

The Identity and Integration Challenges Facing Muslim Immigrants in the West: France as a model

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Abstract:

The issue of identity and integration of Muslim immigrants in Western countries is one of the most difficult challenges facing Western governments. Muslim immigrants face several difficulties in integrating into new societies due to differences in their customs and ways of life, especially as Western societies have become more rigid towards Arab and Islamic cultures and traditions.

This article attempts to approach the issue of identity as one of the fundamental and sensitive dimensions of any self-sustaining society that maintains its specificities. This is done by focusing on the idea of cultural and religious identity as representing the basic foundation for resilience and confronting the challenges of assimilation into other cultures, which possess a particular strength that can impose itself on contemporary life on many levels.

Keywords: Immigration, Muslim community in the West, identity issues, integration requirements.

INTRODUCTION:

Muslim immigrants to Europe face several challenges that hinder their integration into host societies. After overcoming language barriers, residency procedures, adaptation, and job search challenges, cultural differences pose another challenge due to their customs and lifestyles being different from those of the new societies. While some consider migration as a new birth process and an entry into a better world, it also brings difficulties and dangers. The crisis usually comes from the host community, as Western societies have become more tense towards Arab and Islamic traditions and cultures.

Europe has witnessed the presence of Muslim preachers and conquerors for nearly eight centuries in the West, represented by Andalusia, and in the East, represented by the Balkans, Albania, Kosovo, Bosnia, and Herzegovina after the 15th century. Its North and South remained untouched by Islamic teachings until the destructive world wars, where Europeans had to resort to labor from their colonies to rebuild their countries. Each part of Europe has received its share of

immigrant workers based on their affiliations to the dominant colonial powers of their countries. Moroccans went to France, Indonesians to Holland, Indians, Pakistanis, and Arab countries from the Middle East went to Britain. They became connected to these countries due to colonization, especially after the end of World War II.

However, the economic crisis in 1973 led to measures being taken to combat immigration flows after the issue became politicized. After three decades of economic expansion and continuous immigration, it became clear that unskilled foreign labor had played a role in slowing economic development, thus greatly increasing unemployment rates among all nationalities. This led to the transformation of the economic and social costs of immigration into a political issue. Some Western governments decided to halt the immigration of foreign labor. In contrast, measures were developed that largely allowed for family reunification. This led to an increase in the number of immigrants year after year, and exponentially, as these numbers jumped from a few hundred to hundreds of thousands and even millions until they became a Muslim community that became a concern and a thousand calculations for them.

According to an investigation carried out by ([Pew Research Centre, 2017](#)), the number of Muslims in all of Europe (excluding Bosnia, Kosovo, Serbia, and Albania) is not less than twenty million people, of whom thirteen million are Muslim immigrants to Europe according to 2010 statistics.

This large number has highlighted the differences in cultures, social and moral values between Muslim immigrants and European societies, and has attracted tangible attention from research, policy, and social centers ([Nacer, 2015](#)). Many questions have been raised, including: Will they become the majority in Europe someday? And will they pose a danger to Western civilization in Europe?

From here, taking measures of "integration" and bringing about a change in the goal of social work aimed at accommodating immigrants has become a priority that cannot be reversed, while allowing them to practice the worship they choose within the framework of the values of those societies.

If we consider identity as the mechanism that we carry with us wherever we go, composed of elements of religion, culture, customs, and history, and if integration is a multi-conceptual term that includes conformity, union, and fusion, then the identity of most Arab immigrants is Islam, which is completely opposed to the identity of Europeans, whether they are Christians or atheists. This scene shows two vastly different identities, where conformity (integration) ranges from possible to impossible. We are facing a bitter conflict between two identities that will never

meet, and this conformity (integration) will only be achieved by one side surrendering to the other, and often the weaker one economically gives in to the dominant and prevailing culture.

The nature of the interaction between the immigrant and the new society is one of the most widely debated topics in the process of integration, to the extent that they have been divided into two teams: the first team adopts the idea of authenticity and requires the immigrant to preserve his customs and traditions without paying attention to the perspective of the receiving society, even if these traditions are provocative to them. As for the second trend, it is modern, and sees no harm in complete interaction and conformity with the customs and society of the host country, and calls for integration and fusion into the new society, considering this a real condition that can enable the Muslim immigrant to achieve the goal of naturalization and stability.

It seems that both teams have gone wrong because the immigrant is no more than a human being who grew up in a country that still holds its traces in his memory, and grew up in a society whose features are still present in most situations. Therefore, he cannot integrate quickly with any society, no matter how close it is to his mind and thoughts. On the other hand, this immigrant must respect the values, customs, culture, and religion of the new society in order to achieve security, stability, and adaptation to this new country. Therefore, he must master the language, for example, and create relationships and connections between him and the members of the new society.

The road to integration requires one of the parties to relinquish one of their identity components. We wonder whether the European citizen, for example, is required to compromise, or is it the Muslim immigrant? Is integration a path taken by one party towards the other, meaning that the Muslim immigrant is always obliged to do so? However, all official slogans push towards integration and encourage it, but programs that motivate people to participate in paving the way are lacking, without it becoming a political issue and a crucial election card. But what are the possibilities for integration in the presence of many differences between identities?

The purpose of this article is to focus on the extent of the possibility of integrating Muslim immigrants into Western societies while maintaining their Islamic identity amidst a society that has a completely different identity (in beliefs and practices) where modesty can be at its lowest level.

Due to this cultural and religious diversity, most Western societies do not look comfortably at any behavior that indicates Arab or Islamic culture (from using

Arabic language in the street, to disapproving of retaining religious traditions and rituals, such as praying primarily, and the hostile attitude towards women's veiling, and the impossibility of getting a job opportunity in many countries because of it). This reality created a feeling of alienation in the Muslim community, in their language, religious rituals and traditions, and their identity in dress, thus two difficult choices emerged: either withdrawing into themselves and distancing themselves from the community, or abandoning their cultural and religious values and melting into the culture of the future society, and thus living in alienation within alienation.

From this reality, several questions arise:

- Does Islam pose a barrier to integration and fusion in Western societies?
- Can we consider Islam as a main reason for Arabs not integrating into European societies?
- Should we abandon Islamic values for the sake of integration?

To answer these questions, we seek, through this article, to explore the identity issues, integration requirements for Muslim immigrants, and the challenges of living in Europe, while maintaining Islamic identity.

1. Requirements of integration in the West

When a person moves from one environment to another with different foundations and culture, it imposes many requirements related to language, religion, and identity. The individual finds themselves in a society with a different language, making it difficult to integrate when ignorant of the language of the country they migrated to. If language is found, many difficulties that the individual is likely to face in the West dissolve with it.

The individual also encounters different laws, customs, traditions, and policies that are more stringent than those in which they previously lived, which they must comply with in the end. At first, they encounter some difficulties until they get used to those religious, socio-cultural concepts and variables.

The issue of identity has been of great concern to intellectuals in various countries. It is often mixed with other concepts such as culture, nationalism, and authenticity (Al-Harmasi, 2000, pp. 19-35). Identity is related to existence, self, and cultural heritage, as well as to pluralism, diversity, differences, and change, or social similarity, symmetry, and stability in its various forms and diverse cognitive levels, as well as in its multiple contexts that produce social awareness that raises questions approaching identity in terms of its connotations, dimensions, basic components, and its relationship with what is fixed and variable from its elements (Al-Haidari, n.d.). Identity has gained increasing attention recently in the concept of Arab-Islamic identity, which has become one of the most important political issues

in Europe, linked to the problem of integration. Identity is the essence and reality of a thing. It is like a fingerprint that distinguishes a person from others, as (Michelli, 1993, p. 169) meant when he said that identity is "a compound of selected referential, material, and self elements that allow for a specific definition of the social actor. As long as identity is a compound of elements, it is necessarily variable while possessing a certain stability, like an individual who is born, grows up, ages, and changes in appearance, behavior, and sometimes taste (i.e. their personality changes), but remains ultimately the same person and not someone else."

As for psychology, it has focused on the social aspect of identity, and there have been many attempts to define identity, especially through the study of concepts such as social and personal identity, among others. William James confirms that identity is a social psychological phenomenon that occurs at the intersection of self-awareness by the individual and by others (James, 1890).

On the other hand, some believe that talking about identity crises is not real, but rather a fabricated crisis that exists more in the mind than in reality, as a result of several factors, most notably the changes and transformations witnessed by the contemporary world, especially with the emergence of globalization. The crisis is not in identity, as (Al-Hamad, 1999, p. 91) says, but in the mind, which has great difficulty in comprehending the variables and producing a new mindset and culture.

Researchers have different answers, but they agree on one central idea that identity is the individual or group's sense of self, which is the result of self-awareness, that I am me or we have distinct characteristics that differentiate me from you and us from them.

Identity, as expressed by a group of researchers, "refers to the individual images and self-differentiation carried, planned, shaped, and modified by the representative through relationships with others over time." This is how identity exists on an individual level, but it can also be applied on a collective level, where it becomes the image of the group and its distinctiveness and difference from others. In this definition, identity is in a state of constant change, transformation, and formation.

It can be inferred from the above that identity is a collection of material and immaterial characteristics that allow us to define a specific subject or thing, consisting of two aspects (objective and subjective). The objective aspect is the existence of a set of characteristics and elements, while the subjective aspect is the selection and choice of any part of these characteristics and elements. Anthony Giddens defines this term as "distinctive features of an individual or group's character and the deep meaningful significance of their existence (Giddens, 2005, p.

766)." He indicates that the concept of identity in sociology is multidimensional and can be approached from several angles. Generally, identity is related to people's understanding and perception of themselves and what they believe is important in their lives. This understanding is formed based on specific characteristics that take priority over other sources of meaning and significance. Sources of identity include gender, sexual orientation, nationality, ethnicity, and social class, among others¹. Izz al-Din Manasra links identity advocacy to behavior, language, and culture, which allow a person to identify with and conform to a social group (Manasra, 2004, p. 24).

Rashad Abdullah Al-Shami believes that it is "the code by which an individual can know themselves in their relationship to the social group to which they belong, and by which others recognize them as belonging to that group. It is a code that is formed by the elements that make up the group over the course of its history, its creative heritage, and its way of life (Al-Shami, n.d.)." According to Al-Shami, the true features of identity are those that are inherited within the group, and remain present and vital, such as myths, values, and cultural heritage, and that identity determines the deep existential feeling that is essential to human beings.

Based on these opinions, we notice that most of them confirm that a person's identity is their true self that distinguishes them from another person, and that their identity is determined by their belonging, which is manifested in defining specific characteristics. Based on this, it can be said that identity is a system of characteristics and material and spiritual elements that make up the existence of something and distinguish it from other things in general, despite the existence of similar elements and characteristics. The specific elements and characteristics of something's identity are of two types: general elements and characteristics that may be shared with other identities, and special elements and characteristics that are unique to this thing. Thus, identity becomes everything that determines the existence and essence of a human being from the material and spiritual elements and characteristics, and the identity of a group becomes everything that determines the existence and essence of the human group from the material and spiritual elements and characteristics that distinguish it from other groups, in addition to the group's awareness of these characteristics. However, willpower and awareness do not determine identity absolutely, as they depend on the existing elements and characteristics that make up the self, and the self chooses what suits its beliefs and interests. Thus, the material and spiritual elements shape specific characteristics and determine a general image of a certain group, while awareness and willpower

¹- Anthony Giddens refers to "gender" as social expectations regarding behavior that is considered appropriate for individuals of both sexes. It also refers to the characteristics that society has imposed or attributed to masculinity and femininity.

highlight what the self believes represents and expresses it according to various standards and criteria, in which interests play a prominent role in choosing and selecting identity elements, in addition to historical circumstances and the environment surrounding the group. Identity plays a two-dimensional role, in that it distinguishes the self from others and becomes a source of pride, meaning that it operates on the external level. It also works to achieve similarity, homogeneity, and integration within the collective self and between its members. Beliefs, ideas, and ideologies play their role in determining the elements and characteristics that are a source of pride and what is not. Therefore, identity is built based on the image that the group sees of itself, recognized by others. In all types of collective identities, identity is related to the sense of common belonging among members of the political community to something they consider common between them, whether it is land (geographical region), culture, or state (political entity - national identity), and the desire to devote and sacrifice for it. This is what Saad al-Din Ibrahim sees and confirms that the issue of identity is fundamentally related to symbolic, spiritual, and collective cultural meanings that give the individual a sense of belonging to a larger body, and create loyalty and pride in this larger body (Ibrahim, 2005, p. 332).

There are three levels of human cultural identity: individual identity, collective identity, and national or ethnic identity. The relationship between these levels is not fixed but is constantly changing in response to circumstances, types of conflict, solidarity, and disunity that are driven by individual, collective, and national interests (Al-Jabri, 2000, p. 299).

As long as a group is distinctive and forms a real observable collective unit based on continuous and active collective positions aimed at achieving a common goal, and as long as it forms a structural social framework that aims to achieve relative cohesion of social life manifestations, we can consider it as a cultural system of the group and a collective mindset.

Anthony Giddens defines a social group as "a group of individuals who interact with each other in organized ways. These groups can vary in size, ranging from close-knit ties to large organizations. Whatever its size, the specific characteristic of the group is the members' awareness of a shared identity among them (Giddens, 2005, p. 747)." On the other hand, he defines a society as "a group of people who live in a specific area, are subject to a certain political power structure, and are aware that they have an identity that distinguishes them from others (Giddens, 2005, p. 761)." The distinction between the group and the society is based on the existence of political authority and a system framework in the society and the absence of them in the group.

Shaker Mustafa Salim adds that a society is a group of people who live and work together for a period of time sufficient to create their own organization. They consider themselves a distinctive social unit, and the foundations on which the society is based are the existence of a group of individuals living together in a specific region as a unit with a unique culture and its continuity over a long period as a group, as well as their awareness and sense of collective ownership of the spirit of the group (Selim, 1981, pp. 898-903).

Based on the above, we can say that the mentioned characteristics and qualities (collective cohesion and cultural distinctiveness, etc.) are the basic elements of cultural identity that emerge through social interaction and are shaped by shared historical experiences, common interests, and values, which contribute to building a sense of belonging and identity among group members.

2. Elements of Islamic Identity

Dr. Ghazi Altoubeh, a Palestinian writer and researcher in Arab, Islamic, intellectual, and historical affairs, believes that the war on Arab Islamic identity is not new but rather an old war that takes various forms. However, he sees that Arab Islamic identity has qualities of strength and resilience that make it resistant to dissolution. Evidence of this is that European colonialism worked for centuries to distort the identity of some Arab Islamic countries, and the best example of this is Algeria, where it lasted for over thirty years, but it failed both intellectually and militarily.

Islamic identity is characterized by possessing a feature that all other identities in the world lack, namely that it is a way of life that touches all aspects without exception. It consists of two fundamental elements. The first is the form, represented by the Arabic language, while the second is the content, represented by Islam. Hence, the close relationship between the Arabic language and the Islamic religion, as they have been linked since their inception and cannot be separated. Therefore, the relationship of the Muslim Arab with his language is much stronger than that of a non-Arab with his language, even if he does not master it. Moreover, the Muslim's relationship with the Arabic language is stronger than his relationship with his original language, which he knows well. Therefore, the Arabic language is the center of Islamic identity, as it is not only a tool for spiritual growth but also the language of all Muslims from every gender and region, and through it they communicate and get to know each other. Preserving it is preserving the cultural unity of Muslims and their religious identity. Hence, when the growth and spread of the Arabic language stopped due to the weakness of its people, non-Arabs among Muslims turned to their original languages, and the Islamic nation became divided

into sects and parties, while most of those who served science and knowledge in all its various forms were non-Arabs.

The manipulators of nations have realized the truth about the relationship between language and identity. The French ruler directed his conquering army to Algeria, saying: "Teach our language and spread it so that we may govern Algeria. If our language rules Algeria, we have truly ruled it." Perhaps this was the meaning that Muslims intended during their era of prosperity and the flourishing of their language in the Abbasid era under the rule of al-Mutawakkil in 240 AH when they prohibited non-Muslims from learning the Arabic language, the language of science and knowledge in that era, and obliged them to use their own national languages. This indirectly caused many of them to convert to Islam. Despite the difference in approach between the two, the goal is the same. When language is linked to identity in this close connection, it can lead to fusion with the other, which may result in a complete identity change. Some studies have shown a strong relationship and special attraction between the migration of Arab brains to Europe and America and their use of the foreign language spoken in these western countries.

Reality has proven that the disappearance of the national language of a nation is the loss of its essence and existence. There is no better evidence of this than the situation of Native Americans when European immigrants invaded their land, working on them militarily and culturally until they lost their language and, therefore, their own identity and distinctive culture. The same happened in Europe and America with regard to black slaves brought from Africa, where they lost all of their origins and backgrounds except for what genetics imposes in terms of physical features and colors.

The European colonizer understood the equation when he invaded Muslim lands, and diligently worked since the end of the 19th century to separate Muslims from their Islamic heritage by seeking to weaken the Arabic language through imposing foreign languages, promoting dialects, spreading popular literature, proposing the use of the Latin alphabet, and calling for the reform and development of Arabic language rules, all based on recommendations from a group of orientalist specialists in Islamic affairs, and using their agents in Arab countries to implement their dangerous colonial plans that ostensibly targeted the Arabic language, but in reality targeted the identity of the Islamic nation in its heritage, civilization, cultural characteristics, and its very self, as the colonizer realized that language is a pillar of cultural identity, and together with faith and heritage, it contributes to building the self, and demolishing it means demolishing the self.

Arabic language has experienced difficult crises throughout its history, especially with populist attacks and calls for regional and local languages, but today

it is exposed to even more severe attacks under the concepts of modernity that call for unity of the features that connect people from all over the world. And these features determine the modernity of different groups and their suitability to live in this time, or their backwardness.

As long as Arabic language is the language of Islam, and as long as Islam is a way of life that touches all aspects, then these concepts and principles of modernity cannot be reconciled with the kind of identity that the nation carries, not in its Islamic content or in its linguistic form. Modernity, in its colonial concept, can only be a form of melting the self into the other, and shaping the Islamic personality into new imported molds.

The Islamic identity can be defined here as the essence and constants of the nation that have been imbued with Islam since it embraced it, becoming the identity that represents the authenticity of its culture. It is what has stamped and colored its culture with its character and imprint, including its customs, traditions, arts, and all its human and social sciences, natural and experimental sciences, its worldview of the universe, the self, and the other, its conception of the place of humanity in the cosmos, where it comes from, where it ends, the wisdom of its existence and end, and the standards of what is acceptable, rejected, lawful, and prohibited. These are elements of our identity.

As we can see in this definition of the Islamic identity, it is the uniqueness of the Islamic Arab personality with a set of qualities and characteristics that distinguish it from other identities, including language, religion, customs, traditions, and moral values, which have been colored by Islam and Arabism since ancient times.

3. The Struggle of Islamic Identity and Integration Requirements in France

The problem of the lack of integration of Muslims in the societies they live in has become widespread, causing concern for both Muslims on one hand, and European countries and societies on the other. Analysts have varied opinions on the reasons behind this phenomenon, with some researchers attributing it to Western racism towards immigrants in general, and Muslims in particular. Meanwhile, another team attributes this failure to the integration policies of European countries, which have led to their marginalization and sense of isolation. Others believe that the inability of Muslims to integrate is due to cultural, social, and religious reasons specific to them. What is the solution to this problem?

The debate surrounding the place of Islam in Europe and its impact on national identity escalated after the September 11 attacks in 2001, and is particularly

focused in France on the issue of Muslim identity and integration into society. The result was a split between those who view Islam as a foreign element to European culture and demand an Islam that complies with the principles of law and human rights, and those who consider Islam as a part of Europe, like Christianity or Judaism. This debate has contributed to raising concerns among some anti-Islam groups and the spread of the phenomenon of Islamophobia, thus arousing the fears of ordinary citizens due to media focus on certain distinct elements of the Islamic religion, such as the hijab or the construction of mosques. Especially as statistics indicate that the number of Muslims in Europe, including Russia, has reached 44 million people, which represents 6% of the total population.

If we want to delve a little deeper into the previous discussion about the possibility of reforming Islam to align with secularism in Europe, we can ask the question in a more expansive and comprehensive way: Can religions be reformed to align with the values and requirements of secularism? The answer can be found within European history itself, where the follower of the relationship between Christianity and secularism in Europe concludes that European countries, from the Peace of Westphalia¹ in 1648 until the early 20th century, were able to force the church to recognize, by force, the secular space of the state and its distance from interfering in public affairs, and thus Christian religious men did not willingly accept secularism. As for Islam, its followers in their original societies remained in the same situation and did not resolve this conflict between religion and politics. This issue was left to Muslims living in the West, and this is the reason for their suffering, as they have not succeeded in their original societies in separating religion and politics. On the one hand, they were unable to take advantage of the successful values of European society, which defined the boundaries between religion and politics.

The crisis of the Muslim community in the West deepened further with the presence of political Islamic groups, such as the Muslim Brotherhood, the Liberation Party, and Salafi groups (Jihadist and non-Jihadist). These groups adopt a political and cultural program that is fused, based on their own particular reading of religion, which aims to Islamize Europe and the world. The Muslim Brotherhood

¹- The Treaty of Westphalia, also known as the Treaty of Munster or the Treaty of Osnabruck, was signed on October 24, 1648, in Munster and Osnabruck, Germany. This peace treaty ended the Thirty Years' War (1618-1648), which began with the rebellion against the Habsburgs in Bohemia in 1618 and resulted from various conflicts over the constitution of the Holy Roman Empire and the state system in Europe. The treaty was concluded by the signing of two agreements: the first was signed in Munster between the Holy Roman Emperor and the King of France, and the second in Osnabruck between the Holy Roman Emperor and the King of Sweden. A group of parties participated in the Treaty of Westphalia, including the Holy Roman Empire (Emperor Ferdinand III), the Kingdom of Spain, France, the Swedish Empire, and the kings of the Free Imperial States. The aim of this treaty was to settle disputes in general and religious disputes in particular, and the kings of Sweden and France pledged to guarantee the conditions of this treaty.

is the most prominent of these groups in implementing these agendas, due to its deep penetration into European society, through its control of economic, educational, cultural, and religious institutions, and its enormous network of interests that enabled it to acquire the platforms of Muslim communities and speak on their behalf, thereby shaping their political, religious, and cultural awareness through an ideological discourse represented in "Islamization" and "the professorship of the world".

In an attempt to approach these problems and analyze their causes and impact on the lives of immigrants, the authors of "European Islam" seek to explore the prospects of what they call the conflict of identity and integration through a group of Arab researchers residing there, across twelve axes that examine various aspects of the phenomenon known as "European Islam". Haytham Manaa approaches an important issue concerning the situation of Muslims in the context of the war on terrorism, arguing that Muslims are more obliged than others to raise the banner of freedoms, secularism, and human rights, especially after the years between 1978 and 1982 witnessed an expansion of Islamic presence and various patterns of dealing with it, particularly political ones. However, subsequent human migrations contributed to changing the class structure, level of knowledge, and nature of the relationship with the new society. After revealing the new factors that contributed to this change, he discusses the identity crisis that European societies began to experience at the level of self-discovery and its reflections.

He also discusses the stance of some Islamic scholars of the first and second generations of immigrants on these issues and challenges. To provide evidence of efforts towards integration into European societies, he cites the call of more than 400 Islamic associations that are an extension of calls made by other associations to defend the values of democracy and human rights, and to try to consolidate the values of moderation and integration among Muslims in the West.

Hussein Abdul Qader is researching the dynamics of moderation and extremism among Muslims in Europe through an analytical introduction that focuses on the emergence of ideological tendencies among Europeans and Muslims. This approach confines culture within a framework of stagnation on the part of the former, while some Muslims view European values as a cultural assault on them.

Social interaction is linked to religious identity, and the main obstacle to acceptable integration into the new environment is some religious prohibitions such as alcohol and certain types of food. This keeps many of the relationships between Arabs and native citizens tied to work and rarely extends to family visits. It is also worth noting the problem of generational differences, where the first generation of Arab immigrants to their home countries remains much stronger in their sense of

belonging, while the second or third generation feels more connected to the host country. However, religious identity remains a reminder of their foreignness.

Like other minorities, Arabs tend to communicate more with their own skin color and language, and they try to preserve their identity and the identity of their children through supplementary Arab and Islamic schools.

The problem seems to be significant in Europe, especially with the increasing percentage of Arab and Muslim immigrants and the poor economic and social conditions of many of them. While it is difficult to determine an exact number of Muslims in Europe, the most widely circulated figures suggest that they make up between 15 to 20 million individuals, accounting for 4% to 5% of the total population of the continent.

In his study "Europe's Angry Muslims," Robert Leiken argues that the Islamic challenge in Western Europe is more important and dangerous than the Hispanic (Latin) challenge in America, which Samuel Huntington (in an article in *Foreign Policy* magazine) sees as the most serious challenge to American culture. The French thinker, Olivier Roy, analyzes in his book "Globalization of Islam" the issue of the Moroccan community in France, which is struggling with economic and social problems and a state of anxiety about its belonging to its Islamic religion and culture, and its ability to adapt to the cultural and social changes in France. Meanwhile, a large proportion of Arab communities live in close-knit areas, which present an obstacle to integration into new societies (Roy, 2016).

The problem of integration and interaction between the large Islamic community and European societies raises many questions in Western media. At the forefront of these questions is the issue of the legal, intellectual, and social reference of Muslims in the West. An investigation by Ian Johnson in the *Wall Street Journal* highlights the issue of the suitability of fatwas issued in the Arab world for those related to minorities in the West. The European Council for Fatwa and Research, founded by Sheikh Yusuf al-Qaradawi, consists mostly of scholars who do not reside in the West and adopt strict fatwas regarding the Muslim's relationship with their community, allowing for the growth of extremist ideas.

The feeling of alienation and cultural and social marginalization fuels the problem of integration. This is confirmed by the high level of unemployment among Muslim youth in Europe. Perhaps the problem of integration, lack of reference, and high unemployment, according to a study we conducted on the issue of integration in France, is one of the main reasons for the growth and spread of extremist Islamic ideas and movements, in addition to the anger that Arab Muslim youth feel towards the political situation in the Arab and Islamic world.

In this context, it is worth mentioning the new social integration study conducted by both the "British Council" and the "Migration Policy Group", which included twenty-five (25) European countries in addition to Canada. The study concluded that foreign integration cannot depend solely on them, but rather the state must provide support for this purpose. According to the study, the most important factors that facilitate integration are facilitating foreign entry into the labor market, facilitating the naturalization process, and even granting them the right to vote.

In the end, it seems that Muslims and Arabs in Europe face serious and significant challenges, including the problematic integration in Western societies while maintaining cultural privacy. These challenges are surrounded by issues related to social and economic conditions, feelings of marginalization and unemployment rates. These challenges are extremely dangerous and threaten the "European Islam" in the coming years.

CONCLUSION

Migration provides a clear example of the effects of interaction between different identities, and future societies are a stage for new cultural habits, behaviors, and experiences. This is particularly true for newcomers who deal with new tensions by either adapting or resisting changes in their lifestyle patterns, consumption patterns, and cultural expressions. This has implications for their physical and mental health, their self-perceptions, and their relationships with others, as well as the role it plays in creating conditions for stability and integration.

Based on the above, identity can be defined as a system of material and non-material characteristics and elements that distinguish it from other things in general, despite the presence of similar elements and characteristics. The specific elements and characteristics of the identity of something are of two types: general elements and characteristics that may be shared with other identities, and specific elements and characteristics that are unique to this thing. When applying this definition to human beings, identity is everything that determines the existence of a person and their community, and their material and non-material characteristics accompanied by awareness of these characteristics and elements. Will and consciousness depend on the material and non-material elements and characteristics that make up the self, whether they are collective or individual. This is what made us decide that the material and non-material elements give specific characteristics and determine a general image of a certain group. Will and consciousness choose what the self believes represents and expresses it, according to various criteria and standards in which interest plays a prominent role in choosing the elements of identity, without forgetting the historical circumstances and external and internal factors surrounding it. Identity plays a dual or two-way role for the individual or the collective, as it

distinguishes the self from others and is the object of its pride, and on the other hand, it works to achieve similarity, harmony, and integration within the collective self and among its individuals. Beliefs, ideas, and ideologies play an important role in defining the characteristics that are the subject of pride.

The Arab-Islamic identity among immigrants residing in Europe is related to the feeling of belonging to the same religion, language, and repeated practices in daily life and in the same place. This means sharing the past and the future, and affects all other aspects of community life. This is what Saad Eddin Ibrahim means when he says that the issue of identity is fundamentally about symbolic, spiritual, and collective civilizational meanings, which give individuals a sense of belonging to a larger entity and create loyalty and pride in this larger entity.

Undoubtedly, the prevalence of unemployment and alienation among some of these Muslim youth, and the feeling of social exclusion, has made them prisoners of closed and isolationist identity discourse.

Recognizing the Arab-Islamic identity in Western societies has become a vital necessity to protect Muslims in diaspora from cultural alienation, religious extremism, and Islamophobia. Therefore, the issue of re-examining the relationship between Islamic and Western cultures has become increasingly important, as violence reflects the imbalance in the interaction between these cultures, whether manifested in the reaction of Muslims or right-wing extremism.

The Islamic presence in the West is no longer just passing through, and Muslims are no longer just a community, but have become a realistic fact and an integral part of the social, cultural, and civilizational system in Europe. Muslims have become a component of Western society.

Addressing the crisis of Muslim integration in Europe, and the West in general, can be achieved by providing intellectual, economic, social, and psychological alternatives for immigrants, encouraging them to participate more deeply in the social dialogue related to local issues that affect their lives in Western communities.

Encouraging them to also be interested in global issues such as social justice, poverty reduction, environmental protection, and world peace, which are universal issues that transcend identities and geographic borders, and can satisfy their desire to be involved in the issues of their native countries.

The subject requires more effort, as the duality of identity and integration is the Achilles' heel in the life of the Arab Muslim immigrant. The question always

remains hanging: Can we talk about integration if the price is identity? Is there a third way between the impossibility of full integration or isolation?

What is certain is that there is a trend that supports positive integration, that is, participation and coexistence without integration, meaning the convergence of two identities, to avoid isolation and living on the margins of life in Western communities.

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