The West and the Religious 'Other':
Connecting with Muslims

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Abstract

Religion and politics have clashed for centuries. Current global political realities have heightened debate about immigration in many Western countries. While much of the debate is needed and welcomed, it has also opened dialogue about perceptions of the religious "other" in general, and toward followers of Islam in particular. In the interest of global peace on one hand and living as friends and neighbors on the other, this paper attempts to inform a global view of the differences and similarities, both real and perceived, of Christians and Muslims living in close proximity to each other in an increasingly connected world. Keeping this lens in mind, this article seeks to shed light on the paradoxes inherent in the debate about Islam and immigration and the potential cultural blind spots that may limit the goal of people of different religions and ideologies living in community and friendship with each other. Using World Value Survey data, this article compares the similarities and differences of cultural values between Muslim and Protestant religions compared to other global religions, and finds that the two religious cultures are not as different as it may seem in popular culture today.

Key Words: assimilation, acculturation, perceptions, connectedness

Introduction

There appear to be paradoxes in the realities of the everyday experience of Muslim Americans and those of non-Muslim, largely Christian Americans. Views on creating a connection and then a relationship between Muslims and Christians differ, resulting in two basic opposite perspectives. One perspective is that there is no significant common ground of interest between the two groups because the main theological character of Islam is so

polemically against Christianity that any attempt to build bridges is wasted effort. Furthermore, an attempt to create common ground will lead to a hyper-contextualization that will produce little more than syncretism. The second perspective maintains that what common ground there is enables conversation between the two parties, who can then move beyond the known to the unknown. In other words, commonality helps build relationships around common ideas that then make the two parties more capable of working on differences.

The paradoxes are exacerbated by Muslim American experience of an invisible wall between them and their fellow citizens, resulting in a sense of isolation that further compounds their disconnection. Because connection derives from identifying with other people with similar views, ethnic or religious enclaves are created (Piascik 2017). This dynamic is described by a Gallup poll in which U.S. respondents were asked what they admire about the Muslim world (Abdo 2006). The most common response was "nothing" (33 percent) and "I don't know" (22 percent). It is these kinds of views that fuel debate about further immigration, particularly from Muslim countries, making it difficult to further parse out these paradoxes. Even though most Americans may not see Islam in a positive light, mosques are being built, Islamic schools are providing education to children, and Islamic faith is practiced as the center of life, particularly by the younger generation.

One result of this assimilation quandary is that Christians tend to hold Muslims at arm's length rather than engaging them and creating a relationship that could result in mutual benefit. Some demographic differences are evident. A 2011 Pew Research study described the 2.75 million Muslims living in the U.S. at that time as younger and having higher fertility rates than the non-Muslim population. The study also indicated that Muslims have about the same household income as other Americans, yet homeownership is considerably less than the average American. These and other differences can lead to perceptions and the development of attitudes that perpetuate the notion that Muslims are "lesser" Americans.

Most of the Muslims in this Pew study indicated that they faced negative attitudes, experienced discrimination and prejudice, or had witnessed public misconceptions about Islam. For those Muslims who were born in the U.S., only 30% said that American citizens were friendly toward them. More than half of young Muslims under the age of 30 indicated they had been treated with suspicion, called offensive names, singled out by law enforcement, or physically threatened in the past year.

Given these realities, when asked about their contact with the general public in America, that same Pew study (2011) indicated that almost half of Muslims coming to the US did not want to adopt American customs. The distrustful dynamic is therefore influenced by both parties, the host culture viewing the other with suspicion, and the immigrants not wanting what the destination culture offers.

Another result of these paradoxes is a current overriding fear among Americans of Muslims. On one end of the spectrum, fueled by horrific global acts of terror by

extremists, that fear focuses on how Muslims might harm people and undermine democracy with Sharia law. On the other end of the spectrum there is a fear of offending one's Muslim neighbors due to a lack of understanding them. At best, these fears tend to keep Muslims at arm's length from their fellow citizens, fueling Islamophobia as "an exaggerated fear, hatred, and hostility toward Islam and Muslims that is perpetuated by negative stereotypes, resulting in bias, discrimination, and the marginalization and exclusion of Muslims from social, political, and civic life." (Ali et. al. 2011:9)

According to Gallup (2017), this fear of Islam and Muslims in general manifests itself in four ways.

1. More than half of American Muslims say that the West does not respect Muslim societies.
2. Approximately 60% of Muslim Americans say that Americans in general are prejudiced toward them.
3. The perception is that Muslims are not loyal to the U.S.
4. The perception is also that resident Muslims will threaten the American way of life.

According to Baer (2017), this fear is further driven by news outlets seeking higher ratings rather than working to provide accurate descriptions of the real world. For example, Americans are over 3000 times more likely to be killed by a firearm than by terrorism. Terrorism is cited in the top five American fears according to the 2016 edition of Chapman University's Survey of American Fears (Chapman 2016). The goal of some media outlets is not to present the facts, but rather to breed fear for the sake of arousing audiences and thereby improving ratings. Further misrepresentation of Muslims from within segments of the media was also described in a study by Travis Dixon and Charlotte Williams (2014), who found that Muslims were significantly overrepresented as terrorists in the minds of many Americans. Their study included an analysis of network and cable news from 2008 to 2012 which showed that while just 6 percent of terrorist acts were committed by Muslims according to FBI statistics, some of these media outlets associated Muslims with 81 percent of these same acts (Dixon and Williams 2014:32).

This fear has served to heighten the debate about immigration to the U.S. all the way to Congressional leaders and the President, and can be exemplified by two recent encounters by the author with taxi drivers in two different US cities. The first was a young Croatian Muslim driver in Washington DC who fled war as a refugee. "If I had not been able to come here, I would be dead now", he explained. The other taxi driver was a Palestinian Muslim in Cincinnati who talked about what it meant to him and his family to be in the US as immigrants. "Why should tens of thousands of innocent people in war torn countries have to die just to give a

small group of scared and uninformed Americans a false sense of safety?" he asked. More specifically, both men also expressed similar levels of confusion over America's claim to be a "Christian" nation vis-à-vis the debate over immigration.

Several Christian authors have begun to attempt to describe these paradoxes more deeply. In his book, *Who Is My Enemy? Questions American Christians Must Face about Islam and Themselves*, Lee Camp (2011) examines Christianity and Islam from historical and modern contexts while also examining key misinterpretations of their respective scriptures, particularly as those misinterpretations exhibit themselves in behaviors and cultural norms – with both positive and negative results. As such, Camp encourages his readers to develop a "double vision" by which beliefs are held as assumptions while engaging in work that honestly engages differing perspectives, ultimately with a willingness to confront those assumptions, adjust beliefs accordingly, and thereby change behavior.

John Barton (2013) compares the way Jews viewed Samaritans with how American Christians view Muslims. He describes Jesus "force(ing) his hearers to grapple with the surprising reversals of the kingdom… [saying] to his Jewish audience, 'Do you want to be a good God-fearing Jew? Then behave as did this merciful Samaritan.' I can imagine him saying today, 'Do you want to be a good, faithful, missional Jesus-follower? Then behave as a merciful Muslim'" (2013:10).

Discussions of differences happen once people gradually realize that there is in fact common ground between them. Learning about this commonality creates an understanding, a relational basis that thwarts the efforts of a narrative that may be pushed by more divisive and hostile agendas. Substantial intellectual and emotional resources are needed to counter the negative effect of narratives from biased and sensational media sources that divide rather than connect individuals. Ultimately, the goal of this article is to encourage deeper dialogue and community building among people regardless of religious affiliation. Therefore the research question is as follows. To what extent does common ground exist for Christians and Muslims to connect and develop relationships that are mutually supportive?

The World Values Survey

Data collected by the World Values Survey (WWS) provides a better understanding of religious differences in a way that contributes to conversations about acceptance and community building, while addressing unwarranted fears of "the other". The WWS is an ongoing, longitudinal study begun in the early 1980s that examines almost 100 countries representing nearly 90% of the world's population, with over 400,000 respondents (World Values Survey 2014). The study is conducted using a national representation of each country utilizing face-to-face interviews with respondents in their native language.

In short, this study focuses on finding differences and similarities between Muslims and Christians. As a metric, six other religions were used in comparison in order to find outliers in the data using a combination of relative percent frequency, mean standard deviation, and confidence interval modeling. If Muslims and Christians fell within the range of the six other religions, it was concluded that no significant difference in attitudes was found. If, however, Muslims or Christians were outside the range of other religions, an attitude difference was considered to be present. Hypothesis testing was conducted on Muslim and Christian points that fell outside the range of other religions to determine which of the data points were statistically significant. By accessing the latest round of WWS surveys, Wave 6, this paper focuses on three key geographical areas – English speaking countries, European Region countries, and moderate majority Muslim countries. Questions were grouped into nine different categories:

1. Values for Friends & Family
2. Values for Leisure, Work, & Religion
3. Acceptance of Others
4. Acceptance of Ideas
5. Trust in Others
6. Trust in Institutions
7. Religious Devotion
8. Religious Belief
9. Religious Importance

In addition, responses in each region were compared with each group to eight religious affiliations of Buddhist, Hindu, Jew, Muslim, Orthodox, Protestant, Roman Catholic, and no affiliation. Each region was then examined individually and as an aggregate to determine if there was a difference in attitudes between the religious group attitudes in the nine categories.

The English speaking countries studied were the United States, New Zealand, and Australia. The European countries studied were Germany, Netherlands, Poland, Romania, Spain, and Sweden. The Muslim countries studied were Cyprus, Jordan, Lebanon, Morocco, Palestine, and Turkey. The countries chosen were limited by the scope of the World Values Survey Wave 6. All countries surveyed which qualified for each group were included.

The World Values Survey (WVS) questions were grouped into nine different categories as follows:

1. Values of Family and Friends
   a. V4 - How important is family?
   b. V5 - How important are friends?

2. Values of Leisure, Work, and Religion
    a. V6 - How important is leisure time?
    b. V8 - How important is work?
    c. V9 - How important is religion?

3. Acceptance of Others
    a. V37 - Would not like to have as neighbors: People of a Different Race
    b. V39 - Would not like to have as neighbors: Immigrants/Foreign Workers
    c. V40 - Would not like to have as neighbors: Homosexuals
    d. V41 - Would not like to have as neighbors: People of a Different Religion
    e. V43 - Would not like to have as neighbors: Unmarried Couples Living Together
    f. V44 - Would not like to have as neighbors: People who Speak a Different Language
    g. V46 - When jobs are scarce, employers should give priority to people of this country over immigrants.

4. Acceptance of Ideas
    a. V153 - When science and religion conflict, religion is always right.
    b. V154 - The only acceptable religion is my religion.
    c. V156 - People who belong to different religions are probably just as moral as those who belong to mine.

5. Trust in Others
    a. V56 - Do you think most people would try to take advantage of you if they got a chance, or would they try to be fair?
    b. V103 - How much do you trust: Your Neighborhood?
    c. V106 - How much do you trust: People of Another Religion
    d. V107 - How much do you trust: People of Another Nationality
    e. V124 - Most people can be trusted

6. Trust in Institutions
    a. V108 - Confidence in churches.
    b. V110 - Confidence in the press.
    c. V113 - Confidence in the police.
    d. V115 - Confidence in your nation's government.
    e. V116 - Confidence in political parties.

7. Religious Devotion
   a. V145 - How often do you attend religious services?
   b. V146 - How often do you pray?
   c. V25 - How active are you in your church or religious organization?

8. Religious Belief
   a. V147 - Are you a religious person?
   b. V148 - Do you believe in God?
   c. V149 - Do you believe in Hell?

9. Importance of Religion
   a. V55 - How much freedom of choice and control [do you have] over [your] own life?
   b. V59 - How satisfied are you with the financial situation of your household?
   c. V23 - How satisfied are you with your own life?
   d. V151 - Meaning of religion: To make sense of life after death vs. To make sense of life in this world

An analysis of each of these groupings follows on separate pages.

1. Values of Family and Friends

This category is comprised of how important in life family and friends are deemed to be. The questions were grouped to show outward priorities, particularly the priority of intimate others in the respondents' lives. There were two questions used for this category: (1) how important is family in your life, and (2) how important are friends in your life?

For Europe and aggregate totals, both Muslims and Protestants fell within the control range. For English speaking countries, Muslim groups (3.5) fell outside the control range of 3.1-3.4, and for Muslim countries, the Protestant community score of 4.1 fell outside the control range of 2.5-3.7. After testing for statistical significance, neither of the two data points were found to be significant.

	Buddhist	Hindu	Jew	Muslim	Orthodox	Protestant	Roman Catholic	None	Control Range
English	3.4	3.1	3.3	3.5**	3.2	3.1	3.2	3.3	3.1-3.4
Europe	3.6	4.1	3.5	3.5	4.0	3.3	3.4	3.4	3.5-4.1
Muslim	N/D	2.5	3.0	3.4	3.4	4.1**	3.7	3.0	2.5-3.7
Total*	3.4	3.4	3.3	3.4	3.8	3.2	3.4	3.4	3.4-3.8

Note: Highlighted values fall outside the control range.

1 = Very Important   10 = Not at All Important

*The total comprises of the weighted average of all surveys and thus does not reflect the simple average of the scores above.

** Outside the control range.

***Outside the control range and statistically significant.

2. *Values of Leisure, Work and Religion*

       This category contains three questions regarding the importance of leisure time, work, and religion in life. They were was assembled to represent inward priorities. For English and aggregate totals, both Muslim and Protestant groups fell within the control range. However, for European (4.3-5.8) and Muslim (4.1-4.6) countries, the Muslim community fell slightly outside the control range at 4.1 and 4.0 respectively. After testing for statistical significance, both data points were found insignificant.

	Buddhist	Hindu	Jew	Muslim	Orthodox	Protestant	Roman Catholic	None	Control Range
English	4.9	4.2	5.3	4.4	4.6	4.7	4.6	5.7	4.2-5.7
Europe	5.0	4.8	4.4	4.1**	4.3	5.0	4.7	5.8	4.3-5.8
Muslim	N/D	4.2	4.1	4.0**	4.1	4.3	4.2	4.6	4.1-4.6
Total	4.9	4.5	5.1	4.0	4.2	4.9	4.6	5.8	4.0-5.8

Note: Highlighted values fall outside the control range.
       1 = Very Important 10 = Not at All Important

*The total comprises of the weighted average of all surveys and thus does not reflect the simple average of the scores above.
** Outside the control range.
***Outside the control range and statistically significant.

3. Acceptance of Others

This category examines how groups accept other people in the community, and is comprised of seven sub-questions. "Would you not like to have as neighbors (1) people of a different race, (2) immigrants/foreign workers, (3) homosexuals (4) people of a different religion, (5) unmarried couples living together, and (6) people who speak a different language?" The seventh question was: "When jobs are scarce, employers should give priority to people of this country over immigrants."

In this category, Muslim and Protestant groups fell within the control range for English, European, and Muslim countries. Muslims fell slightly outside the control at 8.0 in 8.1-9.2. This Muslim group was not found to be statistically significant.

	Buddhist	Hindu	Jew	Muslim	Orthodox	Protestant	Roman Catholic	None	Control Range
English	9.0	9.1	9.4	9.1	9.1	9.0	9.1	9.1	9.0-9.4
Europe	8.4	9.2	8.9	9.1	8.1	9.0	8.7	9.0	8.1-9.2
Muslim	N/D	6.8	7.8	7.4	8.0	7.6	7.4	6.9	6.8-8.0
Total*	9.2	9.0	8.9	8.0**	8.1	9.1	8.9	9.1	8.1-9.2

Note: Highlighted values fall outside the control range.

   1 = Yes   10 = No

*The total comprises of the weighted average of all surveys and thus does not reflect the simple average of the scores above.

** Outside the control range.

***Outside the control range and statistically significant.

4. Acceptance of Ideas

This category was developed to test how accepting different groups are of other religious ideas. It is comprised of three questions based on religion: (1) "whenever science and religion conflict, religion is always right," (2) "the only acceptable religion is my religion," and (3) "people who belong to different religions are probably just as moral as those who belong to mine."

In Europe, both Protestant and Muslim groups fell within the control range. In English countries, Muslim groups (5.8) and in total (4.3) fell out of the control ranges of 6.1-7.3 and 5.6-7.5 respectively. However, only in English countries was the result found significant. Muslim attitudes in English countries were less accepting of other ideas.

Investigating each question, in English speaking countries, Muslim groups tended to feel more strongly that whenever science and religion conflicted, religion was always right. Muslim groups, however, felt that other religions were acceptable and that people who belonged to other religions were as moral as they were. Statistical significance was found at the individual question level.

	Buddhist	Hindu	Jew	Muslim	Orthodox	Protestant	Roman Catholic	None	Control Range
English	7.3	6.1	7.3	5.8***	6.2	6.4	6.6	7.3	6.1-7.3
Europe	5.8	7.1	5.4	5.8	5.6	6.8	5.6	5.2	5.2-7.1
Muslim	N/D	4.2	6.0	4.2	5.5	5.2	5.6	7.1	4.2-7.1
Total*	7.4	6.3	7.5	4.3**	5.6	6.6	6.1	7.5	5.6-7.5

Note: Highlighted values fall outside the control range.

1 = Strongly Agree   10 = Strongly Disagree

*The total comprises of the weighted average of all surveys and thus does not reflect the simple average of the scores above.

** Outside the control range.

***Outside the control range and statistically significant.

5. Trust in Others

This category was based on four questions testing how varying groups trust those in their community. The questions are comprised of (1) "how much do you trust your neighborhood," (2) "how much do you trust people of another religion," (3) "how much do you trust people of another nationality," and (4) "most people can be trusted."

In this category in English and European countries, both Protestants and Muslims fell within the control range. In Muslim (6.4) countries and in aggregate (6.0), Protestants fell outside the control ranges of 6.8-7.3, and 6.1-7.2 respectively. In Muslim countries and in aggregate, the Protestant results were statistically significant. Overall, Protestant attitudes were more trusting in Muslim countries and in aggregate.

Investigating each question individually, in Muslim countries Protestants trusted people of other religions and people of other nationalities more than other populations. Protestants trusted people in their neighborhood and trusted people in general the same as other religions. Statistical significance was found at the individual question level.

	Buddhist	Hindu	Jew	Muslim	Orthodox	Protestant	Roman Catholic	None	Control Range
English	6.6	6.2	5.9	6.4	6.6	6.0	6.1	6.2	5.9-6.6
Europe	6.5	5.9	6.6	6.1	7.3	6.0	6.3	6.3	5.9-7.3
Muslim	N/D	7.3	7.0	6.9	6.9	6.4***	6.8	6.9	6.8-7.3
Total*	6.5	6.1	6.1	6.9	7.2	6.0***	6.3	6.3	6.1-7.2

Note: Highlighted values fall outside the control range.
        1 = Trust Completely   10 = Do Not Trust at All

*The total comprises of the weighted average of all surveys and thus does not reflect the simple average of the scores above.
** Outside the control range.
***Outside the control range and statistically significant.

6. Trust in Institutions

This category investigated to what degree respondents trusted societal institutions, and was comprised of five questions: (1) confidence in the churches, (2) confidence in the press, (3) confidence in the police, (4) confidence in your nation's government, and (5) confidence in political parties.

In European and Muslim countries, all responses from Muslim and Protestant groups were within the control range. In English (7.2) speaking countries and in aggregate (6.1), Muslim responses were outside the control range 6.0-7.0 and 6.2-7.1 respectively. The results for Muslim attitudes in these two areas were statistically significant. Overall, Muslim groups trusted institutions less in English speaking countries and in aggregate.

Within the questions, in aggregate, Muslim attitudes were less trusting in the police but fell within the control range for the other four questions. On the individual question level there was no statistical significance found, but in aggregate, there was statistical significance present. In English speaking countries, Muslim attitudes were less trusting in churches, the press, but fell within the control range for the political parties, the police and government. Statistical significance was found for both individual questions.

	Buddhist	Hindu	Jew	Muslim	Orthodox	Protestant	Roman Catholic	None	Control Range
English	6.6	6.0	6.6	7.2***	6.6	6.4	6.4	7.0	6.0-7.0
Europe	5.6	6.9	7.3	6.4	6.8	6.1	6.8	7.3	5.6-7.3
Muslim	N/D	3.5	5.9	6.1	6.6	6.0	7.1	8.0	3.5-8.0
Total*	6.7	6.2	6.6	6.1***	6.8	6.2	6.7	7.1	6.2-7.1

Note: Highlighted values fall outside the control range.
1 = A Great Deal   10 = None at All

*The total comprises of the weighted average of all surveys and thus does not reflect the simple average of the scores above.
** Outside the control range.
***Outside the control range and statistically significant.

7. Religious Devotion

This category investigated how committed respondents were to their religious practices, and was comprised of three questions: (1) "how often do you attend religious services," (2) "how often do you pray," and (3) "how active are you in your church or religious organization?"

In English, Muslim, and in aggregate, both Muslim and Protestant responses fell within the control range. In European countries, Muslim (5.5) respondents were outside the control range of 5.8-9.0, however no statistical significance was found.

	Buddhist	Hindu	Jew	Muslim	Orthodox	Protestant	Roman Catholic	None	Control Range
English	5.9	4.7	6.3	5.6	5.5	5.8	5.6	6.8	4.7-6.8
Europe	6.4	6.4	6.1	4.6	4.1	6.3	5.3	7.0	4.1-7.0
Muslim	N/D	4.6	4.2	4.7	4.1	3.6**	4.3	6.2	4.2-6.2
Total*	6.0	5.4	5.7	4.1	4.2	6.0	5.2	6.9	4.2-6.9

Note: Highlighted values fall outside the control range.

1 = A lot   10 = Not At all

*The total comprises of the weighted average of all surveys and thus does not reflect the simple average of the scores above.

** Outside the control range.

***Outside the control range and statistically significant.

8. Religious Belief

This category investigated to what degree respondents believe in their core ideals. The questions in this category were comprised of (1) "are you a religious person," (2) "do you believe in God," and (3) "do you believe in hell?"

In Muslim countries, both Muslim and Protestant respondents fell within the control range. In English (5.0), Europe (5.0), and in aggregate (4.7) Muslims were outside the control range of 5.3-7.6, 5.1-8.5, and 5.2-8.2 respectively. The results were statistically significant, therefore Muslims were found to have stronger belief systems.

Inspecting each question individually, in English speaking countries, in European Countries and in aggregate, Muslims believed in hell to a greater extent. The results were statistically significant for all three individual data points.

	Buddhist	Hindu	Jew	Muslim	Orthodox	Protestant	Roman Catholic	None	Control Range
English	6.7	5.7	7.3	5.0***	5.3	5.5	5.3	7.6	5.3-7.6
Europe	6.9	6.0	6.9	5.0***	5.1	6.8	5.8	8.5	5.1-8.5
Muslim	N/D	4.4	5.2	4.7	5.3	5.7	5.1	7.2	4.4-7.2
Total*	6.8	5.8	7.1	4.7***	5.2	6.2	5.6	8.2	5.2-8.2

Note: Highlighted values fall outside the control range.
         1 = A lot   10 = Not At all

*The total comprises of the weighted average of all surveys and thus does not reflect the simple average of the scores above.
** Outside the control range.
***Outside the control range and statistically significant.

9. Importance of Religion

This category investigated how important God and religion were to the respondents. The questions included were (1) "how important is God in your life," and (2) "how important is religion in your life?" In English and Muslim countries, both Protestant and Muslim responses fell within the control range. In European (2.3) and in aggregate (2.1) Muslim responses indicated a higher importance of religion in their lives.

Investigating each question, in European countries, religion was more important to the respondents, and the importance of God fell within the control range. In aggregate, both God and religion were more important for Muslims, however there was no statistical significance found at the individual question level.

	Buddhist	Hindu	Jew	Muslim	Orthodox	Protestant	Roman Catholic	None	Control Range
English	3.6	2.9	4.4	2.7	2.4	3.0	2.9	6.2	2.4-6.2
Europe	5.3	3.2	2.9	2.3**	2.5	4.2	3.2	7.3	2.5-7.3
Muslim	N/D	1.8	2.5	2.1	2.3	2.8	2.4	5.0	1.8-5.0
Total*	4.0	3.0	4.2	2.1**	2.4	3.7	3.1	6.9	2.4-6.9

Note: Highlighted values fall outside the control range.

　　　　1 = Very Important   10 = Not At All Important

*The total comprises of the weighted average of all surveys and thus does not reflect the
　 simple average of the scores above.
** Outside the control range.
***Outside the control range and statistically significant.

Discussion Summary

The data were explored in 72 different religious/regional pairings. Of these relationships, there were 17 differences or (23.6% of the responses) which fell outside the control group. Of these differences, eight relationships (11%) were found to be statistically significant.

Question Groups:
1. Values of Family and Friends
2. Values of Leisure, Work, and Religion
3. Acceptance of Others
4. Acceptance of Ideas
5. Trust in Others
6. Trust in Institutions
7. Religious Devotion
8. Religious Belief
9. Importance of Religion

	Question Groups								
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
English	M**			M***		M***		M***	
Europe		M**						M***	M**
Muslim	P **	M**			P ***		P**		
Total			M**	M***	P ***	M***		M***	M**

** Outside the control range.
***Outside the control range and statistically significant.
P= Protestant, M= Muslim

Statistically Significant Results

English Speaking Countries

      In English speaking countries, of the 72 comparisons, four differences of three (4.2%) were statistically significant. Muslim groups believed that religious ideas took precedence over scientific ideas. Muslim groups also trusted the institutions of churches and the press less. They also had a stronger belief in hell as opposed to other religious groups.

European Region Countries

      In European countries, there were three differences found, of which one (1.3%) was statistically different. As with English speaking countries, Muslims believed in hell to a greater extent as opposed to other groups.

Muslim Countries

      In Muslim countries, there were four differences found, of which one (1.3%) was found to be statistically significant. Protestants trusted people of other religions and people in their neighborhood more than other groups.

Aggregate of all Countries

      When comparing the results of English speaking countries, European region countries, and Muslim countries, six differences were found, of which three (4.2%) of the 72 comparisons were found to be statistically significant. In general, Protestant groups were slightly more trusting of people from other religious groups and people in their neighborhood. Muslim groups were less trusting of churches and the press. Muslim groups seem to be less trusting of police. Muslim groups also believed in hell to a greater extent than other groups.

      Overall, Muslim and Christian groups seem to share significantly more values (89%) than those which are statistically different. Eight (11%) of the 72 areas investigated were statistically different. Of the areas where the groups were statistically different, Muslim differences seem to be understandable. For example, and understandably, they seem to have a bias against churches and the press in English speaking countries and in aggregate. Muslim groups also were less trusting of police in aggregate. Considering the political environment, in these countries, these biases seems logical.

      Protestants, interestingly, seemed to trust those in other religious groups more than the aggregate in Muslim countries and in aggregate. This could be the result of Christians being more intimately involved in the Muslim societies in those Muslim countries.

Summary and Conclusion

In this article, the similarities and differences between Muslim and Protestant groups have been examined. The data clearly show that the cultural biases toward Muslims tend to make Muslims more skeptical toward churches, the press and police. Protestants, however, seem to be more trusting in other religions differing from theirs.

To summarize the discussion, the boundary between Muslims and Christians can be described by looking at the common ground, or the lack thereof, between both parties. In the case of Muslims, there is a tendency not to adopt the Christian customs of the countries to which they migrate. In an environment of fear or uncertainty, there is a tendency to cling to the familiar. In many cases, this is their fellow Muslims or Christians. A desire to maintain a distinct identity is promoted when each group follows and sustains specific cultural attributes as lived out in daily life.

The other party, non-Muslim's in the U.S., display attitudes that encourages the existence of the invisible wall between Muslims and Christians. Fed by misrepresentation in the media, Americans view Muslims through the lens of fear. They are viewed with suspicion, and are found to be unattractive. The intricate components and characteristics of Muslim society are not of interest, and Muslims are treated as intruders. This boundary between the two groups stalls assimilation and discourages the connection between two distinct groups that would otherwise turn into mutual gain.

When creating a connection between Muslim and Christian groups, it is helpful to have shared norms and values to which both groups can relate (Bulow and Kumar 2011; Salacuse 2004). In addition, these groups must also engage with each other in a manner which fosters connection. Individuals should approach each other understanding their own prejudices and looking to create a win-win relationship. Not only must common norms and values be sought, but the correct attitude must be present as well. Assimilation is not easy, as culture is a moving target. Assimilation may happen, but if it is at a pace that is slower than the changes in the culture, the gap may be widening rather than closing. The inability to catch up may disenfranchise Muslims, causing them to feel further alienated.

The presence of other factors such as identity politics that undermine the potential for harmony adds complexity to the quandary, as the focus is on differences their intolerance. Sometimes these intolerable differences are exaggerated. Alternatively, even when engagement is achieved and discourse over differences happens, disengagement may happen shortly thereafter when values and norms exceed a threshold of intolerance. Disengagement may lead to hatred, which may lead to threat-oriented behaviors. Leveraging a common base may allow for the exposure, discussion, and appreciation of similarities before engaging about the intolerable differences. This is not blind acquiescence, but rather understanding wrapped in respect for people who hold different worldviews. At the same time, those who thrive on

fomenting misunderstanding and victimization should be exposed. This is not the Christian goal. Instead, we posit that it is best for all people to talk about shared beliefs and the promises a belief makes equally available to all of its members. Once this is understood, there is a foundation on which to deal with our differences constructively.

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