

“Delineation As A Means of Identity Preservation”

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Abstract

The purpose of this study is to explore how various groups of people have sought to preserve their respective identities. This paper focuses on the Jewish experience, Egypt's Coptic Christians, and Muslim societies—both, in the context of Muslims living in the western world, and Muslims living in Muslim majority countries. The study finds that there is an infinite number of ways in which individuals may seek to preserve their identities, or delineate themselves from others. However, they all seem to relate to separating one's self from the “Other,” and various justifications for such actions exist to legitimize these differentiations.

Introduction

Segregation, separation, and the propping up of barriers are nearly synonymous with conflict, and hostility. However they can also be utilized as a means to preserve one's culture. Take, for example, the case of one religious group. They are a people segregated, more or less, from the Western world, which they rarely interact with. They practice devoutly in their houses of worship. Their women typically cover their hair, and hide their bodies underneath long, draped garments. Their men grow thick, long beards, and their children are taught to follow the strictness of the scripture.

I am referring to the Pennsylvania Amish. These people have chosen to segregate themselves in order to preserve their own religious identity—and without such segregation, they probably would not be able to preserve their unique identity. It is easy to understand why this type of identity could not possibly be preserved without complete isolation from the modern world—as Amish communities even reject the most common of modern technologies, electricity.

The Amish can be considered at the far end of the spectrum, when discussing the use of self-segregation to preserve identity because they completely isolate themselves. Yet, there are others who, like the Amish, also seek to preserve their identity through varying degrees of segregation. Perhaps every people act in such a way that produces an infinite number of levels of separation.

Last November, New York Times writer Kirk Sempler chronicled the story of immigrant millionaires that have made fortunes in the U.S. without learning English. His article, *Moving to the U.S. and Amassing a Fortune, No English Needed* reported the story of Felix Sanchez de la Vega Guzman, a Mexican-American, who “turned a business selling tortillas on the street into a \$19 million dollar food manufacturing empire that threaded together the Mexican Diaspora from coast to coast and reached back into Mexico itself.” The successful entrepreneur still speaks little to no English, and has relied heavily on internet technology which allows his customers to purchase his products online, or in New York City shops and bodegas. What little interaction he does have with clients is typically in Spanish, as much of his customer—at least at the onset of his business—are primarily Latino or Spanish speakers (Sempler).

Another immigrant, Zhang Yulong of China, sits atop a 30 million dollar per year cell phone accessories business, and employs 45 employees. Yet, he is neither fluent in English nor a U.S. Citizen. He began his business after moving to the U.S. in 1994 and prefers his status as a legal permanent resident because it allows him the flexibility of traveling to mainland China without a visa. While not all immigrants are millionaires, the 2010 U.S. Census has reported that 35,500 heads of households in the U.S. speak little to no English, yet garner an impressive annual income of over \$200 thousand dollars a year (Sempler).

While there are certainly questions related to why so many successful immigrants have gotten by without learning the local language—such as access to education, time, affordability, practicality, and difficulty—a preference to one’s own culture and identity may also be at play. In many ways, this can be seen as an ideal example of pluralism—in which both majority and minority identities are preserved without conflict, and peacefully coexist without dilution (Sempler). For Guzman and Yulong the question is not how come they were able to become so successful in the United States without learning the local language, but why have they not fully integrated? It would be one thing to neglect learning the local language; however Yulong seems to still be very attached to his mother country—foregoing dual citizenship. To at least some degree, cultural preference and comfort must be at least part of matter. Though there are certainly constraints and obstacles to full integration via language acquisition, these individuals may not, simply, identify with every aspect of American life—both culturally and socially.

Literature Review

Minority-Majority Relations

Minority-majority relations can be broken down and analyzed in a variety of ways. Richard Shaefer describes relations between minority and majority groups in the span of a continuum. The continuum begins on the far left with **extermination** (genocide), followed by **expulsion** (e.g. the expulsion of Native Americans from colonial territories), **secession** (e.g. the uprooting of a people, who then create their own nation—like Israel or Pakistan), **segregation** (e.g. the segregation of African Americans in the United States), **fusion** (the synthesis of two or more groups, thus creating an entirely new group), **assimilation** (the conformation of the minority group, to the majority group), and finally **pluralism** (peaceful coexistence of multiple

groups of people) (24-31). However, Shaefer gives little explanation as to how these relationships come to existence, or what elements or factors precede such majority-minority relationships.

Sociologist John Berry explains minority-majority relations (or what is termed “migrant-host relations”) through two main criterion. The first is the level to which the minority group values its own culture, and the second is whether the minority values the majority culture. If a minority values both their own culture and the majority culture, they fall into the category of **integration** (keeping up with both cultures). However, if they value the majority culture over their own culture then **assimilation** occurs. Devaluing both one’s own culture, and the majority culture leads to what Berry calls **separation** (e.g. a separation from both your own society, and the majority culture’s society), while valuing one’s own culture over the majority culture leads to **marginalization** (a lack of social and political participation in the majority culture) (183).

James Rosenau (2004) expands upon this idea by including a final grouping, **hybridity**. This category is added to explain any combination of the four previously mentioned relationship categories—hybridity is typically circumstantial, and occurs in specific situations. For example, one “may desire economic assimilation (via employment), linguistic integration (bilingualism), and social separation (marrying someone from the same group and socializing only with members of their own group)” (Martin and Nakayama, 318).

“Othering”

The philosopher Emmanuel Levinas was the first to delve deeply into the concept of the “Other” and “Othering” in his piece “Thinking of the Other.” In it he writes “in every attitude toward the human being there is a greeting—even if it is a refusal of a greeting” (7). In other words, Levinas is stating that all of our actions instill some sort of message or statement—even if

it is the absence of a statement—and that we define one another through these statements, thus delineating ourselves from others. Levinas continues:

By relating to beings in the openness of being, understanding finds a meaning for them in terms of being. In this sense, understanding does not invoke them, but only names them. And thus, with regards to beings, understanding carries out an act of violence and of negation. A partial negation, which is violence. And this partialness can be described by the fact that, without disappearing, beings are in my power. The partial negation which is violence denies the interdependence of beings: they are mine (9).

In other words, Levinas is saying that when we delineate others from ourselves we are effectively committing an act of violence in the sense that we are asserting our power or force over another person, and labeling them as something we have defined, ourselves, without their consent. Levinas goes on to say that in our “being” there is an inherent push for “self-preservation”—thus correlating “Othering” and “self-preservation” (201).

Sonia Sikka critiques this thought of the “Other” by contending that “an ethics emphasizing alterity and asymmetry, an ethics that deliberately refrains from imagining the Other as another like oneself, might contribute to a failure to recognize and respect [the] Other, and his or her very difference from oneself” (109). Sikka continues, “through such writing, one ends up encountering, ironically, never the other, but only oneself, only the other painted in the image of oneself” (110). Her thoughts conclude that Levinas has a Eurocentric bias based upon the events of the holocaust—describing them as “the only kind of ethics that could come out of the Holocaust” (115). She ends her assessment of Levinas saying:

This is the philosophy of the Other, that, although it claims to be based on difference, is in another sense indifferent to difference. It is a philosophy that says: beyond all identity and difference and prior to them, there is this other who challenges my self-absorption, and to whom, whoever (s)he may be, I, whoever I may be, owe bread and water and warmth and shelter (115).

Finally, Sikka concludes that “it is better served, I think, by grammar of “recognition” (reconnaissance) even with all of its attendant difficulties”—or recognizing our differences and accepting them, as opposed to ignoring them and walking away from any type of delineation, and a failure to actually encounter the Other (116). Thus, the other is different and should be recognized and understood separately from one’s self.

Identity Theory

There are multiple ways to conceptualize how one comes to understand their own identity. In his 1943 piece, *A Theory of Human Motivation*, Abraham Maslow used a categorization of human needs that must be satisfied before one’s own identity (“self-actualization”) can be discovered or understood. He divided the categories in an ascending fashion, in which certain needs must be satisfied before others can be sought after. These categories are, first, **Physiological Needs** (biological needs—breathing, food and water, sex, sleep, homeostasis, and excretion), then **Safety Needs** (security of the body, economic security, safety of family, health, and shelter), **Love Needs** or a sense of belonging (friendship, family, and sexual intimacy), and **Esteem Needs** (self-esteem, confidence, achievement, the respect of others). The final level is **Self-Actualization** (morality, creativity, spontaneity, problem-solving, lack of prejudice, and acceptance of facts). This final stage is where one comes to their own, and discovers who they are. The concept of identity ultimately falls at the highest point of Maslow’s pyramid, under self-actualization.

Other scholars believe that identity springs forth from social constructs and social interaction. George Mead (1934) argues that the self is developed through communication and interactions with society and others. It is based upon the mind’s ability to recognize that it is an

individual among other individuals. The mind then begins to treat itself as an individual. William James (1890) expands on this in *Principles of Psychology* and suggests that individuals have multiple versions of themselves that differ given the social context within society—thus they have multiple identities, which is not an idea too far off from Rosenau’s hybridity model. More importantly, he refers to self-esteem as an equation—success divided by pretension—and also suggests that it is a culmination of both our aspirations and achievements. Thus, even the most successful individuals will have low self-esteem if their aspirations are higher their accomplishments. This differs from Maslow’s explanation of esteem, as being based upon the fulfillment of needs, such as love.

Sheldon Stryker (1980) continues on this vein of identity formation through social interaction, and designates four premises that are used in identity formation (or “internalized position designations”). The first is that “behavior is premised on a named or classified world,” and that there are “shared behavioral expectations that grow out of social interaction” (53). From these interactions one “learns how one is expected to behave with reference to those objects” (54). Second, individuals take on roles that have been developed in society, and are associated with their labels. These widely recognized labels are shared and used throughout that culture and society. Third, the previously mentioned labels are associated with shared expectations and expected behaviors. Last, individuals take on those roles and labels in a reflexive way, and identify with them. This last premise is what is most important to understand—that shared expectations and given definitions are what individuals take on to determine their own identity. Thus common definitions of identities are formed (e.g. ‘bus-driver,’ ‘Muslim,’ ‘entrepreneur’) and then taken on by individuals who then project those identities (e.g. I am a...bus-driver, Muslim, entrepreneur). These definitions then dictate behaviors, based upon expectations.

East-West Relations

In *Orientalism*, Edward Said (1978) draws a dichotomy between the Middle East and Europe suggesting “European superiority over Oriental backwardness.” He goes on to suggest that European identity is “superior” “in comparison with all non-European peoples and cultures” and cites a myriad of examples noting the relationship between the Middle East and Europe—particularly Britain and France—as an exotic affair (7).

Bernard Lewis famously debated and contended Said on his stances in *Orientalism*. In a 1982 book review Lewis writes “to prove his point, Mr. Said makes a number of very arbitrary decisions. His Orient is reduced to the Middle East, and his Middle East to a part of the Arab world. By eliminating Turkish and Persian studies on the one hand and Semitic studies on the other, he isolates Arabic studies from both their historical and philological contexts” which prevents from any real analysis or theoretical framework. Lewis continues “For Mr. Said, it would seem, scholarship and science are commodities which exist in finite quantities; the West has grabbed an unfair share of these as well as other resources, leaving the East not only impoverished but also unscholarly and unscientific” (5). In sum, Lewis finds Said’s piece racist and simplistic towards the East.

Francis Fukuyama’s *The End of History and the Last Man* suggest that today’s “liberal democracy may constitute the ‘end point of mankind’s ideological evolution’ and the ‘final form of human government’ and as such constituted the ‘end of history’” because they hold the greatest legitimacy (xi). The book characteristically rejects other modes of rule as inferior—thus deeming other frameworks or ways of life and government inferior. Fukuyama indirectly continues this trend relating to Eastern inferiority.

In *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of the World Order*, Samuel Huntington (1996) discusses the relationship between the Muslim world and America as a cultural clash. Indeed, Huntington believes that “the world...is divided between a Western one and a non-Western many.” He suggests that all future conflicts will be related to religious and cultural identity between the West (the United States, Western Europe, Australia, and New Zealand) and 8 other cultural civilizations (Latin American, African, Islamic, Sinic, Hindu, Orthodox, Buddhist, and Japanese). He believes that “conflicts are increasingly shaped by cultural and civilizational factors” and that “conflicts that pose the greatest danger for stability are those between states or groups from different civilizations” (36). Huntington’s simplistic map seems to also refer to the West with a sense of superiority, like Fukuyama.

In sum, these pieces illustrate identity clashes between the Western world and East (specifically, the Arab world). Many other works of literature exist on the topics of *Minority—Majority Relations*, *Othering*, *Identity Theory*, and *East West Relations*. Many other works can be used and applied for this discussion. However, given the scope of this research, these scholarly pieces will be used as a launching point into the topic of this paper: Delineation as a means of identity preservation.

The Research Question & Methodology

This piece will seek to assess how segregation has served as a means of preserving one’s identity. Simply put, the research question is to what extent and in what ways has segregation or delineation been used as a means to preserve identity and culture. Additionally, in what other ways has segregation been used a means of cultural preservation, outside of genocide (Holocaust/Armenia/Rwanda) and complete self-segregation (Amish/Quakers). While direct

hostility and conflict are of great importance to this subject, the scope of this research will be defined within the limits of cultural and identity relations so as to focus on one specific matter.

Four case studies will be explored in order to further demonstrate the subject matter. The first will be the Jewish experience, biblically and in 19th and 20th century Europe. This will be followed by a case study on the Coptic Christian people of Egypt, then Antisemitism and Islamophobia, and finally Muslims in an ever globalized world (i.e. how Muslims have adapted to globalism, while staying true to their own culture). All four case studies are distinctively different. However, all are common in that the issue of identity is central to these conflicts.

In the case of Jews and Israelis, the issue of identity is particularly strong—as Israel is a Jewish state surrounded by hostile neighbors and an autonomous, unrecognized Palestinian Authority. The state has sought to preserve itself in a variety of ways, not limited to segregating itself from Palestinians, to whom it denies rights. What's most fascinating about this is not the fact that the Israeli state has done this, but that this need for separation bred from hostilities toward European Jews during the Holocaust. This idea will be extrapolated in the third case study.

The second case study will examine Coptic Christians living in Egypt, and their plight to preserve their own identity within an Arab nation that is 85 to 90 percent Muslim. While Coptic Christians hold a minority status within Egypt, they are the largest Christian community in the Middle East. Their long and rich history spans over 20 centuries—dating back to the early church. The Coptic community's status is also particularly fascinating because they, not only, separate themselves from Muslim communities but also Christian communities that they feel are less conservative in beliefs, practices, and values.

Lastly, we will explore cases relating to Muslims living in the Western world and their own identity crisis—as they seek to reconcile their own identity with that of the Western world, and their nation of residence. In this instance, the situation is rather complicated as the Muslim world seems to be at odds with the Western world; through war and armed conflict, but also as a matter of identity. For this reason, there are instances of segregation on both ends, as the Western World (particularly Europeans) seek to uproot Islamic traditions and culture in avoidance of multiculturalism, and Muslims seek to find a place for themselves while staying true to their traditions. This topic will be explored through a discussion related to a fatwa (religious ruling) regarding whether or not Caviar is halal (permitted), and Islamic Finance.

It is hypothesized that delineation, othering, and separation are all methods employed to preserve culture.

Discussion & Analysis

The Jewish Experience

One's identity is typically a confusing subject. Accepting an overarching definition for an entire people is difficult, especially while attempting to preserve individualism. Yet individuals still subscribe to definitions in order to find commonality, community, and a sense of self. Now, once these religious, cultural, or ethnic communities are established there is often an effort to keep them intact, or preserve them. This preservation effort is where we create our own perception of the Levinas "Other" (individuals outside of our community). Indeed, it helps validate our own uniqueness or exclusiveness. Defining the "Other" is a critical part of preserving our own communities. Defining the "Other" is no different than defining our own communities—for defining communities requires differentiating one community from another.

The effort to preserve our own community is what creates and, ultimately, defines how we perceive “Others.” Similarly, the biblical Jewish community’s aim to preserve itself has shaped how it preserves “Others.” However, this is not a Jewish phenomenon, and can be seen in other communities as well.

First, we must begin with Jewish communities. The Jewish perception of the “Others” can also be analyzed through the Biblical texts. However, analyzing religious texts often expose contradictions that do not provide us with a clear answer as to how Jews should or do perceive non-Jews. The Bible relays instances of both cooperation and conflict between the Israelites and their neighbors. There are examples of both wars (e.g. the Chedorlaomers from Genesis chapter fourteen, the Philistines in the Book of First Samuel) and friendly relations between the Israelites and their neighbors (e.g. Abraham’s tithing to King Melchizedek, King of Salem). In both instances there are efforts of preservation. This can be seen as fighting the “Other” in order to preserve your own people, or partnering with the “Other” in order to ensure friendly relations, partnerships, and possibly prevent future conflicts (Kessler). This idea can be related to Maslow’s hierarchy of needs, as needs associated with safety and esteem are necessary before self-actualization. Thus, it would make sense that during times of desperation, securing these needs took a higher priority to identity, or self-actualization.

This can be seen through different relations. With regards to marriage and social assimilation, the book of Esra chronicles the purging of non-Jewish wives following exile. In contrast, Jeremiah the Prophet suggests that Jews should “increase” (or multiply) and assimilate while in exile. He even goes as far as suggesting that the exiled Israelites should marry into Babylonian families (However, Jeremiah is later tried and sentenced to house arrest for preaching these ideas.). Lastly, the Book of Ruth depicts her as a heroine, despite being an

outsider from the Tribe of Moab. She also marries Boaz (a Jew) despite the illegality of the marriage as mentioned in the Book of Deuteronomy (Kessler).

These cases can be analyzed as a plight for preservation, through biblical interaction with the “Other.” The need for preservation defines relations with the “Other.” In the case of Esra, cultural and religious identity is preserved through the removal or eradication of non-Jewish wives. While in the cases of Jeremiah and Ruth, mingling with the “Other” is nearly vital to the preservation and survival of the Israelites.

In Dr. Ed Kessler’s lecture on *Judaism and Jewish Perceptions of the “Other”* he noted that many 19th century European Jewish communities, to a degree, isolated themselves from non-Jews in order to preserve their own religious and cultural identity. This is depicted in a number of forms including the inability of strict Jews to share meals with non-Jews because of their dietary laws and practices. Kessler also states that, to a degree, this alienated European Jews before ghettos were established (this is not to say that other factors such as anti-Semitism were not at play in Europe at the time, and may have been cause for further alienation). The inwardness resulting from strict dietary practices can be identified as an example of religious and cultural preservation—for dining with non-community members could result in the breaking of dietary laws (Kessler).

Inwardness as a means of preservation can also be identified through societal relations. Some believe that Jewish laws relating to personal interactions and dealings with people are exclusive to Jewish communities. Specifically, Rabbi Akiva’s argues that the verse “Love your neighbor as yourself” (Leviticus 19:18) refers primarily, or perhaps even solely, to Jewish communities. This may suggest that Jews should be most preoccupied with other Jews, and

socialize with Jews, while non-Jews should be of secondary concern. Kessler also mentions that while Jews in exile submitted to the ruling powers for political reasons—stating that “The law of the land is our law”—there was still some resistance in an effort to preserve community autonomy (which allowed for management of one’s own affairs) (Kessler).

The Copts of Egypt

In Egypt, the Coptic Christian minority has also sought to manage its own affairs in order to preserve its own religious and cultural identity. The church has not gone as far as secession—or uprooting—as Shaefer discusses, but does separate itself from society to a degree, and manages its own affairs. Such managing has also dictated Coptic perceptions of the “Other.” Due to the nature of Egyptian law, which requires its citizens to register their religion—Judaism, Christianity, or Islam—the Church has had an influential role in many issues, and has sought to consolidate certain areas of influence. Egyptian citizens who register themselves as Christians are under the jurisdiction of the Coptic Church for certain issues—most notably the issue of marriage and divorce. The Coptic Church has been in contention with the Egyptian government over the legality of marriage and divorce and has been determining what is and is not appropriate for all Christians.

The Coptic Church is able to do this because Egyptian law is composed of a combination of both Civil and Islamic law. Therefore, legal matters are often resolved based upon the suggestion of religious institutions. Under Coptic law, couples are only allowed to divorce for two reasons—infidelity and conversion. Because of this, the Coptic Church wields a lot of power in the everyday lives of the entire Christian population (Copts, Protestants, and Catholics). Christians wishing to divorce outside of the Church’s teachings must either convert to another religion, or bear false witness of infidelity. Since the year 2000, there have been over 160,000

unresolved cases relating to this matter—signifying growing pressure. Many individuals bringing cases to trial are secular or other non-Coptic Christians (Carr). This can be seen as Coptic alienation from Egyptian civil society as a means of preservation. The preservation effort has resulted in conflict, and, perhaps, negative sentiments or perceptions of the “Other.”

The Coptic Church also tends to act more inwardly and closed off towards both other Christian sects and Muslims. This can be considered yet another preservation effort which indirectly dictates Coptic perceptions of the “Other.” Since the Protestant Church tends to be more lenient dogmatically, and focuses more on the moral and community aspects of Christian society, Copts tends to avoid Protestants. The Coptic Church tends to be less integrated with other Egyptian Christians because of its longer history, and stricter practices (especially in regards to fasting and life style). Some may see this as Coptic arrogance, in the sense that since the Coptic Church has a long standing and rich tradition, and a longer history it feels superior to “Other” churches, and perhaps even more legitimate. This sense of superiority and pride results in religious and cultural preservation through inwardness and produces negative or inferior sentiments towards the “Other.”

Sectarianism towards other Christians, not in the sense of violence, but through a lack of mingling, cooperation, and interaction, is a manifestation of this preservation effort. In 2009, the late-H. H. Pope Shenouda III (Pope and Patriarch of Alexandria, and all of Africa) even went as far as signing off on recommendations to limit Coptic and Protestant mingling—banning “closed meetings in churches and homes without prior permission from the respective bishop, so as to curb the dissemination of Protestantism among Copts” (“Pope Shenouda Signs Holy Synod Recommendations Resisting Protestant Penetration in Coptic Church,” *Al Masry Al Youm*). This

would be a definitive example of an effort to preserve religious identity through inwardness, which then leads to a negative perception of the “Other” as a lesser or inferior entity.

These examples of inwardness and religious autonomy are a manifestation of the Coptic Church’s effort to preserve their community, similar to the aforementioned examples of Jewish preservation. The resulting effort to preserve religious identities or communities can result in societal alienation and separation. This then propagates the perception of the “Other” as an outsider. A perception of “Others” as outsiders often results in negative sentiments. Instances where perceptions of the “Other” are not correlated with negative sentiments are often connected to situations in which the “Other” is necessary for self preservation (e.g. Jeremiah and Ruth’s integration). Relations with “Others” seem to be most correlated with the need to preserve a community’s own identity.

In other words, if assimilation is necessary for preservation, then mingling with the “Other” is likely to occur because there is greater power in numbers. This is why individuals, organizations, and institutions are willing to band together against common aggressors if mingling or grouping is necessary for survival. However if mingling with the “Other” jeopardizes a community’s ability to preserve its own identity, it is likely that there will be less mingling and perhaps a less friendly perceptions of the “Other.”

Antisemitism & Islamophobia: An Identity Preservation Crisis

Antisemitism and Islamophobia are both rooted in the same underlying behaviors. While they have different histories, the two have resulted in the same types of discrimination—both by States and societies. While Antisemitism is much different now than it was nearly 100 years ago, it is still very present today. However, Antisemitism is no longer manifested through exclusion, but discrimination as a result of European inclusion. In contrast, Islamophobia is now following

trends similar to Antisemitism in the sense that Muslims are facing pressure by not only society but also States and governments. Lastly, the response to both of these experiences has been hostility towards the “Other,” as explained through Levinas’ theory on Othering.

Islamophobia has resulted from two main trends. The first is the tragic events of September 11th, 2001 and others similar to it. Though there have been instances of Islamophobia in the past, for many, this horrific event was America’s first real encounter with the Muslim world—or at least a radical minority of it. Irresponsibly, many Americans took the images of these events as representative of all Muslims, triggering widespread Islamophobia. Some American courts have even been compelled to ban what they perceive as Muslim ideals. For example, dozens of State courts in the United States have banned the implementation of Sharia law from their legal system. There is no doubt that the implementation of Islamic law is not a threat to American society. Yet, because of widespread fear of Muslims, some communities have chosen to take an offensive stance on the matter—defending American ideals regardless of whether or not they are in imminent danger (Martin). There have also been countless instances of discrimination in the form of Koran burnings, violence, and the vandalism of Muslim homes and businesses (Boorstein).

Quite unfortunately, these attacks have only lead to the further alienation of American Muslims, who already feel like outsiders in American society. In extreme instances, some Muslim Americans have felt so ostracized and victimized by their communities that they have taken to violence themselves. The events of the Fort Hood attacks, just two years ago, are a manifestation of this phenomenon. Nidal Malik Hasan, an American and Major in the U.S. Army worked as a psychiatrist. However, it is believed that he became overwhelmed by the many instances of prejudice and discrimination he endured while in Fort Hood, Texas. Tragically, he

chose to kill 13 of his colleagues (BBC, 2009). This is not to say that Hasan's violent response was justified because he was the victim of Islamophobia, but that our actions have great implications and that hostility only breeds greater hostility.

This was also true in the case of the "Time Square Bomber"—Faisal Shahzad—who attempted to detonate a truck loaded with fertilizer in May of 2010 (Thompson). In this instance another American citizen was compelled to use violence as an escape for Islamophobia. Again, his actions were not justified, and completely unacceptable. However, it is believed that Shahzad resorted to violence after feeling ostracized and rejected by American society. There have been 46 total instances of domestic, or "Homegrown Terrorism" between September 11th and the end of 2009. They have involved 125 individuals, and in about 75 percent of these cases the individuals were not working with al-Qaeda or any other terrorist network. Neither Shahzad nor Hasan had strong links to any type of terrorist group, yet they felt compelled to commit or attempt to commit acts of terror (Johnson).

Their actions were a result of an "alienation cycle that has helped to make a small but increasing number of Americans susceptible to extremist ideology," according to an October 2010 report by the American Security Project (Difo). Thus Islamophobia is part of a tragic cycle of alienation, violence, and prejudice towards Muslims, which then leads to further alienation. Because of inherent prejudices, even terror attacks that are not linked to Islamic organizations tend to be at least initially blamed on Muslims. This has happened recently as last summer, when a "Right-wing Christian fundamentalist" massacred over 90 Norwegians. It also occurred prior to the attacks of September 11th, when another right-wing extremist was found responsible for the Oklahoma City Bombing in 1995 (Abdulrahim).

In Europe, Islamophobia has also sprung out as a response to terror attacks—both those of 9/11, and several others throughout Europe. Perhaps the most underlying factor of European Islamophobia has been immigration. Many Muslim have migrated into Europe over the past few decades. The majority of them have come from North Africa, and have settled in France, the Netherlands, Switzerland, Germany, and the UK among other countries (Dominguez-Diaz). There have been a variety of instances where Muslims have been discriminated against. Like the United States, discrimination has come in the form of both social discrimination and judicial discrimination—or prejudice enacted through law. Part of this phenomenon is related to the economic burdens attributed to immigration. This is particularly true for illegal immigrants. However, it is also related to fear and the “Othering” of European Muslims.

In Europe this has been exhibited through the banning of the hijab (“headscarf”) in schools, and the burqa (full veil) outside of the home. The bans were attributed to both security and cultural preservation. However, a very small minority of individuals actually wear the burqa. Out of the estimated 6.4 million Muslims in France, no more than 2 thousand individuals wear the full veil, making the argument regarding security questionable. Switzerland has also sought to “preserve” their culture by banning the mounting of minarets atop Mosques (Dominguez-Diaz). Both policies have been widely criticized, and deemed intolerant.

Though Antisemitism and Islamophobia bear similarities, Antisemitism is much older. This is because the Jewish people have lived in exile of Israel for centuries. Perhaps the only nation with a Jewish majority today is Israel. In contrast, there are dozens of countries with Muslim majorities throughout the Middle East, North Africa, and South Asia. Because of this, Islamophobia has largely sprung up as a result of recent immigration, where Muslims must adapt to being religious and cultural minorities. The Jewish people have arguably suffered more than

any other people in Europe. They have suffered from Antisemitism and discrimination since the late 1800's in the form of ostracism, social exclusions and prejudice. Jews have also been subjected to book burnings, and the vandalism of homes, businesses, and places of worship. This phenomenon culminated in the "Kristallnacht" or "the Night of Broken Glass" on November 9th 1938. On that night 300 Jewish synagogues, homes and businesses were broken into, vandalized, and torched. What ultimately followed was the systematic killing of 6 million European Jews during the Holocaust (Kessler).

While Islamophobia has not escalated to the point of Western genocide, it is similar to Antisemitism in the sense that prejudices and fears have led to distrust, hostility, and violence. Perhaps, what is most alarming about both instances is the fact that they have continued to occur in the modern era, and under the watch of liberal democratic institutions, cultures, and societies (Cohen). Today Antisemitism is still present. However, this new form of Antisemitism is not simply in the form of societal exclusion. Much of it has resulted as a backlash towards to inclusion of Jews in European society. Some Middle Easterners feel that European Jews are actively participating in Western neocolonialism, manifested through the previous creation of Israel and the Palestinian occupation. Such sentiments have resulted in the vandalism of Jewish graves and cemeteries. Many of these felonies have been attributed to European Arab youth who feel alienated, and out of place in European society. This is not entirely dissimilar to Muslims previously mentioned in the United States—who feel alienated and have resorted to hostility out of a sense of desperation (Cohen). Again, it must be restated that hostility and violence is never an appropriate reaction. However, the sentiments and factors that have resulted in such behavior must also be mentioned.

Hostility as a reaction towards discrimination is not a phenomenon exclusive to Muslims. Antisemitism and the tragic and heartbreaking event of the Holocaust also resulted in hostility. The genocide of over 6 million Jews, and previous instances of European Antisemitism lead many to believe that the Jewish people were in dire need of their own nation-state. This is where the previously mentioned secessionist theory comes into play. These people felt that a new state was critical to preservation. They believed that the creation of a Jewish nation would prevent further suffering to an already decimated people. What resulted was the partitioning of Palestine, and the mass migration of hundreds of thousands of Jewish refugees.

During the Arab Israeli wars that followed, hundreds of thousands of Palestinians left seeking asylum from the violence—hoping to return after the fighting had stopped. These refugees were not permitted to return to their homes after the creation of Israel in 1948, and continue to live entrenched in ghettos (Kessler, Israel and Zionism). Thus, the reaction towards persecution led to even more persecution and hostility. In both cases, discrimination and alienation lead to violence as a result of vulnerability. This vulnerability led both peoples to feel that violence and the propping up of barriers was the only means of fighting back and preserving their peoples and identities.

Antisemitism and Islamophobia have both been scourges on society. While Antisemitism is much older than Islamophobia, they both bare the same origins of social prejudice and intolerance. Both Jews and Muslims have also been actively targeted by States that enacted discriminatory legislation, or committed discriminatory acts against them. Unfortunately, this type of behavior has only resulted in greater hostility. As some Muslims became alienated, and struggled to find a place in Western society, they resorted to violence as an escape from Islamophobia. Similarly, some Jews who felt vulnerable to another horrible act of genocide

flocked to form the State of Israel. Not all Jews were in favor of settling in the Palestinian territory. However, those who did ultimately created a hostile environment for the Palestinian people, who now continue to struggle to find a place to call their own. In both cases, prejudices and hostilities lead Jews and Muslims on a quest to preserve their ethno-religious identities, and what resulted was even more hostility.

Lastly, these instances of hostility can be analyzed through Maslow's hierarchy. In the case of homegrown terrorism and youth vandalism, it is likely that there are needs that were not being met. A sense of safety and security, love needs, and esteem needs were likely at a loss for these individuals. As a result of those absences, or lack of securities, they committed those terrible acts in hopes of coming to a point of self-actualization. Likewise, Zionists were also looking to ensure they own security after the atrocities of the Holocaust. Since Identity lies at the top of the pyramid (self-actualization), groups that rally around the "flag" of identity are more likely to seek to satisfy security and economic need before they reach a state of self-actualization. Thus social, political, and economic security (mid-level needs) become prioritized and validate hostility in order to get to a state of identity, and the preservation of identity

Muslims, Caviar, Finance & the Western World

Muslims in the Middle East are also trying to preserve their identity amid the Western world, as many Muslims feel under duress. Globalization is making the world smaller, and mingling markets are also putting some Muslim governments and leaders in untraded territory. These ideas can be related back to the writings of Fukuyama and Huntington who believe that the West and the East are undergoing a cultural class or civilizations, identities, and cultures.

Take for the example religious guidance regarding food. *Halal* (permitted) foods are permissible to Muslim, while *Haram* (forbidden) foods are not. While much of the rules cut

across the Islamic world (e.g. pork is always considered *Haram*), there are instances of ambiguity—matters where religious guidance varies from sect to sect. For example, all three liberal Sunni schools allow for the consumption of what is called aquatic life, and justify their ruling based upon Koranic verse 5:96 which says “Permitted to you is the catch of the sea and the food of it.” However, Shiite Muslims believe that only fish with scales are *Halal*, based upon the traditions of the Imams (Chehabi, 17).

While this matter may seem obscure and irrelevant, it became a matter of great importance following the Iranian revolution (1979) and religious revival. The issue was over one particular fish, the sturgeon, and its particularly valuable black caviar. Although “Shiite jurisprudence considered it haram (forbidden)...its production and export were a state monopoly,” and “procured the Iranian treasury millions of dollars in revenue” each year. Chehabi continues: “moreover, caviar is the epitome of luxury and culinary refinement in Western culture, which alone must have rendered it suspect in the eyes of the populists who took power soon after the revolution. To find a way out of this dilemma, the status of caviar under religious law was revisited” (17).

Ultimately, the fish was deemed *Halal* by Ayatollah Khomeini, after further, meticulous, inspection and the discovery of a small scale “under the tail” as well as “under and near” the fins. In his Fatwa (religious ruling) Khomeini wrote “If it has scales, even if it is in the region of the tail, it is *halal*.” However, his ruling came under criticism by outsiders who asked him to elaborate—asking specifically whether or not caviar was *Halal*. He responded with “ambiguity” saying “if it comes from a fish with scales, or if there is uncertainty whether it is from a fish without scales, it is permitted. Otherwise it is not.” As a result many took the fatwa with a grain of salt and “the new state policy was ascribed to economic necessity alone” (21). Not long after,

caviar consumption within Iran increased substantially, and by the end of the 1990's Iran took Russia's place as the world's largest caviar producer (Russia had been previously allowed to buy up Iran's sturgeon and sell its caviar) (22).

It is clear that this was an instance where Iranian religious leaders sought to “eat their cake, and have it too.” Khomeini sought to preserve and uphold religious doctrine, while amassing economic gains for the state of Iran. It is particularly fascinating because it is a case of assimilation and acceptance of western culinary norms, yet an example of cultural preservation—as religious doctrine was ultimately upheld (regardless of how ambiguous).

Yet there are other instances of this in the Muslim world. One in particular is Islamic Finance and banking, which seeks to fund projects, businesses, and infant ideas while staying true to Islam. In a way, Islamic Finance is a means of Arabizing a routine western procedure so that it can stay true to Islam. These projects must simply be approved by Muslim religious leaders before being funded. The point of the practice is to “promote social justice by banning exploitive practices.” However, western analysts believe that the practice “boils down to a set of prohibitions—on paying interest, on gambling with derivatives and options, and on investing in firms that make pornography or pork.” This accounts for an estimated \$500 billion dollars in investments (Eaves and Noer). Islamic Finance can be seen as a means to accommodate Islamic identity, while interacting with both Middle Eastern and Western firms.

What can be concluded from these examples is that instead of assimilating, or accepting popular western culture and practices (caviar consumption and finance), and some Islamic states and institutions have chosen to preserve their own religious and cultural identity. They have done so by writing new religious rulings which—despite ambiguity—give the impression that the religious law is being upheld and religious and cultural identity is being preserved, or by

tweaking the method of practice (providing caveats) so that it is still considered religiously and culturally amicable and acceptable, as in the case of Islamic Finance. Whether or not these rulings are legitimate is debatable, however there is a clear effort to preserve religious and cultural identity, while participating in common western practices—whether for economic reasons or otherwise.

This instance of identity preservation does not exactly fit into Shaefer, Berry, or Rosenau's models. It is neither fusion (a blending of cultures that then creates a completely new identity) because it remains a means of cultural preservations. It is not full integration because the action is in defiance of Western culture—thus only Muslim religious culture is valued. This example may be an example of hybridity, in which business is more integrated into Western culture, yet other aspects of culture and identity remain the same. However, the fatwa rulings were a means of preserving identity so that it was not infiltrated, or spoiled by Western practices. Thus, it is not clear where this instance of cultural preservation fits.

Conclusion

The previously discussed case studies show that delineation and separation can be used as a means to preserve ones identity. The biblical Jews separated themselves from others in times of peace as a means to preserve their own identity. However, during times of conflict they comingled in order to preserve themselves as a people through cohabitation. Likewise, European Jews of the 19th and 20th century also separated themselves in order to preserve their identity. For strict Jews, dietary requirements prevented them from comingling with others during meals. Thus, in order to preserve their identity, they were forced to withdraw and separate themselves. Part of this inwardness provided for communal autonomy, as explained by Kessler, which also

drew benefits. Rabbi Akiva's interpretation regarding the teaching "love your neighbor as yourself," explains that this lesson refers specifically to Jewish-Jewish relations, as opposed to Jewish relations with others. Though other interpretations of this teaching certainly exist, Akiva's reading may further suggest social inwardness, or a type of separation to preserve religious integrity, as the teaching suggests that social interaction should be prioritized among other Jews.

Today's Coptic Christians in Egypt also seem to be seeking some sort of religious and cultural identity preservation. By delineating themselves from other religious groups in Egypt—both Muslims and other Christian denominations—the Copts of Egypt are also preserving their own identity. With regards to the issue of marriage and divorce, the Copts have sought to prevent any type of divorce law from being allowed among Christian groups in Egypt, and have refused to recognize civil separations that would allow Christians to remarry within the church. This comes at the expense of other Christian groups, as Protestants and Catholics are subject to the same religious laws under the Christian umbrella. In addition, Copts preserve their identity by socially withdrawing themselves from society, and mingling primarily with other Copts. This withdraw is not limited to social engagements with Muslims, but also other Christians as evident from recent decrees that discourage or warn against Coptic participation in Protestant and Catholic retreats and gathering. The explanation for this decree was to avoid or prevent confusion of doctrine and religious teachings. Thus, this delineation ("othering"), inwardness, and separation have all been means by which Copts have sought to preserve their religious identity.

Islamophobia has been an issue in both the U.S. and Europe. "Othering" has occurred as a means to preserve Western ideas and identity. Though the prospects of implementing Sharia

Law in the United States are slim to non-existent, Americans have felt that need to write legislation banning such law in over a dozen states. In Europe, multiple countries have sought to preserve national identity by passing their own laws that suppress Islamic practices and culture. In France, the hijab has been banned in public schools and other public places. The niqab or burka has also been banned in public on the grounds of security, despite the fact that perhaps only 2 thousands individuals in France wear the full veil, among 6.4 million French residents. In Switzerland, construction of minarets atop mosques has been banned for the sake of preserving Swiss culture. Thus othering, delineation, and outright banning have all been implemented to preserve identity.

There have been instances where terrorism is wrongly blamed on Muslims as well—both in the U.S. and Europe—as a result of ingrained othering, and perhaps to delineate western identity from Islam. In the U.S., the 1995 *Oklahoma City Bombing* was initially reported to be related to Islamic fundamentalist. Likewise, 16 years later, the massacre of over 70 Norwegians by a Christian fundamentalist was also initially blamed on Islamic fundamentalist, without merit. This behavior can be blamed on ignorance, but it also bears signs of othering that distinguishes western identity from wrongfully perceived Muslim identity.

This plight to preserve Western identity in both the U.S. and Europe have brought upon Homegrown Terrorism. Though violence of any sort is never an acceptable recourse or response, some Muslims has found themselves so rejected by society that they have turned to terrorism, themselves, out of frustration and an inability to preserve their own identities in the Western world. In the cases of both the Fort Hood massacre and the Time Square Bomber, both individuals were integrated into U.S. society. Shahzad had completed a lengthy naturalization process and attained U.S. citizenship. Hasan had enlisted in the U.S. Army. Yet, both were

compelled to commit or attempt to commit acts of terror because of their feelings of social isolation and animosity as a result of othering, and western identity preservation. This caused alienation and a violent response. Neither Shahzad nor Hasan had meaningful links to Al Qaeda or any other terrorist organization. Indeed, 75 percent of domestic terrorism cases between 9/11 and 2009 have been unrelated to Al Qaeda—meaning that these individuals acted out of their own sense of urgency to preserve their own identity, which they felt was being threatened (Johnson). Though, it must be continually reiterated that violence is never an appropriate response.

Similarly in Europe, Middle Eastern and Palestinian youth have acted out as a result of European cultural preservation and Muslim rejection. It has resulted in the vandalism of Jewish graves and property in response to what is perceived as European acceptance of Judaism and Islamic rejection. This recourse is certainly a response linked to Islamic cultural rejection (Cohen).

Likewise out of the urgency of the mass atrocities and indiscriminate murder of 6 million Jews during the holocaust, Zionist also sought to preserve their own identity. Likewise violence came out of the response. The mass emigration of Jews to Palestine and the creation of Israel ultimately led to the current refugee status of the Palestinians. Thus, in seeking to preserve the remnants of the Jewish people after the holocaust, Zionists delineated themselves from Palestinians in order to preserve their own identity; and in doing so succeeded in ceding and creating their own nation.

In the Middle East Muslims have sought to preserve their identity in different ways. In some cases fatwas or religious rulings have been made in order to maintain religious identity

while adapting western culture in an ever globalized world. Today, Iran now exports and consumes the black caviar of the sturgeon fish despite the fact that it had always been deemed *Haram*. However, Ayatollah Khomeini wrote a fatwa in favor of the sturgeon after ample inspection of its scales so that the state of Iran could reap economic gains. What makes the case particularly interesting is that a fatwa was necessary to preserve religious identity, and prevent the Persian country from being corrupted by the western delicacy, and western culture. Thus caviar was essentially accepted into Persian, Shia Muslim identity while still preserving Iranian Shia identity. Likewise, the creation of Islamic finance has also been a means of preserving Islamic law and identity while adapting to an ever globalized world. This practice allows for finance within the limits of Koranic teachings. This means no pork, pornography, interest, or derivative gambling. The adaptation is a means of utilizing an important financial and developmental tool in finance, while also preserving Islamic identity.

The implications of this study suggest that different groups of people have employed delineation, othering, and separation as a means of identity preservation. This framework has produced multiple examples of identity preservation through the four case studies discussed (*The Jewish People, The Copts of Egypt, Antisemitism and Islamophobia: An Identity Preservation Crisis, and Muslims, Caviar, Finance & the Western World*). These case studies show that identity preservation can serve as an explanation for different phenomenon in the world. It also suggests that identity preservation may have more to do with separating oneself from other identities, in addition to keeping with the practices of our own identities.

Implications for Further Study

This research can be expanded into a variety of other studies. Based upon Edward Said's work, *Orientalism*, this research can be expanded to see what types of cultures and identities are more or less likely to come into contact with other cultures and identities. Fukuyama and Huntington's work can be further explored to see what political struggles exist within identity, and the future of world politics.

Are identities more likely to make concessions in culture or ideology if economic incentives are involved (as in the case of the Iranian caviar or Islamic finance)? If economic incentives do allow cultures and identities to bend the rules, so to speak, is *Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs* validated in that economic security and safety needs must precede the need of self-actualization? What are the political costs, or political tolls associated with identity preservation? Where does one draw the line between identity preservation, and political power consolidation, as in the case of Egypt's Copts? How can we better integrate European and American Muslims without while preserving what we deem American and European identity? Can this even occur, or has multiculturalism failed, as some of Europe's leaders believe? All of these questions suggest that much more work can and should be done on identity, and identity preservation.

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