

# **Global Culture or Cultural Clash: An Islamic Intercultural Communication Perspective**

**Dr. Basyouni Ibrahim Hamada  
United Arab Emirates University**

## **Introduction**

Central within the current debate on the impact of the information and communication technologies are the theories of the “global culture” and “cultural clashes”, or global village and clash of civilizations. According to the first theory (ICTs) will generate global culture or American culture and homogenous religious patterns; the cultural dimension of globalization. On the other hand, theory of cultural clashes claims that ICTs intensifies awareness of cultural differences that ultimately lead to cultural clashes. From the Islamic intercultural communication perspective, Islamic world communication values provide a “Third Way” based on peaceful and democratic coexistence among different global cultures. The “Third Way” also opposes the principles of both global culture and cultural clashes. To use the words of Ali Izetbegovich, the Muslim President of Bosnia: ... As Islam in the past was the intermediary between the ancient cultures and the West, it must again today, in a time of dramatic dilemmas and alternatives, shoulder its role as intermediary nation in a divided world (Braibanti, 1999). By the same token, I argue that the universal intercultural communication values of Islam could solve all the problems related to and generated by the dominant global and homogenous culture perspective, and those of the clash of cultures perspective. And definitely, this is the meaning of the Third Way, the Islamic way. In this paper, I also think that theories of global culture and clash of cultures threaten the democratic intercultural communication and undermine the potentials of the Islamic intercultural communication.

## **Why the Third Way?**

There are two competing views on what impact new information and communication technologies have on culture, 1) those scholars who argue that we can expect an increasingly unified global culture and, 2) those scholars who expect culture to remain complex and varied, and that these cultural differences may even lead to future cultural clashes (Ellingsen, 2000). The main thesis of the first vision is in line with the cultural imperialism theory, of insisting on a single culture and prohibiting all other cultures, including the languages that are not the language of the dominant group (Kenneth, 1999). The dominant thesis of the second vision is that the pattern of conflict in the era of globalization will follow the fault- lines of civilizations. As Huntington states civilization is the highest cultural grouping of people and the broadest level of cultural identity people has. Of all the elements, which defines civilizations the most important is usually religion (Huntington, 1996). These two perspectives have generated and will be producing a lot of troubles amongst peoples of the world as they threaten the fundamental democratic bases on which the intercultural communication must be built. They also undermine the basic need for every civilization to preserve its identity and culture against any external cultural attack while keeping a continuous interaction with other cultures and civilizations. The Islamic perspective provides Third Way based on a harmonious mix of global communication values to safeguard a peaceful, tolerant, diversified and democratic intercultural communication. In no other intercultural communication perspective, can people interact and communicate peacefully, freely, fairly, and tolerantly as in the Third Way. As Samovar and Porter tell us when discussing worldviews in communication between cultures, “knowing about religions can help us understand values and behavior or at least find explanations for perceived behavior”. This is particularly true of Islam because, from its inception it has been more than a religion – it has been an entire way of life for its adherents. In order to understand the communicative implications involved, an overview must be made of the basic universal values of Islam. For Muslims, belief that religion is not separated from, but rather organically related to, the state, encompassing both private and public life, is rooted to the Qur'an and sayings of Prophet Mohammad (Dick, and Robinson 1997).

The universality of Prophet Mohammed's mission (Peace be upon him) has been clearly confirmed by the Qur'an; it is a logical consequence of the finality of his Prophethood. A prophet after whom there was to be no other, had to be a guide and leader for all men and for all ages. God has provided through him the complete code that man needs to follow the right path, and this is in itself supports the concept of finality, since without completeness the need for other prophets would remain (Maududi, 1978). Islam comprehends and fulfills all the requirements of life, past and future until the end of human existence on the earth whether these requirements are spiritual, material, political, economic, social, moral, intellectual, or aesthetic, in other words Islam determines the rules, which should form the basis of social, cultural relationship, economic, judicial, and political dealings, matters of war and peace, and international affairs. The Prophet brings with him a whole system of thought and action which in Islamic terminology is called al – Din (a complete way of life) (Maududi, 1978). An important intercultural communication value is that Islam confers the concept of the equality and brotherhood of all mankind. It was from Muhammad that the world first heard the revolutionary message of human equality." O Mankind, your God is one and you have but one father" (Ali Nadvi, 1978).

In Islam, There is no distinction between private and public conduct. The same moral code, which one observes at home, applies to one's conduct in public. This is true of every institution of society and every department of government; all must conform the laws of Islam (A, la Maududi, 1978). Islam also does not recognize any division between the temporal and the spiritual since man's desire to propitiate God and follow His commands permeates every fibre of human activity. Every one of man's actions, his behavior and morality, is guided by his motive, which, in the terminology of religion is known as *niyat* or intention. The intention or purpose with which any act is done is the criterion of its moral worth (Ali Nadvi, 1978). It seems important to quote the former U.S Attorney General Ramsey Clark (a man who has studied Islam closely and who has traveled extensively throughout the Muslim world) and who made the following observation in 1955 address before an audience of Muslims and non-Muslims: "Islam is the best chance the peoples of planet have for any hoop of decency of their lives, for any hope for dignity in their lives. It is the one revolutionary force that cares about humanity". According to Qur'an, Muslims are entitled to cooperate with all nations regardless of their faiths and to reject all kinds of extremism, oppression, and terrorism. The Islamic community is encouraged to work with others to advance the goals of peace, stability and social justice (Yaacob, 1994, & Hamada, 2000). The remaining parts of this paper are devoted to a critical analysis of both the global culture and the clash of cultures perspectives followed by an assessment of the bases of the Third Way.

## **Clash of Cultures Perspective**

The "us/them confrontation is the most persistent theme in world order perceptions. The dichotomy can take a variety of forms- the native versus the foreigner, the friend versus the foe, the familiar versus the strange, the Orient versus the West, the North versus the South, the developed versus the developing countries, and so on. This dichotomous framework of world perceptions amounts to an iron law of dualism, a persistent conceptualization of the world of us and them (Mazrui, 1980). To what extent is this mode of thinking a product of culture and to what extent is cultural dualism intensifying hostility between the rest of the world and Islamic culture? It seems that the dichotomy Islam /the West has recently gathered impetus as a result of a dual perception arising from the post-Cold war division of the world into east and west. In its search for a new enemy since the late 1980s, it seems that the West has chosen to confront Islam, considering cultural issues as the trigger for conflict. Why cultural or civilization issues? It is clear that this is not unrelated to the transformations the global system has undergone since the end of the bipolar system. Such transformations have affected how the principle of security is interpreted. Today's societies and nations are indeed dominated by the dialectic between universal integration and the assertion of differences in a framework of regimes whose survival depends more on their capacity to generate legitimacy and institutional efficiency than on support from abroad. Instead of understanding these ongoing changes within a socio- political or human context, they are being used by some to support arguments favor of civilization incompatibility

(Munoz, 1999). In this context relations between the Muslim world and the West are difficult and marked by mutual suspicions. Mutual perceptions are greatly influenced by the debate on values, which even in Western Europe is no longer the domain of conservative circles. The debate serves an obvious function: to prove one's own superiority in the domain of morals, ethics and humanity, and to deny those values to the other (Kramer, 2000).

It is not also difficult for any observer to understand that the West –in spite of being in many ethical and moral troubles, has the nerve to offer itself as the obligatory model for every other nation. Cultures not willing to imitate the West are under threat of being marginalized. This was the true message when Frances Fukuyama, in 1991 after the collapse of the Soviet Union, proclaimed the “end of history”. What he was saying was that the so-called “Project of Modernity”, also known as the “American Way of Life or Macdonaldization”, is the peak of civilization, unsurpassable for all times. For those people, the future globe will be divided only into the ever expanding West and the rest. Samuel Huntington even predicted bloody clashes between the two realms (Hoffman, 2000).

But why Islam? And why has the Islam / the West dichotomy been put forward so insistently over the last few years? Although a biased presentation of international events, such as the Gulf War, or regional events such as those arising from the confrontation between Arab and Islamist regimes, has no doubt fostered the perception of a threat, the dichotomy established by many between Islam and the West is based primarily on the false perceptions which have been conveyed traditionally to different peoples, as a result of a misinterpretation of history. Mohammed Abed al – Jabri proposes in his book, the predominant historical interpretation of West- Islam relations has been focused on the ideological principle of antagonism (Byzantium against the Islamic Empire; the Christian Kingdoms against al- Andalus; the Ottoman Turks against Europe; Arab or Islamic against the West). On the other hand, the Islamic expert Mohammed Arkoun points out, while Christianity and Judaism were integrated in the West into what is commonly known as the “ Judaeo-Christian civilization, Islam was peremptorily swept aside. The prejudices created by the Islamic – Christian confrontation in Spain, in the Crusades or the fight against the Turk, penetrated the Western collective subconscious so deeply that Hichem Djait, in his book Europe and Islam (1990), expresses doubts that they may ever be eliminated (Munoz, 1994).

Moratinos Angel points out that there have been many turning points in the emerging of the recent European and Western attitude towards Islam. Firstly, it was undoubtedly the article by the American political scientist Samuel Huntington on the inevitability of a clash between civilizations that caused the greatest negative impact, given its intellectual and doctrinal nature. Without a doubt, the article, published in the journal of Foreign Affairs in the summer of 1993, paved the way for a series of attitudes opposing Islam. The second turning point occurred as a result of the unfortunate statements made by Willy Cales, the former NATO secretary general. His justification of the NATO- Mediterranean Countries talks revealed a subconscious full of false fears and new threats. When he claimed that the priority aim of the talks was to fight against “Islamic fundamentalism” he gave rise to legitimate and fierce criticism, not only from some of the Arab states involved, but also from NATO members themselves, particularly Spain. A new declared crusade had been launched from the very hub of Western military power. The “Desert Storm” operation was a military success in the short term, but left in its wake deep- seated social and psychological bitterness throughout the Arab world (Moratinos, 1999).

The author thinks that after the terrorist attack of September 11, 2001, the debate around the question of clash of civilizations has been intensified and many scholars have taken this attack to support their notion about the clash between the Muslim world and the West. However, it is imperative to emphasize two facts in this respect; 1- Israel and its followers in the US and the West have been trying to convince the West that the new “enemy” is the entire Islamic world. The tragedy of September 11 came as a gift from the sky to Israel and its supporters. They used the Taliban as a representation of all Islam and Muslim nations, 2- Israel and its followers in the U. S and the West have been trying to equate Palestinian legitimate resistance to occupation with terrorism, specially after the successful experience of the Lebanese resistance movement (Al Hewart Editorial: January 2002). It is the American's policies and actions that preclude any

possibility to achieve peace in the Middle East. Bush support of Ariel Sharon, his grant of carte blanche to Sharon's actions in the occupied territories, his declaration that Sharon is a "man of peace" precisely at the moment when he is actively attempting to destroy the Palestinian nation, all indicate that U.S. administration not only has a plan for achieving Palestinian statehood, but does not care whether there ever is a Palestinian state, or indeed the Palestinian people survive. It is the Middle East question that perpetuates the hostility between Muslim community in general and Arab world in particular and the West. Muslim peoples have the right to believe that if the West has a real intention to put an end to the Israeli 35 year occupation, it will force Israel to comply with the international law and eliminate its brutal occupation. Muslims also are wondering why does the West use its military power against the illegitimate Iraqi occupation of Kuwait while supports Israel to violate all U.N and Security Council resolutions concerning the Arab Palestinian occupied territories? The American air strike against Afghanistan, which has financially, politically, and military been supported by the West is seen by the majority of Muslims as evidence of the clash of civilizations. The last but not least is the American invasion of Iraq without UN or Security Council 'approval and without any concrete evidence that Iraq has mass destruction weapons is the most striking evidence of the intended clash with Muslims. These events represent major turning points in reinforcing a sense that the West is seriously involving in implementing the scenario of the conflict with Muslim world civilization.

In addition to these military attacks, one has to add the controversial tape of bin Laden that has been broadcasted for the first time on October 7, 2001 via Al Jazeera Satellite Television. The tape emphasizes the injustice done to the Palestinians, the cruelty of continued sanctions against Iraq, the presence of US troops in Saudi Arabia, the support of repressive governments in the Middle East. It seems that these arguments win a good deal of popular sympathy among Muslims and Arabs. Bin Laden exactly states "millions of innocent children are being killed in Afghanistan as I speak, they are being killed in Iraq without committing any sins and we do not hear any condemnation from the rulers. By the end of the tape he said that neither America nor the people who live in it would dream of security before we live it in Palestinian, and not before all the infidel armies leave the land of Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him" (Hamada, 2000 a).

To what extent the clash perspective has sound claims or allegations towards Islam and Muslim world? Huntington and others assert that Islamic culture explains in large part the failure of democracy to emerge in much of the Muslim world. However, the critical investigation of many studies shows that Islam is not an obstacle to the evolution of a democratic polity. And it would still be wrong to argue that Islamic culture is responsible for the failure of democracy in the Muslim world when in fact some of the most fundamental philosophical and political ideas and ideals in Islam promote freedom, individual autonomy, accountability on the part of the ruler, consultation with the people, respect for different point of view, the independence of the judiciary and the rule of law (Muzaffar, 2000). Hunter also refuses to accept the inevitability of conflict between Islamic civilization and the West because she believes that Muslims disagree with Western countries over economic, social, and political issues. She also rejects the notion that Islam is peculiarly incompatible with democracy, arguing that Judaism and Christianity, not only Islam, are in conflict with absolute secularism (As'ad, 1999). Esposito also makes it clear that the issue of democratization like that of authoritarianism, in Muslim societies is not primarily one of religion but of history and political and economic development. Centuries of European colonial rule followed by decades of authoritarian governments have created and perpetuated conditions that are not conducive to democratization. However, democracy nowadays is an integral part of modern Islamic political thought and practice, accepted in many Muslim countries as a litmus test by which both the openness of government and the relevance of Islamic groups or other political parties are certified (Esposito, 2000).

The author completely agrees with Muzaffar who noted that Huntington contradicts himself when he said that Muslims are the victims of violence, how can they be held responsible for generating violence? Shouldn't one distinguish the violence of the victim from the violence of the aggressor? By what moral criteria does one put both kinds of violence in the same bracket? In any case, there is no justification at all for linking Islam to violence. Huntington is also wrong in implying that Islam has a problem with people of other religions. Quite the opposite. Islam and

Muslim empires, by and large, have an excellent record of treating non-Muslim minorities with respect and decorum (Muzaffar, 2000). There are also those who believe that Western and Eastern cultures are united not only by their religious roots, but also by a common Greek heritage. During the high Middle Ages, the works of Aristotle, which represents the ancient foundations of Western scientific development, were made available to European scholars through the translations of Arab philosophers such as Ibn Sina and Ibn Rusched. In the same way, as the Renaissance in Europe could not happen without the scientific achievements of the Islamic Orient, the modern Islamic world was deeply influenced by Western ideas and thinking. Napoleon's expeditions to Egypt in 1798, for example, triggered a process of modernization which was encouraged by the Ottoman's Sultan's Governor in Egypt, Mohammed Ali (Hafez, 2000). The big methodological mistake of the analysts of the clash perspective is that they use the Western culture as a benchmark to evaluate the Islamic culture. Therefore, they look at the differences as points for conflicts and deny the right of others to choose their own way of life. As a result, they pave the way that will sooner or later threaten the democratic fundamental bases of the intercultural communication. The author also completely agrees with Abbas Malek and Krista Wiegand in their article "Islam and the West: Cultural Encounters", when they tell us that the key problem is a lack of cultural relatively, which allows one to judge another culture by its standards rather than by using Western standards (Malek & Wiegand, 1997). The second methodological problem of the clash perspective is that collective and individual behavior patterns among the peoples in Islamic countries are explained from the viewpoint of an abstract notion of Islam rather than being interpreted from a stance which takes into account geography and local history, social structure and human experience (Munoz, 1999). After Sep.11 2001, Muslims were depicted in the influential Western media as if they are terrorists (Hamada, 2002a). But it is clear that like Christianity and Judaism, Islam has no room for terrorism. And like Christianity and Judaism, Islam has adherents who violate its law in its name (Esposito, 2002).

## **Global Culture Perspective**

The modern vision of the global village comes from the communication theory. Marshall McLuhan focuses on the rise of (and consequences of) electronic communication and rapid transportation, and their effects on culture. The electronic communication allowed people from different corners of the globe to simultaneously experience the same culture. Globalization, according to many theorists denotes, not only structural characteristics, but also includes culture. This will lead to increasing levels of tolerance and generate processes of cultural unification and homogenization. People will become increasingly aware that they belong to a global world, thus a global identity, mentality and culture is growing. Another example of the potential for unified global culture is Roland Robertson (1992). Robertson defines globalization according to two elements, one structural and the other clearly cultural: Globalization as a concept refers both to the compression of the world and the intensification of consciousness of the world as a whole both concrete global interdependence and consciousness of the global whole in the twentieth century (Ellingsen, 2000).

This perspective is mainly based on the idea that globalization of the electronic mass media especially Internet has established a new transnational identity and culture; the Western or definitely American identity and culture. In this respect, the author differentiates between two global phenomena; the first is the penetration of the communication technologies, and the second is dominance of the culture of the West. The first phenomenon does not match the second. This assumption requires more investigations in different cultural settings, as there will be different responses to different perceived challenges. The point is that though the penetration of the communication technologies is a universal phenomenon, it does not bear any implication for acceptance of the identity of the other. In the Arab world –for example- there are two forces which coexist together; 1- the penetration of new media and satellite television, and 2- the persistence of strong sense of Arab National identity. Therefore, in many Arab countries, specially, the Gulf region, the state invests in all available means of communications with the belief that this investment will help enhance the sense of national identity (Wheeler, 2000). Other studies show that the new transnational media have also allowed the reintegration of Arab emigrants into Arab life and society. No longer cut off from their homelands, many Arabs living in

the West read Arab newspapers on the Internet and watch Arab satellite channels (TBS, 1999). At the same time, Arabs have in some ways adapted the new media to the expression of their own cultural traditions and vice versa. (Hamada, 2000 b).

According to the previous discussion, it is safe to say that theories about the inevitability of social, political, and economic change toward globalization and homogenization underestimate the resiliency of local identity and cultural difference in the developing world and the Islamic world in particular. Based on an empirical research in the Gulf area Hheeler states that global culture is like putting together a culturally incompatible orchestra: instruments are not standard issue, there is more than one conductor, and not all musicians (if any) want to play the same tune. Our new global culture might consist of shared identities in the sense that communities will have increasing capabilities to raise their voices to represent differences. The north will continue to advocate the notion that Western knowledge is power; that one of the most important manifestations of power is making money; and that to make money in the age of rapid technological change, one has to be on the ground floor of marketing scientific discovery or at least partake of the charity that Northern countries are willing to give if only cultures of the south will adapt themselves to the prescripts of the global system.

### **The Third Way Perspective**

A major purpose of this part is to analyze the fundamental principles of the Islamic intercultural communication perspective as an alternative to both the clash of civilizations and the global culture perspectives. The alternative, or as I would like to call it “ the Third Way” can contribute a great deal to the global civilization in general, and the intercultural communication in particular. Its notion of a balance between “din”, religion, and “dunya”, the world, is a worthy one. It can provide a corrective and a check to the materialism that characterizes much of contemporary civilizations, offering instead compassion, piety and a sense of humanity. The Islamic principles which encourage flexibility and rational choice are reflected in the exchange: ijihad, independent judgment; shura, consultation; and ijma, consensus. Clearly, rationality and man’s own judgment play a significant part in arriving at decisions. Islam also places knowledge at the highest level of human endeavor. Reasoning and re-interpretation are embedded in Islamic history and text. The following discourse between the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) and Muadh ibn Jabal, a judge, on his way to Yemen clearly indicates the principle: Prophet: how will you decide a problem? Ibn Jabal: according to the Qur’an. Prophet: if it is not in it? Ibn Jabal: according to the Sunna (Islamic custom) Prophet: if it is not in that either? Ibn Jabal: then I will use my own reasoning (Ahmed, 1992). The Third Way presents itself as a way for the digital age. It would be useful to quote Ali Mazrui’s analysis who wrote recently that Prophet Muhammad moved from Mecca to Jerusalem in a single night in the Age of travel by camel; he moved from earth to heavens during the same night ascending from Jerusalem; and while in the heavens, the present age communicated with the ages of the past, for Muhammad was able to talk to Jesus, Moses and all the way back to Adam during the same night. The Prophet was back in Mecca before morning, breaking at least three barriers of cosmic experience: 1- killing distance between Mecca and Jerusalem, 2- killing the distance between the earth and the heavens, and 3- killing the distance between the past and the present. It is in this sense that Islam prepared believers for the age of the end of distance and the age of globalized digital simultaneity (Mazrui, 1998).

It is not new to state that the Third Way perspective very appreciate the value of democracy. The critical investigation of many studies shows that Islam is not an obstacle to the evolution of a democratic polity. And it would still be wrong to argue that Islamic culture is responsible for the failure of democracy in the Muslim world when in fact some of the most fundamental philosophical and political ideas and ideals in Islam promote freedom, individual autonomy, accountability on the part of the ruler, consultation with the people, respect for different point of view, the independence of the judiciary and the rule of law (Muzaffar, 2000). The Tunisian Islamist leader Rashid Ghannouchi provided an early example of a governing democratic trend: “ if by democracy is meant the liberal model of government prevailing in the West, a system under which the people freely choose their representative and leaders, in which there is an alternation of power, as well as all freedoms and human rights for the public, then Muslims will find nothing in

their religion to oppose democracy” (Esposito, 2002).

It is my belief that describing the Third Way as incompatible with the democratic system of governance is completely unfounded. Before any of the political systems known today, Islam has called for the participation of all individuals in the political life of their societies and has made sure that their contributions is not weakened by restrictions. Allah has ordered His Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) to take counsel with his companions on matters of concern to the Muslim community. The second Caliph Umar Ibn al- Khattab is known by his saying: May Allah blesses those who point to my defects. It is also true that Islam is the religion, which is most protective of human rights, as has been confirmed by all the Islamic texts and Islamic life-style. Islam seeks to safeguard all human rights, which are founded on two fundamental principles: freedom and equality (Taher, 1997). However, most accommodationists would agree that it is important for Muslims not to uncritically copy what the West has done; emphasizing that there are different forms that legitimate democracy can take. Iran’s President Mohammad Khatami, in a television interview in June 2001 before his country’s presidential elections noted, “the existing democracies do not necessarily follow one formula or aspect. It is possible that democracy may lead to a socialist system. Or it is possible that democracy may lead to a liberal system. Or it may be a democracy with the inclusion of religious norms in the government. We have accepted the third option. Khatami presents a view common among the advocates of Islamic democracy that “today world democracies are suffering from a major vacuum which is the vacuum of spirituality, and that Islam can provide the framework for combining democracy with spirituality and religious government (Esposito, 2002).

The Third Way is based also on one of the values that are imperative for developing a just intercultural communication. Justice is the hallmark of the Islamic system of government since God commands Muslims to uphold the principles of just dealings and fairness in setting disputes with non- Muslims. The Qur’an teaches that human success and failure, gain and loss in the ultimate sense depend on right faith, right knowledge and right deeds integrated in a harmonious way. Right faith (iman) and right deed (amal salih) are inseparable and constitute the two fundamental conditions of salvations in this world and in the hereafter. The essence of ethics in the Islamic world –view is found in the following verse: “ By [the token of time] [through the ages], verily man is in loss, except such as have faith, and do righteous deeds, and [join together] in the mutual teaching of truth, and of patience and constancy.” (Q. 103: 1-3), (Hassan, 1994).

Sadly, the old-new question about the terrorism and Muslims is still being asked in the West and even by the elite. Unfortunately, the other two intercultural communication perspectives completely misunderstand the Islamic Jihad and therefore undermine the potentials of the Third Way. Islam does not call for wars except when the rights and freedom of Muslims are threatened. The Qur’an states that: “ Permission is hereby given to those who are attacked, because they have been wronged. God has power to grant them victory” (Hajj, 39). The Qur’an has also made it clear that Muslims must not use their power to aggress other people: “ Fight for the sake of God those who fight against you, but do not attack them first. God does not love the aggressors” (Baqara, 190). In the world of today, which is known for cross-cultural contacts, Jihad should take the form of cultural dialogues in the light of peaceful coexistence (Taher, 1997). On the other hand, Islamic scholars and religious leaders across the Muslim world such as those at the Islamic Research Council at al- Azhar University, regarded by many as the highest moral authority in Islam, have made strong, authoritative declarations against bin Laden’s definition of jihad (militant jihad). The declaration states that Islam provides clear rules and ethical norms that forbid the killing of non- combatants, as well as women, children, and the elderly, and also forbids the pursuit of the enemy in defeat, the execution of those who surrender, the inflictions of harm on prisoners of war, and the destruction of property that is not being used in the hostilities (Esposito, 2002). Islam also calls for a peaceful coexistence between peoples and nations and urges Muslims to treat the non-Muslims with kindness and equity: “God does not forbid you to be kind and equitable to those who have neither made war on your religion nor driven you from your homes (Mumtahina, 8).

In general, Muslims are often criticized for not producing the best, but they are seldom congratulated for having standards of behavior, which have averted the worst. There are really no

Muslims equivalents of systematic Nazi extermination camps, nor Muslim conquest by genocide on the scale perpetrated by Europeans in the Americas or Australia, nor Muslim versions of rigid apartheid once approved by South African Dutch Reformed Church, nor Muslim equivalents of the brutal racism of Japan before the end of World War II, nor can Islam be blamed for the only world wars in human history (Mazrui, 1998). In line with this fact, Murad Hoffman concludes that in contrast to the high Western ideals pronounced and exported, what one discovers in terms of actual behavior is highly disturbing: Slave- trading and apartheid; two savage world wars; Stalinist massacres and the Nazi holocaust; ethnic cleaning in Bosnia, and atomic warfare against civilians in Hiroshima and Nagasaki, the Israeli continuous terrorist military 35 year occupation for the Arab Palestinian territories with unlimited financial, political and military support of U.S and many European countries. The U.S military attack against Afghanistan with killing of thousands of civilians. The U.S invasion of Iraq beyond the international law with hundred of thousands of innocent civilians killed and injured without committing any sins except they are resisting the occupation. These disasters were the bloodiest the world has ever seen (Hoffman, 2000 b).

With regard to the ethics of the intercultural communication of the Third Way, Islam does not permit, not even to a journalist, to spy and seek to confirm suspicious, slander, circulation of rumor, and name-calling. Islam has established strong tradition of critical evaluation of the sources of news, use of sound methods of verification, documentation of evidence and testimony wherever possible, reporting within the proper context and treating the subject fairly. In principle, the Muslim media should serve the cause of unity and equality among all humankind in general and the Muslim community in particular (Siddiqi, 2000). The Islamic law "Hisbah" (commanding good and forbidding evil) says that citizens are, as far as their conditions and capabilities permit, entitled to speak and to act in pursuit of what in their enlightened judgment seems good, or they likewise can forbid whether in words, acts or silent denunciation, any evil which they see being committed. Last and not least, Nasihah (sincere advice) is a friendly or sincere counsel to others when one is convinced of the essential benefit of his advice whether it is in social, political, or personal matters (Kamali, cited in Dick, 1997).

## **Conclusion**

This paper proves the inability of both clash of cultures and global culture perspectives to offer a democratic, peaceful and just intercultural communication in the era of globalization. It also demonstrates the fundamental principles of the Islamic intercultural communication perspective which is capable to overcome the problems generated by the other alternatives and provides the globe with the values of tolerances, freedom, democracy, equity, balance, justice, modernity, rationality and peaceful coexistence. The main conclusion the paper finds is that the humankind is in bad need to support the efforts that enable the Third Way perspective to replace dominance with tolerance, the monoculture with multiple cultures and clashes with peace. Finally, I would like to emphasize the issue addressed by many Western and Muslim scholars which is of great significance to our present discussion: If we are to see a more positive Euro- American appreciation of Islam, all the misconceptions which each side holds concerning the other need to be re-examined. The idea of the whole West minus its Muslim minorities all being anti-Islam is as false as the idea of the monolithic Muslim world that is totally united politically in its jihad against Western civilization.

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