



Research Paper

Christian-Muslim Tensions in Modern Society: A Foreshadowing of the Crusade Era?

R.Trivedi

Department of Comparative Religion and Philosophy, Demos Foundation Center For Research In Humanities, Shankarrao Kirloskar Marg, Erandwane, Pune.

Abstract:

Recently there are opinions within United States Christianity faces existential crisis due to political Islam. Such threats are evident from the significant demographic changes in western nations like UK and USA. Islamic immigrants in West are continuously and intensely demanding for an Islamic law, Sharia to be implemented in host countries. Besides a religion based dated law structure they are also enforcing cultural practices that are identified with Islam like enforcement of dress code of Burqa. As a reaction to this, many countries that are Christian by culture and nature have reacted to this cultural invasion with banning some of practices of Islam like public display of Burqa. These struggle between Christianity and Islam is not relatively new, these two dominant religions of world have long history of conflict, sometime extending to decades long wars. Muslims had initial advantages in these wars however Christians soon regained lost areas due to technological advancement and organized warfare. This Christian victory was followed by peaceful coexistence between these two forces. With large scale immigration of Muslims in Christian countries and their violent insistence of Cultural dominance; it feels like the Crusade-era tussle is re-emerging.

Keywords: Christianity, Islam, Crusade, Immigration, Demographic change, Sharia, Right-wing Politics

Received 10 Aug., 2024; Revised 21 Aug., 2024; Accepted 23 Aug., 2024 © The author(s) 2024.

Published with open access at www.questjournals.org

I. Introduction:

Few days ago, the former President of United States and the current Republican Presidential candidate Donald Trump, while addressing an event 'The Believers Summit' organized by a conservative advocacy group, urged 'Christians get out and vote. Just this time'¹. On similar lines Billionaire and CEO of Tesla Elon Musk posted on the social media platform X 'Unless there is more bravery to stand up for what is fair and right, Christianity will perish'². These two statements have generated a lot of debate about the context and the intention with which these were made (Tibi B, 2023).

Not long ago, in the mid of July, 2024, the running mate of Donald Trump and Ohio Senator J D Vance claimed that UK could become the first truly Islamist country to get a nuclear weapon³. He was speaking at the National Conservatism Conference in Washington. This statement, clearly drops a hint on what all they intended to point out to. And was this a mere sarcastic remark? The recent events in the UK point it otherwise. In recent days, there have been multiple reports of attacks on the natives by the migrants, with Harehills and Southport violence being the latest, followed by the violent protests allegedly by far-right organizations⁴. And these are not stray incidents. The country that ruled the world is under the threat of subversion. The migrants, arriving for several reasons have caused concerns amongst the natives. The latest census figures reveal that Islam is the fastest growing religion in United Kingdom⁵. The mayor of London Sadiq Khan, is of Pakistani descent. Brighton recently elected its first Muslim Mayor Mohammed Assaduzzaman who is a Bangladeshi descendant⁶. The menace of grooming gangs is also growing day by day.⁷And this is not just the case with Britain, but with the whole of Europe. France, Germany, Belgium, Norway, Sweden, Ireland, Holland, Spain, Italy all are facing these issues with growing Muslim population in their countries. Muslims are entering these countries in large numbers as either students or as asylum seekers, refugees or migrants due to favorable policies for them. But it is only now they are realizing the dangers posed by them to their society.

The situation regarding the growing Muslim population is not confined to Britain alone; it is a widespread phenomenon occurring throughout the entirety of Europe (Bawer, B. 2007; 2023). Countries such as France, Germany, Belgium, Norway, Sweden, Ireland, Holland, Spain, and Italy are all grappling with similar

challenges associated with significant increases in their Muslim populations (Goddard, H., 2024). However, as these communities grow, there is aburgeoning recognition among both governments and citizens regarding the complexities and potential challenges that this demographic change can present. There is an emerging dialogue about the implications of such demographic shifts on social cohesion, cultural identity, and national security. Many European countries are now beginning to confront the potential dangers and societal frictions that may arise from not only the integration of these new populations but also from the differing cultural values, religious practices, and community dynamics that they bring with them. The perceived threats may encompass issues related to social integration, economic competition, and the strain on public resources, prompting a reassessment of immigration policies.

¹<https://www.reuters.com/world/us/trump-tells-christians-they-wont-have-vote-after-this-election-2024-07-27/>

²<https://x.com/elonmusk/status/1817273263761817710>

³<https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/international/world-news/donald-trumps-vp-pick-jd-vance-called-uk-islamist-country-with-nuclear-weapons-faces-backlash/articleshow/111788046.cms?from=mdr>

⁴<https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/world/uk/southport-stabbing-riots-break-out-near-mosque-over-attack-that-killed-3-children/articleshow/112147663.cms>

⁵<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v= SX1gHBxvjX0>

⁶<https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/c72p807kr9mo>

⁷<https://www.indiatoday.in/world/story/uk-grooming-gangs-british-pakistanis-minors-sexual-assault-rishi-sunak-suella-braverman-2356084-2023-04-05>

As the Muslim population has grown over the years, they have started demanding that Sharia law should be applied to them⁸⁹¹⁰. Screams of “*Allah u Akbar*” have now become common in Europe¹¹. Riots and violence have now become a part of Europe which earlier was relatively peaceful¹²¹³. The most popular names for new born in Europe include Muhammad¹⁴¹⁵. According to research done by Pew, a Washington based think tank and research organization, the share of Muslims in Europe’s population is set to increase even in case there is no migration. To show how the size of Europe’s Muslim population may change in the coming decades, it has modeled three scenarios’, namely zero migration, medium migration and high migration scenario¹⁶. If the scenarios are to be believed, then a large-scale change in the demography of European nations is inevitable. Lately, some countries have taken a stand to make changes to the immigration policies which are led by far-right and conservative leaders like Viktor Orban, Giorgia Meloni, Geert Wilders among others and multiple right-wing parties. The impact was felt in the 2024 European Parliament elections as well, where the right-wing made significant gains and the European Commission’s President Ursula Von der Leyen was severely criticized for her pro-immigration policies¹⁷. Many countries have banned face-covering veils and headscarves like France¹⁸, Austria¹⁹, Bulgaria²⁰, Denmark²¹, Norway²² to name a few. This polarization is not just in Europe alone, but a general trend seen in

⁸<https://www.gatestoneinstitute.org/2425/belgium-islamic-sharia-law-court>

⁹<https://www.i24news.tv/en/news/international/europe/1568920086-poll-46-of-french-muslims-believe-sharia-law-should-be-applied-in-country>

¹⁰<https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-16522447>

¹¹<https://www.facebook.com/share/v/QnGfNdFCk5YQKRax/?mibextid=oFDknk>

¹²https://www.theepochtimes.com/world/french-riots-just-the-beginning-of-greater-civil-unrest-in-europe-political-scientist-5390344?utm_medium=GoogleAds&utm_source=PerfmaxM&utm_campaign=PM_max_EggRefrigerateV456_Test8

¹³<https://www.nytimes.com/2023/11/24/world/europe/dublin-riots-police.html>

¹⁴<https://www.nytimes.com/2023/11/24/world/europe/dublin-riots-police.html>

¹⁵<https://www.nytimes.com/2023/11/24/world/europe/dublin-riots-police.html>

¹⁶<https://www.nytimes.com/2023/11/24/world/europe/dublin-riots-police.html>

¹⁷<https://www.nytimes.com/2023/11/24/world/europe/dublin-riots-police.html>

¹⁸<https://www.nytimes.com/2023/11/24/world/europe/dublin-riots-police.html>

¹⁹<https://www.nytimes.com/2023/11/24/world/europe/dublin-riots-police.html>

²⁰<https://www.nytimes.com/2023/11/24/world/europe/dublin-riots-police.html>

²¹<https://www.nytimes.com/2023/11/24/world/europe/dublin-riots-police.html>

²²<https://www.nytimes.com/2023/11/24/world/europe/dublin-riots-police.html>

²³<https://www.nytimes.com/2023/11/24/world/europe/dublin-riots-police.html>

²⁴<https://www.nytimes.com/2023/11/24/world/europe/dublin-riots-police.html>

idUSKCN1201FV/

²¹<https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/denmark-burqa-ban-europe-muslim-women-face-veil-niqab-islam-a8377586.html>

²²<https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/norway-burqa-ban-schools-universities-parliament-vote-niqab-latest-a8387826.html>

other places as well, be it Australia or America. This polarization has been triggered by multiple terror attacks which include the 9/11 attacks on World Trade Centre (2001), Madrid train bombings (2004), London train bombings (2005), Paris attacks (2015), Brussels bombings (2016), Berlin Christmas market attack (2016), Manchester Arena bombing (2017), Barcelona attacks (2017), Crocus city hall attack (2024) to name a few besides multiple instances of violent protests and stabbing attacks.

A Foreshadowing:

This struggle between Christianity and Islam is not new. Both the religions are Abrahamic and originated in the Middle East. Christianity originated around two thousand years ago while Islam originated around 1400 years ago. Both share certain similarities as well. The struggle between Christianity and Islam started soon after the advent of Islam in the 7th century. In the early 8th century, Muslims under the Umayyad Caliphate invaded and conquered Iberian Peninsula²³, which is basically part of modern-day Spain and Portugal. But their advances in Western Europe were halted in 732 A.D in the Battle of Tours after the Umayyads suffered heavy casualties at the hands of Frankish forces²⁴. Thereafter, the Christian Kings launched a series of successful military campaigns to reconquer the areas under the Muslims thereby regaining all the territories, referred to as Reconquista²⁵. In the medieval period, Christians fought a series of crusades or religious wars under the support and direction of Church with the objective of liberating Jerusalem which was under the Muslim rule. Initially, they were successful in establishing their rule, but later Muslims under Salahdin and Mamluks succeeded in regaining control of Jerusalem(Sultan, W. 2011).

The Muslims under Ottoman Turks were able to make headway into Europe with the conquest of Constantinople²⁶(Istanbul). But, due to technological advancements, the Christians under the European colonial powers were able to colonize many nations including the Islamic ones. This led to a steady decline in the territory and strength of Muslims. After the two World Wars and consequent weakening of the colonial powers, the Islamic nations came together to consolidate their strength and formed the Organization of Islamic Cooperation²⁷, though the immediate trigger for coming together was a fire incident in the Al-Aqsa Mosque, Jerusalem in 1969. The OIC has become a collective voice of the Muslim world working ensure and safeguard and protect the interest of the Muslims on economic, social and political areas.

²³<https://www.islamweb.net/en/article/136056/taariq-ibn-ziyaad-the-conqueror-of-andalusia>

²⁴<https://www.thelatinlibrary.com/imperialism/notes/tours.html>

²⁵<https://courses.lumenlearning.com/atd-herkimer-westerncivilization/chapter/the-reconquista/>

²⁶<https://web.archive.org/web/20170618134946/http://www.economist.com/node/346800>

²⁷<https://new.oic-oci.org/SitePages/CommonPage.aspx?Item=1>

In the last few decades, both the religions are aggressively competing for world dominance. Today, Christianity is the world's most followed religion with around 2.5 billion adherents while Islam is closely behind at second number with around 1.9 billion adherents^{28,29}. There are 157 countries where Christianity is a majority religion³⁰and 49 countries with Islam as the dominant religion³¹in the world (O'mahony, A., Loosley, E., 2024). Both the religions have an expansionist policy believe in spreading their religion and are involved in missionary activities aimed at proselytizing. This can be gauged from the fact that there is a substantial increase in the number of Churches and Mosques the world over. In the past century there is a ten-fold increase in the number of churches with around 4.2 million around the world³². The number of mosques has also seen a substantial rise with around 3.6 million mosques worldwide³³. While new churches have come up in Africa and Asia, mosques have increased in number in America and Europe, in the cradle of Christianity. The fertility rate among the Muslims is higher when compared to the Christians. According to a study by Pew, if the current trends in increase in population continue, Muslims would outnumber Christians after 2070³⁴. And this is the cause of worry in the Christian world, because none other than Muslims can challenge the dominance of Christians (Spencer, R., 2003;2008). Christians have already lost Lebanon to Muslims³⁵. With the assistance from the Human Rights Organizations and Left-liberal organizations, Islam is making inroads in Europe. And this is the reason we see western leaders who view Islam as a threat to the very existence of the western world, speaking up against Islam. Recently, Russia also banned Islamic Niqab on security grounds and also accused Muslims of disrespecting women of other faiths, though Russia has maintained a moderate outlook against Muslims until now³⁶. And in this background, we need to see the statements of Donald Trump or Elon Musk. They are only

reflecting upon the general feeling that exists in American and European Christians today. That is why we see the trends #EnoughIsEnough on social media platform X³⁷. And to shed more light on this, we may refer to Donald Trump's interview in which he said that he thinks Islam hates them³⁸.

²⁸<https://www.statista.com/statistics/374704/share-of-global-population-by-religion/>

²⁹<https://www.britannica.com/topic/List-of-religious-populations>

³⁰<https://www.pewresearch.org/religion/2012/12/18/global-religious-landscape-christians/>

³¹<https://worldpopulationreview.com/country-rankings/muslim-majority-countries>

³²[https://www.frontierpartners.org/global-christianity-](https://www.frontierpartners.org/global-christianity-surges#:~:text=Over%20the%20past%20century%2C%20the,of%20reaching%20600%2C000%20by%202050.)

[surges#:~:text=Over%20the%20past%20century%2C%20the,of%20reaching%20600%2C000%20by%202050.](https://www.frontierpartners.org/global-christianity-surges#:~:text=Over%20the%20past%20century%2C%20the,of%20reaching%20600%2C000%20by%202050.)

³³[https://en.irna.ir/news/81699685/Number-of-mosques-to-rise-to-nearly-4-million-by-](https://en.irna.ir/news/81699685/Number-of-mosques-to-rise-to-nearly-4-million-by-2019#:~:text=According%20to%20AI%2DBayan%20daily,world%20at%20around%203.6%20million.)

[2019#:~:text=According%20to%20AI%2DBayan%20daily,world%20at%20around%203.6%20million.](https://en.irna.ir/news/81699685/Number-of-mosques-to-rise-to-nearly-4-million-by-2019#:~:text=According%20to%20AI%2DBayan%20daily,world%20at%20around%203.6%20million.)

³⁴<https://www.pewresearch.org/religion/2015/04/02/religious-projections-2010-2050/>

³⁵<https://web.archive.org/web/20080308163340/http://www.time.com/time/magazine/article/0,9171,975156,00.html>

³⁶<https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/videos/international/putins-rare-blunt-attack-on-muslims-russia-defends-ban-on-islamic-niqab-watch/videoshow/112049734.cms>

This conflict is not just limited to the western world, but is visible in India as well. Recently, in Kerala, controversy erupted when Nirmala College, managed by Catholic Church, denied permission to girl students to offer namaz inside the campus, resulting in protests³⁹. And this is not the first time that Christians and Muslims are at loggerheads. The Church in Kerala has also expressed concerns about love jihad⁴⁰.

II. Conclusion:

Finally, it can be concluded that the tussle between Christianity and Islam is bound to increase in future. Be it Christianity or Islam, they want to establish their supremacy. Both view each other as threats to their objective. This clash of civilizations could lead to more hostilities and thereby to more civil wars and more bloodshed. Millions have been slaughtered by these blood-thirsty religious fanatics since their origin. The Marxists in the field of education have deliberately erased those chapters from our history that would have highlighted the tremendous harm the world suffered because of the wars under the guise of jihad and crusades.

Though both religions claim to be religion of peace and prosperity, but the truth is that the cost of this prosperity is enormous that was paid by ethnic cleansing of millions of innocent people or infidels/kaffirs. The followers of these religions believe that theirs the only true religion and do not believe in the existence of other religions. Those who do not believe in their religion are considered as infidels or kaffirs. They have desecrated and destroyed the structures which belonged to other religions. With the advent of Christianity and Islam, religious orders and beliefs and cultures that existed earlier have either become extinct like Manichaeism, Finnish Paganism or Canaanite religion or are on the verge of extinction, like Samaritanism, Yazidi, Zoroastrianism or Druze.

The different viewpoints and the diverse nature of human society has not only been challenged, but their very existence has been threatened. hence the question arises, are we heading to the crusade era? Are we heading to an era where the whole of the world would become a battlefield of fierce combats in which millions would perish and societies devastated just to establish the supremacy of either Christianity or Islam?

³⁷https://twitter.com/search?q=%23EnoughIsEnough&src=typed_query&f=top

³⁸<https://www.cnn.com/2016/03/09/politics/donald-trump-islam-hates-us/index.html>

³⁹<https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/kochi/nirmala-college-management-denies-prayer-rooms-for-all-students/articleshow/112092600.cms>

⁴⁰<https://news.rediff.com/report/2009/oct/14/is-love-jihad-terrors-new-mantra.htm>

References:

- [1]. Bawer, B. (2007). While Europe slept: How radical Islam is destroying the West from within. Anchor.
- [2]. Bawer, B. (2023). The Muslim Brotherhood's Pan-European Structure. *Middle East Quarterly*, 30(1), 5-6.
- [3]. Goddard, H. (2024). Christian Views of Islam'. *St Andrews Encyclopaedia of Theology*.
- [4]. Hohmann, L. (2023). *Stealth Invasion: Muslim Conquest Through Immigration and Resettlement Jihad*. Post Hill Press.
- [5]. O'mahony, A., &Loosley, E. (Eds.). (2024). *Christian responses to Islam: Muslim-Christian relations in the modern world*. Manchester University Press.
- [6]. Spencer, R. (2003). *Onward Muslim soldiers: How jihad still threatens America and the West*. Regnery Publishing.
- [7]. Spencer, R. (2008). *Stealth Jihad: How radical Islam is subverting America without guns or bombs*. Regnery Publishing.

- [8]. Stewart, B. (2021). Misogyny Knows No Borders: In the face of indifference and political correctness, Hoover fellow Ayaan Hirsi Ali defends women's rights. *Hoover Digest*, (4), 69-78.
- [9]. Steyn, M. (2006). *America alone: The end of the world as we know it*. Regnery Publishing.
- [10]. Sultan, W. (2011). *A god who hates: The courageous woman who inflamed the Muslim world speaks out against the evils of Islam*. St. Martin's Press.
- [11]. Tibi, B. (2023). *The challenge of fundamentalism: Political Islam and the new world disorder (Vol. 9)*. University of California Press.