialogue projects in Europe, but perhaps even more in the United States, Malaysia and other countries. The November 2006 conference organized by the **American Society for Muslim Advancement** (ASMA) and the **Cordoba Initiative** took the title *Women's Islamic Initiative in Spirituality and Equity* (WISE). It aimed to identify ways to bring women's voices more forcefully into contemporary debates on the role of Muslim women in the global community. Central topics were Women Empowering Women, Faith Fuelled Activists, and Frameworks for Social Justice. ASMA and the Cordoba Initiative in August 2007 joined the **Aspen Institute** as sponsors of a symposium entitled *Women, Islam, and the West*. Focused on the challenges experienced by five Muslim women leaders living in the West, this forum brought Muslim and Western thought leaders together for two days of dialogue.

"If we are not able to extend prosperity to the many, we risk a backlash against our open society. If we do not succeed in integrating minorities, the result will be radicalization and polarization…" Daniel Sachs

Dialogue Themes in North America

Muslims in the United States are, in general, better off than their counterparts in Europe in terms of income and education. Most estimates of the US Muslim population fall between 1-2%, with African American Muslims accounting for about a third of the total. Islam in America is part of a broader multicultural and multiracial context. In Canada, too, where Muslims account for about 2% of the population, dialogue between Muslims and non-Muslims is often framed broadly in terms of intercultural understanding. For example, in August, 2007, Canada's **Couchinching Institute on Public Affairs** held its 76th Annual Summer Conference on *The Stranger Next Door: Making Diversity Work*. Muslims were among a wide range of participants who explored questions of identity, shared values, and the meaning of citizenship in a globalizing world.

In the US in 2006-2007 concerns about discrimination were primary drivers of Muslim engagement in dialogue with fellow citizens and government officials. These concerns were, in large part, a response to enhanced security and surveillance measures implemented after the 9/11 attacks and the possibility they might be further intensified. A 2006 Gallup Report found that 39% of Americans supported the idea of a special identity card for Muslims. Interestingly, support for such measures varied depending on levels of personal contact with Muslim compatriots. Only 24% of those who know a Muslim personally would approve of a special identity card, but such a measure could find support among 50% of those who do not. A similar pattern emerged on the basic question of loyalty to the United States: 45% of Americans surveyed who do not know a Muslim view them as not loyal to the US. That figure drops to 30% among Americans who know a Muslim.

Such figures are admittedly open to interpretation. But they do suggest a cultural divide between Muslims and non-Muslims in the US. One survey after another points to similarities between both groups when it comes to politics, education, and social and economic position, as well as to attitudes towards democracy and fundamental freedoms. However, majority suspicion of the Muslim minority in the wake of 9/11 continues, reinforced by the widespread and simplistic equation of Islam with Islamic extremism.

The US government and various state and local governments have sought to respond to this situation through outreach, education and dialogue. An example of these official efforts is the Homeland Security *Roundtable on Security and Liberty: Perspectives of Young Leaders Post-9/11*. A formal event brought together about 40 young Arab, Sikh, South Asian and Muslim leaders to discuss issues of civil liberties and exchange thoughts on the challenges and opportunities facing these communities in post-9/11 America.

One example at the local level: the New York City Commission on Human Rights has played host to a number of *Muslim*

Unity Forums, a response to the commission's reports documenting hate-crimes in the Arab, Muslim and South Asian communities. One survey found that 69% of the respondents "believed they were the victim of one or more incidents of discrimination or bias related harassment."

National-level Muslim organizations in the United States have taken a wide variety of initiatives to promote dialogue. The **Muslim Public Affairs Council** brought young Muslims from across America together in 2007 with high-level government officials and Congressional staffers for a *National Muslim American Youth Summit*. While the government representatives underscored their desire to work with the Muslim community, several young Muslim representatives pressed instead for public service programmes aligned to their Muslim values.

The Washington, DC based **Council for American-Islamic Relations** (CAIR) has convened a variety of dialogues that bring together Muslim and non-Muslim citizens around issues of common concern. The organization has joined with others – Muslim, Christian, Jewish and secular – to fight the Patriot Act in court and promote national and state legislation to protect the rights of Muslim citizens. Since 2005, CAIR has backed a proposed End Racial Profiling Act, which would establish procedures to log, investigate and respond to complaints of racial profiling. The act would also include provisions to discipline law enforcement officers who engage in racial profiling.

Within the US, with its increasing religious and cultural diversity, Muslim-West dialogue has often been folded into a broader interfaith context. To cite one of many examples, **The Interfaith Alliance** in Washington, DC, supports a *Leadership Education Advancing Democracy and Diversity* programme that empowers high school age students to become more informed about religious diversity and take action to encourage religious liberty and civil rights.

Interfaith groups in many cities, including Chicago, New York and Los Angeles, have sponsored events designed to increase knowledge of and appreciation for Islam – from informal gatherings to lectures and conferences. **The Interfaith Center of New York** convenes roundtables with religious leaders and judges to discuss access to the legal system and the particular concerns of religious communities.

Outside the Transatlantic Area

Australia and New Zealand have an established tradition of national and local dialogue initiatives that include outreach to Muslim minorities. The year 2006-2007 saw a continued focus on issues of citizenship. In November 2006 the **Federation of Islamic Associations in New Zealand** hosted an Eid al-Fitr celebration with parliamentarians, designed to promote government efforts to better engage the Muslim community.

The **Australian Intercultural Society** held a symposium in June 2007 on *National Social Cohesion: Muslims in Australia and Social Integration*. In August it co-hosted the Sixth Annual International Abraham Conference on the theme, *Shaping a Nation's Values: The Abrahamic Contribution*. Both events took place against the backdrop of a nation-wide debate about the fairness of Australian citizenship tests for Muslim immigrants.

Similar efforts have unfolded at the state level in Australia, with the Department of Families, Community Services, and Indigenous Affairs hosting a symposium on Australian Muslims entitled *Sharing Our Achievements*. A significant

Box 4.5

The Imperative of Moderation and Toleration in the Global Environment

HE Muhammad Sa'ad Abubakar

His Eminence Muhammad Sa'ad Abubakar is the Sultan of Sokoto and leader of Nigeria's Muslims. He is the President-General of the Nigerian Supreme Council for Islamic Affairs (NSCIA).

The ability of human beings to moderate their views, however strongly held, to appreciate and respect the uniqueness of the "other", remains one of the defining qualities of inter-group relations and the primordial basis of mutual co-existence. With the frantic pace of globalization and with greater interaction between peoples, cultures and religions, each struggling to find a respectable niche in the global village, the cultivation of moderation and toleration have become all the more imperative and an incontrovertible indicator of human development.

The ethos of moderation and toleration are well established in the Qur'an. In Chapter 2: 143 Allah [SWT] declares that "Thus have we made you a moderate people (ummatan wasatan) that you might be witnesses over others and the Messenger a witness over you." In Chapter 5: 48 Allah [SWT] further admonished that "To each among you have we prescribed a Law and an open Way. If Allah had so willed He would have made you a single people, but [His plan is] to test you in what he has given you." In the same chapter, Allah [SWT] had earlier warned that "Oh you who believe, stand out firmly for Allah as witnesses to fair dealing and let not the hatred of others to you make you swerve to wrong and depart from justice. Be just, that is next to piety, and fear Allah, for Allah is well acquainted with all that you do."

The greatest challenge of cultivating moderation and toleration lies with religious leaders, both Muslim and Christian, whose activities should transcend the symbolisms of Interfaith Dialogue and embrace an active Interfaith Cooperation to address effectively the enormous social and moral dilemmas confronting contemporary society. We must be able to give hope to the young and the not so young and to provide them with the appropriate tools to face the challenges of the future. The "burden of history" should be transformed into an irrevocable commitment to penitence, forgiveness and justice and should never be used to engender bigotry and religious disharmony.

The political class also has a special responsibility in the promotion of moderation and toleration locally and internationally. A situation whereby parties, especially those on the far right, are allowed to peddle hatred and bigotry in the name of politics is plainly unhelpful to the cause of mutual coexistence. Much worse, it sends the wrong signals to those who are firm in their belief that the West is unwilling and unable to permit the emergence of a multi-religious, multi-racial and multi-cultural society in Europe.

It is also important to open a robust and meaningful debate on the issues of religious rights and freedoms and what constitutes proper behavior in a globalised and religiously sensitive world. The Danish Cartoon Saga is a case in point. Moderation and toleration do not assume the absence of rights and freedoms. They pre-suppose individuals who possess unfettered rights and freedoms as well as the full ability to use them but choose to exercise them responsibly to avoid hurting the rights and sensibilities of others.

outcome was the realization that Australian Muslims' need for services is similar to other segments of society, but the delivery mechanisms may need to be adapted, including the use of culturally sensitive communication.

Dialogue around questions of citizenship and integration was as diverse and significant in non-Western countries, although efforts to track them are even more difficult. In countries with large Christian and Muslim populations, such as Nigeria and Malaysia, the dialogue between communities and their efforts to secure resources and protection from the state emerged in new forms in 2006-2007.

Dialogue efforts in Nigeria are well reflected in the creation of the **Muslim-Christian Dialogue Forum** and the **Interfaith Mediation Centre** in Kaduna in 1999. Pastor James Wuye and Imam Mohammed Nurayn Ashafa have taken the lead on these initiatives, with the support of international partners including the Geneva-based **Initiatives for Change**. The forum provides a meeting place for Muslims and Christians from different sectors of society and is an important locus of national dialogue in the midst of ethnic and religious tensions. Both leaders, whose struggle has received wide international attention, emphasize how a long history of economic and social privation has fuelled years interreligious tension.

The **Malaysian Open Dialogue Centre**, which brings together diverse religious and secular voices, hosted several conferences that addressed various relevant political controversies. In February 2007, for example, a seminar on *NGO & Civil Liberties in Malaysia* looked specifically at issues of freedom of speech and the role of youth as active citizens. Not all interfaith work has been smooth. For example, government plans for an interfaith council were cancelled in 2006, apparently out of fear of a backlash from Muslim extremists.

Perhaps nowhere is interfaith dialogue more needed than in the Sudan, where ethnic and religious tensions have fed into a series of civil wars claiming the lives of more than 2 million and leaving an additional 4 million internally displaced. In 2006-2007, international attention focused on genocide in the western region of Darfur, where territorial and tribal interests were more significant than religion as a driving factor, but the conscience of religious voices was aroused across the world.

"The political class also has a special responsibility in the promotion of moderation and toleration locally and internationally… It is also important to open a robust and meaningful debate on the issues of religious rights and freedoms…" HE Muhammad Sa'ad Abubakar

Religion matters along Sudan's North-South axis, which separates Muslim and Christian-majority populations. The Comprehensive Peace Agreement of 2005 that ended the civil war represented important progress in addressing long standing interreligious tensions. Interfaith efforts have supported efforts to reconstruct civil society. **The Sudan Inter-religious Council**, supported by the Washington, DC based **Inter-national Center for Religion and Diplomacy**, has worked to identify the religious causes to Sudan's bloody civil conflict – alongside ethnic, social and economic factors – and to support a fragile peace through dialogue and outreach activities. The Council played a pivotal role in reclaiming confiscated church property from the

government and initiating local peace initiatives within villages aimed at bringing Muslim and Christian leaders together to "heal the wounds of war."

The issue of religious minorities in Muslim-majority countries is proving particularly controversial in both national and international politics. Restrictions on the public practice of Christianity, including bans on the construction of churches and the distribution of bibles, routinely spark criticism in the West. In 2007 the **US Commission on International Religious Freedom** placed several Muslim-majority countries on its list of "Countries of Particular Concern," including Saudi Arabia, Pakistan and Sudan. NGOs, including the Oslo-based **Forum 18**, seek to hold countries both inside and outside to Muslim world to the religious freedom guarantees set down in Article 18 of the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

In 2006-2007, the Western media picked up on two high-profile cases concerning converts from Islam to Christianity in Afghanistan and Malaysia who were subject to persecution under the prevailing Sharia law courts. Abdul Rahman faced the death sentence in Afghanistan, but following international pressure, was allowed to emigrate.

In Malaysia, Lina Joy sought to have her conversion to Christianity officially recognized on her national identity card, but the courts referred the matter to the Sharia courts, arguing that someone who is part of a religious community must follow that community's dictates when attempting to leave it. Similar cases were reported in other countries where Islamic law courts have jurisdiction over matters of religious freedom, including the Sudan and parts of Nigeria.

These high profile cases have overshadowed several important examples of long-standing and robust religious and civic pluralism in Muslim-majority states, including Senegal and Indonesia, in which minority rights are guaranteed and interfaith dialogue is a continual reality. Political leaders in Senegal carefully consult with religious leaders across different traditions on major public policy issues and participate in public religious festivities. In March 2008 Senegal plans to host to the *World Summit on Christian-Muslim Relations*, which will coincide with the **Organization of the Islamic Conference**'s meeting in Dakar.

Indonesia, a Muslim-majority country with a history of tolerance and respect for religious diversity, has active dialogue events across many sectors. One body reflecting this diversity is the **Institute for Inter-Faith Dialogue in Indonesia**, which hosts discussion groups for religious school teachers across diverse traditions. The institute also publishes scholarship on religious pluralism as it bears on problems of political, social and cultural problems across the country. Its mission statement highlights the objective of dialogue "not meant to undermine differences," but as "a step undertaken in an effort to establish communication, as well as an expression of readiness to listen."

As these examples demonstrate, there are close connections between political and religious pluralism in today's world. Governments in both the West and the Muslim world are wrestling with greater religious and cultural diversity and its implications for public policy. The challenge is not primarily a theological one. In the case of Western Europe, for example, controversies surrounding citizenship and integration have centred as much on economic and social exclusion as on religious differences.

However, it would be wrong to assert that religion does not matter when it comes to issues of national identity and minority rights, or that it is simply a tool exploited by opportunistic politicians around these or other issue areas. Religious passion is not a residual force in politics. It is a crucial source of community identity and ethical commitments for many Muslims, Christians, Jews and adherents of other faith traditions. The next chapter explores how internally diverse religious communities – and the Abrahamic Faiths in particular – are increasingly engaging in dialogue around questions of faith, ethics, and ideology at a national, transnational and international level.

5

Religion, Ethics and Ideology

Since the turn of the millennium, religious, ethical and ideological questions have moved up the global political agenda. In the context of relations at the intersection of the West and the Muslim World, the political tone has often been polarized. US President George W. Bush, for example, marked the fifth anniversary of the attacks of 9/11 with reflections on Islamic extremism."Since the horror of 9/11, we've learned a great deal about the enemy," he told a global television audience. "We have learned that they are evil and kill without mercy, but not without purpose. We have learned that they form a global network of extremists who are driven by a perverted vision of Islam: a totalitarian ideology that hates freedom, rejects tolerance and despises all dissent."

With a reference to a "perverted vision of Islam," Bush alluded to mainstream Islam's opposition to terrorism, a common theme in many of his speeches. But in this particular address, on the fifth anniversary of the attacks, his overall tone was strident: "The war against this enemy is more than a military conflict. It is the decisive ideological struggle of the 21st century and the calling of our generation… This struggle has been called a clash of civilizations. In truth, it is a struggle for civilization." In concluding, he invoked "confidence in our purpose, and faith in a loving God who made us to be free."

Just two weeks earlier, Mohammed Khatami, the former President of Iran and one of the architects of the idea of a Dialogue of Civilizations, cast the challenge in a different light. During a visit to Japan, he portrayed the 20th century as "the most violent episode of history." Unfortunately, he added, "the trend has continued in this century in a more worrying fashion. Two world wars, various regional wars, the cold war, and new horrible forms of terrorism were the most significant events which filled human life, from East to West, with unmasked violence."

Like Bush, Khatami asserted that peaceful majorities across cultures and religious traditions are the rule. But he also launched a thinly veiled attack on the US "war on terror" and invasion of Iraq. "A surprising development in human history is that the proponents of violence even distort the message of peace and love, which has been brought to humanity by religions and cultures. They portray the use of force and violence as a divine mission, trying to mobilize the sentiments of their followers behind this evil objective," he said.

In 2006-2007, the rhetoric of global political leaders, sharpened by ongoing international political conflicts, was a backdrop that propelled dialogue efforts among Muslims, Christians, Jews and other religious and secular citizens at all levels of civil society – transnational, national and local.

International Interfaith Dialogues

Khatami made his August 2006 remarks at a major global dialogue in Kyoto, Japan: the Global Assembly of **World Council of Religions for Peace** (WCRP), one of the world's major interfaith organizations. The WCRP works to promote dialogue at many levels, from community and national groups in countries including Nigeria and Serbia to periodic global assemblies that articulate joint approaches to global challenges including poverty, healthcare and education.

l Ideology

A theme woven throughout the Kyoto Assembly, attended by more than 800 religious leaders from almost 100 countries, was "shared security" – the idea that traditional security issues cannot be divorced from human welfare and respect for human dignity and diversity. The assembly had high visibility, but equally important were WCRP efforts over the course of 2006 to convene senior Sunni, Shiite and Christian leaders to address escalating sectarian violence in Iraq and promote an interreligious council of Middle East religious leaders. At a Religions for Peace meeting in Alexandria, Egypt in December 2007 Rev. Leonid Kishkovsky commented: "The actions taken by such diverse religious leaders demonstrate the power and relevance of multi-faith cooperation to address the most serious issues of the global community."

"An attempt to overcome the prevailing influence of the clash of civilizations thesis must begin by rejecting the misconception that an embrace of democracy by Islamists must necessarily lead to its eventual hijacking upon the attainment of power."

Anwar Ibrahim

In 2006-2007 the Rome-based Catholic lay organization, the **Community of Sant'Egidio**, organized a series of three large-scale interfaith meetings designed to bring religious leaders together in the context of global threats to peace, human rights and social justice. In October 2006, the community celebrated its 20th annual interfaith meeting in Assisi, the site where Pope John Paul II first convened international religious leaders. That anniversary was preceded by the April 2006 **International Prayer for Peace**, held for the first time in the United States on the campus of Georgetown University in Washington, DC. The theme for the Georgetown gathering was Religions and Cultures: The Courage of Dialogue.

The October 2007 annual meeting took place in Naples under the heading, A World Without Violence: Faiths and Cultures in Dialogue. Pope Benedict XVI was in Naples for the opening of the meeting, which brought together some 200 religious leaders, including representatives from the Muslim world. Peace appeals that emerged from all three meetings underscored a common commitment of the major faiths to work together for peace. The Naples Declaration, for example, included an exhortation that, "anyone who uses the name of God to hate the other, to practice violence or to wage war is cursing the name of God."

Concern about violence in the name of religion informed other international meetings of representatives of the Abrahamic faiths and other world religions. *The World's Religions after September 11 Congress*, held in September 2006 in Montreal, Canada was one prominent example. A large-scale gathering with multiple sponsors including the **Council for a Parliament of the World Religions**, the Congress gathered some 2,000 people from all over the world. The main theme was, Can religion be a force for good? A central topic of discussion was a proposed Universal Declaration of Human Rights by the World's Religions. Organizers drew a parallel between religious extremism in the present and the secular militancy that had culminated in World War II and spurred the Universal Declaration of Human Rights in 1948. The imperative was to learn from history "before religious extremism gets out of hand."

Similar themes were sounded at meetings of religious leaders coinciding with summits of the Group of Eight (G8) leading industrialized nations. In July 2006, the **Interreligious Council of Russia** organized a meeting that issued a joint declaration on the eve of the Moscow G8 meeting. "Let us keep the peace that God has given us," they proclaimed,

Box 5.1

Islam and the West: The Myth of the Great Dichotomy

Anwar Ibrahim

Deputy Prime Minister of Malaysia from 1993-1998, Dr. Anwar Ibrahim is now an advisor to the People's Justice Party (KeADILan). Honourary President of AccountAbilty and Chairman of the Foundation for the Future, he is the author of *The Asian Renaissance*.

The myth of the dichotomy between Islam and the West springs from a host of factors. There is the perception of irreconcilable values of the respective civilizations. Authoritarianism, despotism and traditionalism are said to be natural features of the political and social structure of Muslim countries, while enlightened democracy, liberalism and modernism are said to be the hallmarks of the West.

There is also the civilizing mission of the West that trumpets reason and enlightenment, while portraying the Islamic world as superstitious, barbaric and dark. In response, the Muslim world caricatures the West as a moral wasteland where the institution of the family has broken down and religion and morality have ceased to have any bearing on social mores.

With the end of the Cold War, the phenomenon of Islam as championed by Islamists of the fundamentalist strain has emerged as the next great challenge to liberal Western democracy. They oppose the perceived determination of the West to achieve hegemony in cultural, social and economic terms. Islam is expressed as a religious challenge to secular political authority – not just to American and Western domination, but also to the secular authoritarian dictatorships foisted upon most Muslim nations. Islam becomes the rallying cry for the marginalized and dispossessed.

We have inherited the baggage of history. The description of the Muslim "other", from Mark Twain to Francis Fukuyama and Samuel Huntington, has been a matter of academic intrigue as well as popular disdain, often bordering on outright racism. In the aftermath of 9/11, this entire discourse has been framed by the doctrine of the war on terror that posits terrorism and security as the primary lens through which engagement with the Muslim world is viewed. The reaction to this from the Muslim world has been an intensely anti-Western discourse exacerbated by events such as the Arab-Israeli conflict, the Afghan War and the disastrous outcome of the invasion of Iraq.

With this legacy it is not surprising that an "us versus them" mentality still persists today. The cartoon controversy, Pope Benedict's opinion on the Prophet of Islam and the apparent exclusionary stance adopted by many in Western Europe on Turkey's accession to the EU, seem to indicate that the divide remains as wide as ever.

But if we view the past relationships between Islam and the West objectively, we cannot escape the significance of the extended periods of peaceful coexistence. These episodes are not merely confined to the annals of history, for example the well-known story of Muslim Spain. A close study of Islam in Southeast Asia today proves there is in Islam a current that is essentially an embodiment of tolerance and pluralism.

An attempt to overcome the prevailing influence of the clash of civilizations thesis must begin by rejecting the misconception that an embrace of democracy by Islamists must necessarily lead to its eventual hijacking upon the attainment of power. Islamists are not synonymous with die-hard fundamentalist groups that advocate criminal acts or violence in the name of ideology.

In as much as "civilizational" dialogue should be motivated by a genuine quest for true understanding, I am convinced that if we go beyond the noise of the day and reflect more on higher ideals we will discover more of the similarities than the differences. The challenge is to conceive a common vision of the future that goes beyond our current concerns and preoccupations, advancing towards the creation of a global community dedicated to the higher ideals of both civilizations.

urging "religion to continue to be the true and solid foundation of peace and dialogue between civilizations," and that "it never to be used as a source of division and conflict." A similar gathering took place in the run-up to the G8 Summit in Berlin the following year.

> ***"Real dialogue, productive dialogue, deep dialogue takes time and trust. Those who agree to engage in it must have the assurance of a safe context and a guaranteed continuity."***
>
> Jane Dammen McAuliffe

Two ambitious meetings brought together Jewish and Muslim leaders over this period. The first *World Congress of Rabbis and Imams for Peace* took place in Brussels, Belgium in January 2005, and was followed by a second in Seville, Spain in March 2006 that gathered more than 250 participants. A carefully crafted final declaration in Seville condemned, "all instrumentalisation of the name of God or his principles as justification for violence," and insisted on claiming "back God's word, which had been taken hostage by extremists." The declaration stated: "There is no inherent conflict between Islam and Judaism." It called for a repudiation of any violence in the name of any ideology and "especially when perpetrated in the name of religion." And it urged "the governments of the world and international institutions to show respect for the attachments and symbols of all religions, as well as their holy sites, houses of worship, and cemeteries, particularly in the Holy Land."

Since 2005 the Holy Land has emerged as a more explicit concern of religious leaders. A newly formed **Council of Religious Institutions of the Holy Land** made up of a wide range of Christian, Jewish and Muslim representatives, has underscored commonalities across the traditions and sought to build on the 2002 Alexandria Declaration. Following a series of consultations with members of the US Congress and the Bush administration in November 2007, the Council issued a communiqué. "Our respective Holy Places have become a major element in our conflict," it noted. "We lament that this is the case, as our respective attachments to our Holy Places should not be a cause of bloodshed, let alone be sites of violence or other expressions of hatred. Joined by belief in one God and commitments to peace and justice, the three Abrahamic faiths should be a force for peace and reconciliation in Jerusalem and beyond. We, believers from three religions, have been placed in this land, Jews, Christians and Muslims. It is our responsibility to find the right way to live together in peace rather than to fight and kill one other." Rabbi David Rosen, part of the Washington, DC, meetings commented that a political solution cannot be achieved unless the religious dimension of the conflict in Israel and Palestine is addressed.

The Ecumenical Patriarch, Bartholomew I, has taken a proactive leadership stance over many years in interreligious dialogue, and has reached out often to Muslim colleagues. Among many initiatives were two interfaith conferences in 2005 and 2006. The first was in Istanbul in November 2005, on the topic *Peace and Tolerance*. Rabbi Arthur Schneier, President of the **Appeal of Conscience Foundation**, a New York based group, summarized the thrust of the meeting: "Interfaith dialogue and the promotion of religious freedom, tolerance and cooperation are essential to building a civil society," he noted. "In Kosovo in particular, and in areas of the Balkans, Central Asia and the Caucasus it is vital that Muslim, Christian (Catholic, Orthodox and Protestant) and Jewish religious leaders continue efforts to contribute to the peace and stability through inter-religious action." The second meeting, on *Islam in a Pluralistic World*, took place with the support of the Austrian Government in advance of its EU Presidency in June 2006. In his message to the meeting the Patriarch highlighted that the state of Christians in some Muslim countries is not safe and considerable steps are necessary to improve it. "Religion has repeatedly become the product of political exploitation in history for the creation of hostilities and the fuelling of fanaticism between people," he said.

The Regensburg Controversy

Each of these international gatherings received only a modest press echo. During the summer of 2006, the media focused on the Israeli war in Lebanon and on the decaying situation in Iraq, which was slipping into civil war. One day after the fifth anniversary of 9/11, however, questions of religion, ethics and West-Islamic relations moved up the global political agenda in a dramatic and entirely unplanned fashion.

What sparked the new controversy and subsequent dialogue were Pope Benedict XVI's remarks on Islam during an address at the University of Regensburg in his native Bavaria on the topic, Faith, Reason, and the University: Memories and Reflections. In the context of a lengthy treatment of the relationship between faith and reason in European history and culture, Benedict made unflattering references to Islam as an anti-rational tradition.

What caused a major sensation was not the Pope's overall argument about Islam, but rather his second-hand reference to Prophet Muhammad.

In a discussion of faith and its perversion for violent ends, Benedict cited a 14th century Byzantine emperor, Manuel II Paleologus, as having said: "Show me just what Muhammad brought that was new, and there you will find things only evil and inhuman, such as his command to spread by the sword the faith he preached." The Pope did not endorse the emperor's perspective, and acknowledged that a modern reader would find his point of view startling. However, he did not repudiate the emperor's remarks.

A political firestorm ensued. Demonstrations took place across the Muslim world, in Egypt, Pakistan, India and elsewhere. There were isolated outbreaks of violence, including the murder of an Italian nun in Somalia and the desecration of churches in the Palestinian territories. In its response the **Organization of the Islamic Conference** (OIC) charged that the "quotations ended up indulging in a character assassination of the Prophet Muhammad, describing his actions as 'evil and inhuman' in flagrant contradiction with his well established reputation as the Prophet of Mercy for all of Humanity – a reputation which has endured for centuries on end the world over."

"Aside from political action that needs to be taken to resolve conflict, it is essential to recapture and develop the spirit of Jewish-Muslim dialogue and mutual respect."

Rabbi David Rosen

The statement, and others like it emanating from Muslim political and religious leaders, also criticized the Pope for not acknowledging the Church's own historical shortcomings: "The OIC has refrained from indulging in polemics concerning the crusades and religious wars prosecuted by the church in Europe, in addition to the persecution of Muslims in inquisition courts in the name of Christ's peaceful and tolerant message."

Mohammed Mahdi Akef, Chairman of the Muslim Brotherhood, suggested: "The Pope's statements come to add fuel to fire and trigger anger within the Muslim world and show that the West with its politicians and clerics are hostile to Islam."

In the face of a barrage of criticism, the Vatican moved to contain the damage. The Pope did not make a direct apology but said he was

Box 5.2

Context and Continuity is Crucial

Jane Dammen McAuliffe

Professor Jane McAuliffe is Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences, Georgetown University. An expert on Islam, she is editor of the five-volume Encyclopaedia of the Qur'an.

We are all familiar with what I have privately dubbed "the dialogue of drones," a polite – but tedious – exchange of theological generalities and self-serving slogans. When the participants are Christians and Muslims, countless variations of, "Christianity is a religion of love" and "Islam means peace," get tossed back and forth across the table. While this may satisfy some basic urge to reach out to the "other", it usually results in nothing more than a modest dose of mutual self-satisfaction.

Some years ago, I found myself involved in one of these mildly soporific sessions. As a Christian with scholarly expertise in Islam, I had been invited to lecture at a university in Indonesia on a topic of interreligious interest. I spoke that afternoon about what could be called "the adversarial analysis of scripture," a common practice among Jews, Christians and Muslims, both medieval and modern.

As any historian of religion knows, Jews and Christians have long searched the Qur'an to find passages they could use in their polemics against Islam. Muslim scholars have done the same with the Bible. Not unexpectedly, the informal, post-lecture conversation gravitated towards issues and concerns of interfaith relations and began to take the shape of a Muslim-Christian dialogue.

The usual pleasantries and platitudes were being exchanged when suddenly a visiting professor from Al-Azhar, the premier religious university in the Muslim world, jumped to his feet. Pointing at himself and then at me, he exclaimed: "One of us is going to hell and it's not going to be me."

As our Indonesian hosts exploded in nervous laughter at this Azhari evangelical's intervention, I tried to perform the rhetorical equivalent of turning the other cheek. Although somewhat nonplussed by the episode, I also understood his frustration and hoped that his eruption might serve to push the discussion beyond its safety zone and move us to a deeper level of theological and cultural engagement.

That did not happen and it was only with later reflection that I began to realize why. In that situation of post-lecture dialogue, all of us were forced to play predefined roles. I was the representative Christian; the Azhari professor was the guardian of Islamic orthodoxy, and the Indonesian faculty were caught between the more pluralist sensibilities of their own culture and the desire to be seen as equally orthodox. None of us could step out from behind these pre-cast characters.

Real dialogue, productive dialogue, deep dialogue takes time and trust. Those who agree to engage in it must have the assurance of a safe context and a guaranteed continuity. If people are willing to speak about their most heart-felt beliefs, to listen generously to the professions of another, to risk the possibility of intellectual and spiritual transformation, they must be protected from premature exposure. They cannot be both religiously "representational" and unguardedly genuine at the same moment. The official persona must step aside and the searching, seeking individual must step forward.

Those steps do not come quickly. Initial meetings in a sustained dialogue engagement may be little more than social chatter, opportunities to simply get comfortable with each other. As trust builds, the conversation can become more probing and the communication less constrained. But that process takes time; it involves repeated meetings, sometimes over months and years, and it requires secluded spaces. Fruitful dialogue is not a quick fix and it does not happen in a fishbowl.

"deeply sorry" for the response to his speech. "These in fact were quotations from a medieval text," he insisted, "which do not in any way express my personal thought." Benedict received several groups of Muslim leaders in the weeks immediately after the speech and, during a historic trip to Istanbul in November 2006, underscored his respect for Islam and for Muslims through words and gestures, including a visit to the Blue Mosque.

Just as significantly, the Vatican altered the initial, provisional official English translation of the speech. Benedict now noted that the emperor's remark was made not just "somewhat brusquely" but with a "brusqueness that we find unacceptable." He added an explanatory footnote: "In the Muslim world, this quotation has unfortunately been taken as an expression of my personal position, thus arousing understandable indignation. I hope that the reader of my text can see immediately that this sentence does not express my personal view of the Qur'an, for which I have the respect due to the holy book of a great religion."

"Dialogue can be a way to reach out to, and potentially transform, extremists… But such efforts come with significant risks."

Thomas Banchoff

Some Muslim leaders rejected these overtures and called for an unambiguous apology. Others have seized upon the controversy as a means to deepen interfaith dialogue. For example, 38 leading clerics and academics endorsed an open letter in October 2006 in which they noted that Christianity and Islam together "make up more than 55% of the world's population, making the relationship between these two religious communities the most important factor in contributing to meaningful peace around the world." They called the Pope "arguably the single most influential voice in continuing to move this relationship forward in the direction of mutual understanding."

The signatories rejected any connection between Islam and illegitimate violence, and insisted strongly on the compatibility of Islam with reason. They supported the Pope's call for "frank and sincere dialogue" and acknowledged his apology. The letter concluded: "We hope that we will all avoid the mistakes of the past and live together in the future in peace, mutual acceptance and respect." Muslim efforts to engage the Pope in direct dialogue continued in 2007 with the release in October of a letter signed by 138 leaders, *A Common Word Between Us and You*, that proposed theological and ethical commonalities across between Islam and Christianity as a basis for far-reaching dialogue and engagement.

Both letters raised the question: Who speaks for the Muslim world? The Pope does not speak for all Christians, and his views on interreligious questions are contested within the Catholic Church itself. At the same time, the papacy does represent an official Christian voice and interlocutor. In an effort to counteract fragmentation within the more decentralized Muslim world and to isolate extremists, King Abdullah II of Jordan supported the proclamation of the *Amman Message* in November 2004.

Developed with the input of leading Islamic scholars, the Amman Message recognized established schools of law, forbade charges of apostasy among Muslims and set forth the preconditions for authoritative legal rulings or *fatawa*. Over the next two years, the Amman

Box 5.3

Recapturing the Spirit of Jewish-Muslim Dialogue

Rabbi David Rosen

Rabbi David Rosen is Chairman of the International Jewish Committee on Interreligious Consultations and the former Chief Rabbi of Ireland. In 2005 he was made a papal Knight Commander for his contributions to Catholic-Jewish reconciliation.

Few religions have as much in common as Islam and Judaism. Despite the exigencies of history, which took the majority of the Jewish People outside the Middle East, Judaism has historically remained overwhelmingly rooted in its Semitic worldview.

At the heart of the two faiths is an ethical-monotheistic vision that determinedly resists any compromise on the idea of the transcendence and unity of God, who is envisaged as just and merciful and who has revealed a way of life in accordance with these values for the benefit of human society. Much the same religious narrative and similar religious injunctions are found in the Hebrew Pentateuch (the Torah) and the Koran.

Common to the two traditions are central practices of prayer, fasting, almsgiving, dietary laws and aspects of ritual purity. The two faiths have traditionally shared other fundamental religious concepts such as reward and punishment related to a Day of Divine Judgment and belief in the afterlife.

The structure and modus operandi of their respective religious jurisprudential codes of conduct – Sharia and Halachah – bear striking similarity and neither tradition has clergy who by virtue of sacrament are separate from the rest of the community. Religious authority is essentially a function of individual mastery of religious sources to be able to guide the community in accordance with their teachings.

Jews under Islam, in marked contrast to Christian rule, were free to practice their religion without interference, although a number of restrictive conditions applied ensuring their subordinate status that were codified in the Pact of 'Umar. Places and periods of positive interaction between the two communities are part of their heritage.

In addition, cultural advancement and productivity in Muslim society was mirrored in the respective Jewish communities – most notably in the Iberian peninsula in the region known in Arabic as al-Andalus.

The relatively open society of al-Andalus ended as North African armies came to help defend against the Spanish Christians. In other parts of the Islamic world, the open and humanistic qualities of Islamic society began to give way by the 13th century to more feudalistic mentalities of rigidity and control with negative impact upon Jewish communities.

However, we should note that even then there were Muslim societies in which Jews were welcomed and that despite periods of tension and even conflict, the heritage of positive Muslim-Jewish relations prevailed in different corners of the Muslim world.

Despite popular interpretations, modern nationalism did not make a conflict of Arab nationalism with Jewish nationalism inevitable. Indeed, the principal leaders on both sides in 1919 signed an historic document that presented the return of the Jewish people to its ancestral homeland as having potential blessing and benefit for Arab society as a whole.

Tragically that vision did not materialize and the Israel-Arab conflict – and now more specifically the Israeli-Palestinian conflict – became the focus of a sense of historical injury within the Arab world, and subsequently in the Muslim world beyond.

The resultant widespread misconception of some innate hostility between Judaism and Islam is a travesty of our respective heritages and denies the noblest periods of our mutual history. It transforms a territorial conflict, which can be resolved through territorial compromise, into an intractable religious conflict and has become a lightening rod for a plethora of historical and contemporary ill feeling.

Aside from political action that needs to be taken to resolve conflict, it is essential to recapture and develop the spirit of Jewish-Muslim dialogue and mutual respect. This should take place not only to be true to the most sublime teachings and historical experience of our respective faith traditions, but also to facilitate genuine reconciliation – both in the Holy Land itself and in terms of the relationship between the Muslim and the non-Muslim world at large.

Box 5.4

Friendship Across the Great Divide

Akbar Ahmed

Professor Akbar Ahmed is Ibn Khaldun Chair of Islamic Studies at American University in Washington, DC. His most recent book is *Journey into Islam: The Crisis of Globalization*.

Talking to Judea Pearl was one of the most challenging dialogues of my life. His son had been brutally murdered in Karachi where I had grown up, and on the surface we had very little in common. Judea had an Israeli background and was a product of the American University system, while I was from South Asia with British education. Our disciplines too seemed far apart: I was an anthropologist and he a scientist dealing with artificial intelligence.

Yet our first difficult public dialogue, conducted on stage in the full glare of publicity in Pittsburgh not long after Danny Pearl's death, seemed to touch a nerve in people. Invitations began to pour in for the two of us to repeat the experience. We spoke to packed halls in the US, Canada and the UK – including a memorable appearance in the House of Lords, appropriately in the Moses room. People from all the faiths joined us in our dialogues.

Muslims had at first been reluctant to be seen in a public dialogue that promoted Jewish-Muslim understanding. There was even some hostility in the community. But this soon changed.

In the conversations with Judea Pearl I learned many lessons about promoting understanding between the West and the Muslim world. I learned that to be involved in bridge-building requires more than mere words in conferences and seminars. Dialogue has to be followed through with the next step, which is a genuine attempt to understand the other position.

Understanding meant the need to read about the history, traditions and customs of the other; perhaps also to visit the house of worship. Muslims needed to visit synagogues and churches and Jews and Christians to see a mosque.

Dialogue and understanding were steps in the right direction, but by themselves did not build permanent bridges across the great divides of religion and culture. They did, however, create conditions for the final step towards bridge-building: that is the possibility of forming friendships.

Once friendships are created everything changes. It is difficult to think of hatred or violence when friends are involved. Many problems of the world today – in the Balkans, the Middle East and South Asia – involve neighbors who are strangers to each other.

Through my friendship with Judea Pearl I learned of the courage and moral strength of a father who turned a catastrophic personal tragedy into bridge-building with a member of the very civilization that had produced the killers of his son.

As a Muslim scholar actively involved in bridging the gap between the West and the world of Islam, I believe there is a lesson to be learned. Dialogue needs to be vigorously encouraged. This in turn creates the foundations for better understanding, all of which lay the grounds for the possibility of friendship. Without friendship the 21st century will be a time of conflict, tension and violence.

Message gained wide support within the Islamic world. The Organization of the Islamic Conference endorsed it in December 2005, and the **International Islamic Fiqh Academy** followed in July 2006. As the Amman Message Committee noted: "This is good news not only for Muslims, for whom it provides a basis for unity and a solution to infighting, but also for non-Muslims." The effort to forge greater consensus on who speaks for Islam, however daunting and ongoing, promised to isolate "the illegitimate opinions of radical fundamentalists and terrorists from the point of view of true Islam."

Isolating Extremists

The theme of isolating extremists and supporting moderates across faith communities was prominent in the rhetoric of political leaders in 2006-2007. Figures as diverse as then Prime Minister Tony Blair of the United Kingdom and Abdullah Ahmad Badawi of Malaysia insisted that whatever their undeniable differences, the vast majority of Muslims and non-Muslims could agree on basic values and political principles. "Certain grave events in the last decade have brought the Islamic world and the Christian West to a defining moment in their relations," Badawi stated. He cautioned in a Tokyo speech at the United Nations University against allowing "the proposition that these two great civilizations are destined to clash with each other… to become a self-fulfilling prophesy." In a Cambridge keynote address in June 2007 Blair highlighted the need to reconcile traditional religion with the modern world. Such theological dialogue would "show that religious faith is not inconsistent with reason, or progress, or the celebration of diversity."

An underlying issue for many dialogue events – in both the global arena or at the local level – is whom to include, and especially whether it is wise or feasible to pursue dialogue with individuals and groups who question the peaceful and harmonious premises of dialogue. President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono of Indonesia, the world's most populous Muslim nation, opened the first *Asia-Europe Meeting on Interfaith Dialogue* in 2005 by stressing the role of dialogue in building understanding. He also addressed the difficult question of who should be included in dialogue. "Certainly, other voices must be heard, even the militant ones, for this dialogue, if it is to be true to its name and purpose, must be inclusive. It should include all groups representing all points of view, attitudes and approaches," Yudhoyono said. While open to radical voices, he emphasized the importance of an arena where moderates could and should seize centre stage: "Many dialogues have failed because the voices of the moderates, which normally form the vast majority in any society, have not been given the exposure that they deserve."

Beyond the events highlighted above, which have had an explicitly religious focus, several multi-sectoral and high profile meetings in 2006-2007 were designed to amplify moderate voices speaking both for Islamic and Western communities and, above all, to emphasize the significance of shared rational and ethical principles. Blair delivered his June 2007 keynote address at an important conference on *Islam and Muslims in the World Today* sponsored by the **Cambridge Inter-Faith Programme**, the **Weidenfeld Institute for Strategic Dialogue** and the **Coexist Foundation**. The conference brought together academics, religious, and political leaders, to address the issues facing Muslim communities in Britain and around the world.

A less publicized but no less significant initiative illustrates the importance of patiently building trust through dialogue over time. Not long after 9/11, then Archbishop of Canterbury George Carey initiated the **Building Bridges** seminar, which brings Christian and Muslim leaders and scholars together for focused conversations on an annual basis. In March 2006, Carey's successor Rowan Williams convened the gathering at Georgetown University in Washington, DC around the theme, *Justice and Rights in Christian and Muslim Traditions*.

The subsequent meeting, planned for 2007 in Kuala Lumpur, did not take place, apparently out of a Malaysian government concern that holding it in the country might exacerbate sectarian tensions. One Malaysian Christian leader suggested that the meeting might have gone "a long way in pursuing the path of respectful dialogue, and strengthen our country's claim to be a viable venue to host such global interfaith dialogues." The 2007 Building Bridges meeting was rescheduled for December 2007 in Singapore.

While interfaith dialogue at a global level has thus far centred on the Abrahamic faiths, other traditions are increasingly being drawn into conversation. A second *Congress of World and Traditional Religions* held in Astana, Kazakhstan in September 2006 included a broad range of participants from across the region and around the world. The congress culminated in a declaration that underlined the enhanced responsibility of religious leaders to foster a spirit of trust and the recognition and respect of cultural and religious diversity. The participants also warned against the exploitation of religious and national differences as a justification for violence, and stressed that extremism and fanaticism find no justification in a genuine understanding of religion.

"It is time for moderate and progressive religious leaders to join in boldly combating fundamentalist extremism, and to jointly teach the role of religion in promoting tolerance and pluralism over sectarianism."

Jim Wallis

Grand global meetings tend to overshadow wide-ranging dialogue efforts at the local and national levels designed to foster conversations among moderate voices within and across traditions. For example, **Alif Aleph UK**, an organization based in London, has sponsored a series of meetings under the rubric, *Working Together: A Muslim-Jewish Dialogue*. The meetings bring imams and rabbis together with Jewish and Muslim educators and community leaders to learn from one another, to diminish fear and apprehension of the "other", and to create a platform for open and honest dialogue. Following a March 2007 Alif Aleph conference dedicated to women's perspectives, British MP Meg Munn called the interfaith dialogue effort the "social glue that joins our differences in culture, faith and ethnicity together."

In November 2006, in Beirut, Lebanon, regional concerns were joined to global issues at a meeting organized by the New York based **Global Peace Initiative of Women**, which brought together widely ranging religious leaders (including Buddhist and Hindu leaders as well leading figures from the Abrahamic faiths) to explore the topic, *A Re-Commitment to Spirituality: Building Mutual Understanding and Peace.* Aram I, the head of the Armenian Orthodox Church, summed up the impetus for the meeting: "Confronting different religions is a must, whether we like it or not, in this globalized world."

Proselytism and Religious Freedom

Accentuated by new forces linked to globalization, an age-old problem in Muslim-West relations has gained greater visibility over the past two years – proselytism. The United States has been the leading sender country for missionaries since the 19th century. Today other countries including South Korea have also become more engaged. At the dawn of the 21st century, Evangelicals and Pentecostals in particular deploy global communications strategies, including television and the Internet, and take advantage of greater political openness – most dramatically in Latin America and the former Soviet Union.

Missionary inroads in most Middle East countries remain limited in the face of legal strictures in many countries. Less visible in the media is Christian-Muslim competition in parts of sub-Saharan Africa, where a complex alchemy of

Box 5.5

The Circle of Dialogue

Thomas Banchoff

Thomas Banchoff is Associate Professor of Government and Director of the Berkley Center for Religion, Peace, and World Affairs at Georgetown University. His most recent book is *Democracy and the New Religious Pluralism* (editor).

Who's in and who's out? Organizers of events designed to improve Muslim-West relations cannot escape this question. Everyone has a right to freedom of expression, but not everyone has a right to a platform or to join every discussion. Dialogue programmes, whether conferences, roundtables, seminars or online chats require effort and resources.

An invitation to participate is an investment in someone. It is meant to further a purpose, the sharing of knowledge and experiences, for example, or the promotion of shared approaches to economic, social, or political issues of common concern. How to draw the circle of dialogue, who to leave in and who to leave out, is not always obvious. To make events public and allow for feedback from the audience does not resolve the problem. The question of the principals – who is on stage – can be critical.

How to define and deal with extremists is a particularly difficult issue. What makes someone an extremist? Is it hatred, like that of the Islamophobe or the anti-Semite? Is it the glorification of violence? Or is the threshold higher: complicity in the killing of innocents? Dialogue can be a way to reach out to, and potentially transform, extremists of all three kinds. But such efforts come with significant risks.

Providing a platform can lend legitimacy, as it recognizes someone as an interlocutor who might have something to teach us. But those who glorify or perpetrate violence – outside of legitimate self-defense – have taken up arms instead of arguments. To invite them to a dialogue may, paradoxically, endorse their repudiation of dialogue and provide them with a platform for a hateful monologue. Yes, a dialogue setting allows for critical questions and public scrutiny. But in deciding how to define and whether to include extremists, one must proceed with caution.

The promise of dialogue is squandered when the term extremist is applied not to hate-mongerers or inciters of violence, but to those with whom we disagree. The fate of Tariq Ramadan provides a vivid illustration of this danger. An Egyptian-born intellectual and fellow at St. Antony's College, Oxford, Ramadan has written and spoken widely on the challenges facing Islam and Muslims in Atlantic democracies. He insists on a critical engagement with core Western values and institutions – not their rejection. Ramadan is an outspoken critic of Israeli policy towards the Palestinians, but he is not an advocate of violence. He has written against suicide bombing and Muslim anti-Semitism.

Ramadan had agreed to assume a position at Notre Dame University in 2004 when the US State Department revoked his visa under the "ideological exclusion" provision of the Patriot Act. No specific offense was cited. In fall 2006 a US official linked the visa denial to contributions Ramadan made to a charity with links to Hamas over the period 1998-2002. Ramadan points out that the contributions were made before the charity was blacklisted. Someday we may know why Ramadan still cannot enter the United States. For the time being, most Americans can engage and debate with him only at a distance.

Since 2005, Georgetown University has twice invited Ramadan to come to campus, and twice he has been unable to obtain a visa. In April 2007, students, faculty and members of the Washington, DC community gathered in the historic Gaston Hall for satellite conversations with Ramadan on topics ranging from democracy and human rights, to interreligious understanding.

When governments draw the circle of dialogue too tightly, global communications can help to keep the conversation going.

religion, ethnicity, politics and economics is in play. Not only churches and mosques, but also schools and hospitals serving local communities are sometimes drawn into complex dialogue about the connections between their service missions and any efforts to gain adherents. Finance is a complicating factor as many foreign backed missionaries draw on diverse sources of support, including funds from local parishes in Western countries and Muslim charities in oil-rich Arab countries.

This competition has to date been less an occasion for dialogue than it has been for mutual suspicion and increasingly open conflict. The absence of a level playing field exacerbates the situation. In many places, Christian missionaries enjoy superior economic resources. In some areas, such as Northern Nigeria, Muslims are better positioned. In countries such as Iraq and Afghanistan, the protection of an occupying power creates a situation that evokes memories of the colonial era. Charges of illicit proselytism have been most prominent where missionary efforts are accompanied by material inducements such as the provision of humanitarian aid.

Christian groups such as the **World Evangelical Alliance** invoke the norm of religious freedom against those who would restrict Christian preaching. They echo the US government in pointing out that the global human rights regime, set down in UN declarations and conventions, guarantees freedom to have and manifest one's religious beliefs. International law also protects the rights of individuals to change their religion. Critics of Christian missionary efforts – not just Muslims, but also Christians, Jews, and non-religious individuals and groups – tend to emphasize another current in international law, which is the right of groups to maintain their own cultural and religious traditions.

The **World Council of Churches** has taken up the proselytism issue over the past several years. A major forward step came with an August 2007 interfaith gathering in Toulouse, France, which followed-up on a May 2006 meeting between leaders of multiple faiths struggling to find the line between the "fundamental, inviolable and non-negotiable right" to witness to one's faith and a desire to "heal" religious organizations of the "obsession of converting others."

The code of conduct that emerged emphasizes a need to avoid coercion in the promulgation of faith and similarly addresses state sponsored anti-conversion and forced conversation laws, specifically within the Muslim world. Although the conference exposed differences in views on proselytism between the world's two major religions, it also demonstrated a broadly shared recognition that targeted conversion efforts backed by material inducements are inappropriate. As one Christian representative commented: "The problem with the idea of bribing people or in some way enticing someone into 'joining' the Christian group – like some companies offer inducements to take out a credit card – is that it doesn't work."

The ongoing controversy over proselytism suggests that this universal impulse within both Christianity and Islam is likely to generate tensions and complicate dialogue on other issues in years to come. There is cause for optimism, however, in the fact that a majority of religious and secular citizens within Muslim and non-Muslim majority countries do not see religious differences as insuperable obstacles to cooperation. According to a major BBC World Service Poll across 27 countries in December 2006, only 26% of responders saw "fundamental differences" as the cause of tensions between Islam and the West. Many

of the interfaith efforts described in this chapter take theological differences as their starting point, but emphasize points of contact between Islam, Christianity and Judaism, particularly around issues of peace, human rights and economic and social development. The next chapter describes efforts to deepen knowledge and promote understanding at the intersection of the West and the Muslim world through educational and intercultural initiatives.

Box 5.6

Avoiding the "Clash of Civilizations"

Jim Wallis

A leading progressive Evangelical, Jim Wallis is President and CEO of Sojourners ministries. Among his books is *God's Politics: Why the Right Gets It Wrong and the Left Doesn't Get It*.

In the confrontations between the Christian West and Islam, radical rhetoric makes headlines far too often. Christian extremists condemn Islam as a violent religion while supporting the invasion of Iraq, and Muslim extremists support violent jihad against the West. It is time for moderate and progressive religious leaders to join in boldly combating fundamentalist extremism, and to jointly teach the role of religion in promoting tolerance and pluralism over sectarianism.

Fundamentalism, it is often said, is caused by taking religion too seriously, suggesting perhaps that faith should be taken less seriously. That conventional wisdom is simply wrong. The best response to fundamentalism is to take faith even more seriously, to critique by faith the accommodations of fundamentalism to theocracy, to violence and to power; and to assert the vital religious commitments that fundamentalists often leave out – namely compassion, social justice, peacemaking, religious pluralism and democracy.

Conventional wisdom also suggests that the antidote to religious fundamentalism is secularism. Again, that is a very big mistake. The best response to bad religion is better religion, not secularism. Our traditions are religions of the Book, so the key question is, how do we interpret the Book? In Christian faith, we have the interpretations of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., but also of the Ku Klux Klan. More faithful interpretations of the Book are better responses to fundamentalism than throwing the Book away.

Fundamentalism too easily justifies violence as a tool for implementing its agenda. Genuine faith forbids violence as a methodology or says that violence must always be limited and lamented, never glorified or celebrated. Genuine faith always seeks alternatives to violence that seek to break its deadly cycle.

Because much of today's terrorism is more "theological" than ideological, it poses the real danger of juxtaposing the "Christian West" versus "Islamic fundamentalism." The mainstream on both sides has no desire for conflict, but profound misunderstandings between Christians and Muslims heighten the potential.

New efforts, with strong leadership from the American churches, must be undertaken to increase understanding and respect between Christians and Muslims. Religious leaders could undertake conflict resolution across political lines, learning to trust and respect each other. The American public must learn not to equate "Muslim" and "Arab" with terrorism.

A crucial battle for the hearts and minds of the faithful is taking place today within all the great religions. That battle is often between a fundamentalist versus a prophetic vision. It is between the kind of religion that promises easy certainty and the kind that prompts deeper reflection. One attacks all those outside the circle of faith – or even outside their faction of the circle – while the other seeks a genuine dialogue without compromising its sacred ground.

Conflicts between religions capture the headlines, but the real struggle is the internal battle within for the soul of each community of faith. Ultimately, faith should be not a wedge that divides, but a bridge that draws us together on the most significant moral challenges of our time.

6 Education and Intercultural Understanding

On 4 September 2007, an Arabic-language public school opened in Brooklyn, New York. The **Khalil Gibran International Academy**, part of the city's effort to address the needs of its diverse population, was embroiled in controversy from the day plans were announced. Opponents of the school, active in the media and on the Internet, organized a campaign, "Stop the Madrasa: Protecting our Public Schools from Islamist Curricula."

Although the school was bound to cover the city's basic curriculum and did not have a religious orientation, anxiety about Islam fed the opposition. One prominent commentator argued: "Arabic language instruction is rarely neutral, usually nudging students towards pro-Palestinian stances and hostility toward the West and the United States." The school remains open, but the controversy continues.

The case of the Khalil Gibran International Academy highlights in microcosm the centrality of education for Muslim-West dialogue and its links to issues of culture and pluralism. Today's increasing cultural and religious diversity places new demands on educational institutions everywhere. These demands are heightened by widely differing perceptions of what the issues are and how to address them. The focus on schools is not surprising given their key role in socializing children into society and preparing them both for work and citizenship. What knowledge to impart and whether and how to foster an appreciation of religious and cultural difference is contested within and across countries and faith traditions.

The debate goes beyond education policy to other sectors, including the media and popular culture. In all of these sectors, government and civil society actors at the national and international levels have stepped up programmatic efforts to close knowledge gaps and foster mutual respect through dialogue and interaction across cultural divides. This is taking place through a combination of dialogue activities and concrete initiatives.

Knowledge Gaps, Anti-Semitism and Islamophobia

Social and political tensions at the intersection of Islam and the West are often fuelled by prejudice and ignorance. In both the educational and cultural spheres, multiple efforts are underway to dispel misunderstanding and build mutual respect among different national, cultural and religious communities. Three deep-seated problems are gaps in basic knowledge about religious traditions and growing anti-Semitism and Islamophobia.

A host of polls and surveys document how little is understood about Islam and Muslims in Europe, but above all in the United States. For example, a September 2007 study by the **Pew Forum on Religion and Public Life** in the US indicated that 58% of respondents said they knew "nothing" or "not very much" about Islam. More worrying is that the number had changed little since 2001, despite a blizzard of efforts to increase public awareness. Reliable data on Muslim knowledge of Christianity and Judaism is more difficult to come by, but similar knowledge gaps may exist there as well.

Box 6.1

The Power of Dignity

HRH Crown Prince Haakon of Norway

HRH Crown Prince Haakon is Goodwill Ambassador to the United Nations Development Programme, with a special focus on promoting the Millennium Development Goals.

We live in a time when there is no shortage of threats to our security and our way of life. Climate change, arms proliferation, poverty and cultural tensions can all result in conflict and division. At the same time, the world is dependent on trust – trust between individuals, organizations and countries. Security and dignity are intertwined. By helping to preserve your dignity, I am simultaneously enhancing my own security. Building bridges is not easy, nor risk free. But it is the only way of creating the future we want for the generations to come.

I have seen examples of bridge-building based on an affirmation of dignity in many countries and regions. In rural Sierra Leone we began each meeting with a Muslim prayer followed by a Christian prayer before elaborating on local development issues. In Jordan, as in Norway, school children intuitively understood the importance of dignity and elaborated on it with stories from their own lives. In Cambodia I met a 19-year-old HIV positive girl who had decided to be open about her status in order to help her peers and fight stigma. In Guatemala, a farmer's union leader told me about their community's struggle with reconstruction after civil war. The moment he became emotional and tears came to his eyes was when he said, "to us this is about life, justice and the ability to lead a dignified life."

These stories and others like them teach us an important lesson. Every day we are reminded of our differences and the reasons why there is confrontation and violence in the world. But what is truly needed is the opposite: to emphasise what unites us. Once we realise that every human being has the right to lead a dignified life our differences become less important. On this common ground we can work out how to live with our differences and take advantage of the positive opportunities that reside within them.

Cultural liberty is key in this regard. We all have multiple identities. It is vital that we find ways to utilise these identities in a constructive way. In Norway, for instance, we have Norwegians with roots in Norway, Pakistan, Sweden, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Iraq, Denmark, Poland, Vietnam and Iran, just to mention a few examples. Together we shall build the future of Norway in the years to come.

It is not enough to merely accept the inherent dignity of all human beings. Our actions must reflect the dignity of others. In my view dignity consists of two main parts. First, inherent dignity and second, perceived dignity – a sort of dignity capital. We all have the ability to increase other people's dignity capital. The beauty of this is that we thus enhance our own dignity. The dignity approach works on all levels. It works for children and for adults, it works for women and for men, and it works on a micro- and a macro-level.

Archbishop Desmond Tutu says that God is trying to teach us only one lesson – that we are all part of the same family. If we really believe this, there would no longer be war and there would no longer be poverty. Because we do not drop bombs on our sister and we do not let our brother starve.

The greatest actions are those that recognise and strengthen the dignity of others.

In the United States, the release of Stephen Prothero's *Religious Literacy* in 2007 vividly documented widespread ignorance about religion among Americans – not only of Islam, but also of Christianity, Judaism and other faith traditions. Prothero's argument, echoed by others, is that knowledge about religion is more important than ever in an era of growing pluralism, and that public educators need to abandon their anxiety about bringing religious studies into the curriculum.

"Every day we are reminded of our differences and the reasons why there is confrontation and violence in the world. But what is truly needed is the opposite: to emphasise what unites us."

HRH Crown Prince Haakon of Norway

Where religious literacy is weak, efforts to demonize the religious "other" flourish. The new anti-Semitism and the rise of Islamophobia make this clear. Anti-Semitism has a long history in the Christian West and is a more recent phenomenon in the Muslim world. A tendency to blame Jews for the world's ills and to see a vast Jewish conspiracy behind the travails of the Arab and Muslim world is evident in extremist Internet sites and in the discourse of some prominent imams. Sheikh Abd al-Rahman al-Sudayyis, imam of the Grand Mosque in Mecca, has referred to Jews as "the scum of the human race, the rats of the world, the violators of pacts and agreements, the murderers of the prophets, and the offspring of apes and pigs." Sheikh Tantawi of Al-Azhar University contends that "the charge of anti-Semitism was invented by the Jews as a means of pressuring the Arabs and Muslims, and with the aim of implementing their conspiracies in the Arab and Muslim countries."

Both Muslim and non-Muslim groups have actively sought to actively counter such voices. One example is the UK organization, **Muslims Against Anti-Semitism**, which supports events and programmes to combat hatred and Holocaust denial, and highlight Muslim-Jewish commonalities, including positive legacies such as coexistence in Medieval Spain. The US-based **Daniel Pearl Foundation**, created to honour the memory of the Jewish-American journalist executed by extremists in Pakistan, works from an "unshaken belief in the effectiveness of education and communication" and sponsors creative outlets for interfaith understanding, including an annual music festival.

Islamophobia is also on the rise – as are efforts to combat it through dialogue. The years since 9/11 have seen an increase in discrimination and hate speech directed against the Muslim minority in Western countries. Franklin Graham's reference to Islam as a "Satanic religion" gained headlines, as did Pat Robertson's 2006 comments, asserting that Americans, "especially the American left, need to wake up to the danger" that Islam presents. Robertson continued: "Who ever heard of such a bloody, bloody, brutal type of religion? But that's what it is. It is not a religion of peace."

The UN helped to put the Islamophobia issue on the global agenda at two 2004 forums under the heading *Education for Tolerance and Understanding*, identifying both Islamophobia and anti-Semitism as pressing global problems. "Islamophobia is at once a deeply personal issue for Muslims," then Secretary-General Kofi Annan declared. "[It is] a matter of great concern to anyone concerned about upholding

Box 6.2

Commonalities Across Traditions

Peter Bisanz

Peter Bisanz is the director of *ONE*, a documentary film that explores the contemporary role of faith in the world. He is a Young Global Leader of the World Economic Forum.

Human beings are unique among creatures in their capacity to create meaning out of their life experience. We weave stories that inform how we interpret our existence, the civilizations we form and the natural world around us.

For the production of the documentary film *ONE*, I had the fortunate opportunity to interview religious leaders, politicians and luminaries from all over the world about difficult questions facing our age today.

As the former president of Iran, Mohammad Khatami, noted: "All of these religions – Christianity, Judaism, Buddhism, Islam – are the religions of peace. So we have to get out of the conventional approach to religion to get to the roots of these religions. We all share the one and only thing, which is peace and stability for all human beings, free will of humankind; so we will be able to live, all of us, in a more secure, in a more better-deserved way of life. For everyone."

If religions agree on common guiding principles – to honour the dignity of all human beings – then why has the face of religion been disfigured, in the modern age, to represent violence, corruption, and extremism in the eyes of many? The disconnect that exists between the peaceful crux of religion and widespread contemporary perceptions of it as intolerant and potentially violent has everything to do with politics.

Nationalism and national identity often overshadow religious identity. Political conflict often masquerades as religious and ethnic intolerance. Wars are often waged over the inequitable distribution of resources yet blamed on alleged cultural and religious differences. Supposedly fixed identities are then used as a way of dehumanizing the enemy.

Some of this dynamic is evident at the level of personal identity. Rabbi David Rosen elucidated this issue in my interview with him when he said: "Because religion seeks to give meaning to our lives, it's bound up with all the components of our understanding of who we are; as individuals, as members of families, of communities, of nations, peoples; even as part of the whole cosmos. And when, in those contexts, we feel threatened or under siege, or lacking in respect or alone and humiliated, then we will utilize that which seeks to give meaning to defend ourselves."

Much of this complexity is lost when contemporary Islam is under discussion. Rather than focus on Islam's message of peace observers highlight fundamentalists and extremists who lash out against the West. John L. Esposito, University Professor and Founding Director of the Prince Alwaleed Bin Talal Center for Muslim-Christian Understanding at Georgetown University noted in his interview: "For many people when they think of Islam, they think of the deadly minority of extremists within the tradition. And the vast majority of Muslims are seen through that lens, which is a distorted lens. Now we don't do that with Judaism and Christianity. When acts of extremism are committed in the name of Judaism and Christianity, most people don't say, 'There go those Christians and there go those Jews again.' They may say, 'There are those extremists'."

Thus our challenge in the modern age is twofold – to reclaim the roots of religions as an access to spiritual principles of unity and peace, and to facilitate progressive dialogue between Islam and the West. Both challenges are related. And they must be met head-on.

universal human values and a question with implications for international harmony and peace… We should not underestimate the resentment and sense of injustice felt by members of one of the world's great religions, cultures and civilizations."

Subsequent efforts to address Islamophobia included a December 2006 consultation of leading American Muslims and US officials, organized by the **Saban Center for Middle East Policy** at the **Brookings Institution**. The consultation was designed to better define the nature of the problem and explore effective ways to address it. Among other initiatives on Islamophobia are the advocacy work of global Muslim organizations like **Islamic Relief**.

Educational Reform

A series of educational and curricular reform efforts designed to close these knowledge gaps and promote greater mutual understanding have been initiated over the past several years. These programs have sought to strengthen the overall quality of education, to link curricula to the promotion of civic values, and to promote social inclusion and economic opportunity.

In May 2007, Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum, Vice-President and Prime Minister of the United Arab Emirates, announced a US$ 10 billion gift designed to make a leap forward in knowledge and education, with a focus on the Arab world. A dedicated foundation will promote sustained investment in education and the development of knowledge in the Middle East, "to open doors for forthcoming generations of leaders of the region to shape their future by equipping them with world-class

knowledge and education." The foundation is expected to address "the illiteracy that is still rampant in the region's communities" and to help create a knowledge-based society.

Several international organizations have stepped up their efforts in support of education in Arab and Muslim majority countries, including the World Bank and the **Islamic Development Bank**. Both organizations put particular emphasis on access to education but issues of quality and relevance are increasingly central. The World Bank has worked for over two years on an intensive study of educational policy and performance in the Middle East region, slated for publication in early 2008. The international *Education for All* programme directs considerable financing towards Muslim countries that are among the world's poorest, including Mali, Niger and Bangladesh. The need to improve education for girls is a special concern. On a visit to Morocco in the context of a UNICEF education programme, Queen Rania of Jordan suggested that education is "a 'social vaccine' for girls. It immunizes against untimely death, poverty and unemployment, and helps them build healthy, hopeful futures."

Much international attention has focused on Islamic institutions in general and what are termed madrasas in particular. In practice, educational institutions run by Muslim authorities vary widely in quality and curriculum, ranging from outstanding institutions in Malaysia and essentially pre-school or parallel religious training in East Africa, to poorly resourced, overstretched institutions in Pakistan and parts of Morocco. While knowledge of what goes on in Islamic schools is limited, they are widely viewed in the West as homes to hatred and extremism and incubators of terrorism.
One of the few efforts to engage Muslim educational authorities with an eye to helping them reform and improve their schools is the Washington, DC based **International Center**

for Religion and Diplomacy's *Madrasa Reform Project*. The project has sponsored a series of workshops with school leaders and education officials in Pakistan designed to help schools move away from rote learning and focus more on reflective learning, practical knowledge and understanding of other cultures. "We feel motivated to think in innovative and creative ways," one workshop participant noted. "We have started looking at ourselves and our system. We have learned here how to plan things for a better future."

> ***"If religions agree on common guiding principles – to honour the dignity of all human beings – then why has the face of religion been disfigured, in the modern age, to represent violence, corruption, and extremism in the eyes of many?"***
>
> Peter Bisanz

The presence of Western educational initiatives and institutions in Muslim-majority countries is sometimes welcomed and sometimes controversial. Two of the more established institutions, the American University of Beirut and the American University in Cairo (AUC), have long fostered intercultural and interreligious understanding through their curricula and through an open, critical classroom environment. Other US sponsored colleges and universities have been created in the Middle East over the past decade. As this presence has expanded, concerns about cultural imperialism have gone hand-in-hand with charges that Western educational institutions cater to wealthy elites in the region. At the same time the academic excellence of these institutions and their remarkable network of graduates have also generated widespread admiration.

New scholarship programmes have recently sought to counter concerns about social stratification. The *Public School Scholarship Program* at AUC, supported by the US government and Egypt's Ministry of Higher Education, has given more than 100 of Egypt's most talented public school students from every region of the country the opportunity to advance their education in Cairo. The *William J. Clinton Scholarship Program*, a partnership with the American University in Dubai, aims explicitly to bridge the gap of cultural understanding between America and the Arab world.

In the West, educational institutions have begun to adapt to greater cultural and religious pluralism, and the increasing salience of Islam in particular. Primary and secondary schools in Europe and the United States are devoting more attention to diverse cultures and religious traditions, including Islam. The **Three Faiths Forum**, a London-based interfaith foundation, promotes school programmes involving "scriptural reasoning" that exemplify efforts to bring religious traditions into school curricula in ways that encourage deep discussion of shared values and differences. Another example is the Australian government's *Values Education and Good Practice in Schools* programme. The **Tanenbaum Center**, based in New York, has a successful programme devoted to teacher training for cultural diversity. An ambitious transnational example of curriculum review is the effort of the United World College system, together with the International Baccalaureate programme, to maintain educational quality while adding a more explicit component to ensure competence and creativity in working across different cultures.

At the university level, more room is being made in the curriculum for religious and cultural pluralism, and for the study of Islam in particular. The sharp growth in Arabic courses is particularly striking. In part, this is a response to real-world developments. Students are eager to acquire knowledge and skills that will serve them well upon graduation. But the trend has been reinforced by philanthropy. In 2006, for example, Prince Alwaleed bin Talal bin Abdul Aziz Al Saud made high profile grants to Harvard and Georgetown to support the study of Islam and further interreligious and intercultural understanding. Another example was the establishment in 2007 of the **Fethullah Gülen Chair** at the Australian Catholic University. The chair is to foster Muslim-Catholic dialogue within Australia and the Asia-Pacific region, and support the efforts of the

Box 6.3

Islam and the West: The Internet Dimension

Shimon Samuels

Dr. Shimon Samuels is the Director for International Relations of the Simon Wiesenthal Centre, based in Paris. He is a co-editor of *Antisemitism: The Generic Hatred. Essays in Memory of Simon Wiesenthal*.

Cyberspace is a common home for all victims of racism and intolerance. On the Internet hate is truly indivisible as all faith and ethnic groups, genders and even the disabled are targeted. The damage is not limited to the Web; hateful video, images and text often find their way into mainstream national media.

The Wiesenthal Centre in Paris, which I direct, has considerable experience in monitoring sites that incite to hatred and violence. Across Europe other organizations, such as the European Network Against Racism, are waking up to the magnitude of the challenge.

At the Wiesenthal Centre we have tracked the emergence of a new anti-Semitism on the Internet across a broad range of far-right and Islamic sites. A parallel source of hatred is the Islamophobic sites that rival mainstream Muslim sites in popularity. A survey of the most popular Islamophobic sites – including thereligionofpeace.com, which portrays Islam as an irredeemably backward and violent faith – revealed thousands of links from other sites, including many in the mainstream media.

Some of the most popular Islamophobic sites, including aljazeera.com, impersonate reputable Muslim sites, but present a violent, often anti-Semitic brand of Islam as orthodoxy. One such site simply made up new Qu'ranic passages to support its intolerant version of the faith.

A leading more mainstream Islamic site, islamfortoday.com, was linked to by fewer sites (around 14,000) than was thereligionofpeace.com (275,000). The imbalance is less striking, if still evident, if one looks at numbers of visits. By this measure, thereligionofpeace.com had 35,000 monthly visits, mainly from the United States, Singapore and Spain. The counterfeit aljazeera.com had 100,000 monthly visits, a quarter from the US, and many of the rest from Egypt, Morocco and the United Arab Emirates. Of islamfortoday.com's 23,000 monthly visits, a quarter came from the US, others largely from Canada, Pakistan and UAE.

The particular characteristics of sites, and not just their links and traffic patterns, can have an impact. The Oklahoma FBI headquarters bomber, Timothy McVeigh, was inspired by one hate site where he also found details for manufacturing explosives. A British Sikh site republished leaflets accusing Muslims of seducing Sikh girls in order to convert them. Just as a single grenade can bring down a house, provocation by one website poisoned relations between these two communities in several cities of northern Britain.

One of the most dangerous aspects of the Internet is its capacity to harbour narrow communities cut off from broader sources of information; communities where hatred can flourish. A defensive, siege mentality can predominate that ascribes ills solely to an outside group, whether Jews, Muslims, Americans or some other group. Here, conspiracy theories find a promising feeding ground.

We need to develop more powerful tools to track religious and cultural hatred in cyberspace. Any effort to explore the impact of the media on West-Islamic relations must bring in the Internet dimension.

university's **Asia-Pacific Centre for Inter-Religious Dialogue**, as well as local dialogue initiatives.

Universities and research institutions are not just devoting more resources to debate and dialogue around Muslim-West issues. Scholars across disciplines are also exploring dynamics of religious pluralism and peaceful interaction across time and space, for example the multi-religious experience of Muslim Spain, Ottoman Turkey and Renaissance Netherlands. One instance is the Berlin Institute of Advanced Study's hosting of a *Working Group on Modernity and Islam* from 1996-2006. Funded by the German Federal Ministry of Education and the city-state of Berlin, the Working Group brought world-class scholars together to examine Islam's complex encounter with diverse dimensions of modernity, including liberal democracy, cultural individualism, nationalism and capitalism. In Spain, efforts to bridge the academy-society divide include the **Islamic Cultural Foundation**'s day courses and lectures. In the US, the Carnegie Corporation is a leader in efforts to advance knowledge about Islam.

Political leaders across countries and faith traditions have recognized the importance of education in fostering greater knowledge of the "other" and overcoming hateful stereotypes. At the World Economic Forum Annual Meeting in Davos in January 2007, Israeli Foreign Minister Tzipi Livni argued: "Educational institutions need to create a generation of peacemakers not of martyrs." During a visit to Washington DC in November 2007, the Sultan of Sokoto discussed Christian-Muslim relations in his native Nigeria and emphasized the importance of education geared to preparing young people for jobs as pivotal to fostering harmonious and productive social relationships.

As the above examples illustrate, national governments, international organizations, and local authorities have recognized the importance of intercultural understanding and a role for educational and curricular reform. But other institutions, more difficult to steer, also affect intercultural and interfaith understanding in the contemporary world. Perhaps the most important are the media and popular culture.

The Media and Popular Culture

The media – primarily television and radio, newspapers, magazines and the Internet – are powerful sources of knowledge about different cultural and religious traditions, as well as forums for the open exchange of ideas. Editors, columnists, and talk show hosts play a critical role in shaping broader society-wide dialogue. Some of the most creative print journalists, including Thomas Friedman of the *New York Times* and Raghida Dergham, who is featured in *Al Hayat*, raise issues in provocative ways that can shift the terms of debate. Television personalities including Oprah Winfrey in the US and Amr Khaled in Egypt have huge audiences. Khaled, in particular, has helped to bring Muslim-West issues to the attention of a wider public in his native Egypt and beyond.

> ***"One of the most dangerous aspects of the Internet is its capacity to harbour narrow communities cut off from broader sources of information; communities where hatred can flourish."***
>
> Shimon Samuels

In practice, however, media outlets often feed consumers oversimplified stereotypes that resonate with their own preconceptions. The problem is particularly acute in the Muslim-West context, where powerful images and inflammatory commentary often have a polarizing effect. As former US President Bill Clinton commented: "If we could just get one story about that world [the moderate constructive face of Islam] for every two bad stories that inevitably have to be printed, because somebody's getting killed, we would all be way ahead." Citizens appear to be aware of the problem. In a 2006 study of Western countries by Communiqué Partners, 40% of respondents considered portrayals of Islam only accurate about half the time; for another 31% it was less than half the time.

Box 6.4

Young People: The Imperative

Sheikha Hessa Al Khalifa

Sheikha Hessa Al Khalifa is Executive Director of inJAz Bahrain, an organization that encourages entrepreneurial spirit among young Bahrainis. She is an active member of the royal family of the Kingdom of Bahrain.

More than a quarter of the world's 2.3 billion children live in Islamic countries and more than 40% of all Muslims are children. We need to invest both in programmes that provide for their basic material human needs and in education that ensures them access to economic opportunities.

We must truly believe in the boundless potential of young people, respect their talents, creativity, perspectives, and backgrounds, as well as treat them as partners and collaborators. Attitudes and education, together, have vital roles to play in making these ideals a reality.

The 2005 UNICEF and the Organization of the Islamic Conference report, *Investing in the Children of the Islamic World*, argues forcefully that children should be the focal point for Islamic governments in their drive for development. It highlights both the rights of children and their welfare: "Investing in children and putting them at the center of development strategies are the most effective ways to eliminate poverty and meet global development targets."

The stark reality is that Islamic countries have both very privileged and deeply deprived children. Many face enormous barriers to survival and have little chance to thrive and grow to productive adulthood. Islamic sub-Saharan Africa faces the severest deprivations: a child born there can expect to live only 46 years, compared to 78 in industrialized countries.

Challenges vary widely country by country, but the global Millennium Development Goals are still far off in many places. Primary school participation is below 60% in 20 African Islamic countries; in some countries more than half the adult population is illiterate. Four out of 10 children in the African Islamic countries are out of school, as are a quarter of children in Arab member states. Yet, primary school participation in Asian Islamic countries is about 82%, with gender-parity. Gender bias in education is strong in many African and Arab countries, but more girls than boys are in school in Bahrain, Jordan, Lebanon, the Occupied Palestinian Territory and Oman.

Over a third of all children in Islamic countries, excluding the Arab sub-region, are chronically malnourished. Health is a critical issue. Of the six countries where polio is still endemic, five are majority Muslim. Maternal and under five mortality rates are exceptionally high in the Islamic countries. Islamic countries account for 11 of the 16 countries with the world's highest child mortality rates; some 4.3 million children under five die each year from preventable disease and malnutrition. Child labour is still far too common.

There is room for hope. Exciting possibilities modelled by programmes in parts of the Islamic world offer the promise of reaching across boundaries to young people who aim for common goals. As they work and learn together they gravitate towards common standards and are truly on an equal par with each other as global citizens. Business and entrepreneurship programmes involve young people as partners to improve life quality and skills. Financial literacy has become essential for all communities.

Hands on experience teaches entrepreneurship and work brings young people into the real world and opens their minds to their potential. Business and civil society working together can generate inspirational messages and hope, so that young people can make a difference in the world.

If the world community works together, these barriers to survival can be overcome.

A variety of initiatives and programs have sought to address the problem. The November 2006 Report of the High Level Group of the **Alliance of Civilizations** underscored the important role of the media in shaping attitudes around Muslim-West issues. The report also made concrete recommendations, including the articulation and implementation of voluntary codes of conduct, the creation of monitoring mechanisms, the institution of a risk fund to help temper market forces that encourage sensationalism and stereotypes, and collaboration with schools of journalism improving journalist training. The recommendations in many respects echoed a call to build a new "media citizenship" addressed at the June 2006 **Fes Forum**, an intercultural, interfaith arts festival held in Morocco. This report's chapter on patterns in the depictions of the Western and Muslim "other" in media illustrate the magnitude of the problem.

To be effective, efforts to impart knowledge and understanding through the media must go beyond news and journalism to popular culture. Television, a leading source of news for people around the world, is also a vehicle for popular entertainment that proffers powerful images, both positive and negative, of diverse religious and cultural traditions. The Washington, DC based **Search for Common Ground** (SFGC) has worked with television networks in Muslim majority countries to produce or promote television programmes with a "soap" or "reality TV" quality that might appeal to young audiences. "While problems between the Islamic world and in the West will not be resolved on the level of public relations, the media on both sides could play a much more constructive role in improving communications," observed SFCG founder John Marks at the screening of two Egyptian programmes in November 2007. Over the past several years SFGC has helped to disseminate positive reporting through its weekly *Common Ground News Services*, one for the Arab/Israeli world in Arabic, Hebrew and English, the other for Muslim/Western world in Arabic, French, English, Bahasa and Urdu.

Alongside television, cinema is widely considered the most influential cultural medium in the world. In recent years, some critics have attacked Hollywood for offering only stereotypical and violent portrayals of Islam, while others note a general absence of Muslim themes and characters. The debate over Western portrayals of Islam peaked in the aftermath of Ridley Scott's 2005 controversial epic Crusade film, *Kingdom of Heaven*, which managed to anger many Muslims and Christians alike. University of Cambridge Professor Jonathan Riley-Scott labelled the film, "Osama bin Laden's version of history," while UCLA Professor Dr. Khaled Abou El Fadl accused the film of "teach[ing] people to hate Muslims." Not all the assessments were negative. The **Council on American-Islamic Relations** praised the film as "a balanced and positive depiction of Islamic culture during the Crusades." Outside the context of this particular controversy, the American Muslim community has sought to improve the image of Islam in Hollywood. The **Muslim Public Affairs Council** maintains a Hollywood Bureau specifically tasked with advancing Muslim-American perspectives in the entertainment industry and nurturing the talent of aspiring Muslim filmmakers.

2006-2007 saw a marked increase in programmes at museums designed to increase understanding across religions and cultures. Among carefully crafted exhibits was *Sacred: Discover What We Share*, a juxtaposition of Sacred Texts of the Jewish, Christian and Muslim faiths, at the British Library. Across the Atlantic, the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York held a major exhibition dedicated to *Venice and the Islamic World*. After viewing a rich collection of art and artefacts documenting centuries of cultural exchange between the West and the Muslim World, the *New York Times* arts critic remarked: "Told often enough that the West and Islam are natural enemies, we start to believe it, and assume it has always been so." Like these exhibits, Akbar Ahmed's documentary film, *Glories of Islamic Art*, released in 2007, made the artistic and architectural achievements of the Muslim world accessible to a wider audience.

Music can communicate cultural diversity in a universal way – it draws people out of their habitual ways of thinking and towards new perspectives. The *Fes Festival of Global Sacred Music* has used this insight in powerful ways to create a platform for daring dialogue that brings members of Abrahamic and other faiths and disciplines together to

explore sensitive issues such as identity, shame and forgiveness. Its formula of carefully presenting differing traditions in juxtaposition, designed to spark dialogue, is emulated in a wide variety of cities, including Italy, Spain, France and the United States.

"We must truly believe in the boundless potential of young people, respect their talents, creativity, perspectives, and backgrounds, as well as treat them as partners and collaborators."

Sheikha Hessa Al Khalifa

Popular music has a similar potential. Through his music and public engagement, Bono, lead singer of the Irish band U2, has had more impact than any popular performer in emphasizing a human unity that transcends particular religious and cultural traditions. At a National Prayer Breakfast in Washington, DC in January 2006, for example, he suggested that "all of us here – Muslims, Jews, Christians – all are searching our souls for how to better serve our family, our community, our nation, our God."

Salman Ahmed, leader of South Asia's most popular rock band Junoon, also serves as a UN Goodwill Ambassador for HIV/AIDS, and epitomizes both the desire and potential to blend artistic and diplomatic endeavours. "I'm highlighting the richness of Muslim music and poetry, both traditional and contemporary," he told an interviewer in 2007.

Last but by no means least, sports have potential to advance dialogue and understanding at the intersection of the West and the Muslim world, and more globally. Like music, sports has a universal dimension that can transcend religious and cultural boundaries – and one that engages the passion of youth. A first sign of efforts to capitalize on this potential was a meeting of religious leaders focused on intercultural harmony at the July 2004 Athens Olympics. The 18th FIFA World Cup, held in Germany in July 2006, saw similar efforts. Against the backdrop of increasing cultural diversity in Europe, and the growth of the Muslim minority in particular, *Mondialogo*, a UNESCO and Daimler initiative, organized events and an interactive website that aimed to translate good will around the championships into more lasting understanding, "a special occasion for different cultures to get know each other and exchange views and ideas."

There are close links between media, popular culture, and dialogue efforts. The media magnify the impact of popular culture by covering television, film, and sports stars. And media coverage, in turn, gives celebrities an opportunity to bring causes including intercultural understanding to the attention of a wider global public. Prestigious awards are another way to recognize contributions to dialogue and harness the power of the media. The Nobel Peace Prize is, of course, the most well-known example, but there are others as well. In 2006 and 2007, for example, the World Economic Forum presented awards to Muhammad Ali and to Prince Charles to honour their contributions to Muslim-West dialogue. Other organizations including **Search for Common Ground**, the **Niwano Foundation**, and the **Appeal of Conscience Foundation** have devoted special efforts to honouring the work of dialogue and its heroes.

Exchanges and Youth Programmes

Ultimately, intercultural understanding is fostered most directly through person-to-person exchanges.

Box 6.5

Dignity Day

John Hope Bryant

John Hope Bryant is Founder of Operation HOPE, America's first non-profit social investment banking organization. He is a Young Global Leader of the World Economic Forum.

I have been conducting Dignity Day sessions – conversations about the human dignity of each and every individual, faith and the value of our diversity of views and perspectives – around the world from Johannesburg to New Delhi, Istanbul, Davos, British Columbia and Pennsylvania. Still, I had apprehensions about traveling to Jordan for Dignity Day in June 2007.

It did not help that prior to the trip, I was encouraged not to speak of religion or faith. Luckily, I had more faith in the light reflected in the faces of the young people I was scheduled to speak with than the understandably cautious adults who have grown far too accustomed to, and fearful of, the darkness that has visited upon the region of late.

As the official programme for Dignity Day opened to the lights and cameras of Jordanian television on that beautiful day, I found myself before a row of microphones, uttering these first words: "Within a few miles from this place, Jesus Christ was baptized. And less than 100 yards from that place, where Christ was baptized, the Prophet Muhammad ascended into Heaven."

I took a calculated risk to make an obvious point and the diverse group of assembled young Middle Eastern men and women got it, instantly. Either God simply has a sense of humor or He was trying to tell us something, or maybe both. Message: we are all the same family.

As we headed into classrooms, I found myself instantly drawn into one of the most inspiring and heart warming conversations with bright young people in Jordan and the Middle East that I have experienced in all of my time. I was completely and utterly swept away by the eloquence and love of these young people from throughout Jordan. I was told that they would not speak to us, yet our session that day ran over precisely because we could not quite stop them from speaking their minds.

When I asked them why they were so open to me and to us, their response was simple – no one had ever asked them what they felt or believed. No one ever actually asked them for their opinion. Dignity extended and dignity received. I remember one conversation in particular, as I dared describe the varied religions of the world – from Christianity, Judaism and Buddhism to Islam – as roadways and passageways up various sides of one mountain. Yet all are oddly destined for the same ultimate location – the mountaintop called God, or Allah, or whatever else one decides to call Him. My guess is God does not have a self-esteem problem. Call Him what you like.

When I asked the young people in my Jordanian classroom what this particular story meant, including young ladies in traditional Islamic dress whose hands I could not shake out of respect for their beliefs, once again I was inspired by their natural and mature response.

They told me, speaking individually yet remarkably in one powerful voice, that "we are all one, ultimately serving one." They also said that we should all learn to better respect the views of others, and that these views do not diminish, nor dishonour our own beliefs simply because they exist.

In a time when no one seems to agree on most anything, from politics to race to religion, I am convinced that the one thing we can all still agree upon, the world over is dignity. Dignity Day, Jordan, made it clear to me that the future of the Middle East and the West is not in the hands of hardened, partisan politicians, nor with religious predators. The future is in the hands of our youth.

Visits by political leaders, parliamentary networks, professional and educational exchanges, and youth connections are all important. The *International Visitor Leadership Program* of the US Department of State brings emerging leaders from areas throughout the world to the United States to gain a direct understanding of US culture and society. Several programmes have reached out specifically to young Muslim leaders on topics ranging from religious diversity to immigration. The Department also collaborates with US universities to support a summer institute that brings recent high school graduates from the Middle East and North Africa to the United States. It seeks to foster better understanding and appreciation between the United States and the Middle East, and "to develop the leadership skills of the region's future leaders." The **United States Institute of Peace** supports some of the same goals through its *Muslim World Initiative*.

Educational exchanges that target religious leaders are particularly important. Instances of creative exchange programmes include the Al-Azhar University and Anglican Communion's mutual training and the initiative by Morocco's **Conseil des Ulemas** to foster exchanges both with religious scholars and with Christian evangelical environmental activists in the United States and Europe.

High-quality interpersonal exchange can also be mediated through technology. The **Soliya** organization works with state of the art, interactive Internet video to bring young people together to discuss current events and other topics and promote intercultural understanding. Soliya also works in partnership with Arab and American universities which, in some cases, provide academic credit for participation in the programme and engage faculty as discussion moderators. At the end of a given semester, students write joint-editorials with their counterparts abroad on topics of mutual interest for news service distribution. In fall 2007, for example, three students at the University of Amsterdam, Georgetown University and University of Sharjah – Kim Brouwers, Caitlin Kelly and Sofia Seer – published an editorial, "Immigration: Societies in Flux", in the *Daily Star* in Lebanon and Egypt.

The importance of youth for intercultural and interreligious understanding was widely heralded in 2006-2007. In outlining the priorities of the Clinton Global Initiative in September 2006, former US president Bill Clinton commented: "Number one: focus on youth. There's a battle going on for their souls and their hearts and their minds, and sometimes we look as if we're not even in the starting block."

The World Economic Forum's Middle East regional meeting at the Dead Sea in May 2007 devoted several sessions to youth and their central role in the future of Muslim-West dialogue. During the meeting **One Voice**, a youth led organization dedicated to peace, brought young Israelis and Palestinians together via satellite technology to exchange ideas and convey a message of common purpose and commitment to peace. In addition, a group of secondary school students from Western and Muslim-majority countries met with Jordan's Queen Rania and then Chancellor Gordon Brown. They raised issues of prejudice, discrimination and social exclusion in modern education systems.

Two of the most sustained and successful programmatic efforts in this area are **Seeds of Peace** and the **Interfaith Youth Core**.

Created in 1993, the New York City based Seeds of Peace brings together young people from communities in conflict. Its core programme is a summer camp which met for the fifteenth time in 2007, bringing more than 300 Egyptian, Israeli, Jordanian, Palestinian and other Middle Eastern teenagers together to learn from one another, expand their mediation skills and advance its goal of coexistence through empathy, respect and engagement.

"In a time when no one seems to agree on most anything, from politics to race to religion, I am convinced that the one thing we can all still agree upon, the world over is dignity."

John Hope Bryant

The Chicago-based Interfaith Youth Core, founded by Eboo Patel in 1998, connects youth from different religious and ethnic backgrounds in dialogue and around concrete service projects in areas such as education and housing. Referring to a pilot programme at the University of Illinois, Patel told an interviewer in April 2007: "We're looking at having this happen on every campus in America. Why shouldn't every campus in America have rooms where 60, 80, 100 people are coming together to learn the skills of interfaith cooperation?"

Most efforts to advance knowledge and promote intercultural understanding are centred at the level of civil society. At the same time, awareness of cultural difference and of the depth and power of religious identities is also shaping symbolic politics at the national level. In the United States, for example, the Annual White House Iftar is well established. At the October 2006 event, President George W. Bush cast it as an opportunity to "renew the ties of friendship that should bind all who trace their faith back to God's call on Abraham." As a guest at an Iftar at the Grand Mosque of Paris in September 2007, French Prime Minister Francois Fillon said that he hoped "mosques will continue to be built all over France that put an end to the Islam of garages and basements."

These high level events may have less durable impact than local and grassroots events that dramatize intercultural and interfaith understanding at a symbolic level. These are, of course, too numerous to mention. One significant example, because it unfolds in Jerusalem, is the *Universal Peace and Freedom Seder*, which annually brings together pilgrims from each of the three Abrahamic faiths in a celebration of pluralism.

This chapter has outlined efforts to build knowledge and overcome stereotypes through educational reform, the media and cultural institutions, exchange programmes and work with youth. Dialogue initiatives in this area are difficult to track, given their wide scope and diversity. Nonetheless, several broad trends can be discerned, including: education's dual role as a vehicle both for practical skills and for knowledge and understanding; the power – and responsibility – of the media and popular culture to highlight and foster constructive communication at the intersection of the West and the Muslim world; and the importance of reaching youth through exchanges and intercultural dialogue oriented to action.

Closing knowledge gaps and promoting intercultural understanding does not always lead to greater sympathy; it can lay bare differences and even increase mistrust. But much confrontation and hatred is grounded in misinformed views of the "other". "We're not witnessing a clash of civilizations," Bill Clinton recently commented. "We're witnessing a clash of ignorances, people who don't know each other and therefore fear one another."

Education and dialogue offer a way to combat ignorance. Another is economic and social development that meets basic needs, promotes opportunity and can counteract the material anxieties and resentments that contribute to Muslim-West tensions. The links between dialogue and development are the subject of the next chapter.

7

Economic and Social Development

The world watched with horror as the rage of a young generation erupted in violence in France in late 2005. The Paris suburbs were shaken by nightly riots for almost two months. Many in the global media interpreted the events through the lens of Islamic radicalism. However, the evidence suggests that the rioters – mainly the children and grandchildren of North African immigrants – were driven by more mundane concerns: a yawning gap between rhetoric about integration and opportunity and the realities of unemployment and dismal prospects. Another wave of riots shook the Paris suburbs in November and December 2007. "Given the way these kids live, I wonder why it doesn't happen more often," commented a scholar who studies French-born Muslims. "The kids learn all the French republican values such as equality in school, and then they find in practice that it's an illusion… There is an enormous gap between theory and practice."

Differing perceptions of economic and social realities – and concern about gaps between proposals to address social ills and their implementation – are important drivers of relations between the West and the Muslim world. Increasingly, actors within public institutions and civil society are recognizing and debating the interdependence of religious and cultural dynamics with social and economic conditions.

Dialogue efforts and concrete initiatives have focused on two related issues. The first is global disparities in wealth and welfare between many Western countries and most Muslim majority countries. While poverty is very real in parts of Western societies, several Muslim-majority countries are among the world's poorest. The second issue is the impact of unbalanced economic and social development in both the West and the Muslim world. Here dialogue and programmes have particularly focused on cultural and religious minorities, many of them recent immigrants, who face economic and social marginalization and exclusion.

The Global Dimension

How to speed economic growth and social progress in the Muslim world is a central strand of Muslim-West dialogue. The challenge was underscored in February 2006 by Dr. Ahmad Hasyim Muzadi, President of the **Nahdat al-Ulama**, Indonesia's largest Islamic organization, with some 40 million members: "In a community of poverty and ignorance, it is generally easier to be involved in the use of violence, irrespective of their religious beliefs," he told the *Assembly of the World Council of Churches* in Porto Alegre, Brazil. Muzadi highlighted the need for "more intensive efforts to systematically eradicate poverty and increase the equality and quality of education, including the need to provide a cross subsidy between wealthy countries and poor countries."

In August 2007, **Organization of the Islamic Conference** (OIC) Secretary-General Ekmeleddin Ihsanoglu also focused sharply on the importance of development. "Most of the Muslim world today [confronts] the formidable challenges of poverty alleviation and social and economic development," he told a conference in Tashkent. "We need to invest in our vast human resource,

al Development

especially the development of our youths and the advancement of women by empowering them into a constructive and productive force."

Many Western leaders have acknowledged economic and social dislocations in the Arab and Muslim world and the importance of addressing them. Then UK Finance Minister Gordon Brown, addressing the *Islamic Finance and Trade Conference* in London in June 2006, noted that he "was shocked to learn that while Muslims constitute 22% of the world's population, almost 40% of the world's out-of-school children are Muslims." He went on to emphasize the importance of addressing a litany of impediments to growth in the Muslim world, including agricultural subsidies.

> ***"Global dialogue about the West and Islam is frankly absurd if its implications for Africa are not central to the agenda."***
>
> Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala

The legacy of colonialism formed part of the backdrop for Western thinking around these issues. For example, on a visit to Algeria in July 2007, French President Nicolas Sarkozy suggested that the European powers have an obligation towards development in the Middle East and North Africa. "Friendship is nurtured more by projects and actions than by treaties or speeches," he maintained.

International institutions are also involved in a continuing dialogue about economic and social progress, although most often the focus on West-Islamic issues is more implicit than explicit. One exception was the November 2007 International Conference on *Terrorism: Dimensions, Threats, and Countermeasures* held in Tunis and co-sponsored by the Tunisian government, the Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC), and the **Islamic Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization** (ISESCO). The conference explored both the military and the socioeconomic dimensions of security. Discussions centred on the challenges of social exclusion, poverty, and illiteracy, as underlying sources of extremism and terrorism and the policies necessary to address them. In his address to the gathering, incoming UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon noted: "It was the first time that all 192 UN Member States came together to formulate a comprehensive, collective, and inter-governmentally approved plan to counter terrorism. It was the first time they agreed that conditions exist that can be conducive to the spread of terrorism, and that, to gain ground, they must address these conditions."

The focus on "shared security" at the *World Conference of Religions for Peace Kyoto Assembly* in August 2006 echoed this theme. The message addressed to religious and political leaders alike was that no one today is secure unless all are secure, and that security involves far more than physical safety; a more comprehensive human security also encompasses access to economic opportunities and social services.

In his address to the Kyoto assembly, Prince Hassan of Jordan developed the point: "Security involves not just military containment, but positive action to win hearts and minds. Its most effective form is a preventive one that tackles root causes by helping the poor, the alienated and the marginalised to realise their human ambitions." Hassan chided as shortsighted any effort to resolve deep-seated problems through military means. "Striking back hard at our enemies may boost domestic opinion ratings, but it fatally undermines long-term stability. Only by enlarging the humanitarian mission and introducing an anthropocentric policy where people's existential needs are addressed, can we hope to offer the hopeless of our world a space in which to flourish."

The public in Western and Muslim-majority countries recognises the importance of balanced and economic

Box 7.1

Africa's Plural Challenges

Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala

Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala is Managing Director of the World Bank. She recently served as Minister of Finance and then Minister of Foreign Affairs of Nigeria. She has served on many non-profit and corporate boards, and as a leader in the World Bank.

Africa's dynamic religious pluralism deserves far more attention than it usually gets. Muslim, Christian and African traditional religious communities are major forces in the daily lives of people across the continent. They are critical players in conflict resolution, and perhaps even more in advancing with social and economic development. Global dialogue about the West and Islam is frankly absurd if its implications for Africa are not central to the agenda.

Africa's extraordinarily diverse religious communities have lived side-by-side for centuries, rarely if ever static, generally, but not always, in harmony. But this historic pluralism is taking on new and dynamic forms today. Christian and Muslim communities across Africa are leading global trends in the world of religion. Their resilient spirit, energy, capacity to adapt and openness to new ideas are aptly termed revolutionary.

Religion's heightened presence in Africa's public square has both bright and dark sides. Many religious leaders are raising powerful voices for peace, reconciliation and honest governance. The peacemakers have learned that they are most effective when they work together. Interfaith efforts to solve conflicts in many communities, including Nigeria, Sierra Leone, Cote d'Ivoire and Sudan, to name just a sample, are showing promising results, but would benefit from greater focus and support.

Religious institutions created most of Africa's health and education systems and today they run an extraordinary mosaic of social service institutions. The success stories in fighting the scourge of HIV/AIDS have often involved interfaith support for common strategies. Senegal's record in particular stands out, as Muslim and Christian leaders took early and courageous stands for forthright approaches to the disease. Their work with children across the continent is legendary.

Conflicts cast in the name of religion are the main dark side and politicians who manipulate religion to their own ends are the villains. Most of Africa's conflicts are not fundamentally driven by religious tensions even if they have religious dimensions. Especially where economic development has faltered, where modern communications bring images of global wealth into homes and where finding jobs is impossible. Festering tensions among communities spark conflicts and, too often accentuated by political currents and even deliberate efforts to that end, religion comes into the picture.

Thus, the search for peace and harmony can never be separated from hope and opportunity. And the name of hope and opportunity more than anything else is education and jobs.

Untapped potential is a central theme for Africa and tapping it will mean working with religious communities. There are countless opportunities for action focused dialogue. Take the role of women. Africa's women are a powerful resource in every field, including religion. Hearing women's voices within religious communities and mobilizing those religious communities to support women's roles in fighting domestic violence, supporting families, starting small businesses and educating girls could bring fantastic results.

Multisector alliances for action founded on multisector dialogue that bring parties together are pivotal everywhere… but nowhere more so than in Africa.

development, even if they see the causes of underdevelopment through different lenses. Mirroring generally positive views of international economic openness in the West, an April 2007 World Public Opinion poll found that majorities in Morocco (62%), Egypt (92%), Pakistan (65%) and Indonesia (80%) considered globalization and economic connectivity a good thing.

Another poll found that majorities in the West and the Muslim world think that the latter should be more prosperous than they are today (70% in Great Britain, 86% France, 83% Egypt, 85% Jordan). But reasons they give for the lag are very different – 59% of those surveyed in Egypt and 66% in Jordan blame Western policies, while 51% in the UK blame corrupt governments and 48% in France blame a lack of democracy. Interestingly, the survey found that Muslims in Europe were more likely than non-Muslims to identify corruption as a cause of lagging development (64% Spain, 63% Great Britain and 57% France).

Dialogue about globalization, economic relations and overarching social agendas relating to West-Muslim relations takes place at many levels and in many global forums, including prominently the United Nations General Assembly, the Group of Eight leading industrialized Nations (G8), the International Labour Organization, the World Bank and International Monetary Fund and the World Trade Organization. It is rare for questions of economic and social development to be related directly to culture and religion in these contexts. The links tend to emerge in discussions about the role of the state and programs of development assistance.

The spectrum of views within the Muslim world – as well as in the West – around issues of social and economic development is broad, ranging from forthright support for growth-led development strategies to sharp criticism. Dr. Ahmad Mohamed Ali, President of the Islamic Development Bank Group, exemplifies the first trend. In an address to the second World Islamic Economic Forum in Islamabad, Pakistan, he highlighted foreign direct investment as a motor of growth and as critical for social development. "As we are all aware, economic growth in our member countries must be sustained in order to achieve a lasting reduction in poverty," he told the meeting. "Annual economic growth should be sustained at least twice the population growth." The latter, critical view of growth-led strategies is perhaps most vividly portrayed in *Bamako*, a 2006 film directed by Abderrahmane Sissako and set in Mali. The film highlights the harsh realities of how globalization and economic forces are experienced in a poor community.

The most significant international effort to focus on underdevelopment in the Arab – as opposed to Muslim – world was a series of *Arab Human Development Reports* published by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) between 2002 and 2005 under the leadership of prominent Arab intellectuals. These reports emphasized the "depth of the crisis, in a bid to shatter the complacency and denial that afflict the Arab discourse on development." The reports received wide media attention. "If you want to understand the milieu that produced bin Ladenism, and will reproduce it if nothing changes, read this report," *New York Times* columnist and author Thomas Friedman wrote. "The good news, as this report shows, is that we have liberal Arab partners for change."

"As long as many people are without a decent life today and can truly hope for a better life tomorrow, stable and harmonious societies are a wistful illusion."

Katherine Marshall

Crucial debates about the role of Islam and development – and the most significant programmes with an Islamic dimension – have emerged within the Muslim world itself. Both the OIC and the **World Islamic Economic Forum Foundation** (WIEF), based in Malaysia, have played a significant role. Encouraging economic integration among members and enhancing the development of less developed Muslim societies has been a fundamental goal of the OIC since its creation. At a June 2005 forum to announce a preferential trading system encompassing many OIC members, Malaysian Prime Minister Abdullah

Ahmad Badawi argued that wealth creation depends on the organization's ability to "promote greater involvement of the less-developed members in economic development as a whole."

Established by the Asian Strategy and Leadership Institute, the WIEF seeks to promote cooperation between leading global Muslim entrepreneurs and companies in OIC countries. WIEF's programmes are designed not just to advance economic growth, but also to foster an exchange of ideas and experiences among local economic actors in Muslim majority countries with the cultural and social institutions of the global political economy. Dialogue is a central objective, "not only for economic reasons, but because the Forum believes that inter-cultural exchange is a necessary step in making the world a better place."

Indonesia and Malaysia are key players in the development of Islamic banking and finance more generally. There is a long-running debate within Islam about the compatibility of the tradition with modern financial instruments, and the charging of interest in particular. Debate and dialogue about Islamic finance highlight creative ways, in the contemporary political economy, to uphold the Qur'anic injunction against exploitation of the weak and in favour of economic activity that supports the community.

The Malaysian government supported the creation of the **International Centre for Education in Islamic Finance** in Kuala Lumpur in early 2006, to develop and disseminate knowledge about Islamic finance and support national and international efforts to create new financial instruments. By the end of 2007, the Malaysian government had issued US$ 20 billion issue in Sukkuk (Islamic bonds) – more than half of the global total. The **Islamic Development Bank** (IDB), the **Islamic Bank of Asia** and **Dow Jones Islamic Fund** are also actively promoting new financial instruments, including Islamic equity funds.

A series of conferences and forums illustrate the growing focus on Islamic finance for Muslim-West dialogue. At the Islamic Funds World 2007 conference in Dubai, experts from around the world discussed ways to strengthen investor confidence in Islamic funds. The previous year saw the sixth annual Harvard University Forum on Islamic Finance on the topic Integrating Islamic Finance into the Mainstream. The discussion centred on how to adapt Islamic financial instruments to international standards and touched on the implications of Islamic finance for the international financial system.

Prime Minister Badawi of Malaysia emphasized those broader implications in his March 2007 address before international Islamic finance experts in Kuala Lumpur. "It is my fervent hope that the world will see that Islamic finance is not just for the benefit of Muslims," he told the gathering. "Its significance is far wider and needs to be seen in the context of global peace and prosperity, thus offering hope to triumph over the odds and to resolve conflicts confronting us."

Another success story is the evolution of microfinance – the provision of small amounts of seed capital to local individuals and entrepreneurs, often with the support of international institutions. Some of the most successful microfinance programmes have flourished in Indonesia and Bangladesh, two of the world's largest Muslim countries. Muhammad Yunus was honoured in 2006 with the Nobel Peace Prize for his work and that of the Grameen Bank. Yunus founded the bank in Bangladesh, which fights poverty and is founded on a belief in the potential of very

Box 7.2

Towards a Future with Hope and True Equity

Katherine Marshall

Katherine Marshall is a Senior Fellow at Georgetown University's Berkley Center for Religion, Peace, and World Affairs. She was at the World Bank for over three decades and is a member of the World Economic Forum's Community of West and Islam Dialogue.

As long as many people are without a decent life today and can truly hope for a better life tomorrow, stable and harmonious societies are a wistful illusion. To build a more just society, we need to bet on meaningful education, jobs and robust, open and plural communities that rejoice in their diversity. Nowhere is the challenge of ensuring a decent future more urgent than in the world's poorest countries, where hundreds of millions of Muslim citizens live.

Different communities and sectors narrate today's problems in distinctive and frequently conflicting ways. The varying narratives suggest different conclusions and courses of action. In West-Islam dialogue, several strands hold that failures of political and religious leadership are the keys. Thus, bold state leadership, joined by robust democratic institutions and proactive faith roles, is where solutions to tensions must be found. Another strand looks to geopolitical power balances, contending that seismic shifts in power relations are essential. Business leaders and financial institutions look for solutions primarily in balanced economic growth that builds wealth and offers jobs.

My narrative, dominating my view of Muslim West tensions, highlights the continuing misery of poverty in today's world and the enormous frustrations that stem from undeveloped human potential. It is shaped by the yawning gaps between rich and poor which owe more to where one is born than any innate capacities. It therefore looks to solutions that will end poverty and promise hope of better lives equally to all people. There will always be diversity (to celebrate) and human tensions (to address creatively) but without addressing today's growing imbalances the future looks grim.

Prosperity and poverty are juxtaposed in most societies. It always has been so, but today these realities are sharply visible both because we have knowledge that shows unmistakably what those realities are, while modern communications bombard everyone with images of how others live. Ironically, at a time when abundant resources should allow every human being to lead a decent life, gaps between rich and poor yawn wider than ever before. Contrasting images of limousines passing by open slum sewers, luxurious universities versus classrooms without desks, lifestyles seemingly dominated by social galas versus those caring for parents with AIDS, fuel anger, despair, and calls for social justice. Conspicuous contrasts often inform and justify narratives about today's problems and tensions.

The Muslim world has great wealth – wealth of talent, youth, heritage and material resources, especially its legendary petroleum reserves. But the contrasts between wealth and poverty are enormous. Vast numbers of Muslims face the grinding poverty that means misery, drives them to migrate to uncertain prospects and fuels a sense of injustice. In the Sahel and Horn regions of Africa, in Muslim communities in South Asia, and elsewhere, forceful action to bring home the promise of prosperity is urgently needed.

This promise is an attainable dream. Four main pillars jointly can support equitable human development. Bold action on education, fierce in addressing difficulties in the way and reaching out actively to the poor, is job number one. Removing impediments to entrepreneurship that can create jobs and make them competitive is job two. Transparency in governance – meaning open discussion about how programs are delivered, and making them efficient, effective and honest, is vital if the first two jobs are to succeed. And finally inclusion should be more than a word –women's voices need to be heard, the energy of youth harnessed and different social minorities made truly part of economic and social life. This attainable dream is what calls for social justice are really about.

poor people to improve their lives. In his Nobel lecture, Yunus highlighted the theme that poverty is a threat to peace: "For building stable peace we must find ways to provide opportunities for people to live decent lives."

Two related development areas that have seen some Muslim-West dialogue and cooperation are water and climate change. Clean water is an increasingly precious resource in certain parts of the world, including the Middle East. It has obvious implications for public health and industry, and symbolic importance across religious and cultural lines. Among major investment projects on the table is the Dead-Red Sea Canal project, which seeks to take advantage of the varying water levels between the two bodies of water to create a steady flow of water that can be used to produce electricity and, ultimately, fresh drinking water through desalination. Israeli President Shimon Peres has long supported this scheme, which stands to benefit both Israelis and Jordanians. Though environmentalists debate the safety and geological impact of the project, Peres believes the canal to be a "peace conduit… vital for the preservation of the Dead Sea, but just as much for peace and prosperity in the area."

Water issues are linked back to the global debate on climate change. Global warming has geopolitical implications. Prolonged droughts and more intense storms, for example, are projected to have particularly strong impact on poorer regions, which include important Muslim majority countries. In recent years, the threat of global warming has moved up the policy agenda across religious traditions. A recent report from the **London Islamic Network for the Environment** (LINE) warns of catastrophic effects for the Muslim world. In Bangladesh, a sea level rise of only 100 centimetres would reduce the country's land mass by 20% and potentially affect the livelihood of more than 100 million people. In Senegal and Mauritania, a decline in rainfall of 20% would stifle agricultural production as much as 50%.

"If feminism is about embracing the full human identify of women, then women's rights advocates need to hear Muslim women's full spectrum of concerns, including their perceptions of political, military and economic oppression."

Ingrid Mattson

In the United States in May 2007, Muslim leaders joined Christian and Jewish counterparts in support of *An Interfaith Declaration on the Moral Responsibility of the US Government to Address Global Warming*. "This is an historic moment when Jews, Christians, and Muslims stand together in solidarity with a shared sense of moral purpose on global warming," the declaration stated. "Each of our diverse traditions has a common concern for creation."
Dialogue about the impact of economic globalization on Muslims in the developing world is increasingly focused on the poorest of the poor. Many in the West think of the Muslim world as centred on the oil-rich countries of the Middle East, but only about a fifth of Muslims worldwide live in the region. Indonesia, Pakistan, India, Bangladesh and Nigeria are among the world's most populous Muslim nations, and all have a significant portion of the population living in deep poverty. Several of the countries that rank lowest on the UNDP Human Development Index are Sahelian countries of West Africa.

The Millennium Development Goals, with their benchmarks for reducing poverty and improving healthcare and education, are critically important for those Muslims in developing countries who find themselves within what the economist Paul Collier recently called the "bottom billion." The OIC, the IDB and other Islamic institutions aiming to promote economic development focus special attention on this group. The IDB plans to launch a major new initiative focused on human development among its poorest member states early in 2008.

An issue that emerges frequently in dialogue related to economic and social development is gender. Cultural sensitivities abound within a highly polarized debate. Western criticisms of a lack of equality or limited opportunity for women in Muslim majority countries are at times dismissed as inappropriate or misinformed. The **Women Leaders' Intercultural Forum** (WLIF) and **Sisters in Islam** are examples of dedicated efforts to combine advocacy for women with dialogue on sensitive topics seen so differently from different perspectives and to build on the commonalities that clearly exist.

The WLIF convened a global conference in Amman, Jordan in December 2007, which focused on ways to link women's leadership to global security challenges. The former president of Ireland, Mary Robinson, a co-chair of the conference, lauded the wide, international representation of women coming together under the programme's initiative to "transform the conversation about security at the international, national and local levels into one that more effectively bridges current cultural, generational, religious, and sectoral boundaries."

National and Local Initiatives

Issues of economic and social exclusion have also become an object of dialogue at the national level in Western countries and in the Muslim world. In the European Union, the Muslim minority appears to be more concerned about economic opportunity than about cultural or religious restrictions. In polls, unemployment is consistently the top concern for Muslims, far outpacing topics such as the decline in religious observance and Muslim women taking on modern roles. The Pew Global Attitudes Survey of 2006 found that unemployment registered as a worry (very or somewhat) for 78% of Muslims in Great Britain, 84% in France, 81% in Germany and 83% in Spain.

Social tensions everywhere can be exacerbated by a vicious circle where lack of job opportunities accentuates community tensions and education systems do not prepare the young for contemporary job markets. Under such circumstances, ethnic and religious tensions with long histories can fester and grow.

Virtually all countries where Muslims and non-Muslims work and go to school side-by-side are witnessing a creative spate of conferences and programmes focused on practical issues around community development. To cite just two examples, the **Association of Islamic Cultural Centers in Germany** (Verband der Islamischen Kulturzentren e.V.) focuses on education of Muslim youth born in in the country. Culture, as defined by the association, is construed broadly to include practical and vocational knowledge that translates into upward economic mobility.

Malaysia's **Open Dialogue Centre**, established in 2005, has similarly organized events on youth empowerment in the promotion of freedom and democracy in the light of the development challenges facing youth in an increasingly globalized economy. As the centre's mission statement notes: "Youth's participation can offer additional information, alternative perspectives, and potential solutions to problems and aid in policymaking. This will also help to rebuild societal cohesion by identifying and expanding ways for people to come together and respond to changes."

Often dialogue efforts linked to economic and social development centre on the local level. One example was the observations and recommendations of the **European Municipal Network** meeting focused on community reconciliation in Amsterdam in August 2007. A collaboration with the **International Center for Conciliation**, the meeting grew out of a concern with practical issues that community and municipal leaders had raised, including

housing, job training, and crime. It particularly focused on addressing the influx of migrant labour from Muslim majority countries, including Turkey and Morocco. Housing, too, is emerging as a critical development issue at the local level open to interfaith approaches. Since 2002, **Habitat for Humanity Lebanon** has assisted displaced Lebanese families in 40 mixed Christian and Muslim communities in the southern part of the country, and similar approaches are underway in Egypt.

One of the most far ranging recent efforts to link Muslim identity with social and economic welfare is India's **Sachar Commission**, which reported to the prime minister in November 2006. This commission report focused on India's Muslim community which, with more than 150 million citizens, is among the world's largest. The commission focused on virtually all aspects of life ranging from water to nutrition to entrepreneurship to job prospects. It documented that, "while there is considerable variation in the conditions of Muslims across states, the community exhibits deficits and deprivation in practically all dimensions of development."

The Sachar Commission's work involved numerous consultations and surveys and its recommendations are an object of intensive dialogue throughout India. Although not without criticism from some elements of the Muslim minority leadership in the nation, the Sachar Commission's extensive analysis as a basis for its recommendations stands as a model among such efforts. In stressing the importance of understanding the data and often harsh realities facing the Muslim community, Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh argued, "one cannot wish away differences merely by refusing to measure them."

Efforts to address the HIV/AIDS pandemic illustrate how both partnerships and dialogue are taking new forms. Of particular interest are three initiatives. The first is the well-documented role of interfaith approaches to addressing the HIV/AIDS pandemic in Senegal and Uganda – efforts that could not have succeeded without the joint engagement of political and religious leaders, including prominent Muslims. The second and third are more recent efforts that focus internationally on the Muslim world. The UNDP-led conference in Cairo in 2006 was seen as a breakthrough in dialogue on the topic. The conference, marking the creation of the **First Network of Arab Religious Leaders Responding to AIDS**, included representatives from more than 20 Arab countries bridging the religious divide. **Islamic Relief** organized a meeting on Islam and AIDS in South Africa in November 2007, marked by open discussion about the key issues. These two events, and others like them, demonstrate a greater willingness to address stigma, the role of condoms and the social consequences of HIV/AIDS in a forthright fashion – a new development in most Muslim majority countries, with the exception of Iran, which has most openly addressed these issues.

Migration and the integration of migrant communities have emerged as critical issues at the intersection of religion, culture, and economic and social development. Migration can be in some circumstances a positive facet of globalization, as people move freely to seek new opportunities, but its manifold dark sides involve pain, frustration and sometimes desperation. Policies that affect migration are on the dialogue agenda in many countries, notably the United States and Europe.

The economic impact of migration has been the subject of a long series of meetings,

Box 7.3

Women, Intercultural Cooperation and Global Challenges

Mary Robinson

Mary Robinson is President of Realizing Rights: The Ethical Globalization Initiative. She was the first woman president of Ireland (1990-1997) and was United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights from 1997 to 2002.

In my current work at Realizing Rights, my colleagues and I support dialogue between Islam and the West by connecting women leaders who are committed to bringing about a more secure and just world. The impetus for this work arose from a simple reality: the women leaders we know believe they have much more in common than that which divides them from their colleagues on the other side of any cultural or political divide. They also believe that lending their voices and views to policy discussions on global security is critical to actually achieving it.

The Women Leaders Intercultural Forum (WLIF), officially launched in September 2006, is a multi-year joint initiative of Realizing Rights and several high profile partners. Through intercultural, intergenerational and intersectoral processes this network of leaders aims to ensure that a necessary diversity of perspectives is incorporated into global policy discussions.

WLIF has since partnered with the Arab Strategy Forum, a gathering of some 500 influential leaders from business, government and civil society with specific emphasis on the Arab world. The partnership dovetails with the WLIF's overall ambition to increase the participation of women leaders from all over the world in discussion of global policy across multiple sectors.

In July 2007, 70 women leaders from the African continent, Muslim and Christian alike, gathered in Nairobi to articulate their common security priorities for the region. Their pointed suggestions were fed into the agenda of the November 2007 International Women Leaders Global Security Summit, where 75 women leaders from around the world – including current heads of state and government, officials from international organizations, the private sector, foundations and civil society – met in New York City. They launched a process to act more collectively to resolve the crises of our world and to bring about needed shifts in policy that increase human and state security. The work continued at a regional meeting in Amman, Jordan in December 2007.

While the WLIF project is still new, it has made it clear that women leaders are well equipped to bridge the divides of our world. Their agenda-setting power is also necessary to achieving sustainable solutions that reflect truly common priorities.

Box 7.4

Who Speaks for Women in the Muslim-West Dialogue?

Ingrid Mattson

Ingrid Mattson is Professor of Islamic Studies and Christian-Muslim Relations and Director of the Islamic Chaplaincy Program at the Hartford Seminary. In 2006 she was elected President of the Islamic Society of North America.

Advocates of women's rights in the Western world have important roles to play in supporting Muslim women who are struggling for their rights. This support can be critical in societies where the rule of law, freedom of expression and freedom of the press are limited or absent. Western activists serve as translators or messengers for Muslim activists and can lobby their own governments to put pressure on repressive governments where Muslim women are struggling for their rights.

Problems arise, however, when Western activists act not as "honest interpreters" for Muslim women, but rather reframe the message according to their own beliefs and in conflict with the beliefs of the Muslim women for whom they claim to be advocating.

For example, when the Pakistani activist and gang-rape survivor Mukhtar Mai traveled in the United States to speak about the violation of her human rights, she emphasized that the sources of her oppression were illiteracy, government corruption and an ancient tribal caste system. Many of Mukhtar's "advocates" kept framing her message as that of a woman oppressed by Islam or that of a citizen of a Muslim country, although Mukhtar rejected this interpretation of her situation, highlighting instead the importance of Islam as her source of spiritual strength. Indeed, she pointed to the support of the local religious leader (mullah) as the reason why her case succeeded.

Similarly, problems arise when Western activists insist that certain beliefs and practices that many Muslim women embrace are inherently oppressive. It is ironic that Western women who claim to be interested in supporting their Muslim sisters are unaware of how deeply paternalistic their attitude is. This lack of self-awareness often arises because many women take what they perceive to be oppressive practices or attitudes towards other women personally.

A Western woman who assumes that a headscarf is a sign of the degradation of women feels within herself an urgent desire to get that thing off the other woman's head. Until that happens, she remains offended and anxious, and often deaf to the other woman's own interpretation and understanding of her beliefs and practices.

Conversations about women's rights across Western and Islamic communities are often unproductive because women in Western countries tend to focus on oppression that they see as gender-specific, whereas women in Islamic communities focus instead on different forms of oppression that they see as more urgent – at least when they meet with a group of Westerners.

If feminism is about embracing the full human identify of women, then women's rights advocates need to hear Muslim women's full spectrum of concerns, including their perceptions of political, military and economic oppression.

Many Westerners approach the issue of Muslim women's rights assuming gender solidarity among women. Many Muslim women feel that this solidarity will remain superficial until Western women can address the ways their own economic and political activities are sources of oppression for many Muslim women.

conferences, and confrontations. Some are sparked by community reaction to illegal immigration. One very local example was a November 2007 meeting on immigration in Suffolk focused on the UK Independence Party's recommendation to introduce national ID cards and stop European Union expansion. Other events have focused on the positive impacts of migration and the potential that remittances offer to boost both welfare and growth. An example was the *Second German Conference on Islam*, where a prominent migration researcher urged Germans to welcome Islam's growth "truly and comprehensively" as part of German state and culture.

The financial dimensions of migration, including remittances, are the subject of numerous meetings and conferences. The positive role that remittances play in financing welfare and investment is an increasing focus, for example in a report released by the International Fund for Agricultural Development in October 2007: "The driving force behind this phenomenon is an estimated 150 million migrants worldwide who sent more than US$ 300 billion to their families in developing countries during 2006."

According to a report of the *UN Expert Group Meeting on International Migration and Development in the Arab Region* in May 2006, remittance flows continue to comprise 2% to 22% of the GDP of every Middle East and North African state. Despite concerns that some resources flow to extremist groups, the report concludes, "international remittances generally have a positive impact on economic development, because they tend to reduce poverty and to get invested in education, health and new entrepreneurial activities."

The commitment of Muslims living in Western countries to engage in the poorer countries, whether through investment or through philanthropy, is growing in significance. The South Asian and Ismaili communities, as well as the Lebanese and Palestinian communities are prominent and active in this regard, as are others. One little heralded illustration of the diverse and complex role of Diaspora communities is the emergence over the past two years of Tijanniya organizations in the United States. These organizations build on their strong links to West African communities to support a wide range of programmes from education to microfinance, as well as more classic social safety net functions.

Turkish Diaspora groups have longstanding and growing programmes that serve not only Turkey but also, for example, the countries of Central Asia. The **Fethullah Gülen** movement, which originated in Turkey, has significantly expanded its school network and now operates in some 100 countries.

"…the women leaders we know believe they have much more in common than that which divides them from their colleagues on the other side of any cultural or political divide."

Mary Robinson

New Patterns in Philanthropy

In response to these development challenges at the national and international level, new kinds of philanthropy have taken shape, responding in some instances specifically to the needs of Muslim populations and often consciously directed towards the role economic and social development support can play in enhancing intercultural and interreligious understanding. The work of philanthropic organizations cuts across virtually all sectors of activity. Many – such as **Islamic Relief**, a UK-based organization that works worldwide, and **Catholic Relief Services** – began largely as humanitarian relief organizations that have responded to crises including earthquakes, floods, and the 2004 tsunami.

Others working in the economic and social arena have more developmental mandates. **Habitat for Humanity** is an example. In its commitment to direct support and advocacy on housing, the organization is increasingly involved in interfaith initiatives with Muslim participation. The **Aga Khan Network** supports wide-ranging programmes with special focus on education, preservation and development of cultural heritage, and sustainable agriculture.

Philanthropic institutions are significant players in shaping future agendas in Muslim majority societies and in many Western countries, although in many different forms. *Waqf* and *Zakat*, and fundamental obligations of charity that are integral to Islamic beliefs, translate into a wide array of individual and collective support for disadvantaged communities. Muslims in the West are a vital source of support for Muslims in the developing world.

"Before reconciliation, peace, and productive dialogue can be credibly attained, we must all first be able to truly understand one another's historical experiences, present circumstances, and future outlook – and information lies at the heart of understanding."

Eric Schmidt

Against this backdrop, controversy has swirled around US-led efforts to impede transfers of private funds out of concern for possible terrorist ties. Some critics charge that these controls are a serious obstacle to many social and philanthropic ventures and are a factor in growing anger and suspicion within Muslim communities. Islamic Relief has played a particularly significant role in spearheading efforts to draw attention to the negative effects of curtailing legitimate charitable flows. Ahmed Younis of the Washington-based **Muslim Public Affairs Council** reported a general unease among Muslim charities regarding the government's failure to set clear guidelines for accepting and distributing donations. "There is always fear that Treasury will come back and reprimand us," he noted.

Western philanthropy is also focusing on Muslim-West dialogue issues, with a wide array of institutions supporting programmes and events. These include established organizations, among them the Carnegie Corporation and Ford Foundation, as well as newer philanthropies such as the Guerrand-Hermes Foundation for Peace, the Abraham Fund, the Three Faiths Forum, and the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation. The activities of these foundations range from support for scholarships, conferences, and programmes that bring together groups with diametrically opposed views, to programmes specifically targeted at youth understanding and venture philanthropy.

The **Ford Foundation**'s Cairo office, which has been in place since the 1950s, acknowledges the widespread "concern that liberalization and globalization will exacerbate poverty and religious and ethnic difference." At the same time, the foundation expresses a sentiment shared by many others, that "this dynamic period presents opportunities to improve livelihoods and imbue civic life with new energy."

As multinational corporations continue to expand their operations throughout the Muslim world, there is increasing focus on corporate social responsibility and a broadening conception of what it means. This fits within the marked increase in attention to these issues globally, reflected in the emergence of the UN-led Global Compact (which describes itself as "the world's largest voluntary corporate citizenship initiative") and private sector events like the November 2007 *Triple Bottom Line Conference* in Paris, which marked an innovative effort to explore faith dimensions of the growing corporate social responsibility movement. World Bank work on the Equator Principles (which offer a framework for project financing based on socially and environmentally sustainable

Box 7.5

Information and the Internet: Delivering Hope and Peace to the World

Eric Schmidt

Eric Schmidt is Chairman of the Board and Chief Executive Officer of Google, Inc. Dr. Schmidt's career has consisted of many achievements as an Internet strategist, entrepreneur, and developer of powerful technologies.

Human history has demonstrated that information can be a key driver of progress and understanding across all human societies. The ability to access, comprehend, create, and utilize information is not only an important factor in determining the success of any one individual, but also the collective prosperity of entire human communities. In Google's more than eight years of serving users worldwide, we have come across countless examples of individuals using information – especially information delivered on the global Internet – to enhance their own productivity and happiness.

But information can play yet another important role in today's world. Beyond adding value to individuals and societies in and of themselves, information can facilitate understanding and, indeed, peace among our world's many societies. Before reconciliation, peace, and productive dialogue can be credibly attained, we must all first be able to truly understand one another's historical experiences, present circumstances, and future outlook – and information lies at the heart of understanding.

Arguably, the story of present-day West-Islamic relations is the story of an information problem. Two groups largely comprised of well-intentioned human beings have been driven to tense relations affecting many millions worldwide. Why? Has the West misunderstood the roots of Islamic fundamentalism? Have Muslim leaders misunderstood American economic and cultural strength? Have leaders of both communities – in their proposed solutions to perceived gaps – misdiagnosed the roots of the issues in the first place?

As the Muslim-West world dialogue continues, it is imperative that we as global leaders place an increased emphasis on understanding through information, overcoming basic barriers to true understanding like language, religion, and culture. We need to move from stereotypical understandings of the world's peoples to those based on true knowledge.

Google, for instance, has recently launched a sophisticated free translation tool with English and Arabic as one of the first set of languages users are able to translate between. This tool will enable users worldwide to be able to translate a range of content – including text and entire web pages – from one language to another. We also provide other tools – from web search and social networking to blogging and online video – that transcend the boundaries of language, religion, and culture, furthering the goals of free expression, true self-awareness, human connection, and understanding.

An essential component of any positive dialogue between the West and the Muslim world must consist of an effort by all to create tools to facilitate a deeper understanding of the issues and people involved. Doing so will help all more fully appreciate the diversity and complexity encompassed by the broad terms “West” and “Islam.”

At Google, we believe that information is fundamentally empowering, and that facilitating access to tools that enable individuals to learn, create, communicate, and express themselves more freely – especially those delivered on a neutral, global medium such as the Internet – will add immeasurably to intercultural understanding and will create a clearer path forward.

principles) and its leading role on many corporate social responsibility issues highlights the general view that corporations today can and need to do more for their stakeholders than merely contribute to philanthropy. Responsible corporate investment is fundamental for establishing rights and encouraging development at the grassroots level.

The UNDP hosted the first conference on corporate social responsibility in Egypt in December 2007. The event underscored the need to hold multinational corporations to the UN Global Compact standards for responsible investment in the region while also encouraging local business to form a network for expanding social initiatives.

Most leading multinational corporations are becoming more active in this area. Hewlett-Packard, for example, has launched an initiative to improve access to technology in institutions of higher education throughout the Middle East and North Africa. Cisco, Microsoft and other leading corporations have focused on infrastructural development and environmental initiatives. Hussam Kayyal of Cisco notes in the Middle East, "When people think of corporate responsibility, they often think of zakat, or charity, because it is one of the guiding principles of Islam." Corporate social responsibility, he argues, is about much more than charity. "It is not just about giving money to the community. It is about being a responsible citizen in terms of the environment, business ethics and community development."

Economic and social development is emerging as a more important issue at the intersection of the West and the Muslim world. Economic issues are appearing more often on agendas of interfaith events and – perhaps to a lesser extent – cultural and religious issues have moved onto the agenda of gatherings of business and development leaders. In Barcelona in 2004, for example, the **Parliament of World Religions** featured discussions of debt and water. Its plans for the next meeting in 2009 in Melbourne, Australia envisage a much greater focus on economic and social development issues. Preparatory events are already underway focusing on specific regions and communities, including parts of the Muslim world. **Religions for Peace**, an interfaith initiative with Muslim participation, is involved in global advocacy for the Millennium Development Goals.

At the other end of the spectrum, the annual and regional meetings of the World Economic Forum, Financial Times and Oxford Analytica gatherings, and other venues for debate and discussion about the future of the world economy, have recently given more prominence to relations among cultures and religions and the social forces that promote both stability and improvements in welfare.

Business and economic leaders can certainly contribute more to Muslim-West dialogue. Cultural and religious leaders, for their part, can do more to engage economic and social issues in a constructive way. Both groups have a shared stake in sustainable economic growth and opportunity that can meet human needs in both the developed and developing worlds.

As this chapter has made clear, the obstacles are significant. Economic inequality between the West and the Muslim world does not offer a level playing field for dialogue and collaboration. Mistrust abounds on all sides. Corruption, dictatorship and failed states do not provide the necessary political foundation for sustained economic growth, effective social services and a just distribution of wealth. If dialogue and collaboration in the area of economic and social development has been less intensive than around the other Muslim-West issue areas outlined in this report, the last several years have seen important new departures.

8

Media Coverage

Authors: Sacha Evans, Christian Kolmer, Roland Schatz.

Research Team: Yasser Abu Mulaiek, Sohail Akhtar, Dewi Astuti, Zuzana Beluksa, Ali Reza Davari, Simon Jakobs, Stella Kallaghe, Atif Mussadaq, Derya Özdeniz, Denise Schaper, Dimitri Soibel.

How did the global media cover the five issue areas highlighted in this report? Media Tenor International carried out an in-depth survey of reporting on Muslim-West issues in 24 countries in 2007. The survey, undertaken in both Muslim majority and non-Muslim majority countries, indicates that most reporting on Muslim-West issues was neutral in tone. However, negative coverage was 10 times more frequent than positive coverage. This was in part due to a focus on international politics – including terrorism – Iraq and Israel-Palestine.

The high volume of reporting on conflicts fuelled negative presentations of the Western and Muslim "other" across all media outlets and countries. Reporting on other Muslim-West issues, such as citizenship, integration and religious ethics was less negative, but also much less frequent.

Examinations of religious and cultural traditions were the least negative areas of coverage, but they focused primarily on majority traditions in Western countries and were not heavily present in media from Muslim majority countries. Media coverage bearing on West-Muslim issues accounted for about one-fifth of total media output in the 24 countries surveyed.

Methodology

Media Tenor International is a global content analysis organization based in Zurich, Switzerland that monitors print, broadcast and online news in more than 15 languages and 35 countries. Its research focuses on the portrayal of countries, individuals and institutions in leading media outlets.

Media Tenor's content analysis for this report included a fifteen week content analysis of three TV news shows, three print publications and one business publication from 24 different countries. The analysis was conducted by 43 Media Tenor researchers who coded content in their native languages.

Analysis was conducted on a statement level. Each coded statement contains: a person or institution, the topic at hand, a positive or negative rating, and the source of the statement or rating. As the data is analysed, if any part of a statement changes (for instance, if a new topic is introduced), a new statement is coded.

See methodology section for details.

Countries covered

Twelve Muslim majority countries: Egypt, Indonesia, Iran, Jordan, Lebanon, Malaysia, Morocco, The Palestinian Territories, Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, Turkey and United Arab Emirates.
Twelve non-Muslim majority countries: Brazil, Denmark, France, Germany, Israel, Italy, Namibia, Russia, South Africa, Spain, the United Kingdom and the United States.

Stories analysed on statement level by:

- Topic
- Main actor(s) featured
- Type of main actor (political, religious, etc.)
- Geographical origin of the main actor
- Tone towards that actor (positive, negative, or neutral)
- Source of that evaluation (individual, government, organization, etc.)

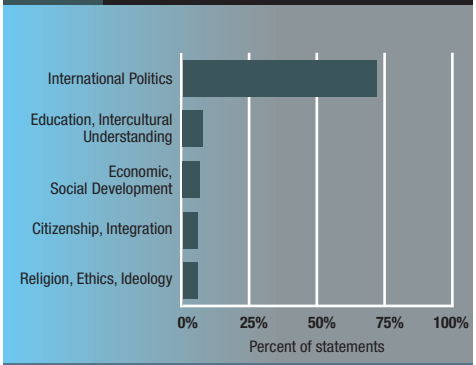
Muslim-West Issue Areas Covered

- International politics, with a focus on Middle East conflicts.
- Religion, ethics and ideology, as a factor in social interactions and politics.
- Education and intercultural understanding, particularly efforts to educate the public about different cultures and religions.
- Citizenship and integration, with an emphasis on issues confronting religious minorities.
- Economic and social development, including reporting on Muslim-West economic and social ties.

Key Findings

1. **Primacy of international politics:** Coverage of Middle East conflicts dominated media coverage of Muslim-West relations, giving it a more negative tone overall.
2. **Negative tone towards the "other":** While most coverage of Muslim-West issues contained no positive or negative judgements, media from Muslim majority countries were more likely to provide negative coverage of individuals and groups associated with Christianity and Judaism and with non-Muslim majority countries. Conversely, media from non-Muslim majority countries covered Muslim majority countries and Muslim protagonists more negatively, but to a lesser degree.
3. **Focus on political and militant Islam:** Most reports involving Muslims depicted them engaged in political, militant and extremist activities. In contrast, Christians and Jews were most often presented in the context of religious activities.
4. **Education and intercultural understanding covered most neutrally:** Reports designed to inform people about religious and cultural traditions were the least negative and the second most visible coverage area. However, they focused primarily on Western traditions and were only covered heavily in non-Muslim majority countries.

Figure 8.1 **Visibility of Muslim-West issues**



Primacy of international politics

The evaluation of international political issues in the media focused on several key Middle East conflicts. Among the 290,452 statements analysed in 160 print and TV news outlets, these international conflicts accounted for nearly three-quarters of the overall coverage of Muslim-West relations across the five topic areas.

The main topics covered under the international politics rubric were the Middle East conflicts that made news in 2007, including the Hamas takeover of the Gaza strip (23.4% of statements) and the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict (15.3%). Terrorism (21.9%) and terrorism-fighting measures (9%) were also prominent, as was the war in Iraq (17.6%).

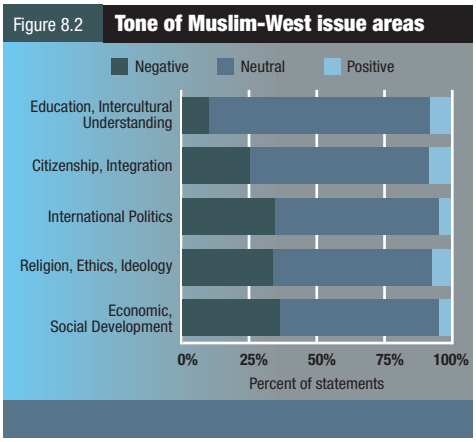
Like all the five issue areas, more than half the reporting on international politics was neutral in tone (Figure 8.2). However, because it contained 34.6% negative statements and only 4.4% positive, the international politics issue area had an overall negative tone. It was the second most negative area of reporting behind economic and social development, which contained 36.4% negative and only 4.5% positive statements, but had much lower visibility.

Education and intercultural understanding had the most neutral tone of all the issue areas with 7.8% positive and 9.9% negative statements, followed by citizenship and integration (25.3% negative, 7.9% positive) and religion, ethics and ideology (33.7% positive, 7.1% negative).

Negative tone toward the "other"

Media in Muslim majority countries struck a more negative tone than media from non-Muslim majority countries. Reports from media

Figure 8.2 **Tone of Muslim-West issue areas**



in Muslim majority countries contained 38.2 % negative statements, 6.4 % positive and 55.4 % neutral statements about the "other". Reports from non-Muslim majority countries contained 25.0 % negative, 6.4 % positive and 55.4 % neutral statements.

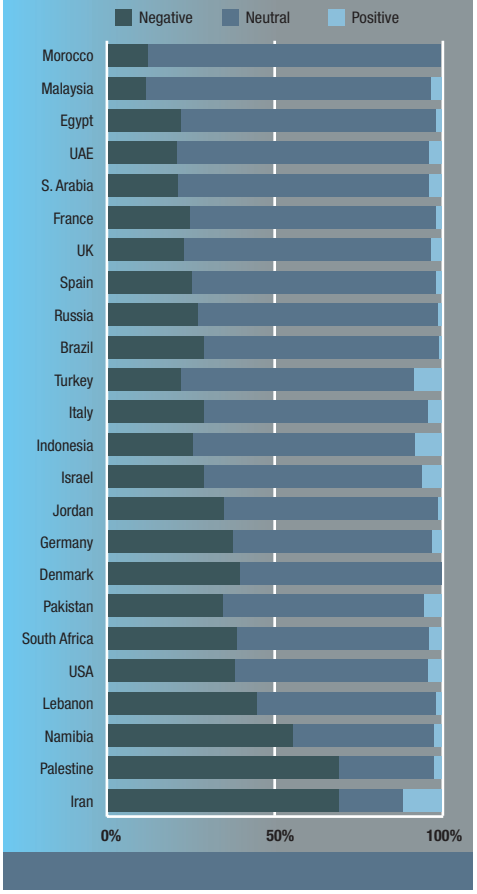
Media from Muslim majority countries presented an especially negative tone in their coverage of non-Muslim actors – with 37.3 % negative and 7.5 % positive statements directed at Muslim actors and 40.5 % negative and only 3.7 % positive directed towards non-Muslim actors. This trend of more negative coverage towards the "other" held in the media of non-Muslim majority countries, but to a lesser degree. Outlets outside the Muslim world covered Muslim actors with 31.3 % negative statements and 3.1 % positive; they covered non-Muslim actors with 18.9 % negative statements and 4.0 % positive.

Journalists from most countries portrayed the "other" side neutrally in at least 50 % of statements. Palestine, Iran and Namibia were the only exceptions (Figure 8.3). Few countries communicated positive messages towards the "other". Iran was again one of the most outstanding exceptions. Its media had the highest share of positive statements (11.7 %) but also the highest share of negative (69.4 %), making them the most polarized, but overall the second most negative of any country. Morocco, Malaysia and Saudi Arabia stood out as particularly neutral in their portrayal of the "other".

Quantifying the "other"

The distinction between Muslim majority and non-Muslim majority countries allows for a measure of how media cover the "other" side. In media from Muslim majority countries, the "other" is defined as Christian and Jewish actors and actors from non-Muslim majority countries. In media from non-Muslim majority countries, the "other" is defined as Muslim actors and actors from Muslim-majority countries. See methodology section for details.

Figure 8.3 **Tone towards the "other"**



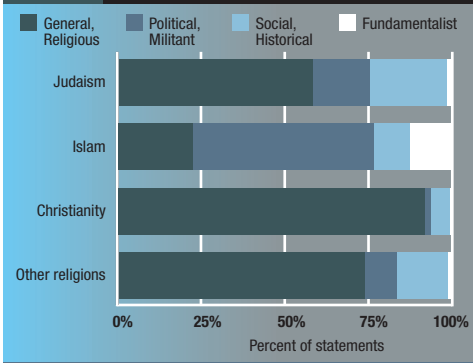
Focus on political and militant Islam

Among religious actors presented in the media, Islam and Muslims were by far the most prominent, accounting for 56 % of individuals and groups explicitly identified with a religion. Christianity came next, identifying approximately

28% of religious protagonists. Judaism accounted for approximately 4% of protagonists surveyed. No other religion achieved more than 1% visibility.

Whereas journalists most commonly portrayed Christian, Jewish and other religious actors engaged in religious activities (in 75% of statements, on average), Muslim protagonists were only associated with religious activities in 13% of statements. (Figure 8.4) More often, actors identified with Islam were engaged in militant or political activities (in 68% of statements). Muslims were also associated with fundamentalist and extremist activities more than six times as often as other religious protagonists were.

Figure 8.4 **Perspective of religious actors**



Education and intercultural understanding covered most neutrally

Efforts to build knowledge and promote understanding of different cultures and religions were the second most frequently addressed area of Muslim-West coverage after International Politics. They accounting for 8.1% of all the stories related to Muslim-West issues in the media outlets analysed. Education and Intercultural Understanding was also the most neutrally reported of the five issues areas.

Most reporting on this issue area originated with media from non-Muslim majority countries (67.7% of statements). These countries focused primarily on the practices and teachings of Christians (57.7%), particularly Roman Catholics (38.7%). Media from Muslim-majority countries likewise focused on the cultural practices and teachings of Muslims (29.3% of statements) and people living in Muslim majority countries (56.7%).

Media from outside the Muslim world only focused 6.7% of their coverage to exploring the traditions and practices of Muslims. Media inside the Muslim world focused on Christian and Jewish traditions in 4.0% of their coverage.

Approximately 40.0% of the statements included in this issue area were descriptions of religious practice, the majority of which focused on Christians and were reported with a neutral tone (84.6%) (Figure 8.5). In general, coverage of education and intercultural understanding was marked by a high degree of neutrality (82.3% neutral statements) as opposed to an average 56.1% neutral statements across the other four issue areas. Religious teachings were the next most visible topic included in this category (14.3% of statements) and were reported with nearly 90% neutral statements.

Analysis: actors in the news

Across all reporting on Muslim-West issues (290,452 statements), protagonists – the main actors in a statement in the news – were more often identified with a country than with a religion. In more than 44.4% of statements, protagonists were identified with a country in the Muslim world – more than 40% from Palestine and another 40% from Iraq, Pakistan, Afghanistan, Lebanon or Iran. Nearly 84% of these protagonists were engaged in political or militant activities.

Figure 8.5 **Visibility and tone of main education and intercultural understanding topics**

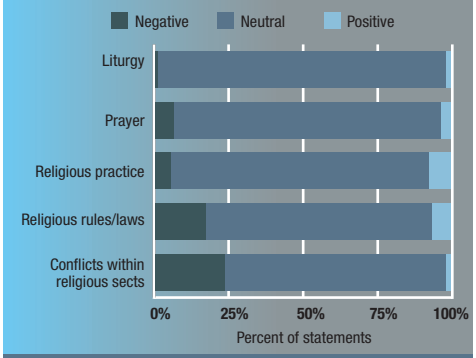


Figure 8.6 **Tone of reporting on most visible protagonists**

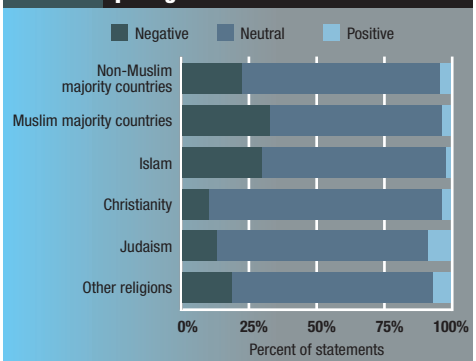


Table 8.1 **Most visible religious and secular protagonists**

Religion	Percent of reporting
Islam	56.0 %
Subdivision	*Percent within reporting on Islam*
Islam in general	90.7 %
Shiite	6.0 %
Sunni	4.0 %
Ismaelite	37.0 %
Sufi	3.0 %
Christianity	37.0 %
Subdivision	*Percent within reporting on Christianity*
Christianity in general	46.0 %
Roman Catholicism	45.0 %
Anglican	2.6 %
Protestantism	2.4 %
Evangelical	0.9 %
Russian Orthodox	0.7 %
Mormonism	0.6 %
Methodist	0.3 %
Lutheran	0.3 %
Scientology	0.1 %
Presbyterian	0.1 %
Baptist	0.1 %

Religion	Percent of reporting
Judaism	4.2 %
Subdivision	*Percent within reporting on Judaism*
Judaism in general	56.0 %
Orthodox Judaism	31.9 %
Zionism	10.3 %
Conservative Judaism	1.7 %
Liberal Judaism	0.20 %
Other religions	1.3 %
Subdivision	*Percent within reporting on other religions*
Buddhism	44.6 %
Hinduism	10.6 %
Orthodoxy, other	9.7 %
Sikhism	2.9 %
Satanism	2.0 %
Shinto	1.8 %
Traditional African Religions	1.7 %
Secular Ideologies	0.9 %
Subdivision	*Percent within reporting on secular ideologies*
Communism	38.0 %
Secularism in general	27.9 %
Socialism	14.7 %
Atheism	14.3 %
Secular Judaism	2.7 %
Individualism	1.5 %
Liberalism	0.4 %
Nationalism	0.3 %

The abundance of reporting on protagonists from Muslim majority countries can be attributed primarily to the fact that journalists from the Muslim world produced most of the reporting on Muslim-West issues and covered them more heavily. In the 12 Muslim majority countries analysed, actors identified with Muslim majority countries were the focus of 56.2% of statements, while actors identified with countries outside the Muslim world were the focus of 28.3% of statements. Conversely, journalists in non-Muslim majority countries focused more on actors outside the Muslim world. Most of these protagonists were American or Israeli (76.3%).

Protagonists from Muslim majority countries were covered the most negatively of the top five protagonists (overall rating 31.1% negative statements, Figure 8.6), followed by protagonists from countries outside the Muslim world (26.9%). In nearly 85% of coverage these protagonists were involved in political or military activities.

Protagonists explicitly identified with either a religious or secular ideology were present in 23.3% of all the media coverage of Muslim-West issues analysed. Within this coverage, 56% of statements involved protagonists representing various Islamic groups.

Christians were covered the most neutrally of all protagonists, with 6.7% negative statements. But they only received a high volume of reporting in media outlets outside the Muslim world, which devoted 11.6% of their coverage to them. Media from Muslim majority countries devoted less than 1% of their coverage to Christians, nearly half of which focused on Catholics.

Media outlets outside the Muslim world provided most of the coverage of Jewish protagonists (86%) and covered them with a significantly more neutral tone, with 6.1% negative statements in non-Muslim majority countries as opposed to 44.5% negative statements in Muslim majority countries. This was the largest difference in tone in any of the major protagonists.

Although not covered heavily, protagonists representing secular ideologies were covered particularly negatively in Muslim majority countries, rating 41.4% negative statements. They were covered with a rating of 26.3% negative statements outside the Muslim world. Whereas most religious protagonists were depicted involved in religious activities in most coverage (75% of statements), Islamic protagonists were more often depicted involved in political or military activities (55%). Journalists depicted Islamic protagonists engaged in religious activities in only 23% of statements. In media outlets within the Muslim world, journalists were more likely to present Muslims engaged in political activities (29.7% of statements). In media outside the Muslim world, journalists presented Muslims involved in militant activities (36.1% of statements). Media from both areas presented Muslims engaged in religious activities with about the same frequency.

The fundamentalist perspective was most visible in media reporting on Muslims, with 12% of statements, compared with an average of 1% of statements involving other religious protagonists. Partially as a result of these perspectives, the overall tone towards Islamic protagonists was more negative (overall rating 24.5% negative statements) than that which was communicated toward Jewish (9.5%) and Christian (6.7%) protagonists.

US President George W. Bush was the single most heavily covered protagonist in all the coverage of Muslim-West issues. (Figure 8.7) Like most religious and political leaders who

Figure 8.7 **Tone towards most visible individuals**

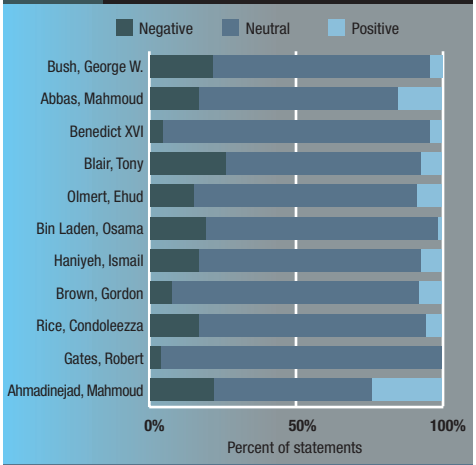
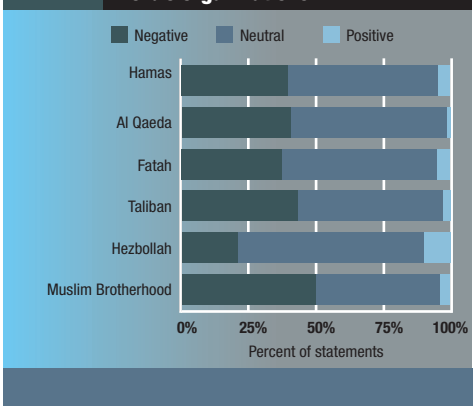


Figure 8.8 **Tone of reporting towards most visible organizations**



received more frequent and neutral coverage in their home countries and cultures, he was covered much more heavily and neutrally in media outside the Muslim world, with an overall rating 11.9% negative statements versus 27.0% in non-Muslim majority countries. The only country whose media rated him more neutrally than the US media was Saudi Arabia.

Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas was covered with the next greatest frequency of all individual protagonists. The tone that journalists in both Muslim majority and non-Muslim majority countries communicated towards him was more balanced than that communicated towards President Bush, partially because Muslim majority countries covered him three times as frequently and neutrally. However, Palestinian media were the second most negative in their portrayal of President Abbas behind Russian media.

Pope Benedict XVI had an even more balanced image (overall rating 4% negative statements). But he only received a high degree of coverage in media from non-Muslim majority countries, which produced 93.1% of the reporting on him. Spain and Italy produced nearly half the reporting on him and did so with a positive overall tone.

Iran's Supreme Leader Ali Ayatollah Khamenei and President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad had the most positive image of all of these most visible leaders, largely because they both had an overall rating of more than 78% positive statements in Iranian media. Then UK Prime Minister Tony Blair had the most negative image of any leader. Iranian media covered him with a rating of 61.3% negative statements – the most negative image in any country. Overall, media covered him more negatively than they covered Osama bin Laden.

The most visible organizations involved in Muslim-West issues were Muslim political organizations. (Figure 8.8) On the whole, these organizations had a less neutral media image compared with individuals. In reporting from both Muslim majority and non-Muslim majority countries, the most visible organizations were political and from the Muslim world. The Taliban was covered with the most negative tone with an overall rating 40.9% negative.

The organization with the biggest difference in tone between Muslim majority and non-Muslim majority countries was Hezbollah, which received a rating of 6.8% negative statements in media inside the Muslim world and 22.0% negative statements in media outside the Muslim world. Interestingly, media from Muslim majority countries covered Fatah, Hamas, the Muslim Brotherhood and al-Qaeda more negatively than media outside the Muslim world.

In general, media from Muslim majority countries were more polarized, presenting a higher share of both implicit and

Evaluating the "other"

To characterize the tone of both the way content is presented and the content itself, two coding variables were employed in the analysis. The first measures explicit tone – the positive, negative and neutral attributes of language. The second takes into account contextual information – the positive, negative and neutral situations described in a text.

Whereas explicit ratings capture descriptions of praise and criticism, implicit ratings measure the extent to which surrounding circumstances are positive and negative. Results on both criteria must maintain a standard above 80% intercoder reliability to be included in the study.

Implicit ratings are generally more common than explicit ratings are. In the coverage of Muslim-West relations, the overall explicit rating was 7.6% negative statements; the overall implicit was 27.0% negative statements[1]. This means that media reported on people involved in negative situations more often than they made explicit judgments about the people in those situations.

For media from Muslim majority countries, the following types of protagonists would be categorized as the "other":

- Officials and members of the public from non-Muslim majority countries.
- Representatives of Western religions (Judaism and Christianity).

For media from non-Muslim majority countries, the following types of protagonists would be categorized as the "other":

- Officials and members of the public from Muslim majority countries.
- Representatives of Islam.

explicit ratings. Media outside the Muslim world provided more neutral reporting. Iran's media was the most polarized of any country with 28.2% neutral statements. Saudi Arabia's was the most neutral (81.3%).

Media from both Muslim majority and non-Muslim majority countries presented more explicit criticisms of actors from the "other" side than they did of actors representing their own country or religion. In media from non-Muslim majority countries, the explicit rating toward actors representing Islam or Muslim majority country contained approximately 11.1% negative statements. The explicit rating towards protagonists from Western religions and countries was 3.6% negative.

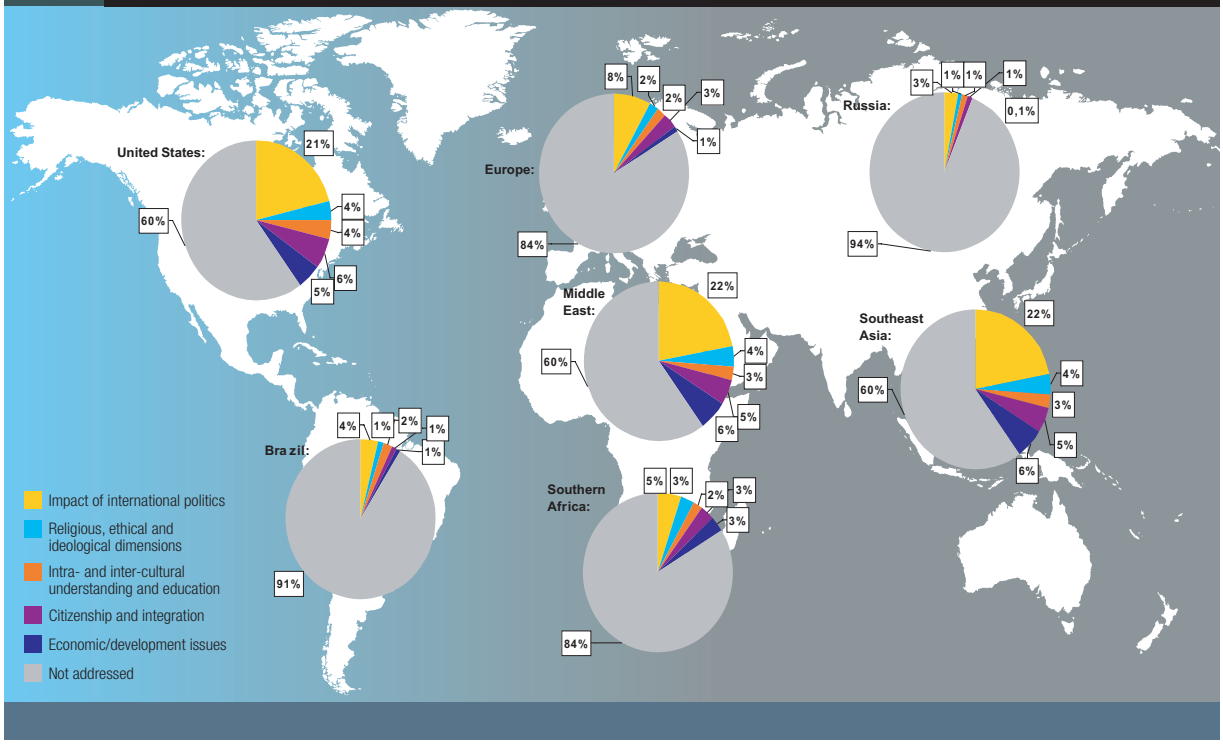
This difference in tone was even more striking in media from Muslim majority countries, which presented explicit criticisms in 14.3% of statements involving actors from Western religions or non-Muslim majority countries and explicit criticisms in only 6.2% of the statements involving protagonists representing Islam or Muslim majority countries.

Media from both sets of countries were also more likely to present the "other" side in negative circumstances. Media from non-Muslim majority countries presented Western protagonists in negative circumstances in only 19% of coverage and presented protagonists representing Islam and Muslim majority countries in negative circumstances in 31% of coverage.

Regionally, the overall tone towards the "other" was most neutral in media from the Middle East[2], with an overall rating of 36% negative statements. Southern Africa[3] and North America[4] were the next most neutral in their coverage, with an overall rating of 35%

1 *Rating is the share of positive minus the share of negative statements.*
2 *Including media from Egypt, Iran, Israel, Jordan, Lebanon, Palestine, Pakistan, Saudi Arabia and Turkey.*
3 *Including media from Namibia and South Africa.*
4 *Including media from the United States*

Figure 8.9 **Coverage of Issue Areas by Region**



and 34 % negative statements, respectively. Media from Brazil, Russia and Europe[5] covered the "other" with the most balance (overall rating of 26 % negative statements).

In Muslim majority countries, TV outlets were more balanced than print outlets were in their portrayal of the "other" side (overall rating 41.3 % negative statement in print versus 34.2 % negative statements in TV). In non-Muslim majority countries, the opposite was true: print outlets were more neutral, presenting an overall negative rating of 33.1 % towards the "other" in TV coverage versus 22.9 % negative statements in print.

Analysis: Patterns Across Issue Areas

Media outlets in North America, Southeast Asia and the Middle East covered dialogue issues more heavily than media outlets from other regions. This is largely because these three regions devoted a high share of coverage to the first issue area – international politics.

International Politics

To operationalize the coding of International Politics, statements that referred to the following Middle East-centred conflicts were coded:

- Israeli-Palestine conflict.
- Iran nuclear conflict.
- Persian Gulf wars involving Iraq and the United States.
- War against the Taliban in Afghanistan.
- The attacks of 9/11.

Because all the conflicts analysed in this survey related in some way to the Middle East, journalists from this region covered them with greater frequency (22 % of all the coverage analysed, Figure 8.9). This is not surprising considering the "news value" of proximity. American media outlets covered these conflicts with the similar frequency (21 %).

Despite Europe's involvement in these conflicts, the media analysed did not cover them as heavily. Only 8 % of coverage

5 *Including media from Denmark, France, Germany, Italy, Spain and the United Kingdom.*

dealt with international politics in European media outlets. This is less than the percentage of coverage devoted to this issue area by the media in the two Muslim majority countries in Southeast Asia – Malaysia and Indonesia – which suggests that the religious affiliations of consumers may be a better predictor of the salience of International Politics in a country than are military engagements.

Media in Muslim majority countries devoted an average of 78.4 % of their issue coverage to international politics. Non-Muslim majority countries devoted an average of 63.7 % of their coverage to this issue area. Italian media covered international politics with the lowest frequency of any country (45.8 % of statements).

Despite the visibility gap between media from Muslim-majority and non-Muslim majority countries, international politics formed the bulk of every media outlet's coverage of Muslim-West issues. In terms of coverage from individual countries, Indonesia covered international politics with the highest frequency, devoting to it 94.6 % of its coverage (Table 8.2). Whereas a high percentage of Indonesia's coverage of international politics focused on the topic of politically motivated crime or terrorism, most other countries focused on Middle East conflicts, such as Palestinian infighting in the Gaza strip. Media from both Muslim majority and non-Muslim majority countries covered this topic with a similar tone and frequency.

There were significant differences between Muslim majority and non-Muslim majority countries in the amount of coverage devoted to specific topics related to international politics. Whereas media from Muslim majority countries covered Israel-Palestine in 20.7 % of their international politics coverage, media from non-Muslim majority countries did so in only 9.3 % of statements. These media outlets instead focused more heavily on Iraq (20.1% of coverage) and terrorism (27.7% of coverage).

Table 8.2 **Percent of coverage devoted to International Politics per country**

Country	Percent of coverage
Indonesia	94.6 %
Egypt	85.7 %
UAE	82.2 %
Lebanon	81.6 %
Malaysia	80.0 %
Palestine	77.5 %
Iran	77.1 %
USA	76.3 %
UK	76.1 %
Morocco	75.8 %
Jordan	75.3 %
Denmark	74.7 %
Turkey	72.7 %
Israel	72.3 %
Pakistan	71.6 %
Saudi Arabia	66.9 %
Brazil	66.2 %
Germany	65.3 %
Spain	63.3 %
Russia	59.4 %
Namibia	59.2 %
France	56.4 %
South Africa	49.5 %
Italy	45.8 %
Average	72.5 %

Media from Muslim majority countries only devoted 15.9 % and 18.1 % of their coverage to these topics, respectively. All reporting on these topics was more negative than positive.

Saudi Arabia's reporting was the most neutral of any country in its reporting of international politics (overall rating 13.9 % negative statements; 80.8 % neutral statements (Figure 8.11).
In general, media from non-Muslim majority countries reported on international politics slightly more neutrally, with an average share of 63.1 % neutral statements in media from non-Muslim majority countries versus 60.5 % neutral statements in media from Muslim majority countries.

Figure 8.10 **Tone of top International Politics topics**

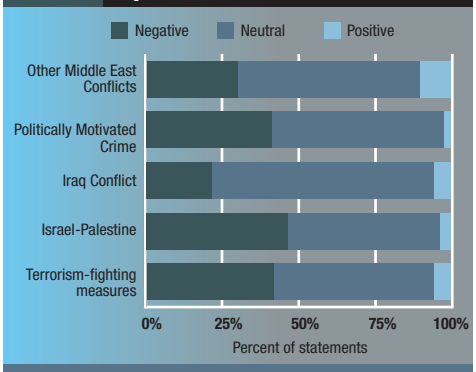
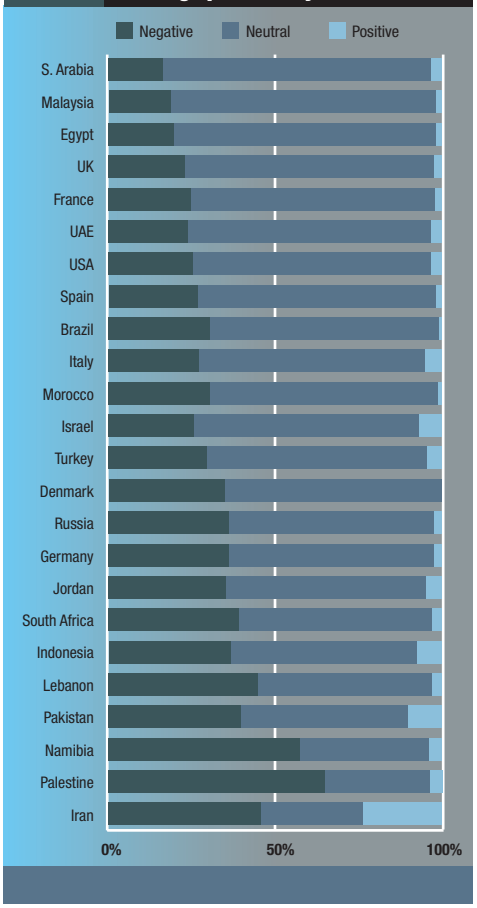


Figure 8.11 **Tone of International Politics coverage per country**



Palestine's coverage of international politics was the most negative of any country – with an overall rating of 61.8% negative statements. Iran's coverage was the most polarized, with the lowest share of neutral reporting (30.4% of statements were neutral, compared to an average of 60.7% neutral statements among all countries).

Religion, Ethics and Ideology

The second issue area, religion, ethics and ideology included coverage of topics related to the intersection of religious and social principles. This issue area had the lowest overall visibility – approximately 6.1% of all the coverage related to Muslim-West relations addressed this issue area. There were notable differences in the frequency with which Muslim majority and non-Muslim majority countries addressed this issue area – the former devoting to it 4.4% of their coverage of Muslim-West relations, the latter devoting 8.0%. Both types of countries covered this issue area with an overall negative rating, with approximately 26% of statements negative.

However, there were very negative and very positive outliers within Muslim majority countries: Jordan and Morocco's average rating was 76% negative statements. Malaysia's was 68% positive statements. (Figure 8.12) Egypt and Saudi Arabia covered this area most neutrally.

Religious fundamentalism was the topic most often addressed in the coverage of religion, ethics and ideology. Reporting on this topic was very negative, with an overall rating of 24.3% negative statements. (Figure 8.13) The only topic covered more negatively was extremism (overall rating 29.4% negative statements).

Social stability had a significantly less negative rating of 4.9% negative statements. The relationship between tradition and modernity was addressed in the next most visible topic – democracy and sovereignty – which also had a less negative rating of 6.9% negative statements.

Education and Intercultural Understanding

Although there was relatively little difference in the amount of coverage for each issue area outside of international politics, education and intercultural understanding was the second most heavily covered issue area, receiving 8.1% of the coverage devoted to Muslim-West relations across all

Figure 8.12 **Tone of Religious, Ethics and Ideology coverage per country**

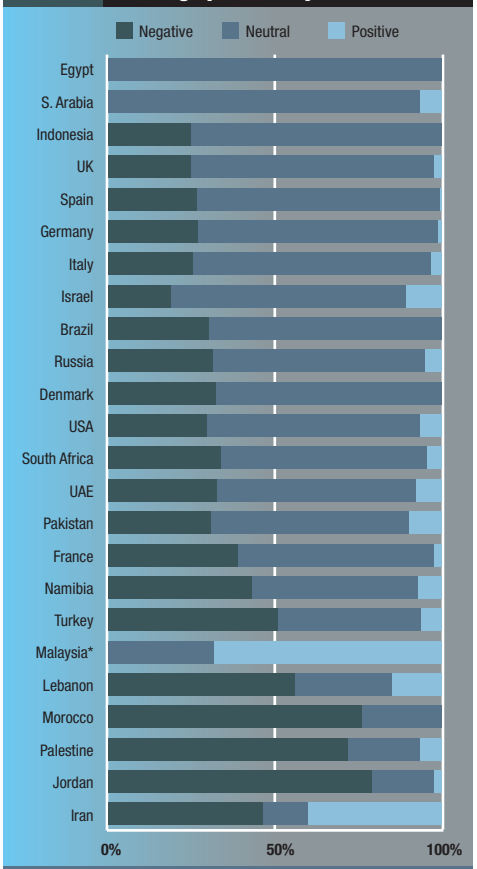
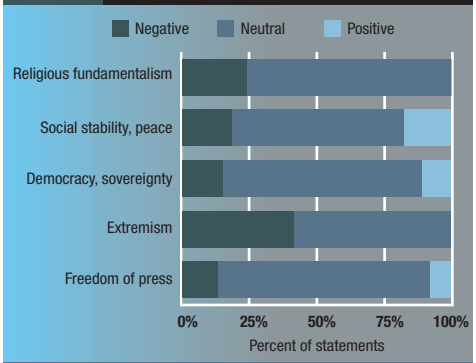


Figure 8.13 **Tone of top Religious, Ethics, Ideology topics**



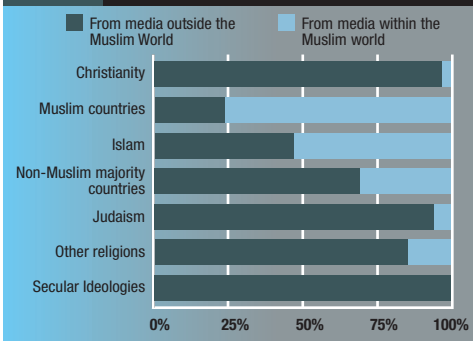
countries. Broadly speaking, coverage of educational and intercultural issues included any attempt by the media or outside groups to educate the public about cultural institutions and religious faiths.

Education and intercultural understanding was reported the most neutrally of the five issue areas (overall rating 2.2% negative statements). But it was also the area of coverage with the largest visibility gap between Muslim majority and non-Muslim countries. Non-Muslim countries devoted 11.8% of their coverage to this issue area; Muslim majority countries devoted only 4.9%.

The main topics reported in coverage of education and intercultural understanding – religious practice and teachings – were characterized by more than 90% neutral statements. However, most of this neutral reporting came from non-Muslim majority countries (70.0% of statements) and focused primarily on Christian protagonists (40.0%). (Figure 8.14) Less than a quarter of statements included in the issue area of education and intercultural understanding described Muslims, and even fewer of those statements were published outside the Muslim world. Therefore, coverage of attempts to educate Western audiences about the religious practices and teachings of Islam was relatively scarce.

On the whole, media from Muslim majority countries covered educational and intercultural understanding issues slightly more neutrally than media from non-Muslim majority countries, with an overall rating 1.0% positive statements in Muslim majority countries versus 3.7% negative statements in non-Muslim majority countries. However, like Western countries, most of their coverage focused on their native religion and culture. Muslims and protagonists from Muslim majority countries were the focus

Figure 8.14 **Reporting on different protagonists related to Education and Intercultural Understanding**



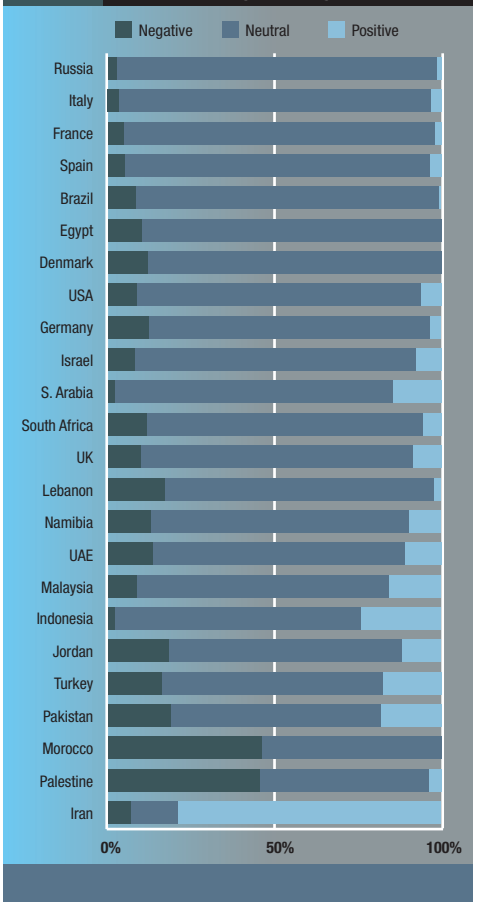
of 74.8% of statements from media in Muslim majority countries. Only a quarter of statements focused on non-Muslim majority countries, Christian or Jewish protagonists.

This observation is consistent with Media Tenor's long-term analysis of Arab satellite TV news, which indicates that Arab media feature infrequent educational programmes about outside religious faiths. But media from non-Muslim majority countries, which produced most of the reporting on this issue area, also concentrated on the traditions and faiths of their majority populations – devoting 70.3% of the statements related to education and intercultural understanding to protagonists representing either the Christian or Jewish faiths.

Both Muslim majority and non-Muslim majority countries covered their "own" side more neutrally than they covered the "other". Muslim majority countries did so more dramatically. The overall rating that media from Muslim majority countries communicated towards Islamic protagonists was 3.8% positive statements. The tone that these media communicated towards the "other side" was 21.1% negative statements.

The most extreme example of this difference in tone was in Iran, where coverage of Islamic protagonists had an overall a rating of 84.7% positive statements, and coverage of the "other" side had a rating of 51.3% negative statements. Media in Iran focused heavily on protagonists representing Islam

Figure 8.15 **Tone of Education and Intercultural Understanding coverage per country**



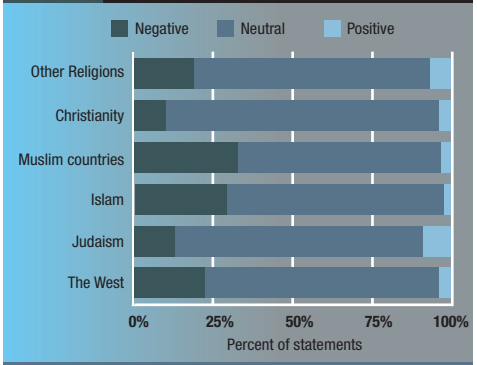
and Muslim majority countries in this issue area (90.0% of statements), which explains why the country's overall rating on this issue area was the most positive of any country. (Figure 8.15)

Journalists in Russia, Italy and France covered education and intercultural understanding most neutrally. But they mainly explored the traditions and cultural practices of Christians. Morocco and Palestine had the most negative coverage and dedicated most of their coverage to exploring how the traditions and belief of Muslims are threatened.

Citizenship and Integration

This issue area centres on challenges related to the assimilation of different religious, ethnic and cultural groups into a society.

Figure 8.16 **Tone of reporting towards various protagonists in media from non-Muslim majority countries**



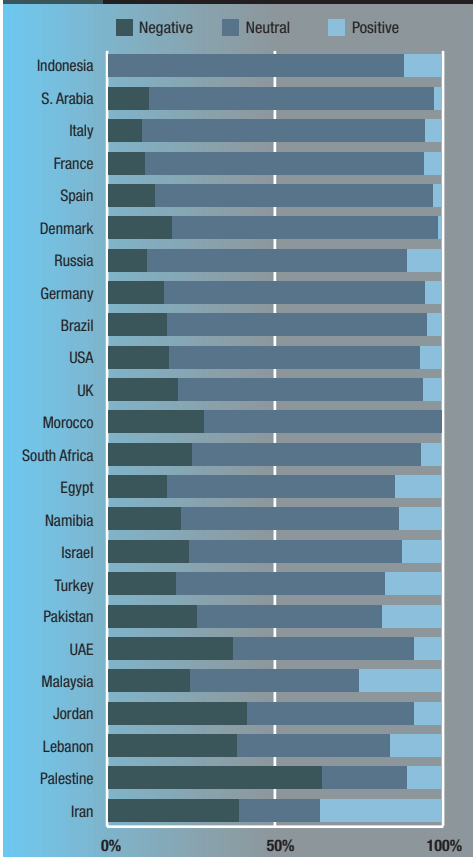
Statements about individual rights and interactions with governments were key to the analysis. Citizenship and integration issues accounted for 6.2% of all reporting on Muslim-West issues, making it the issue area with the second lowest visibility.

Most reporting on citizenship and integration issues came from non-Muslim majority countries (63.9% of statements), particularly European countries. These countries mostly focused on the role that their own governments play in granting citizenship rights, enforcing laws, respecting religious freedoms and uniting diverse communities. Media outside the Muslim world focused roughly equal percentages of citizenship and integration reports on the role of governments from Muslim majority countries (19.6% of statements), governments from their own countries (18.8%) and growing Muslim populations (19.6% of statements).

Of the three groups of protagonists, political protagonists from non-Muslim majority countries were covered with the most balance. Muslims and Muslim majority countries were covered most negatively. (Figure 8.16)

Media from Indonesia, Saudi Arabia and Italy provided the most neutral coverage of citizenship

Figure 8.17 **Tone of Citizenship and Integration coverage per country**



and integration issues. (Figure 8.17) However, most of their coverage focused on the activities of their own governments and majority populations. Italian media reported on citizenship and integration the most heavily of any country, providing 11.2% of all statements for this dialogue issue area. They struck a largely balanced tone in their coverage, with an overall rating on 5.0% negative statements. But they focused primarily on the rights and political interactions of Christians (mainly Catholics) within Italian society (69.3% of statements).

Muslim majority countries covered citizenship and integration issues more negatively than media outside the Muslim world did, partially on account of their very negative tone towards

Figure 8.18 **Tone of Economic and Social Development coverage per country**

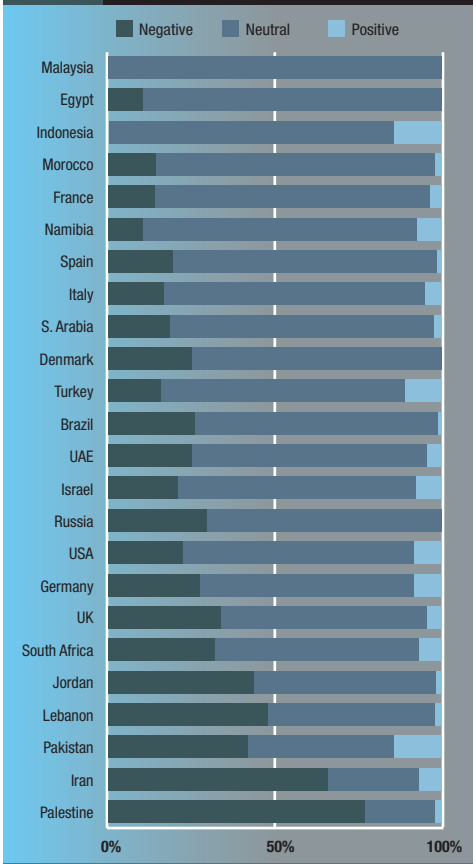
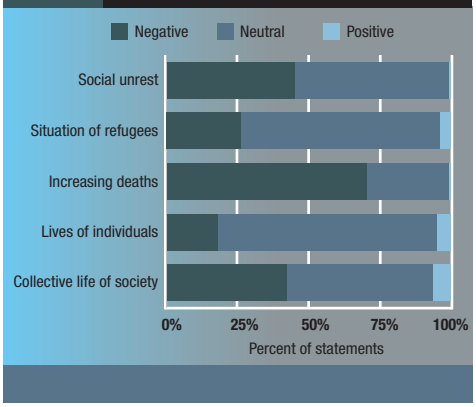


Figure 8.19 **Tone and volume of Economic and Social Development topics**



Western governments and Jewish and secular protagonists (average rating 47.9% negative statements). However, they focused most of their coverage on Muslims and domestic governments, and did so with a more balanced tone. Palestinian and Jordanian media provided the most negative assessment of this issue area (54.3%). Most of their negative coverage focused on the conditions of Muslims under Israeli occupation.

Economic and Social Development

Economic and social development included reporting on Muslim-West partnerships designed to improve living standards and promote peace. Economic and social development topics accounted for 7.2% of all the reporting on Muslim-West issues. Coverage of this issue area often focused on conditions that impeded development. As a result, it had the highest share of negative reports of the five issue areas, with an overall rating of 31.9% negative statements. However, negative reporting was to some degree offset by coverage of development assistance and concrete economic partnership initiatives. Journalists in almost all 24 countries highlighted a few examples of successful economic restructuring and foreign assistance programmes. At the same time, reporting on some continuing efforts, such as relief from the tsunami and the Pakistani earthquake, were not heavily covered.

Media outlets from all countries focused on conditions among Muslims in the Middle East. The situation in Palestine alone accounted for 41.6% of statements. Most development programmes were reduced to foreign aid, primarily that given to Iraq and the discontinuation of Western assistance to The Palestinian territories. In general, Muslim majority countries covered economic and social development issues more heavily and negatively than media from non-Muslim majority countries. Muslim majority countries produced 62.1% of the statements related to this issue area with an overall rating of 39.5% negative statements.

Malaysia and Egypt covered economic and social development most neutrally, and focused a strong majority of their coverage on protagonists representing Muslim majority countries (Figure 8.18). Media from Palestine covered this issue area with the highest frequency of any

country (14.0% of statements), and with the most negative rating (74.7%).
The most heavily reported topics related to economic and social development were almost by definition negative – social unrest, refugees and increasing number of deaths. (Figure 8.19) Even the more neutral topics related to the collective or individual lives of citizens were communicated with a predominantly negative tone that was often cited as a cause of radicalization among Muslims.

Business publications captured the growing trend towards Islam-friendly finance such as the launching of Sharia-compatible finance instruments. However, general interest media did not explore this trend.

Methodology

The following three TV news shows, three print publications and one business publication were analysed from 24 countries:

Brazil – seven outlets
- Print – Folha de Sao Paulo, Estado de Sao Paulo, Globo, Gazetamercantil.
- TV – Band News, Record International, RIT TV.

Denmark – seven outlets
- Print – Borsen Dagblad WE, Ekstra Bladet, Jyllads-Posten Sunday, Politken.
- TV – TV-avisen 18.30 (DR1), TV-avisen 21.00 (DR 2), Nyhederne 19.00 (TV2).

Egypt – seven outlets
- Print – Akhbar El Yom, Al Ahram Al Arabi, Al Ahram Allqtissadi, Rose Al Yussuf.
- TV – Nile TV – Nile Info, Egypt TV – Nashrat Al Akhbar, Al Nile – Al Akhbar.

France – seven outlets
- Print – Figaro, Les Echos, Le Point, L'Express.
- TV – FR 1, FR 2, Tele 5.

Germany – seven outlets
- Print – Handelsblatt, Super Illu, Focus, Spiegel.
- TV – ZDR, ARD, RTL.

Indonesia – seven outlets
- Print - Media Indonesia, Bisnis Indonesia, Jawa Pos, The Bali Times (Friday edition).
- TV – TVRI, Metro TV News Today, Metro TV News 9.

Iran – seven outlets
- Print – Abrar, Abrar Iqtisadi, Hambastegi, Ettlaat.
- TV – JamJam1 Khabar, Irinn Khabare, Al Alam – Al Akhbar.

Israel – seven outlets
- Print – Faxx, Ha'aretz (English) Friday edition, Marker, The Jerusalem Post.
- TV – Keshet (Ch. 2) Prime Time News, Channel 1 Mabat, Channel 10.

Italy – seven outlets
- Print – Il Sole 24 Ore (Economical), Repubblica, Il Corriere della Sera, Panorama.
- TV – Rai Uno, Ria Due, Canale 5.

Jordan – seven outlets
- Print – Ad Doustour, Al Arab al Yawm Friday edition, Al Ghad, Al Rai.
- JRTV – Mujaz al Akhbar, JRTV – Jordan's News Bulletin, JRTV – News Bulletin.

Lebanon* – two outlets
- Print – Al Hayat.
- TV – Al Manar.

Malaysia* – six outlets
- Print – Malay Mail, NST, Star.
- TV – RTM TV1, RTM TV1 Mandarin, TV 3 Buletin Utama (20:00- 21:00).

Morocco – seven outlets
- Print – Alalam, Assabah, L'Economiste, L'Opinion.
- TV – 2M – Akhbar, TVM – Le Journal televise en Arabe, Medi 1 – Al Akhbar.

Namibia – 6 outlets
- Print – Namibia Today, Republikein, New Era, The Namibian.
- TV – Namibian Broadcasting Corporation (19.00).

Pakistan – seven outlets
- Print – Business Recoder, Khabarain, The Dawn, Jang.
- TV – PTV – News at Ten (Headlines), AryOneWorld – UK News Round Up, AajTV.

Palestine* – six outlets
- Print – Al Ayyam, Al Quds, Al Hayat Al Jadedah.
- TV – Palestinian TV – Al Akhbar, Alaqsa TV – Al Akhba, Alaqsa TV – Al Akhvar.

Russia – seven outlets
- Print – Kommersant, Komosomolskaya Pravda Weekly Moscow, Moskovskie Novosti, Moskovski Komsomolets, Trud-7.
- TV – Vesty.ru, Kanal 1, NTV.

Saudi Arabia – seven outlets
- Print – Al Hayat, Al- Eqitsadiah, Al- Jazirah, Asharq al Awsat.
- TV – Saudi 1 – Al Akhbar, Saudi 2 – News on 2, Al Ikhbariya – Al Akhbar.

South Africa – seven outlets
- Print – South African Mail and Guardian, Sunday Times, City Press, Sunday Independent.
- TV – SABC English News (19.00), E- TV News (19.00), SABC Sotho News.

Spain – seven outlets
- Print – La Geceta de los Nogocios (economical), El Mundo, El Pais, Actualidad Economica.
- TV – TELE Madrid Telenoticias 3, TVE International Teldiario 2nd Edicion, Noticias2 21.00 (Antena3).

Turkey – seven outlets
- Print – Ekonomist, Hurriyet, Milliyet, Zaman.
- TV – TV8 – Ana Haber Bulteni, ATV – ATV Ana Haber, TRT 1 – Ana Haber Bulteni.

United Arab Emirates – seven outlets
- Print – Al Bayan, Emirates Today, Gulf News, Al Ittihad.
- TV – Abu Dhabi TV, Al Jazeera, Al Arabiya (MBC).

United Kingdom – seven outlets
- Print – Economist, Sunday Times, Sunday Telegraph, Observer.
- TV – BBC 1, BBC 2, ITV.

United States – seven outlets
- Print – Wall Street Journal, Newsweek, Time, US News and World Report.
- TV – NBC Nightly News, ABC: World News Tonight, CBS Evening News.

Total – 160 outlets

Media were analysed from the period 16 June 2007 to 30 September 2007. In 10 countries, coverage was analysed every day during this period. In 14 countries[6] a representative sample of 35 days of coverage was analysed. Media were selected based primarily on consumption levels in each of the 24 countries.

Variables in the coding system

In addition to coding an article's formal aspects (date, style, length and media outlet) every message in the media was assigned a numeric code by a human analyst in their native language. Coding was performed on a "statement" level, meaning that every combination of a protagonist and a topic was coded as a single statement. Depending on its complexity, a single sentence could produce multiple statements. The following sample of our coding fields demonstrates how a statement would be coded.

6 *Brazil, Denmark, Egypt, Indonesia, Iran, Israel, Jordan, Lebanon Malaysia, Morocco, Pakistan, Palestine, Russia and Turkey.*

"Palestinian sources said that the meeting between Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas and Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Olmert will be held in Jericho on Thursday." – The Wall Street Journal, US Edition. "Egyptian minister of intelligence calls for dialogue on Palestine." January 1, 2007, Page A10.

A Coding Example

The following example displays how a quote would be coded.

"In his first major address on Middle East peace since the Islamist group Hamas seized control of the Gaza Strip in a bloody sweep last month, Mr. Bush pledged to restart the moribund peace process by pouring aid and diplomatic attention on the new government established by Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas." – The Wall Street Journal, US Edition. "Bush Pins Peace Hopes on Fatah," July 17, 2007, Page A6.

Statement 1		
Protagonist	816473	Palestine
Perspective	601	Abbas, Mahmoud
Classification	2	Positive, takes part in dialogue
Area	609	Palestine
Time	1	Present
Topic	208669	Relations, negotiations between Israel and Palestine
Rating (explicit)	0	No explicit rating
Rating (implicit)	0	No implicit rating
Source of Opinion	7	Anonymous sources, "informed circles"
Nationality	609	Palestine
Area and rating variables describe the protagonist		

Statement 2		
Protagonist	816098	Israel
Perspective	213	Olmert, Ehud
Classification	2	Positive, takes part in dialogue
Area	604	Israel
Time	1	Present
Topic	208669	Relations, negotiations between Israel and Palestine
Rating (explicit)	0	No explicit rating
Rating (implicit)	0	No implicit rating
Source of Opinion	7	Anonymous sources, "informed circles"
Nationality	609	Palestine

Statement 1	**Bush gives an address on Middle East peace.**
Protagonist:	Bush
Explicit rating:	Neutral
Implicit rating:	Neutral

Bush's activity – giving an address – is not explicitly qualified, nor is it generally considered to be positive or negative activity in and of itself.

Statement 2	**The Islamic group Hamas seized control of the Gaza Strip in a bloody sweep.**
Protagonist:	Hamas
Explicit rating:	Negative
Implicit rating:	Negative

"Bloody" is both a negative adjective and an indication of a negative circumstance.

Statement 3	**Mr. Bush pledged to restart the moribund peace process…**
Protagonist:	Bush
Explicit rating:	Neutral
Implicit rating:	Neutral

Both the explicit and implicit ratings are ambivalent – a restart of the peace process is generally considered to be positive, but the fact that the peace process is "moribund" is negative. Ambivalent statements are coded as neutral.

Statement 4	**By pouring aid and diplomatic attention…**
Protagonist:	Bush
Explicit rating:	Neutral
Implicit rating:	Neutral

Bush's action is not explicitly qualified. Providing aid and attention to could be perceived as implicitly positive or negative for the US government.

Statement 5	**On the new government established by Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas.**
Protagonist:	the government established by Abbas
Explicit rating:	Neutral
Implicit rating:	Positive

While aid and attention are not identified with any positive adjectives, they are generally considered to be a good thing for a country. Abbas receiving aid is implicitly positive.

9

Conclusions and Paths Forward

As the year 2007 drew to a close, Muslim-West relations were marked by contradictory trends. At a November meeting in Annapolis, Maryland hosted by the US government, Israeli and Palestinian leaders committed themselves to negotiations to bring about a peaceful two-state solution. That same month, Vatican officials responded positively to an invitation to dialogue issued by 138 Muslim leaders several weeks earlier. In December, the civil war in Iraq appeared to be ebbing, and a revision of the US intelligence community's assessment of Iran's nuclear programme reduced fears of an imminent military clash.

Not all the news at year's end was good. The global media was transfixed by a crisis involving a British school teacher jailed in the Sudan for allowing her pupils to name a toy bear "Muhammad". Observers questioned the ability of the Israeli and Palestinian governments, under pressure at home, to arrive at long hoped for compromise. The situation in Afghanistan and Iraq remained volatile. In December al-Qaeda claimed responsibility for a car bombing outside UN offices in Algiers, Algeria. And, during the final days of 2007, Benazir Bhutto was assassinated in Pakistan, dealing a blow to the country's democratic prospects with potential repercussions far beyond.

It is not clear what 2008 will bring. Efforts to improve relations between the West and the Muslim world – and to foster peaceful interaction and collaboration among Muslims and non-Muslims within the West – will be shaped both by broad global trends and contingent, unforeseeable events. High-level international meetings promise to advance dialogue, including a forum of the Alliance of Civilizations in Madrid in January and the Organization of the Islamic Conference summit two months later in Dakar (see box). At the national and local levels, numerous meetings, seminars and collaborative projects are planned for the year. How those efforts will play out will depend on a shifting international and national political constellation. But their success will also depend on whether and how they link back to and build upon the diverse dialogue efforts that have expanded dramatically over the past several years.

Islam and the West: Annual Report on the State of Dialogue provides a map of that diversity. It highlights high-profile initiatives led by global institutions, national governments and non-governmental organizations, and features many local and regional efforts that focus on particular communities. Throughout, the focus is on programmes and events designed to go beyond just talk to build knowledge and trust and to advance collaboration around key shared policy challenges, including peace, human rights and social justice.

This report seeks to raise the visibility of dialogue efforts and through public opinion and media analysis, to illuminate the changing setting within which dialogue unfolds. It aims to bring dialogue efforts to the attention of leaders across government, business and civil society. Just as important, the report aims to inform those engaged in Muslim-West dialogue across multiple issue areas of the parallel and complementary efforts of others. Greater awareness may help to build networks and deepen collaboration.

ths Forward

Announced Events Around Muslim-West Topics in 2008

15-16 January: Alliance of Civilizations Annual Forum, Madrid, Spain
A first annual forum of the Alliance of Civilizations will bring together leaders from government and civil society to discuss cross-cultural understanding. Two working sessions are on the agenda: The Role of Religious Leaders and Communities in Promoting Shared Security and Intercultural and Interreligious Youth Exchanges. More information: http://www.unaoc.org

21-23 January: 38th Trinity Institute Conference, New York City
The Trinity Institute is organizing its 38th Annual National Theological Conference on Religion and Violence: Untangling the Roots of Conflict. Prominent Christian, Jewish and Muslim thought leaders will explore the connection between religion and violence and prospects for peaceful coexistence across cultural and religious lines. More information: http://www.trinitywallstreet.org

4 February: Launch of World Bank Report on Education in the Middle East and North Africa, Amman, Jordan
The World Bank is preparing a major report ,The Road Not Traveled: Education Reform in the Middle East and North Africa. Queen Rania of Jordan is scheduled to participate in the launch event, which will bring together education officials from across the region to discuss the report's operational implications. More information: http://web.worldbank.org

16-18 February: US-Islamic World Forum, Doha, Qatar
Organized by the Brookings Institution and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Qatar, the theme of the 2008 annual forum is "New Directions". It will address critical issues in US-Islamic World relations through small group dialogues and public plenary sessions. More information: http://www.us-islamicworldforum.org

3-5 March: The Challenges and Opportunities of Islam in the West: The Case of Australia, Brisbane, Australia.
Griffith University will host a conference on the development of Muslim-West relations at the Brisbane Convention and Exhibition Centre, including Muslim intellectuals from around the world. Its focus will be on historical, cultural, and social challenges facing Islamic communities in Australia. More information: http://www.griffith.edu.au

13-14 March: 11th OIC Islamic Summit, Dakar, Senegal
The Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC) holds the Islamic Summit Conference once every three years to set policy and to elect a chair for a three year term. The Summit Conference is the supreme authority of the OIC. Malaysia, which hosted the last regular Islamic Summit Conference, is the current chair of the OIC. More information: http://www.oic-oci.org/

24-27 March: Arabs' and Muslims' Scientific Contributions to Humanity, Sharjah, UAE
The University of Sharjah in the United Arab Emirates will host the First International Conference on Arabs' and Muslims' History of Sciences. The conference will convene more than 250 scholars and researchers from around the world. More information: https://www.sharjah.ac.ae

April: EU-Sponsored Debate on Interreligious Dialogue, Brussels, Belgium
The European Union has designated 2008 as the European Year of Intercultural Dialogue. As part of the project, a series of debates will take place in Brussels throughout the year. One of these is slated to cover the topic of interreligious dialogue. More information: http://www.interculturaldialogue2008.eu

5-6 April: Innovations in Islam, Edmund A. Walsh School of Foreign Service, Georgetown University, Doha, Qatar
The Center for International and Regional Studies at Georgetown's SFS Qatar campus will host an international conference to coincide with the opening of the Museum of Islamic Art in March 2008. The conference will explore a wide variety of Muslim contributions to culture through history. More information: http://www1.georgetown.edu/sfs/qatar/

13-15 April: Breakthrough: The Women, Faith and Development Summit to End Global Poverty, Washington, DC
The National Cathedral Center for Justice and Reconciliation will host a summit at the Washington National Cathedral on links between women, faith, and global development. With the participation of former secretary of state Madeleine Albright and other world leaders, the summit will propose new global poverty alleviation efforts. More information: http://www.wfd-alliance.org/

24-26 April: Inaugural Conference of ASMEA, Washington, DC
The inaugural conference of the Association of the Study of the Middle East and Africa will be on The Evolution of Islamic Politics in the Middle East and Africa. It will focus on Islamic political tradition in its theological, juristic and practical aspects, with particular attention to salient contemporary debates. More information: http://www.asmeascholars.org

17-19 May: World Economic Forum on the Middle East, Sharm el-Sheikh, Egypt
The annual Middle East meeting of the World Economic Forum will convene leaders from across sectors to discuss the region's economic, social, and cultural trajectory. Topics for discussion will run the gamut from information technology to the arts. More information: http://www.weforum.org/en/events/

May: Encounter 2008, Rovereto, Italy
Religions for Peace will host Encounter 2008, a symposium on religions, values and European identity. It will bring some 200 religious representatives together with European officials to confront urgent issues including cultural pluralism, immigration, economic disparities, and community cohesion. More information: http://www.wcrp.org/

April/May: URI Training on Muslim-Christian Dialogue, Manila, Philippines
The Peacemakers' Cooperation Circle and the Institute of Islamic Studies of the University of the Philippines will offer training modules on Muslim-Christian Dialogue for Nation-Building in Metro Manila. This pilot program is meant to launch a first-of-its-kind Interfaith Peacebuilding Institute in the Philippines. More information: http://www.uri.org/

6-14 June: Fes Sacred Music Festival, Fes, Morocco
The Fes Sacred Music Festival brings artists from around the world together in one of the world's most ancient holy cities. The Fes Encounters, which are part of the festival, convene politicians, academics and social activists to discuss urgent issues ranging from conflict resolution to climate change. More information: http://www.fesfestival.com/

11-14 July: IslamExpo 2008, London, UK
London's annual IslamExpo will be held in Olympia, London. In addition to a number of cultural and social programs showcasing achievements in the Islamic world, this year's program will have a specific focus on the topic of Islamic Finance and specifically the need for ethical investment in the UK and abroad. More Information: http://www.islamexpo.com

The Politics and Potential of Dialogue

Each of the issue areas covered in this report suggests a different balance of external constraints, key actors and patterns of interaction. In international politics, the balance of power and the struggle for security place constraints on dialogue efforts. Political leaders often engage in discourse of self-justification, while voices within civil society, both religious and secular, often have trouble being heard. At the same time, however, increasing religious and cultural diversity and the salience of public opinion and public diplomacy point to the importance of dialogue as a component of international politics.

Around questions of citizenship and integration, particularly salient in the European context, public opinion and political incentives often favour populist agendas over creative policy solutions. A growing Muslim minority committed to active and full citizenship within the West is increasingly finding a voice in the public sphere. Governments, committed to ideals of equality and recognition, but eager to maintain majority support and national cohesion, are seeking to engage Muslim groups in structured dialogue – with mixed results.

The three remaining issue areas outlined in the report – religion, ethics and ideology; education and intercultural understanding; and economic and social development – tend to play out in a less overtly political environment. Actors within national and transnational civil society interact with one another as much as with international organizations and national governments.

Individuals and groups across the Abrahamic traditions have multiplied dialogue efforts designed to flesh out shared ethical positions and, in some cases, articulate common – or at least compatible – approaches to diverse issues ranging from holy sites in Jerusalem to the threat of global warming.

Efforts to increase knowledge of other traditions and advance intercultural understanding are extraordinary in their diversity and creativity, and are particularly evident in curricular reform and structured exchanges of people and ideas. The power – and responsibility – of the media and the entertainment industry are increasingly a topic of discussion.

Global economic and social development, a vital issue in its own right, has begun to take on greater visibility at the intersection of Islam and the West. How to do business in a world marked by greater cultural and religious diversity is a topic of dialogue and debate. At the same time, controversy swirls around whether and how underdevelopment, failed states, and increasingly visible global imbalances drive social and political frustration and religious extremism.

Taken as a whole, the five issue areas suggest the centrality of politics and the constraints it imposes. But they also point to a space for dialogue, deliberation and debate in a spirit of truth and compromise.

Any public communication, whether among leaders in government and civil society or among citizens in different walks of life, is linked back to particular agendas. To explain and justify a particular ethical stance or policy position; to persuade others of its rightness; or to demand respect and recognition – all are means to advance interests in power, wealth, and security. The instrumental use of dialogue in the service of particular agendas is often evident across key issue areas at the intersection of Islam and the West.

At the same time, however, none of the dialogue activities mapped here should be dismissed as simply rhetoric. They are directed toward real world problems that affect multiple communities. They involve efforts to make sense of complex problems and mobilize coalitions for action. By building knowledge and shaping mutual expectations, dialogue can have positive ripple effects

Dialogue – the exchange of ideas oriented towards action – is the alternative to violence. Even where linked back to narrow interests it can also point forward to shared or at least compatible or overlapping perspectives. It is a way, perhaps the only way, to better understand the other, to locate common ground and to manage differences peacefully.

Through dialogue political leaders can seek compromise and find solutions. Equally important over the long term, dialogue is a means to transform the political contexts that constrain political leaders at home and abroad. Dialogue

that engages the views of others and broadens political participation in the national and transnational public sphere can generate an awareness of shared interests. Partners to dialogue have an opportunity to move beyond stereotypes to a greater awareness of the complex interplay of ethnicity, race, culture and broader economic and social forces.

Dialogue that brings together Muslims and non-Muslims may, of course, highlight differences as well as commonalities. But a vibrant culture of peaceful contestation makes it more difficult for leaders to exploit cultural and religious differences for destructive ends. Such a culture cannot be mandated from above; it grows out of deliberate, difficult dialogue activities within the society and the state and across borders, over time.

Public Opinion and the Global Media as Context

The Gallup Muslim-West Dialogue Index supports this view of dialogue as both embedded within political and social struggles and as a path forward towards a better future. Most citizens of the Muslim and non-Muslim majority countries surveyed have a negative view of the current state of the dialogue between the West and the Muslim world. They see relations as having grown worse over the past several years and identify deep conflicts reinforced by a lack of knowledge and respect on both sides. Respondents in Muslim majority countries point in particular to Western interventions in the Middle East and the unresolved Israeli-Palestinian question as a source of ongoing tension and an obstacle to dialogue.

Most surveyed in the both the West and the Muslim world, however, do not see religion itself as the basic stumbling block. They tend instead to blame extremists who deploy religion in support of narrow agendas. Majorities appear to believe that Muslim-West relations can improve over time. Pessimism about dialogue in the present and the immediate future may prove compatible with cautious optimism over the long term.

If dialogue, and not mutual accusations, threats, and violence, is to shape Muslim-West relations in the future, the global media will have a role to play. The Media Tenor International content analysis featured in this report highlights both the dominance of conflict coverage in the television and print media and the prevalence of negative reporting on "the other."

It is hardly surprising that the media in 2007 should focus on conflicts in Gaza, the war in Iraq and the sharp confrontation between the US and Iran. Conflict and bloodshed are good drama; peaceful dialogue is rarely a gripping story. Much will turn on whether the dialogue activities featured in this report, and others like them, will receive more media coverage into the future. That will depend on whether international conflict breeds deadlock and exhaustion, prompting leaders to dialogue as a better means to advance economic and security interests. It will also depend on whether well-known individuals from the worlds of business, sports and entertainment lend their support to dialogue efforts. It is too easy to berate the media for not covering a story. If dialogue increases in its intensity and scope, the media will cover it more extensively in the future.

Four Gaps to Address

The analysis of dialogue efforts across the issue areas, combined with the results of the public opinion and media analysis, suggests four gaps to be addressed in years to come.

The Elite/Grass Roots Gap: Dialogue among political and religious elites garners most media

attention. However, much of the impetus for Muslim-West dialogue comes from the local level. Community responses to tensions sparked by issues including school curricula and the construction of places of worship can bring local leaders together to solve problems and build trust across religious, ethnic and cultural lines.

Face-to-face iterative dialogue often has the most direct impact on people's lives. It rarely, however, receives much attention from national and international media and, perhaps more significant, from national and international leaders. A frequent lack of Internet presence makes it all but invisible to a broader public.

Shining more light on the grass roots can address this gap in two ways. First, it can bring local activities to the attention of leaders and the media and point to reservoirs of political support for more ambitious national and international efforts. Second, it can facilitate a sharing of best practices about how to convene people, set agendas, exchange views and further practical collaboration.

Both this report and the more comprehensive database of dialogue efforts associated with it – islamwest.org – let people see themselves as part of a transnational effort to engage the perspectives and concerns of others in a spirit of openness and pragmatism.

The Politics/Religion Gap: Over the past decade, political leaders in both the West and the Muslim world have increasingly woven religion, ethics and identity through their rhetoric. Sometimes this has a large dose of self-justification, more akin to monologue than dialogue. In many situations, however, it encompasses good faith efforts to advance intercultural understanding and find common ground.

While such public rhetoric can help to set the tone for more substantive efforts within the state and civil society, political leaders often have little direct contact or interaction with diverse religious leaders. Given the importance of Muslim-West dialogue, political leaders would do well to reach out more proactively to faith communities, individually and through interfaith groupings, in order to understand better their motivations and support their engagement with one another around pressing policy challenges.

A common counsel also is to reach beyond "comfortable" agreements to draw in groups that tend to perceive issues outside the dominant paradigm. A radical secularism opposed to religious discourse and actors in politics may oppose such engagement in principle, pointing to the danger of injecting theology into politics. But in an era when religion shapes politics and society, whether we like it or not, openness to faith communities is more productive and far-sighted than ignoring or stifling them.

The work of the World Economic Forum's Community on West and Islam Dialogue (C-100), which brings together political and religious leaders, is one example of a way forward. The UN's Alliance of Civilizations is another major initiative.

The Business-Professions Gap. Business people and practitioners of the long established professions, including education, law and medicine, are among the most respected and influential actors in today's world. Business prides itself on discipline, delivery of results, and innovation; the professions on high standards of ethics and excellence. This is as true in the Muslim world as it is in the West.

Over the past decade, dialogue and debate about corporate social responsibility and educational, legal and medical ethics have intensified, at the local, national, and international levels. To date, however, conversations in both business and professional circles have rarely been linked to the parallel and active Muslim-West dialogue addressed in this report. Religious leaders have engaged one another and, to some degree, political elites. The media and public opinion have played an important role. But structured interaction with business and professional leaders has been quite rare.

If Muslim-West dialogue is to move effectively beyond theological and ideological questions towards practical efforts to address global economic and social challenges, leaders across civil society must be engaged more fully. Here, the World Economic Forum's C-100 has the opportunity to play a catalytic role.

The Inside/Outside Gap: Some of the most significant dialogue is taking place within, not across, religious and secular communities. Islam, Christianity, Judaism – as well as Buddhism, Hinduism, and various strands of atheism and secular humanism – all have diverse inner currents. Within each of these communities, some who hold that they possess the complete truth face off against others who are comfortable with their convictions, but respectful of and open to the beliefs and values of others.

These internal debates are often little noticed by those outside the tradition, whether leaders, citizens, or the media, until punctuated by clashes among colourful personalities or violent outbursts. The internal debates highlighted within this report point to majorities of moderates across traditions – groups that are committed to particular beliefs and practices, but open to learning from and collaborating with others through peaceful exchange.

Religious leaders, supported by scholars, can do more to highlight the rich diversity within traditions – to help both understand and counter the minorities attracted to extremist views and leaders. Work within traditions can help advance dialogue outside them. The Amman Message and A Common Word Between Us and You are excellent examples of such initiatives in the Islamic context.

To some degree, these four gaps – and efforts to address them – are a function of broader constellations of forces. Three decades ago Muslim-West dialogue barely figured on the global agenda for multiple reasons, including the East-West conflict of the Cold War, the secular drift of Muslim and non-Muslim majority societies and flows of information and immigration that were far more limited than they are today.

As the opposition between capitalism and communism fell away, broader debates about culture and religion moved into the public square around the world, the Muslim minority grew in Europe and North America, and a global media and communications revolution unfolded. The relationship between the West and the Muslim world became more prominent on global agendas – 9/11, the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq, and the persistence of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict have accelerated the process.

The West and Islam were never two separate worlds. But now they are more connected than ever. Ignorance, suspicion and confrontation have a long history at their intersection. Given the depth of Muslim-West interpenetration today, dialogue is now much more than an ideal. It is a reality that increasingly connects elites with the grass roots, political with religious leaders, and ideas and people inside traditions with those outside them.

Ultimately, efforts to close these gaps and address global challenges at the intersection of the West and the Muslim world will depend upon the actions of courageous and far-sighted individuals. Perhaps the most compelling parts of this report are the short essays that outline particular programmes, strategies and experiences. They recount trial and error, frustration and misunderstanding, but also surprises and breakthroughs. The difficulties are enormous, but as one practitioner has observed, dialogue "is infinitely better than the alternatives and more than worth our best effort in light of the stakes involved."

Dialogue designed to build knowledge and foster trust does not always work as it should. Sometimes it works best when expectations are low. The diversity of approaches to and experiences of dialogue recounted in the

essays mirrors the diversity within the West and the Muslim world and the complexity of the ties between them. Just as the West and Islam are not monolithic, but differ across national, cultural, social and political settings, so too dialogue should not be over-generalized.

What works and what does not is difficult to pin down. Dialogue efforts do not add up in a simple or mathematical way. If we cannot generalize about best practices, we can learn from particular experiences. This report provides a partial overview of the vast universe of dialogue efforts unfolding around the world. It is a source of knowledge and – hopefully – an encouragement to those committed to improving West-Islamic relations in the service of peace.

Annex 1: Public Opinion on the State of Muslim-West Dialogue

Authors:
Dalia Mogahed and Ahmed Younis

Research Team:
Dr. Richard Burkholder,
Dr. Rajesh Srinivasan, Dr. Bob Tortora,
Neli Esipova, Dr. Zsolt Nyiri,
Dr. Frank Newport and Dr. Gale Muller

This chapter presents findings from the original polling data used to construct the Gallup West-Muslim Dialogue Index. The survey asked nine questions of a representative sample in 21 Muslim and non-Muslim majority countries. The questions fall into two categories – assessments of the current state of West-Islamic relations and perceptions of their likely future development.

Large majorities in most nations surveyed do not believe that the Muslim and Western worlds are currently getting along. Perhaps of greatest concern, most respondents do not believe that the Muslim and Western worlds respect one another. Although many respondents in majority Muslim countries believe that the Muslim world does respect the West, this respect is neither widely perceived in the West nor reciprocated. The most encouraging finding on the status of the current relationship is that large majorities in most countries say that the quality of the relationship is important to them personally.

Looking to the future, most respondents see the relationship getting worse, not better. A comparison of results within Muslim and non-Muslim majority countries reveals a perceptions gap. Majorities in Muslim countries believe that the Muslim world is committed to better relations with the West, but that the West does not share the same goal. Majorities in non-Muslim majority countries reach opposite conclusions: they see the West, but not the Muslim world, committed to better relations.

Variance is greatest among responses to questions about the likely effects of a future increase in West-Islamic interaction. Many see such an increase as a threat, while many others see it as a benefit. The most encouraging finding on perceptions of the future of West-Islamic relations is that majorities in all countries surveyed do not believe that violent conflict is inevitable. On balance, the data suggest that most people are concerned about the state of West-Islamic relations and believe that relations can be peaceful.

Perceptions of Muslim-West Relations Today

Four of the survey questions ask respondents to reflect on the state of Muslim-West relations today:

- Do you think the Muslim world and the Western world are getting along well with each other today?
- Do you believe the Western world respects the Muslim world?
- Do you believe the Muslim world respects the Western world?
- Is the quality of the interaction between the Muslim and the Western world important to you?

There is strong consensus around the world that the Muslim and Western worlds are not getting along well. This perception is most prevalent in the United States (88%), Denmark

nion on the State Muslim-West Dialogue

(85%) and Israel (83%), and among Palestinians (83%) – all countries that have experienced major military or cultural confrontations in the past five years. 75% of Egyptians and 71% of Turks also said the Muslim world and the West are not getting along well with each other today. However, there is less pessimism among Saudi Arabians (48%), Bangladeshis (37%) and Pakistanis (26%), where less than a majority said the relationship between the two communities was poor, with a significant percentage unable to answer. Results were similar in Singapore, Russia and Brazil; in each case, more than a quarter of those surveyed did not offer a response, and in Singapore and Brazil only slim majorities said the two civilizations were not getting along well. All three countries have significant Muslim populations that are relatively well integrated and have not had any direct conflict with majority Muslim nations.

The data suggest that opinion is driven more by concrete matters of policy than by state-level commitments to international or military alliances. Turkey, for example, is a close ally of the United States and a member of NATO, but the war in Iraq and stiff opposition from some European powers to Turkey's bid for membership in the European Union may be influencing the Turks' perceptions of how well the West and the Muslim world are getting along.

In Egypt, also a strong ally of the United States, 3 out of 4 respondents believe that the Muslim world and the West are not getting along. Palestinians, who have faced intense conflict for much of the recent past, are equally as likely as Israelis to believe the two civilizations are not getting along well. Egyptian opinion may reflect the population's strong opposition to the war in Iraq; in 2005, 91% of Egyptians said they believed the coalition invasion did "more harm than good," compared to 76% in Saudi Arabia, and only 52% in Iran.

Some of the nations in which less than a majority believe the West and the Muslim world are in conflict – including Saudi Arabia, Pakistan and Iran – are those often linked in Western media with religious fundamentalism and notions of an inherent clash between civilizations. However, the Gallup Organization found that Muslims around the world do not regard the West as a monolith to be opposed on cultural or religious grounds. For example, while 61% of Saudi Arabians say they have very unfavourable views of the United States, and 51% say the same about the UK, only 16% express similar views about France, and even less (13%) about Germany. While 71% of Saudis associate "ruthless" with the United States, only 3% associate this same description with France[1].

Residents of Bangladesh are least likely to say conflict exists. Bangladeshis, however, tend to be among the most optimistic people in the world on many issues. Their positive attitude here may correlate more closely with a general optimism rather than anything specific to West-Islamic relations. For example, though Bangladesh is among the poorest of nations, 62% of Bangladeshis say they are satisfied with their standard of living – comparable to South Korea, where 60% express this sentiment, and much higher than Romania's 37%, despite Romania's considerably higher per-capita GDP[2].

- *Do you believe the Western world respects the Muslim world?*

In 2005, the Gallup Organization asked Muslims around the world, from Morocco to Indonesia, to explain in their own words what the West could do to improve relations with the Muslim world. The most frequent response was, "greater respect for Islam and to stop regarding Muslims as inferior."

Not surprisingly, we again found that many residents of majority Muslim countries believe that the Western world lacks respect for the Muslim world, though there is a difference of 31 percentage points between residents of Muslim nations surveyed in the Middle East and Africa (70%)

1 *Gallup World Poll 2005*
2 *Gallup World Poll 2007*

and those surveyed in Asia (31%). Very high percentages in The Palestinian Territories (84%) and Egypt (80%) believe that the West does not respect the Muslim world, while the numbers from Turkey (68%), Saudi Arabia (67%) and Iran (62%) are only somewhat lower.

These findings illustrate a consistent sense of being disrespected across nations that have very different economic, political and geo-strategic relationships with the West. It is noteworthy that while Iran is engaged in a very public standoff with the United States on issues such as nuclear proliferation and its role inside of Iraq, Iranian respondents feel less disrespected than their Turkish counterparts, who are attempting to join the European Union and move closer to the West.

Majorities or significant minorities in all Muslim majority countries surveyed also believe that the West does not respect the Muslim world. In fact, fewer than half of those in Denmark (30%), the United States (42%), Sweden (32%) and Canada (41%) believe that the West respects the Muslim world. In Israel and The Netherlands, the numbers are somewhat higher at (45%) and (46%), respectively. In Russia, a meager 13% think the Western world respects the Muslim world.

There are a number of possible explanations for why many in Western or non-Muslim majority countries contend that their own civilization lacks respect for the Muslim world. Of them, negative Western perceptions of Islam stand out with regard to its treatment of women, the use of violence and terrorism and the religion's perceived view of non-believers[3]. Another possibility is a general perception that Muslim societies are unable or unwilling to embrace modernity and adopt educational, technological and cultural advances in a manner consistent with other regions globally[4].

- *Do you believe the Muslim world respects the Western world?*

One of the most striking contrasts in these data concerns the question whether or not the Muslim world respects the Western world. While the majority of respondents in Muslim majority countries respond in the affirmative, majorities in every non-Muslim majority country surveyed except Singapore believe that the Muslim world does not respect the West.

Led by the United States at 82% and Israel at 73%, similarly high figures are seen in Spain (63%), site of the Madrid terrorist bombing of 2004, Denmark (69%), where the international firestorm over the editorial cartoon depicting Prophet Muhammad originated in 2005, and The Netherlands (55%), where the 2004 killing of a Dutch filmmaker by a young Muslim has sparked controversy. However, the polling reveals that even in the nations studied with no obvious conflicts or significant dysfunction with local Muslim minority communities – such as Italy (70%), Canada (67%) and Sweden (54%) – high percentages of respondents feel the West is disrespected.

In contrast, majorities or pluralities in all Muslim-majority nations believe the Muslim world does respect the Western world, though there is some variability here. Two-thirds of respondents in Indonesia (65%), the country with the largest Muslim population globally, believe that the Muslim world respects the West; similar numbers are seen in Saudi Arabia (72%), The Palestinian Territories (69%) and Egypt (62%). On this question, as with others, non-Arab nations of the Middle East divert from their Arab neighbours. In Iran and Turkey, the percentages who feel the Muslim world respects the West are somewhat lower, at (52%) and (45%), respectively. If citizens of Muslim-majority countries express

3 *Dalia Mogahed, Americans' views of the Islamic World, 8 February 2006.*
4 *The Great Divide: How Westerners and Muslims View Each other, The Pew Poll, 22 June 22.*

many things that they admire about the West, why is there such a disjuncture between the Muslim world's beliefs about the Western world and perceptions in the West? Many Westerners may misinterpret anger at America with disrespect for Western culture. Roughly 8 in 10 Americans say they believe that those living in Muslim countries have unfavourable opinions of the United States, and about the same number believe the Muslim world does not respect the Western world[5].

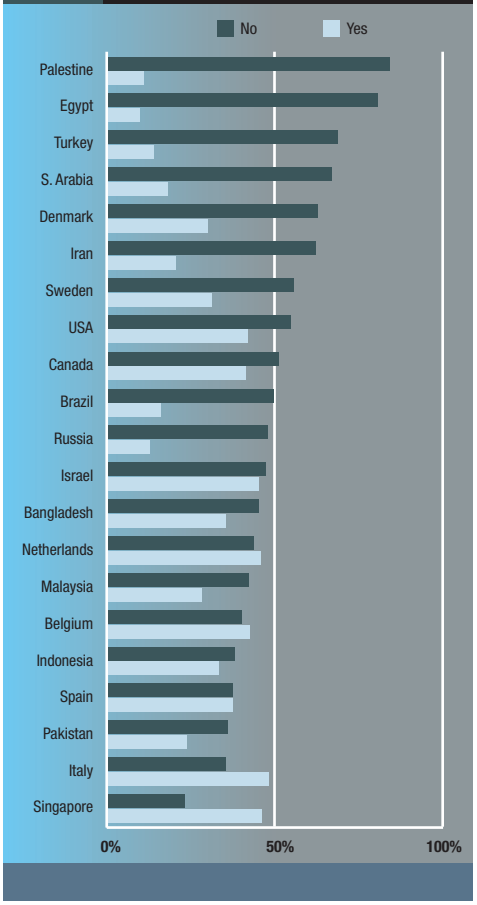
In reality, while many Muslims indeed hold unfavourable views of the United States, these are driven by resentment at its perceived policies rather than rejection of its values and principles[6].

Another possibility is that North Americans and Europeans believe Muslims lack respect for Western values, such as free speech, and therefore do not respect the Western world. For example, nearly half of Danes consider Islam as incompatible with democracy[7] Ironically, while many Muslims perceived the printing and reprinting of the Danish cartoons as an act of disrespect to what Islam holds dear, their reaction was perceived by some citizens of Western countries as an act of degradation to what the West holds dear.

A full year after the controversy erupted in September 2005, little over half believed the Danish newspaper *Jyllands-Posten* was right to print the controversial cartoon of the Prophet Muhammad with a bomb in his turban as a demonstration of free speech[8]. While most Americans (61%) said they believe the European newspapers that printed the cartoons behaved irresponsibly, the same percentage also said that the controversy was due more to Muslim intolerance to other points of view than it was to Western nations' disrespect for Islam[9].

This case of free speech raises an important distinction between general attitudes toward "values" and specific incidents where values seem to clash. For example, the vast majority of Muslims value free speech in principle. At the same time, 94% of Egyptians and 92% of Iranians say they would guarantee the right of free speech if they were asked to draft a constitution for a new country[10]. Many also mention it as among the most admirable qualities of the West.

Figure A.1 **Do you believe the Western World respects the Muslim World?**



However, while supporting the right of free speech in principle, this particular act of speech was deemed by many Muslims as unacceptable. For example, 75% of Muslims in London said that newspapers printing the Prophet cartoon should not be allowed under protection of free speech, and similar percentages said the same about racial slurs, child pornography and jokes about the Holocaust. Some other Europeans agree. While 59% of the German public said printing the Prophet cartoon should be allowed under

5 *Frank Newport, Complex but Hopeful Pattern of American Attitudes toward Muslims, 23 March 2006.*
6 *Dalia Mogahed, Muslims and Americans: The Way Forward, Gallup World Poll Special Report.*
7 *AFP, 4 September 2006*
8 *Associated Press, 30 September 2006.*
9 *David Moore, Gallup Poll: Public Critical of European Newspapers Showing Mohammed Cartoon But says controversy reflects Muslims' intolerance, 14 February 2006.*
10 *Dalia Mogahed, Islam and Democracy, Gallup World Poll Special Report*

protection of free speech, only 40% of the French public and 36% of the British public agreed. In the case of the British public, a majority (57%) said it should not be allowed[11].

Although these European publics were split on where to draw limits in regard to the Danish cartoons, majorities in these three nations were in agreement that newspapers should not be allowed to print racial slurs, child pornography and jokes about the Holocaust. For example, while the majority of Germans believed printing the Danish cartoons was protected by free speech, only 10% said the same about newspapers printing cartoons making light of the Holocaust, and no respondent thought child pornography should be included within the boundaries of freedom of expression[12].

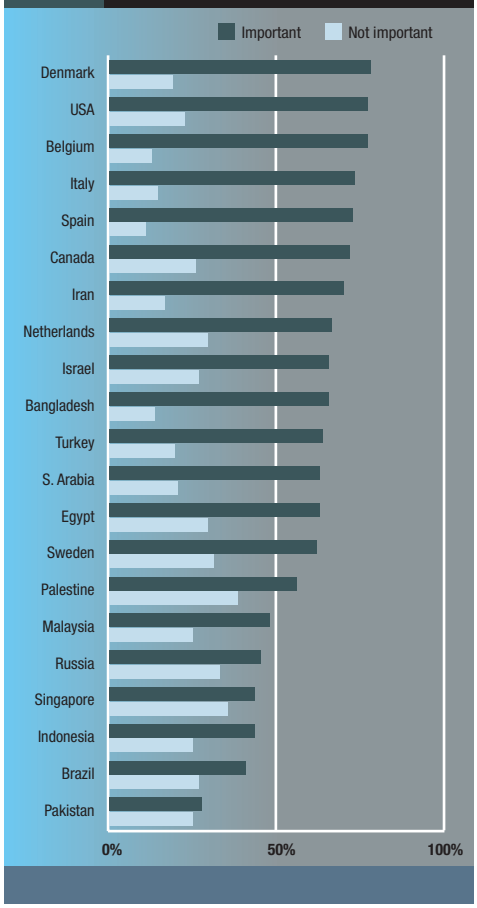
Whatever, in fact, drives the perception that the Muslim world does not respect the West – the conflation of Muslim anger toward specific countries, policies, or values issues with anger at Western culture at large – the perception itself flies in the face of the data. Allowing for the fact that "respect" can be understood in different ways in different contexts – for example, some may respect the West for its power but despise its dominant individualist ethos – there appears to be a reservoir of goodwill among the populations of Muslim-majority countries that might be a resource in efforts to deepen dialogue at international and national levels.

- *Is the quality of interactions between the Muslim and Western worlds important to you?*

Another encouraging sign for the prospects of greater dialogue is the finding that majorities in most nations surveyed say that the quality of interactions between the Muslim and Western world is important to them. In some countries – including Denmark, the United States, Belgium, Italy, Israel, Canada and Spain – the number is as high as 3 in 4, which is more than those that credit either the Muslim World or the Western world for commitment to improved relations. In this regard, many believe their own personal level of commitment is higher than that of their own leadership, and much higher than the leadership of the "other side".

In the Middle East, Iran had the highest percentage saying that the interaction between the West and the Muslim world is important, at 70%. These figures were also particularly high in Turkey (64%). US imposed sanctions, as

Figure A.2 **Is the quality of interaction between the Muslim and Western Worlds important to you?**



11 *John L. Esposito and Dalia Mogahed, Gallup World Poll in UK, Germany and France, January 2007, referenced in Who Speaks for Islam? What a Billion Muslims Really Think.*
12 *Ibid*

well as the threat of a US lead attack, make bettering relations with the West a vital priority for Iranians. Turkey's geographic and economic ties with Europe, as well as its bid for EU membership, also make improving relations imperative. The implication is that residents in these countries are most likely to see potential for positive or negative change in their individual and regional realities stemming from the actions and policies of the West.

However, while almost two-thirds of respondents in Bangladesh, Turkey, Saudi Arabia and Egypt say that the quality of interaction between the Muslim world and the West is important, this number was only 56% for Palestinians. This relative apathy could suggest a lack of confidence that Western policies towards the region would benefit them even if the quality of interaction with the West did improve, which perhaps reflects a Palestinian lack of faith in the United States as an honest broker in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict[13]. If so, this may serve as a reminder to Western policymakers that openness to dialogue may increase alongside the expectation that it will bring tangible benefits.

The openness to Muslim-West interaction revealed in the data is a hopeful sign for future dialogue efforts. An awareness of this finding among political leaders may increase their openness to engage in dialogue to be more attuned to the values of their constituents.

13 *Gallup Poll: Israel/ The Palestinian Territories: Support for Potential Peace Brokers, January 26, 2007 by Lydia Saad and Steve Crabtree*

The Centrality of Respect

At the heart of the tension between the two civilizations is this simple finding: most of those in non Muslim-majority countries believe that the Muslim world does not respect the West, while most of those in Muslim-majority nations believe that the West does not respect the Muslim world. The latter are more likely to feel the Muslim world is committed to improving the interaction between the Muslim and Western worlds than residents of Western nations are to say the same about the commitment of the Western world to such improvement.

The quality of interaction between the Muslim and Western worlds is important to most respondents in all nations, regardless of their relative optimism or pessimism in response to other questions in the Gallup Muslim-West Dialogue Index.

Finally, the global diversity of Muslims is reflected in meaningful variances in the data across Muslim majority countries in Asia, the Middle East and North Africa when it comes to their relationships with the West.

Muslims' perception of being disrespected is often understood in the West as a cultural issue, one to be avoided through inclusive language and not giving offence. However, our analysis uncovered a great deal more complexity behind this apparent public relations problem. In many cases, what Muslims mean when they say, "more respect" is "better treatment," which means a change in policy, not just language. For example, here are some verbatim comments from different Muslim respondents regarding the West and its interaction with the Muslim world:

"They should consider us humans and should end war and be at peace with Muslim World." - A respondent in Lebanon

"Their belief is 'torture people, especially if they are Muslims'." - A respondent in Pakistan

"Stop war with Arabic people and respect civilians… in Iraq especially." - A respondent in Morocco

"What I resent most is that they bully small countries such as Iraq and Iran." - A respondent in Malaysia

Ironically, although American public diplomacy efforts have focused largely on portraying American values and lifestyles in a positive light, the positive perception of American principles may actually contribute to a sense of disrespect among Muslims. When asked what quality they most admire about the West, respondents in Muslim majority nations are most likely to cite technological advancement, followed by political freedoms such as democracy, sovereignty and responsive government[14].

Many Muslims also associate a "fair judicial system" and the idea that "citizens enjoy many liberties" with the West, especially the United States. At the same time, majorities contend that the United States is not serious about supporting democratic forms of government in their part of the world. The espousal of democracy combined with support for dictatorship in the Muslim world may be perceived by many as a sign of disrespect. This is one more example of the need to place issues of dialogue and respect within a broader political and geopolitical context.

14 *Dalia Mogahed, Islam and Democracy, www.MuslimWestFacts.com*

Muslim-West Relations: Looking to the Future

Five of the survey questions asked respondents to look to the future.

- *Do you think the interaction between the Muslim world and the Western world is getting better or getting worse?*
- *Do you think the Muslim world is committed to improving relations between the Western and Muslim worlds?*
- *Do you think the Western World is committed to improving relations between the Muslim and Western worlds?*
- *Is greater interaction between the Western and Muslim worlds a threat or benefit?*
- *Do you think violent conflict between the Muslim and Western worlds can be avoided or not?*

In most cases, populations in which majorities believe the West and Muslim worlds are not getting along also believe the situation is getting worse. This is especially true in the United States and Israel, where roughly three-quarters hold this view. Americans' perceptions that the conflict is worsening are reflected in what they most frequently say is the most important problem facing their nation: the war in Iraq[15].

In several countries, however, many respondents are not sure which direction the conflict is evolving. One-fourth or more of those in Sweden, Spain, Russia and Belgium say they do not know, roughly equal to the percentage who believe the interaction is getting better. In Singapore, 41% say they do not know whether or not tensions are easing.

Again, majorities of Egyptians, Turks and Palestinians believe interaction between the Western and Muslim worlds is getting worse. Bangladeshis are the most likely to be optimistic, while Pakistanis are the most likely to say they are unsure. Iranians' perceptions are particularly interesting in light of heightening tensions between their nation and the United States over its nuclear programme and its alleged role in Iraq.

About 1 out of 3 Iranians believes that interaction between the Muslim world and the West is getting better, while a somewhat higher percentage (40%) believe it is getting worse. These results are similar to those from Indonesia, a country that is not directly involved in any conflicts with Western powers.

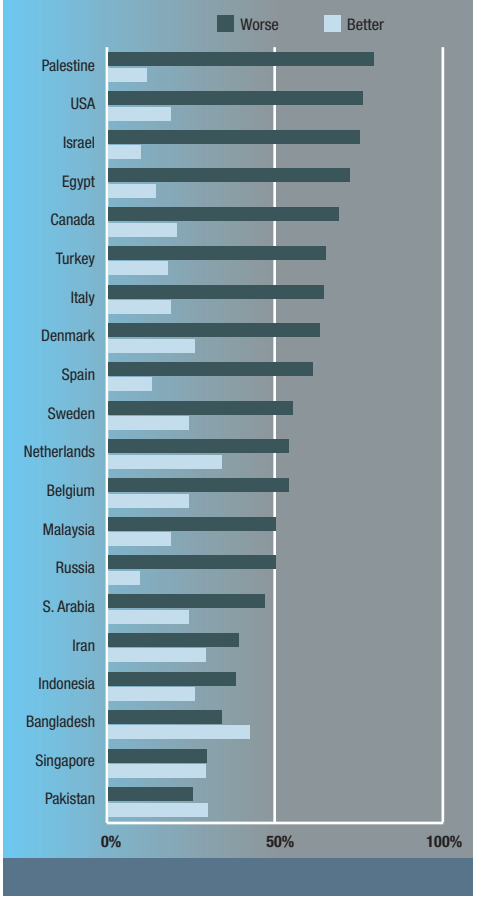
- *Do you think the Muslim world is committed to improving relations between the Western and Muslim worlds?*

An astonishing 76% of respondents in the United States think that the Muslim world is not committed to improving relations with the West, and the same percentage of Palestinians think that the Western world is not committed to improving relations with the Muslim world.

This dichotomy is illustrative of a debilitating perception on both sides that any attempts by the "other" to engage in dialogue or bridge the divide lack authenticity.

Majorities in Italy (58%), Denmark (52%), and Spain (50%) agree that the Muslim world is not committed to improvement.

Figure A.3 **Do you think the interaction between the Muslim and Western World is getting better or worse?**



15 *Gallup Poll of American Households, 12 July 2007. http://www.galluppoll.com/content/?ci=1675&pg=1*

In contrast, Israelis give Muslims more credit: 64% of Israeli respondents believe the Muslim world is committed to improving relations.

Among Muslim majority nations surveyed, Saudi Arabia (68%) and Egypt (64%) are most likely to believe the Muslim world is committed to improving relations with the West. The only Muslim majority country in which most people do not believe the Muslim world is committed to improving relations with the West is Turkey, where only 26% agree while fully half (50%) say this is not the case. This is particularly noteworthy given that 64% of Turks say that the quality of interaction between the Western and Muslim worlds is important to them. This may mean that many Turks regard Turkey as outside the so-called "Muslim world". When in 2005, Turkish residents were asked what they admired least about the "Muslim world" some gave responses like "women can't drive," signalling that they were specifically talking about Saudi Arabia and not their own society[16].

- *Do you think the Western world is committed to improving relations between the Western and Muslim worlds?*

Views of Western commitment to improving relations form another perceptual gap between both sets of countries. In all non-Muslim countries – except Spain, Russia and Brazil – more people believe the West is committed to better relations than believe it is not committed. In contrast, majorities in every Middle Eastern country studied disagree, while respondents in majority-Muslim Asian countries are about evenly split. Majorities in Israel (58%), the United States (56%), Belgium (58%), Denmark (53%), and Italy (54%) think that the West is committed to improving relations between the Western and Muslim worlds. However, significant minorities in most non-Muslim majority nations – including the United States (40%), Spain (38%) and Denmark (39%) – feel this is not the case.

It is important to highlight how different events shaping public dialogue in each of these nations shape respondents' answers to this question. For instance, in US public discourse the war in Iraq has been a top agenda item for years. When the Gallup Organization asked Americans in April 2003, "All-in-all, do you think it was worth going to war in Iraq?" 73% said it was worth it. But when asked the same question in December of 2006 only 37% said it was a good idea, while 62% disagreed[17]. This is an example of how, within each Western nation, public opinion on engagement with the Muslim world is both diverse and fluid.

In Spain, respondents might be assessing the US role as a de facto representative of the West in engagement with the Muslim world, and thus assessing US commitment to improving relations, rather than commitment throughout the West per se. At the very least, the United States is clearly understood to be the most significant Western player in both the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and the war in Iraq – the two issues that occupy the most attention in interactions between the West and the Muslim world. Following the Madrid train bombings, there was a backlash in Spain against the government of Jose Maria Aznar, as political rival Jose Luis Rodriguez Zapatero swept into power by persuading the public to draw a connection between Spanish support for the Bush administration on Iraq and the terrorist bombings in their homeland.

It is likely that Danish responses reflect the debate sparked by the publication of the cartoons perceived as defamatory to Muslims. In 2006, an opinion poll conducted throughout Europe found that about half of Danish

16 *Gallup World Poll, 2005.*
17 *Gallup Poll, April 2003, December 2006*

respondents (47%) said that it was wrong to publish the cartoons in the *Jyllands-Posten* newspaper. The potentially lasting effect of the cartoon crisis on the attitudes of Danes points again to the diversity of possible reasons for perceptions that the West is not committed to improving relations with the Muslim world.

Among Muslim-majority nations there is again on this question a difference of 31 percentage points between populations in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) (62%) and those in Asia (31%). In the MENA region, 76% of Palestinian respondents, 71% of Egyptians, and majorities in Turkey (64%) and Iran (56%) do not feel the Western world is committed to improving relations with the Muslim world. Like most other Gallup data from the MENA region, these findings point to the centrality of policy grievances in the Arab world. These data may also suggest a common perception in Muslim majority countries that the status quo is more beneficial to the West than any shift in policy or posture aimed at improving relations would be.

About 1 in 3 Saudis (36%) believe that the West is committed to improvement, making them second only to Bangladeshis in their optimism on this question. These perceptions may reflect, among other things, the interest in preserving the currently favourable relationship between the Kingdom and the United States. It may also reflect a general optimism among Saudis with respect to their current economic boom where in 2007 87% said they were satisfied with their current standard of living. For reference, this compares to 82% of Americans who express similar contentment[18].

- *Which comes closest to your point of view?*
  - *Greater interaction between Muslim and Western worlds is a threat.*
  - *Greater interaction between Muslim and Western worlds is a benefit.*

Many Americans say what they resent most about the Muslim world is a perceived lack of motivation to be a part of or have relations with the rest of the world[19]. However, despite perceptions that the Muslim and Western worlds are not currently getting along, and that the Muslim world is not respected by the West, residents of Saudi Arabia, Egypt, the Palestinian Territories, Malaysia, Turkey and Iran were more likely to feel greater interaction between Muslim and Western worlds is a benefit than they were to feel it is a threat.

This discovery is supported by an earlier Gallup finding that two attributes that residents of Muslim-majority countries frequently associate with their societies are: 1) "Attachment to their spiritual and moral values is crucial to their progress" and that they are 2) "Eager to have better relations with the West." These results suggest many Muslims do not regard religious devotion and cross-cultural cooperation as mutually exclusive.

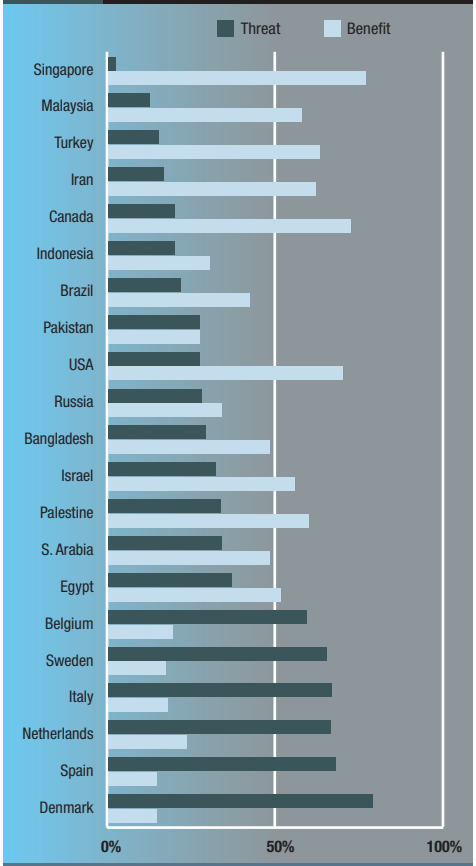
Likewise, although many in the Middle East and Asia feel the West shows little interest in better relations, majorities in the United States (70%) and Canada (72%) say greater interaction is a benefit. Majorities in Singapore (77%) and Israel (56%), both nations with majority-Muslim neighbours as well as significant Muslim minorities themselves, also believe that greater interaction between Muslim and Western societies is a benefit, not a threat.

In sharp contrast, clear majorities in all European countries surveyed – including Denmark (79%), Italy (67%), the Netherlands (67%), Spain (68%), Sweden (65%) and Belgium (59%) – see greater interaction between the West and the Muslim world as a threat. This reflects a growing fear among Europeans – driven in part by rising immigration from predominantly Muslim regions – of a perceived "Islamic threat" to their cultural identities. A recent poll found that only 21% of Europeans supported Turkey's bid to become an EU member[20], and Nicolas Sarkozy's successful presidential campaign in France included strong opposition to Turkish membership[21].

A 2006 poll found that the main reason Germans opposed Turkey's membership was "fear of a growing influence of Islam in Europe"[22]. These negative attitudes are especially interesting given that in 2005, residents of many Muslim majority countries were more likely to hold favourable

18 *Gallup World Poll, 2007.*
19 *Ibid*
20 *http://www.bloomberg.com/apps/news?pid=20601085&sid=az3mrvNAaUFY&refer=europe*
21 *http://acturca.wordpress.com/2007/01/15/sarkozy-launches-presidential-bid-with-anti-turkey-stance/*
22 *http://www.expatica.com/actual/article.asp?subchannel_id=26&story_id=31208*

Figure A.4 **Greater interaction between Muslim and Western Worlds is a...**



rather than unfavourable opinions of the European Union, while majorities in virtually all of them hold unfavourable opinions of the United States.

Ironically, those countries most pessimistic about the current state of the relationship between the Muslim and Western worlds are among the most likely to regard greater interaction as a benefit, not a threat. This includes majorities in Turkey, Egypt, the Palestinian Territories, the United States and Israel, signalling recognition in these countries of potential opportunities in the current situation, despite the perceived conflict. Many residents of these nations may feel misunderstood and see greater interaction as a way to clear up misinformation. Indeed, in 2007, the Gallup Organization found that the majority of Americans believed Muslim antipathy toward the United States was due to misinformation, rather due to actual US actions[23]. Many Americans also said that to improve relations between the Muslim and Western world, greater mutual understanding was necessary[24].

- *Do you think violent conflict between the Muslim and Western worlds can be avoided or not?*

Some prominent scholars have suggested that Muslim antipathy toward the West has little to do with specific policies, and is instead a function of anti-Western cultural and religious antagonism rooted in Islam. This theory, popularly known as the Clash of Civilizations thesis after Samuel Huntington's seminal 1993 article, assumes violent conflict between Muslim and Western societies is inevitable due to Muslim antagonism toward Judeo-Christian values[25]. Similar arguments have been used to explain motivations for terrorism. Palestinian militants, for example, are held to be motivated by perceived religious and value conflicts in an "eternal struggle" between Judaism and Islam[26].

Do many of the world's citizens agree? Despite gloomy appraisals of the current state of the relationship between Muslim and Western societies, the data suggest that most respondents, Muslim and non-Muslim alike, do not accept the idea of an inevitable clash between the two civilizations. Majorities in all countries believe that violent conflict can be avoided. The exception is Pakistan, where the majority said they did not know. This sentiment was strongest in Italy, Belgium and Spain, where roughly three-quarters believed conflict was avoidable, and weakest in the United States, Israel, Egypt and the Palestinian

23 *Frank Newport and Dalia Mogahed, Americans: People in Muslim Countries Have Negative Views of US, 2 February 2007.*
24 *Frank Newport, Complex but Hopeful Pattern of American Attitudes Toward Muslims, Gallup Poll, 23 March 2006.*
25 *Bernard Lewis, The Roots of Muslim Rage, 1990; Samuel Huntington, The Clash of Civilizations, 1993 and 1996.*
26 *A. Moghaddam, Palestinian suicide terrorism in the second intifada: Motivations and organizational aspects, Studies in Conflict and Terrorism, 26:65-92, 2 February 2007.*

Territories, where just over half held this view. Once again the similarity between Israeli and Palestinian assessments of the state of the relationship between the Muslim and Western worlds is remarkable.

The "nature" of the conflict

- *Thinking about the tensions between the Muslim and Western worlds – do you think they arise more from differences of religion or differences of culture or from conflicts about political interests?*

Another question helps inform analysis in the context of the Clash of Civilizations thesis. When asked whether tensions arise more from differences of religion or differences of culture or from conflicts about political interests, majorities around the world – including the United States, Israel, Denmark, Turkey and Egypt – say culture or religion is to blame. There are, however, two notable exceptions. In The Palestinian Territories and Iran, respondents are more likely to blame political interests. Ironically, these are the two nations most often associated with a theological antagonism to Western values in conservative US media.

Does this result mean that many global citizens believe conceptions of culture and religion in Muslim societies are incompatible with those in the West – or worse, that their own faith teaches them to oppose the other? Given the finding noted above that majorities around the world say conflict between the Muslim world and the West can be avoided, the answer is probably not.

However, it is more likely that respondents on each side believe those on "the other side" are taught to harbour cultural or religious biases against them, rather than interpreting their own faith to require conflict[27]. For example, in 2005, 42% of Egyptians associated "religious extremism is common" with the United States, while only 10% associated the same attribute with Saudi Arabia. At the same time, 88% agreed that Islam opposes the use of attacks on civilians[28].

When asked what the United States could do to improve relations with the Muslim World, Egyptians responded that America should show greater respect for Islam. This suggests that many Egyptians believe in a sort of reverse "clash thesis" where the West antagonizes Muslims because of a religiously motivated hatred of Islamic values, rather than the other way around. A recent poll suggests they are not alone; majorities in Morocco, Pakistan and Indonesia believe spreading Christianity in the Middle East is a goal of the United States, and majorities also believe the goal of the war on terror is either to exploit oil resources or to divide and weaken Islam and its people[29].

Conclusion

The data suggest that the negative perceptions of Muslim-West relations are most prevalent in the United States, Israel and the Muslim Middle East, reflecting the acute conflicts currently raging in Iraq and the Palestinian territories. Despite the fact that most people in these countries feel those on the "other side" have little concern for improving relations, majorities on both sides in fact are very interested in better relations and see greater interaction as a benefit rather than a threat. This gap in perception presents an important opportunity for greater dialogue.

Currently, relations between Muslims and non-Muslims in Europe reflect a different dynamic, one that is more focused on domestic rather than foreign policy. If ongoing anti-immigration sentiment among European populations continues to dominate the way they feel about interactions with Muslims, it may lead to a new European isolationism. In contrast, Americans are far more likely to view interactions with the Muslim world as opportunities for diplomacy, which many believe will lead to less anti-American sentiment, and thus greater national security.

However, while Americans mainly characterize the conflict as a public relations problem, Muslim-world residents are more likely to see it as a policy problem. Perceptions of current US policies towards the Middle East leave them feeling misunderstood and looked down upon. Many believe that greater interaction between the two sides would facilitate a greater understanding of Islam in the West, and thereby lay the foundation for a policy environment mutually beneficial to both sides.

27 *Global Poll Finds that Religion and Culture are Not to Blame for Tensions between Islam and the West, The Program on International Policy Attitudes at the University of Maryland, 19 February 2007,*
28 *Muslim Public Opinion on US Policy, Attacks on Civilians and al-Qaeda, The Program on International Policy Attitudes at the University of Maryland, 24 April 2007.*
29 *Ibid*

Methodology

The GallupWorld Poll uses two primary methodological designs. A Random-Digit-Dial (RDD) telephone survey design is used in countries where 80% or more of the population has landline phones. This situation is typical in the United States, Canada, Western Europe, Japan and Australia. In the developing world – including much of Latin America, the former Soviet Union countries, nearly all of Asia, the Middle East and Africa – an area frame design is used for face-to-face interviewing.

The following are key aspects of the overall Gallup World Poll survey philosophy:

- The sample represents all parts of each country*, including all rural areas. Countries are reviewed on a case-by-case basis when part of a country cannot be included in the sample design. The review determines whether the survey should be carried out.
- The target population includes all individuals aged 15 and older.
- Face-to-face interviews are approximately 1 hour in length. Telephone interviews are considerably shorter, about 30 minutes in length.
- There is a standard set of questions used around the world.
- In those parts of the world where face-to-face surveys are conducted, the questionnaire includes questions tailored to each region. For example, the questions used in heavily indebted poor countries are tailored toward providing information about progress on the Millennium Development Goals.
- The questionnaire is translated** into the major languages of each country. Interviewing supervisors and interviewers are trained, not only on the questionnaire, but also on the execution of field procedures. This interviewing training usually takes place in a central location.
- Quality control procedures are used to validate that correct samples are selected and that the correct person is randomly selected in each household. Random respondent selection uses either the latest birthday method or the Kish Grid.

Sampling

The typical World Poll survey in a country consists of 1,000 completed questionnaires. However, in some countries, over-samples may be collected in major cities. For example, we collected an additional 500 interviews in Moscow.

In countries where face-to-face surveys are conducted, census listings of Primary Sampling Units (PSU), consisting of clusters of households, are the main way of selecting the sample. Typically, the PSU are stratified this way:

I. Cities with population = 1,000,000 or more
II. Cities with population = 500,000 to 999,000
III. Cities with population = 100,000 to 499,999
IV. Cities with population = 50,000 to 99,999
V. Towns with population = 10,000 to 49,999
VI. Towns/Rural villages with populations under 10,000

PSU are proportionally allocated to the population in each stratum and typically 125 PSU are sampled with an average of eight interviews, one interview per sampled household, per PSU. If maps of the PSU are available, then they are used; otherwise, the selected PSU must be mapped. Random route procedures are used to select sampled households. Interviewers must make at least three attempts to survey the sampled household, unless an outright refusal occurs.

If an interview cannot be obtained at the initial sampled household, the household to the immediate right of the initial household is

** Three exceptions exist: Areas that threaten the safety of interviewing staff are excluded, as are scarcely populated islands in some countries and areas that can only be reached by foot or animal, with the exception of China.*

*** The translation process includes two independent translations and back translations; survey personnel adjudicate the differences.*

selected. If the first attempt at this household is unsuccessful, then the house immediately to the left of the initial household is selected. Attempts to obtain an interview can be made at up to nine households. In the RDD survey, at least five call attempts are made to reach a person aged 15 and older in each household. Typically the design is not stratified, but otherwise the other processes and procedures follow those used in the face-to-face design.

Dates of interviews

Country	Start	End
Bangladesh	05/01/2007	05/30/2007
Belgium	04/24/2007	05/10/2007
Brazil	07/07/2007	08/26/2007
Canada	08/21/2007	09/05/2007
Denmark	04/18/2007	05/15/2007
Egypt	07/01/2007	07/21/2007
Indonesia	04/01/2007	04/29/2007
Iran	06/19/2007	07/06/2007
Israel	07/15/2007	08/06/2007
Italy	04/23/2007	05/04/2007
Malaysia	05/14/2006	06/23/2007
Netherlands	04/19/2007	05/10/2007
Palestine	07/09/2007	07/23/2007
Pakistan	06/01/2007	06/30/2007
Russia	03/01/2007	03/30/2007
Saudi Arabia	06/01/2007	07/30/2007
Singapore	04/01/2007	05/07/2007
Spain	04/19/2007	04/27/2007
Sweden	04/18/2007	04/26/2007
Turkey	05/01/2007	05/30/2007
United States	08/01/2007	08/26/2007

Statistical Validity

The first round of data collection was carried out in late 2005 and 2006. These probability surveys are valid *** within a statistical margin of error, also called a 95% confidence interval. This means that if the survey is conducted 100 times using the exact same procedures, the margin of error would include the "true value" in 95 out of the 100 surveys. With a sample size of 1,000, the margin of error for a percentage at 50% is ±3 percentage points. Because these surveys use a clustered sample design, the margin of error varies by question and if a user is making critical decisions based on the margin of error he or she should consider inflating the margin of error by the design effect. The design effect accounts for the potential of correlated responses, and increase in the margin of error, caused by the sample of clusters of households in PSU.

*** *Assuming other sources of error, such as non-response, by some members of the targeted sample are equal. Other errors that can affect survey validity include measurement error associated with the questionnaire, such as translation issues and coverage error, where a part or parts of the target population aged 15 and older have a zero probability of being selected for the survey.*

References

4. International Politics

Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC) – *http://www.oic-oci.org*

Professor Ihsanoglu speech to the Organization of the Islamic Conference
http://www.oic-oci.org/press/English/2006/September%202006/sg-acm-un.htm

President Bush Rededicates Islamic Center of Washington
http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2007/06/20070627-2.html

Chancellor Angela Merkel: Remembering the fifth anniversary of September 11, 2001
http://www.germany.info/relaunch/politics/speeches/091106.html

Gallup World Poll at Times Online, 2007
http://www.timesonline.co.uk/tol/news/world/us_and_americas/article1415550.ece

Israel and Iran Share Most Negative Ratings in Global Poll
http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/shared/bsp/hi/pdfs/06_03_07_perceptions.pdf

Nation Pew Global Attitudes Survey – *http://pewglobal.org/reports/pdf/253.pdf*

Muslim Public Opinion on US Policy, Attacks on Civilians and al-Qaeda
http://www.worldpublicopinion.org/pipa/pdf/apr07/START_Apr07_rpt.pdf

Washington Post/ABC News Poll, March 6, 2006
http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-srv/politics/includes/postpoll_iraqwar_030606.htm

New York Times/CBS News Poll, July 2007 – *http://www.angus-reid.com/polls/view/16656*

Iraqi Institute of Peace – *http://www.usip.org/iraq/programs*

Report of the Iraq Study Group –
http://www.usip.org/isg/iraq_study_group_report/report/1206/index.html

Letter from Iran's President to President Bush, May 2006
www.president.ir/eng/ahmadinejad/cronicnews/1385/02/19/index-e.htm#b3

Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice, Interview With the NBC Editorial Board, May 2006
http://www.state.gov/secretary/rm/2006/66020.htm

President George W. Bush, Press Conference, 17 October
http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2007/10/20071017.html

Chancellor Angela Merkel, Speech at Munich Conference on Security Policy, February 2006
http://www.germany.info/relaunch/info/press/releases/pr_02_06_06.htm

Associated Press, Italy's Roman Prodi and Iran, 6 November 2007
http://www.iht.com/articles/ap/2007/11/06/europe/EU-GEN-Italy-Iran.php

The Standard, Iran nuclear negotiator hails "new ideas" from Rome, 25 October 2007
http://www.thestandard.com.hk/news_detail.asp?pp_cat=17&art_id=55683&sid=15968571&con_type=1

Meeting of European Parliament's Delegation for Relations with Iran, Oct. 9-10, 2006
http://www.europarl.europa.eu/meetdocs/2004_2009/documents/cr/645/645611/645611en.pdf

Mennonite Central Committee Iran Delegation, Feb. 17-25, 2007 – *http://mcc.org/iran/delegation/*

Christian Leaders Take Iran's Message to Washington, Feb. 26, 2007
http://blogs.wsj.com/washwire/2007/02/26/christian-leaders-take-iran%E2%80%99s-message-to-washington/

Alliance of Civilizations – *http://www.unaoc.org*

Report of the High Level Group of the Alliance of Civilizations, Nov. 2007, p. 12
http://www.unaoc.org/repository/HLG_Report.pdf

Secretary-General Kofi Annan's Farewell Press Conference, Dec. 2006
http://www.un.org/apps/sg/offthecuff.asp?nid=962

Search for Common Ground – *http://www.sfcg.org*

Madrid +15 Conference, 2007
http://www.commongroundnews.org/series.php?edId=1287&lan=en&sid=0

Toledo International Centre for Peace – *http://www.toledopax.org*

Fundación Tres Culturas del Mediterráneo – *http://www.tresculturas.org*

FAFO – *http://www.fafo.no*

International Crisis Group – *http://www.crisisgroup.org*

Jonas Gahr Støre, Speech at Madrid +15, Jan. 2007
http://www.regjeringen.no/en/dep/ud/About-the-Ministry/Minister-of-Foreign-Affairs-Jonas-Gahr-S/Speeches-and-articles/2007/Highlights-of-remarks-made-at-Madrid-15.html?id=445674

US-Islamic World Forum, Feb. 2006 – *http://us-islamicworldforum.org/pdf/DOHAFINAL2006.pdf*

Brookings Institution – *http://www.brookings.edu*

Youssef Qaradawi Addresses US-Islamic World Forum, Feb. 2007
http://qatar-conferences.org/usislamic2007/viewlastnews.php?id=57

Alexandria Process – *http://www.usip.org/religionpeace/alexandria_declaration.html*

International Centre for Reconciliation – *http://www.coventrycathedral.org.uk/bkground.html*

Canon Andrew White: "Hope in a Violent World: The Alexandria Peace Process"
http://www.biblesociety.org.uk/exploratory/articles/white03.pdf

Combatants for Peace – *http://www.combatantsforpeace.org*

Women to Women for Peace – *http://www.bym-rsf.org/quakers/news/womensPeace.shtml*

Abraham Fund – *http://www.abrahamfund.org*

We Were Born to Live Together, July 2007
http://www.abrahamfund.org/main/siteNew/index.php?page=52&action=sidLink&stId=1416

Rajmohan Ghandi comments at Fes Forum, June 2006
http://siteresources.worldbank.org/DEVDIALOGUE/Resources/Fes2006SummaryJune6Day4ENGLISH.doc

World Economic Forum – *http://www.weforum.org*

Tzipi Livni, Speech at the World Economic Forum on West-Islam Dialogue, Jan. 2007
http://www.mfa.gov.il/MFA/Government/Speeches+by+Israeli+leaders/2007/FM+Livni+speaks+at+Davos+on+West-Islam+ Dialogue+25-Jan-2007.htm

Joint Statement from Annapolis Conference, Nov. 2007
http://www.haaretz.com/hasen/spages/928652.html

5. Citizenship and Integration

The List: The World's Fastest-Growing Religions, Foreign Policy, May 2007
http://www.foreignpolicy.com/story/cms.php?story_id=3835

Islam Incompatible with Europe, Say Dutch, Motiveaction/GPD Poll, June 2006
http://www.angus-reid.com/polls/view/12143

Transatlantic Trends, 2006 –
http://www.transatlantictrends.org/trends/index_archive.cfm?year=2006

Muslims in Berlin, London, and Paris: Bridges and Gaps in Public Opinion, Gallup 2007
http://media.gallup.com/WorldPoll/PDF/WPTFMuslimsinEuropeExecSumm.pdf

Islam and Muslims in the World Today, The Cambridge Inter-Faith Programme, 2006
http://www.divinity.cam.ac.uk/cip/islam-conference.php

Tariq Ramadan, The Guardian, June 2007
http://politics.guardian.co.uk/comment/story/0,,2094525,00.html

French Council for the Muslim Faith (French Language Only) – *http://www.cfcm.info*

Preventing Extremism Together – *http://security.homeoffice.gov.uk/counter-terrorism-strategy/preventing-extremism*

German Conference on Islam – *http://www.bmi.bund.de*

Consulta Islamica (Italian Language Only)
http://www.interno.it/mininterno/export/sites/default/it/temi/religioni/sottotema003.html

Unione delle Comunita de Organizzazioni Islamiche in Italia (Italian Language Only) –
http://www.islam-ucoii.it

Centro Islamico Culturale d'Italia
http://www.councilforeuropeanstudies.org/pub/Silvestri_sep05.html

Atman Foundation for Dialogue among Civilizations
–http://www.fundacionatman.org/index_en.htm

Atman Encounter for International Debate
http://www.fundacionatman.org/encuentros/encuentro_2007/informacion_general_2007_en.htm

Unión de Comunidades Islámicas de España (Spanish Language Only) – *http://ucide.org/es*

Islamic-Christian Study Center of Copenhagen – *http://www.ikstudiecenter.dk/eng/index.php*

Union of NGOs of the Islamic World – *http://iur.nl/en/showarticlenews.asp?id=972*

Intercultural Communication and Leadership School
http://www.intercivilization.net/en/europe.php

Tariq Ramadan, Europe and its Muslims: Building a Common Future, July 2007
http://www.tariqramadan.com/article.php3?id_article=1150&lang=en

Dr. Lale Akgün, Immigration, Integration, and Identity, May 2006
http://www.germany.info/relaunch/politics/speeches/051506.html

Prime Minister Anders Fogh Rasmussen, speech, February 2006
http://www.stm.dk/Index/dokumenter.asp?o=6&n=0&h=6&t=14&d=2512&s=2

Turkish Premier Criticizes Drawings of Prophet Muhammad, Pravda, March 2006
http://english.pravda.ru/news/world/03-02-2006/75375-Turkish%20premier-0

The Federation of Islamic Organizations in Europe – *http://www.eu-islam.com*

Muslim Leaders of Tomorrow, Copenhagen, July 2006 – *http://www.asmasociety.org/mlt2006/events.html*

Cartooning for Peace – *http://www.cartooningforpeace.org*

New Swedish Integration Minister Debates Islamic Veils, Nov. 2006 – *http://www.sr.se*

The Muslim Council of Britain – *http://www.mcb.org.uk*

Ministers Compared to Nazis over Islam Stigma, Dec. 2006
http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/main.jhtml?xml=/news/2006/12/17/nislam17.xml

American Society for Muslim Advancement – *http://www.asmasociety.org*

The Cordoba Initiative – *http://www.cordobainitiative.org*

Women's Islamic Initiative in Spirituality and Equity (WISE) – *http://www.asmasociety.org/wise*

Women, Islam, and The West: A Symposium of the Aspen Institute, Aug. 2007
http://www.cordobainitiative.org/WIW.pdf

Lydia Saad, Anti-Muslim Sentiments Fairly Commonplace, Gallup, Aug. 2006
http://media.gallup.com/WorldPoll/PDF/AntiMuslimSentiment81006.pdf

Couchinching Institute on Public Affairs – *http://www.couch.ca*

The Stranger Next Door: Making Diversity Work, August 2007 – *http://www.couch.ca/conference*

US Secretary of Homeland Security, Security Discussion with Young Leaders, August 2007
http://www.pressandguide.com/stories/080107/loc_20070801007.shtml

Discrimination Report, NYC Commission on Human Rights, 2003
http://www.nyc.gov/html/cchr/html/report.html

Muslim Unity Forums – *http://161.185.1.156/html/cchr/html/muslim_forum04.html*

Muslim Public Affairs Council – *http://www.mpac.org*

National Muslim American Youth Summit, Muslim Public Affairs Council, 2007
http://www.mpac.org/article.php?id=519

Council for American-Islamic Relations – *http://www.cair.com*

The Interfaith Alliance – *http://www.interfaithalliance.org*

Leadership Education Advancing Democracy and Diversity – *http://www.weleadd.org*

The Interfaith Center of New York – *http://www.interfaithcenter.org*

Religious Communities and the New York State Court System
http://www.interfaithcenter.org/connections.html

The Federation of Islamic Associations of New Zealand – *http://www.fianz.co.nz*

Australian Intercultural Society – *http://www.intercultural.org.au*

National Social Cohesion: Muslims in Australia and Social Integration, June 2007
http://www.intercultural.org.au/events_2007/National%20Cohesion%20Symposium/New-cohesion.gif

Shaping a Nation's Values: The Abrahamic Tradition, Aug. 2007
http://www.intercultural.org.au/events_2007/abraham_conference/Shaping%20a%20Nation?s%20Valuesfinal.doc

Muslim-Christian Dialogue Forum and the Interfaith Mediation Centre
http://www.sipa.columbia.edu/cicr/research/journal/features/kaduna.html

Initiatives of Change – *http://www.iofc.org/en*

Open Dialogue Centre – *www.odc.org.my*

NGOs and Civil Liberties in Malaysia
http://www.odc.org.my/page.php?id=p02/07&product_id=355

The Sudan Interreligious Council – *http://sirc-sd.org*

International Center for Religion and Diplomacy – *http://www.icrd.org*

United States Commission on International Religious Freedom – *http://www.uscirf.gov*

Forum 18 – *http://www.forum18.org*

World Summit on Christian-Muslim Relations
–http://www.un.int/philippines/statements/20051020.html

The Global Peace Initiative of Women – *http://www.gpiw.org/programs_3.5.html*

Institute for Interfaith Dialogue in Indonesia – *http://www.interfidei.or.id/about_us.html*

6. Religion, Ethics, and Ideology

President George W. Bush, Address to the Nation, September 2006
http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2006/09/20060911-3.html

H.E. Seyed Mohammad Khatami, Address at the World Assembly of Religions for Peace, August 2006
http://khatami.ir/lecture.php?uid=15&lang=fa&lang2=en

World Conference of Religions for Peace – *http://www.wcrp.org*

Community of Sant'Egidio – *http://www.santegidio.org*

International Prayer for Peace, April 2006 – *http://prayerforpeace.georgetown.edu*

A World without Violence: Faiths and Cultures in Dialogue, October 2007
http://www.santegidio.org/en/ecumenismo/uer/2007/intro.htm

World's Religions after September 11 Congress, September 2006
http://www.worldsreligionsafter911.com

Universal Declaration of Human Rights by the World's Religions
http://www.worldsreligionsafter911.com/pdf/UDHRWR.pdf

Council for a Parliament of the World Religions – *http://www.cpwr.org/*

World Religious Leaders Write to G-8, July 2006
http://www.indcatholicnews.com/geeeight218.html

World Congress of the Rabbis and Imams for Peace – *http://www.imamsrabbis.org/*

Council of Religious Institutions of the Holy Land Communiqué, November 2007
http://www.hcef.org/index.cfm/mod/news/ID/16/SubMod/NewsView/NewsID/1893.cfm

Religious leaders from Holy Land advocate unity, work to stop violence
http://news.medill.northwestern.edu/washington/news.aspx?id=68611&print=1

Appeal of Conscience Foundation – *http://www.appealofconscience.org*

Religious Leaders Meet to Foster Peace and Tolerance in Kosovo, Central Asia and the Caucasus, October 2005
http://www.appealofconscience.org/news/article.cfm?id=100019

Patriarchal Discourse on Holy Pascha, 2007 – *http://ecupatria.org/*

Pope Benedict XVI, Faith, Reason, and the University: Memories and Reflections, September 2006
http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/benedict_xvi/speeches/2006/september/documents/hf_ben-xvi_spe_20060912_university-regensburg_en.html

Organization of the Islamic Conference – *http://www.oic-oci.org/*

OIC Response to Pope's Statements on Islam, September 2006
http://www.oic-oci.org/press/English/2006/september%202006/pope.htm

CNN, Pope's Islam Comments Condemned, September 2006
http://www.cnn.com/2006/WORLD/europe/09/15/pope.islam/index.html

Islamica Magazine, Open Letter to His Holiness Pope Benedict XVI, October 2006
http://www.islamicamagazine.com/media/pdf/open/b/openletter-8238DA.pdf

A Common Word Between US – *http://www.acommonword.com*

The Amman Message – *http://www.ammanmessage.com/*

Final Declaration Issued by the International Islamic Fiqh Academy, June 2006
http://ammanmessage.com/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=34&Itemid=34

Malaysian Prime Minister delivers 12th U Thant Lecture, Summer 2006
http://update.unu.edu/archive/issue42_14.htm

The Cambridge Inter-Faith Programme, Islam and Muslims in the World Today,
http://www.divinity.cam.ac.uk/cip/islam-conference.php

H.E. Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono Keynote Address, Asia-Europe Meeting on Interfaith Dialogue, July 2005
http://www.kbrisingapura.com/docs/ASEM_interfaith/welcoming_remarks_president.pdf

Cambridge Inter-Faith Programme – *http://www.divinity.cam.ac.uk/cip*

Weidenfeld Institute for Strategic Dialogue – *http://www.clubofthree.com*

Coexist Foundation – *http://www.coexistfoundation.net*

Christian Muslim Forum – *http://www.christianmuslimforum.org*

Georgetown to Host Interfaith Seminar with Archbishop of Canterbury, March 2006
http://explore.georgetown.edu/news/?ID=13718

Times Online, Summit on Religious Harmony is Thrown into Discord by Malaysia, May 2007
http://www.timesonline.co.uk/tol/comment/faith/article1769414.ece

The Rev. Hermen Shastri, General Secretary of the Malaysian Council of Churches, May 2007
http://www.religiousintelligence.co.uk/news/?NewsID=748

Second Congress of World and Traditional Religions, Kazakhstan, September 2006
http://www.akorda.kz/www/www_akorda_kz.nsf/index?OpenForm&lang=en

Alif Aleph UK – *http://www.aauk.org*

Meg Munn Comments at Alif Aleph Conference, October 2007
http://www.megmunnmp.org.uk/datapages/views/viewsviewentry.asp?id=221

A Re-Commitment to Spirituality, Beirut, November 2006
http://www.gpiw.org/programs_3.8.html

Global Peace Initiative of Women – *http://www.gpiw.org*

World Council of Churches – *http://www.wcc-coe.org/*

Mark Kelly, SBC Press, October 2007 – *http://www.sbcbaptistpress.org/BPnews.asp?ID=26698*

BBC World Poll, December 2006 – *http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/shared/bsp/hi/pdfs/19_02_07_islam.pdf*

7. Education and Intercultural Understanding

Khalil Gibran International Academy – *http://schools.nyc.gov/SchoolPortals/15/K592/default.htm*

John Allen, New Arab Academy Caught in Debate of Religious Pluralism, War on Terror, September 2007 – *http://www.catholic.org/national/national_story.php?id=25247*

Pew Forum on Religion and Public Life – *http://pewforum.org*

Pew Forum on Religion and Public Life, Public Expresses Mixed Views of Islam, Mormonism, September 2007– *http://pewforum.org/assets/files/religionviews07.pdf*

Stephen Prothero, Religious Literacy, 2007
http://www.harpercollins.com/books/9780060846701/Religious_Literacy/index.aspx

Neil Kressel, The Urgent Need to Study Islamic Anti-Semitism, March 2004
http://chronicle.com/free/v50/i27/27b01401.htm

Muslims Against Anti-Semitism – *http://www.ma-as.org.uk*

Daniel Pearl Foundation – *http://www.danielpearl.org*

New York Times, Islam is Violent in Nature, Pat Robertson Says, February 2002
http://query.nytimes.com/gst/fullpage.html?res=9A0CEEDA103EF930A15751C0A9649C8B63&n=Top/Reference/Times%20Topics/Subjects/A/Arab-Americans

Education for Tolerance and Understanding, Confronting Anti-Semitism, New York, December 2004
http://www.un.org/Pubs/chronicle/2004/issue2/0204p48.asp

Confronting Islamophobia: Education for Tolerance and Understanding, New York, December 2004
http://www.un.org/Pubs/chronicle/2004/webArticles/112204_Conference.asp

Saban Center – *http://www.brookings.edu/saban.aspx*

Brookings Institution – *http://www.brookings.edu*

BBC News, Dubai Ruler in Vast Charity Gift, May 2007 –
http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/middle_east/6672923.stm

World Bank – *http://www.worldbank.org*

Islamic Development Bank – *http://www.isdb.org*

Education for All – *http://www.unesco.org/education/efa/ed_for_all*

UNICEF Press Centre, Queen Rania Visits UNICEF Projects in Morocco, June 2007
http://www.unicef.org/media/media_39879.html

International Center for Religion and Diplomacy – *http://www.icrd.org*

Madrasa Reform Project – *http://www.icrd.org/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=83&Itemid=104*

The American University of Beirut – *http://www.aub.edu.lb*

The American University in Cairo – *http://www.aucegypt.edu*

The Public School Scholarship Fund at AUC – *http://www1.aucegypt.edu/support/fund/pssf.htm*

The William J. Clinton Scholarship Program at the American University of Dubai
http://www.clintonfoundation.org/programs-cs5.htm

Three Faiths Forum – *http://www.sternberg-foundation.co.uk*

Values Education and Good Practice – *http://www.valueseducation.edu.au*

Tanenbaum Center – *http://www.tanenbaum.org*

United World Colleges – *http://www.uwc.org*

The Fethullah Gülen Chair in the Study of Islam – *http://www.acu.edu*

Asia-Pacific Centre for Inter-Religious Dialogue – *http://www.unescoapceiu.org*

Institute of Advanced Study, Berlin – *http://www.wiko-berlin.de*

Working Group on Modernity and Islam – *http://www.wiko-berlin.de/index.php?id=90&L=1*

Islamic Cultural Foundation – *http://www.funci.org/en*

Carnegie Corporation – *http://www.carnegie.org*

Tzipi Livni, Speech at the World Economic Forum on West-Islam Dialogue, January 2007
http://www.mfa.gov.il/MFA/Government/Speeches+by+Israeli+leaders/2007

Sultan of Sokoto Talk at United States Institute of Peace, November 2007
http://www.usip.org/events/2007/1113_nigeria.html

Bill Clinton, Summation and Closing Address of the Clinton Global Initiative, September 2006
http://www.clintonfoundation.org

Communique Partners Islam Perceptions Poll, 2006
http://www.islamperceptions.org/WesternPerceptionofIslamandMuslims.pdf

Alliance of Civilizations – *http://www.unaoc.org*

Fes Forum, Giving Soul to Globalization, June 2006
http://www.fesfestival.com/en06/colloque-rencontres-de-fes.php

Search for Common Ground – *http://www.sfcg.org*

Council on American-Islamic Relations – *http://www.cair.com*

Muslim Public Affairs Council — Hollywood Bureau – *http://www.mpac.org/hollywood-bureau/*

British Library Online Gallery, Sacred Contexts – *http://www.bl.uk/sacred*

Venice and the Islamic World
http://www.metmuseum.org/special/Venice/Islamic_world_more.asp

US Premiere of Glories of Islamic Art, January 17, 2007 –
http://www.brookings.edu/events/2007/0117islamic-world.aspx

Fes Festival of World Music – *http://www.spiritoffes.com*

Transcript: Bono Remarks at the National Prayer Breakfast, USA Today, February 2, 2006
http://www.usatoday.com/news/washington/2006-02-02-bono-transcript_x.htm

Junoon – *http://www.junoon.com*

Mondialogo – *http://www.mondialogo.org*

International Visitor Leadership Program – *http://exchanges.state.gov/education/ivp*

United States Institute of Peace – *http://www.usip.org*

USIP Muslim World Initiative – *http://www.usip.org/muslimworld*

Conseil des Ulemas (Arabic and French Languages Only) – *http://www.almajlis-alilmi.org.ma*

Soliya – *http://www.soliya.net*

Immigration: Societies in Flux, October 2007
http://www.commongroundnews.org/article.php?id=21820&lan=en&sid=1&sp=0

One Voice – *http://www.onevoicemovement.org*

Seeds of Peace – *http://www.seedsofpeace.org*

Interfaith Youth Core – *http://www.ifyc.org*

White House Iftar, October 2006 –
http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2006/10/20061016-6.html

Universal Peace and Freedom Seder –
http://www.jewishaz.com/jewishnews/000519/bridges.shtml

8. Economic and Social Development

Peter Ford, Deep Roots of Paris Riots, Christian Science Monitor, November 2005
http://www.csmonitor.com/2005/1104/p06s02-woeu.html

Message from Dr. Ahmad Hasyim Muzadi, 2006
http://www.oikoumene.org/en/resources/documents/assembly/porto-alegre-2006/4-messages-other-statements-sermons/messages-from-guests-of-other-faiths/ahmad-hasyim-muzadi.html

Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC) – *http://www.oic-oci.org*

OIC Secretary General Ihsanoglu, August 2007
http://haber.tnn.net/haber_detay.asp?ID=1811109&cat=ENG

Speech by the Chancellor of the Exchequer, the Rt Hon Gordon Brown MP, at the Islamic Finance and Trade Conference, London, June 2006
http://www.hm-treasury.gov.uk/newsroom_and_speeches/press/2006/Press_41_06.cfm

The French Abroad, The Economist, July 2007
http://www.economist.com/displayStory.cfm?story_id=9495323

The International Conference on Terrorism, Tunis, November 2007
http://www.isesco.org.ma/English/press/viewpage.asp?Id=2191

Islamic Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization – *http://www.isesco.org.ma*

Ban Ki-moon, UN Secretary General, Address to the International Conference on Terrorism, Nov 2007
http://www.un.org/apps/news/infocus/sgspeeches/statments_full.asp?statID=149

World Conference of Religions for Peace Kyoto Assembly
http://www.wcrp.org/about/assemblies/kyoto-2006

Muslim Public Opinion on US Policy, Attacks on Civilians and al-Qaeda
http://www.worldpublicopinion.org/pipa/pdf/apr07/START_Apr07_rpt.pdf

13-Nation Pew Global Attitudes Survey – *http://pewglobal.org/reports/pdf/253.pdf*

Dr. Ahmad Mohamed Ali, Challenges of Social Development to Islamic World, November 2006
http://www.presidentofpakistan.gov.pk/images/wief/idb-speech.pdf

Second World Islamic Economic Forum, Pakistan, Nov. 2006 – *http://www.wief.org.my/event4.cfm*

Arab Human Development Reports, 2002-2005 – *http://hdr.undp.org/en/reports*

Thomas Friedman, Arabs at a Crossroads, New York Times, July 2002
http://query.nytimes.com/gst/fullpage.html?res=9B0CE1DE1531F930A35754C0A9649C8B63

World Islamic Economic Forum Foundation – *http://www.wief.org.my*

International Centre for Education in Islamic Finance – *http://www.inceif.org*

Islamic Development Bank – *http://www.isdb.org*

Islamic Bank of Asia – *http://www.dbs.com/newsroom/2007/press070507.html*

Dow Jones Islamic Fund – *http://www.investaaa.com*

Islamic Funds World 2007, Dubai – *http://www.terrapinn.com*

The Seventh Harvard University Forum on Islamic Finance
http://ifptest.law.harvard.edu/ifphtml/index.php?news_id=92

Malaysian Prime Minister Badawi's Address to Islamic Financial Services Board, March 2007
http://www.pmo.gov.my/webNotesApp/ABDULLAH.nsf

Muhammad Yunus Nobel Lecture, December 2006
http://nobelprize.org/nobel_prizes/peace/laureates/2006/yunus-lecture-en.html

Dead-Red Sea Canal Project – *http://www.mfa.gov.il/MFA/MFAArchive/2000_2009/2002/8*

Report on Climate Change in the Muslim World, July 2007 – *http://www.wdm.org.uk/news/climatechangemuslimworld17072007.htm*

London Islamic Network for the Environment – *http://www.lineonweb.org.uk*

Interfaith Declaration on the Moral Responsibility of the US Government to Address Global Warming, May 2007
http://www.theregenerationproject.org/mfiles/Interfaith%20Declaration.pdf

Women's Leaders Intercultural Forum – *http://wliforum.org/about.html*

Sisters in Islam – *http://www.sistersinislam.org.my*

13-Nation Pew Global Attitudes Survey – *http://pewglobal.org/reports/pdf/254.pdf*

The Association of Islamic Cultural Centers in Germany (German Language Only) *http://www.vikz.de*

Open Dialogue Centre (ODC) – *http://www.odc.org.my*

Building Bridges Between Majority and Muslim Communities in Western Europe
http://www.centerforconciliation.org/AmsterdamReport.html

Habitat for Humanity International – *http://www.habitat.org/intl/ame/113.aspx*

India ENews on Sachar Panel – *http://www.indiaenews.com/politics/20061117/29100.htm*

Islam and AIDS Conference – *http://www.islamandhivaids.org*

Islamic Relief USA, Charity Strives to Keep Clean, August 2006
http://www.irw.org/news/inthenews/20060829

Second Plenary Session of the German Conference on Islam, May 2006
http://www.bmi.bund.de/cln_028/nn_1026714/Internet/Content/Themen/Deutsche__Islam__Konferenz/DatenUndFakten/Islamkonferenz__Kurzinfo2__en.html

UN Expert Group Meeting on International Migration and Development in the Arab Region, May 2006
http://www.un.org/esa/population/meetings/EGM_Ittmig_Arab/P01_Adams.pdf

Fethullah Gülen – *http://en.fgulen.com*

Catholic Relief Services – *http://crs.org*

The Aga Khan Development Network – *http://www.akdn.org*

Muslim Public Affairs Council – *http://www.mpac.org*

Ford Foundation Cairo Office – *http://www.fordfound.org/global/office/index.cfm?office=Cairo*

United Nations Global Compact – *http://www.unglobalcompact.org*

Triple Bottom Line Investing – *http://www.tbli.org*

Triple Bottom Line Conference in Paris, November 2007
http://www.tbli.org/conference/TBLI+2007+Europe/813

CSR at Cisco Targets Human Capital – *http://www.ameinfo.com/132189.html*

Council for a Parliament of the World's Religions – *http://www.cpwr.org*

COMMITTED TO
IMPROVING THE STATE
OF THE WORLD

The World Economic Forum is an independent international organization committed to improving the state of the world by engaging leaders in partnerships to shape global, regional and industry agendas.

Incorporated as a foundation in 1971, and based in Geneva, Switzerland, the World Economic Forum is impartial and not-for-profit; it is tied to no political, partisan or national interests. (www.weforum.org)