

Islam and Western Civilization.

What views are found in today's Muslim ~~and~~ circles about Western civilization? Identify and analyze them.

Outline

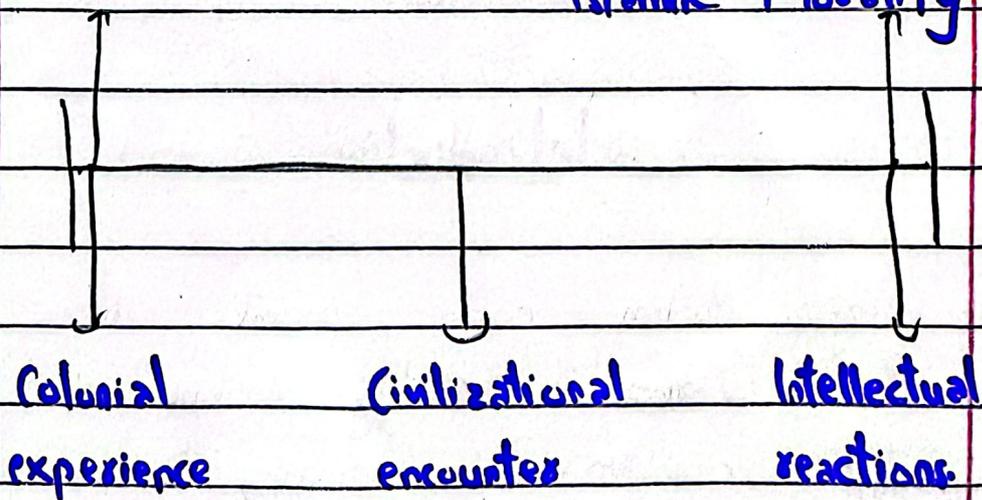
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(1) Introduction

Today's Muslim circles present diverse and sometimes conflicting views about Western civilization. These views are shaped by colonial history, political

confrontation, globalization, and intellectual insecurity. Some perceive the West as morally corrupt and hostile to Islam, while others admire its ~~specific~~ scientific advancement and institutional strength. Between these extremes lies a spectrum of reformist and integrative approaches seeking balance. Understanding these perspectives requires examining their theological assumptions, political motivations, and ~~at~~ civilizational reasoning within the broader Islamic worldview.

Rejection + Imitation + Search for
 Reform + Engagement balanced
 Islamic Morality



② Rejectionist Muslim Perceptions

2.1, Total civilizational rejection e

A significant strand within Muslim discourse considers Western Civilization inherently secular, materialistic, and incompatible with Islamic principles. This view interprets Western dominance as moral decay masked by technological progress. It emphasizes distinct religious identity and civilizational separation, arguing that imitation leads to spiritual erosion and dependency. Such circles prioritize cultural insulation and resistance over engagement, often grounding their stance in the belief that divine guidance alone ensures sustainable moral order.

Ayat

﴿لَكُمْ دِينُكُمْ وَلِيَ دِينِ﴾
"For you is your religion,
and for me is mine."

2.2 Colonial Trauma interpretation &

Another rejectionist approach is rooted in colonial memory, where Western powers are remembered primarily as occupiers and exploiters. Historical humili^{ation} shaped a perception that Western institutions represent domination rather than progress. Muhammad Asad in Islam at the Crossroads argued that emotional reaction to political oppression often produced intellectual rigidity, preventing nuanced differentiation between Western science and Western secular philosophy, thereby reinforcing defensive attitudes instead of confident engagement.

2.3, Moral degeneration Critique &

Certain Muslim assess Western civilization primarily through ethical standards, focusing

on family disintegration, hyper-individualism, and consumerism. They argue that technological sophistication cannot compensate for spiritual emptiness. The Prophet (PBUH) centered his mission on moral excellence, which frames civilizational success as ethical refinement rather than material accumulation. Therefore, Western cultural exports are viewed ~~cautiously~~ cautiously due to perceived impact on Islamic moral fabric.

Hadith

I was sent to perfect noble character.

2.9, Defensively identity preservation &

In many contemporary Muslim societies, globalization intensifies fears of cultural absorption. Preservationist circles advocate strict adherence to traditional norms as a safeguard against Westernization.

Abul Ala Mawdudi in **Islamic Way of Life** explained that maintaining civilizational identity is necessary for intellectual independence; however, when preservation transforms into isolationism, it risks intellectual stagnation and prevents Muslims from contributing constructively to global discourse.

③ **Imitative and Accommodationist views**

3.1, Western Modernity as Model

Some Muslim elites perceive Western civilization as the universal template for progress, equating modernization with Westernization. They emphasize institutional efficiency, democratic governance, and scientific advancement as benchmarks for development. This perspective argues that

Muslim decline resulted from resistance to change and that adopting Western systems wholesale is essential for revival.

Ayat

﴿ وَاللَّهُ يَلْوِ الْحَدِيثَ لِيُذَكِّرَ الَّذِينَ لَا يَذَكَّرُونَ ﴾

Such days We alternate among people

3.2, Secular accommodation approach s-

Another strand advocates adapting Islam to fit Western ^{secular} ~~secular~~ frameworks, treating religion as private spirituality rather than public guidance. **Fazlur Rahman in Islam and Modernity**

critiqued superficial adaptation, warning that divorcing ethics from revelation weakens moral coherence and produces fragmented societies lacking transcendent accountability, even if they institutionally efficient and politically stable.

3.3, Pragmatic technological adaptation &

A more pragmatic view distinguishes between Western technology, and Western ideology, encouraging Muslims to adopt scientific knowledge without internalizing secular values. This perspective considers knowledge universal and transferable, while moral philosophy remains rooted in revelation. It seeks empowerment through education and research rather than cultural surrender.

Hadith

” الحكمة خير من المال ”

Wisdom is the last property of the believer

3.4, Cultural Hybridization Trend &

Global Muslim youth often embrace hybrid identities shaped by media, migration, and education. **Khushid**

Ahmad in Islam: Its Meaning and Message highlighted that selective adaptation requires strong moral anchors, otherwise, cultural blending may dilute ethical clarity. This approach reflects neither total rejection nor blind imitation but often struggles with coherence due to competing influences.

④ Reformist and Critical engagement approaches

4.1, Self-critical reform view &

Reformist thinkers argue that Muslim decline stems from internal stagnation rather than Western conspiracy alone. They advocate educational reform, intellectual ~~re~~ renewal, and ethical renewal within Muslim societies. Change begins with moral reconstruction and social responsibility rather than hostility toward external civilizations.

Ayat

﴿ إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يَبْدِلُ أَلْوَانَهُ بِقَوْلِ الْبَشَرِ ﴾
"Allah does not change the condition of people."

4.2 Political resistance narrative e

Certain movements frame Western influence as political domination requiring ideological resistance. Their discourse interprets global conflicts as civilizational confrontation. **Dr. Hamidullah** in **Introduction to Islam** observed that political awakening must remain ethically restrained; otherwise reactionary politics may distort Islamic objectives by reducing them to power struggles detached from moral principles.

4.3, Spiritual renewal response e

Another current emphasizes internal purification

over external confrontation. Societal transformation is viewed as beginning with sincerity, discipline, and moral integrity. The Prophet's emphasis on sincere counsel frames reform as ethical reconstruction rather than political agitation, redirecting attention from blaming the West to strengthening Muslim spirituality.

Habib

7
"Religion is sincere counsel."

4.4, Intellectual reconstruction effort

Modern Muslim intellectuals attempt systematic reinterpretation of Islamic thought in dialogue with Western philosophy, democracy, and human rights.

Muhammad Asad Iqbal in Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam argued that dynamic ijtihad enables engagement with

modern ideas while preserving revelations
authority, thus transforming confrontation
into creative intellectual participation

⑤ Contemporary reassessment and global positioning

Sib, Dialogue and cooperation view e

A growing segment advocates
civilizational dialogue instead of
polarization. Shared global challenges
such as climate change, poverty, and
injustice require cooperation beyond
ideological divisions. This perspective
promotes confidence in Islamic ethical
contributions while recognizing common
human concerns and mutual learning
opportunities.

Ayat

"We made you nations and
tribes so what you may
know one another."

5.2, Extremist polarization reaction ◁

Frustration with global inequalities has sometimes produced extremist narratives portraying Western civilization as a monolithic enemy. Such views simplify complex realities and justify confrontation.

The Prophetic principle prohibiting harm establishes moral limits, indicating that grievance does not legitimize indiscriminate hostility or collective blame.

Hadith

لا يرد على الشر ولا يرد على الشر
"There should be neither harm nor reciprocating harm."

5.3, Confident Muslim participation ◁

An emerging view encourages Muslims, especially in Western societies, to participate confidently in civic life while preserving faith identity. **Taqwā**

Ramadan in Western Muslims and the Future of Islam

argued that constructive presence transforms minorities into ethical contributors, challenging stereotypes and enriching pluralistic societies without diluting religious commitments.

5.4, Balanced civilizational engagement

The most sustainable perspective promotes critical engagement & benefiting from Western scientific and institutional achievements while offering Islamic moral insights to global debates.

This balanced approach rejects intolerance and hostility alike, encouraging intellectual confidence and ethical clarity. It views civilizations as dynamic participants in shared human progress rather than

Isolated rivals competing for dominance

(6)

Conclusion

Muslim views regarding Western civilization range from rejection and ambivalence to reform and balanced engagement. These perspectives reflect historical memory, theological interpretation, and contemporary geopolitical realities. The future direction of Muslim societies depends on developing a confident, ethically grounded, and intellectually open approach that neither withdraws in fear nor assimilates uncritically, but contributes meaningfully to global civilization.

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