Western Democracies and the Threat of Social Disintegration

By Prof Rodrigue Tremblay

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Theme: **Religion**

*"**Millions of men will leave the Southern Hemisphere** to go to the Northern Hemisphere. They will not go as friends. They will go to win, and they will by populating it with their sons. The fertile wombs of our women will allow us to conquer Europe and the world."* —Houari Boumedienne (1932-1978)**,** Algerian military man and president of Algeria, (in a speech at the United Nations, in Sept 1974, advocating the Ummah, i.e. a global Islamic nation.)

*"**The mosques [in Western countries] are our barracks,** the domes are our helmets, the minarets are our swords, and the faithful are our army"* —**Recep Tayyip Erdogan** (1954-), Turkish Prime Minister, (comment made in Dec. 1997, when he was Mayor of Istanbul.)

*"**Seeking proof** [about religion] **misses the point of religion.** It is what it does that matters.**"** —**Hilary Putnam** (1926-2016), American philosopher, (as quoted in The Economist, March 26, 2016*

*"**Islamist movements, supported by Western courts,** try to prevent any criticism of Islam. We should resist this wind of inquisition in the interest of humanity. Western judges who support this inquisition are real useful idiots who expose their own countries to the worst dangers.**"** —**Sami Aldeeb** (1949-), Palestinian-born Swiss university professor, and Director of the Center of Arab and Muslim Law, Switzerland, 2014*

*"This is, in theory, still a free country [the U.K.], but our politically correct, censorious times are such that many of us tremble to give vent to perfectly acceptable views for fear of condemnation. Freedom of speech is thereby imperiled, big questions go undebated, and great lies become accepted, unequivocally as great truths.**"** —**Simon Heffer** (1960-), British journalist, (in The Daily Mail, June 7, 2000)*

Global Research Editor's Note

This article by **Prof. Rodrigue Tremblay** does not specifically address US-NATO initiatives [to destabilize secular governments in Muslim countries leading to the installation of an Islamic Stat](#)e. These include **Iran** (1953, 1979), **Afghanistan** (1979, 2001) **Iraq**, (1991, 2003), **Libya**, (2011), **Syria** (2011-2024). These actions –which include wars and regime change– have a bearing on the flow of immigrants to Western Europe which is addressed in Prof. Rodrigue's article.

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Introduction

Established religions have always had problems coexisting with governments and especially, in modern times, with [democracy](#) and the [secular](#) nature of societies. In the West, in fact, over time, a more or less hermetic separation has developed between religions and democratically elected political power.

This is because, in addition to maintaining places of worship, religions are social forces. They are competing organizations of power over people and society, with a structured system of beliefs, mysteries, 'revealed' truths, doctrines, dogmas, rules and laws, symbols, texts and images, rites and practices. Religious authorities often base their power over people on concepts of the supremacy of abstract divine powers.

While some established [religions](#) are highly centralized, others are much less so, and they reflect a plurality of views and types of operation.

I. Politically Structured Religions and Spiritual and Personal Religions, in a Democracy

Many people think that all religions are equal.

Prof. Rodrigue Tremblay (right)

This is only partly true. On the one hand, there are greatly politicized religions, based on sacred principles. They are highly institutionalized, centralized and omnipresent in terms of political influence in countries where they operate. On the other hand, there are also more philosophical and spiritual religions, mainly focused on the destiny of an individual's soul and the transcendence of human existence, and they rely mainly on personal life practices.

In the first group, among Abrahamic-type religions, there are Christianity and Christendom and Islam and Islamism, the latter dating from the 7th century. These are religions that can be classified as political. In a second group, there are more philosophical religions whose historical source is mainly Asia, such as Buddhism, Taoism, Hinduism, etc.

II. Politicized Religions and Democracy

However, [Christianity](#)and Christendom have undergone transformations and reforms since the time when it was a dominant political religion in some parts of the world. They were even the source of [holy wars](#).

In recent centuries, Christianity has become more of an individual and personal religion rather than a fundamentally political religion. It has gradually adapted to the advent of democracy in most Western societies and to more secular democratic states.

In this context, the ultimate and legitimate power in a democratic society emanates directly or indirectly from the people, and not from abstract divinities and their spokesmen on earth. In the formula of American President Abraham Lincoln, democracy is a *"government of the people, by the people, and for the people."* It is also, in many instances, the principle of a more secular state.

The Special Case of Political Islam in the West

In contrast, Islam (the word means 'submission' or 'surrender' to the will of Allah in Arabic) and Islamism, that is political Islam in action, have remained more or less frozen in their founding dogmatism of the 7th century, and remain an eminently political and social religion. In countries where it is the majority, it often imposes itself as the only compulsory state religion, excluding all others. These countries could then become "Islamic republics", some of them being openly theocracies, with very little separation between religion and politics.

The best known examples are Saudi Arabia (Sunni branch) and the Islamic Republic of Iran (Shiite branch), which are countries where religious leaders act as "supreme guides" and who play a determining role in the behavior of citizens as individuals, in politics and in social affairs, and in the overall running of society.

Some religions even rely on a religious police to make sure that revealed religious precepts are well observed by members and even by the entire population.

This is why, among all established religions, the case of Islam can be considered special.

Its principles are based on four main components:

- the Ummah is the global Islamic community or nation to which every believer must belong, with the common goal to advance the cause of Islam;
- jihad or 'effort' can refer, among other things, to an obligation of 'holy war' in order to propagate and, if necessary, impose Islamic principles by 'the heart, by the tongue, by the hand and by the sword' against the infidels;
- the Quran is the sacred book of Islam, much as the Bible is for Judaism and Christianity. It is supposed to bring together revelations from Allah transmitted orally by the archangel Gabriel and compiled by different authors, before being transmitted to the prophet Muhammad, in the 7th century;
- Sharia (Islamic law), like jihad, is taken from the Quran. Sharia represents the various doctrinal, social, cultural and relational laws, norms and rules that are addressed to believers.

The traditional reading of the *Quran* divides the world and humanity into two areas: the House of Islam, *Dar al-Islam* or "the world of submission to Allah" where Sharia applies and where Muslims live, and *Dar al-Harb*, "the world of war" against non-Muslims.

III. Unselective Immigration and the Clash of Civilizations Between Democratically Elected Western Governments and Political Islamism

By their history, laws and rules, Islam and Islamism constitute an imminently political, proselytizing and conquering religion. It is a serious error to confuse them with reformed religions such as Christianity and other essentially personal and individual religions such as Buddhism.

If there are clashes between a political religion and politics, it is not only because there is competition for power but also because the foundations of a political religion often enter into a subversive conflict with the practice of democracy.

Indeed, when a political religion carries within itself a global political project, we can then speak of a 'civilization' with a common ideology, which creates, by extension, a predictable opposition between different civilizations—or even a *Clash of Civilizations*, according to the title of a book on the subject by American scientist Samuel Huntington (1927-2008), and published in 1996.

This is an expression suggested by the author to demonstrate how conflicts of civilization can arise when different political views or cultures find themselves juxtaposed on the same territory. Indeed, Huntington refers not only to a clash of religions but also to a clash between cultures.

IV. Factors of Social and Political Disintegration in Western Democracies

It is by no means unavoidable that Western democracies must disintegrate under the pressure of politicized religious cultures, especially when they are imported from elsewhere. Already, in France since 1905, in Italy since 1947 and in Spain since 1978, but also in Nordic countries such as Norway, Sweden, Denmark, and also in Switzerland, among others, concrete steps have been taken to adopt the principle of state secularism.

Indeed, if nothing is done and if governments let things happen, or worse, if they consider that their country is a kind of experimental social laboratory and promote the creation of diverse cultural areas, serious problems of integration are bound to arise.

In fact, in certain neighborhoods in France and in some other countries, there has been an emergence of so-called "No-Go zones", where laws are hardly respected, and where the police dare to venture only with special reinforcement, under the threat of being attacked or worse. This could even deteriorate into a form of domestic terrorism.

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A typical sight in the commercial areas of "94," one of the most heavily Muslim areas of France.
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The need to take action would seem urgent before the gangrene of social anarchy takes hold. This would require on the part of governments, political elites and the population in general, a serious awareness, a clear vision of the situation, courage and firmness, and the adoption of concrete masures to correct a phenomenon in evolution, before it deteriorates even further.

In the case of France, but also in some other Western countries, this stage is progressing after decades of carelessness, complacency, laxity, negligence, weakness and abdication of responsibilities on the part of public leaders. In many instances, the latter have placed short term partisan political interests above the long term interest of their nation in allowing communitarianism and ethnic ghettos to take hold.

It is not normal for a democracy to let its institutions wither away under the threat of totalitarian ideologies imported from elsewhere (see the frightening quotes from Boumedienne and Erdogan above).

V. There Are a Number of Ways to Prevent and Counter Social and Political Disintegration in the Face of an Uncontrolled Migratory Invasion

Here are a few policies to be considered:

1. A first type of intervention consists in denouncing as unacceptable and a threat to security the leaving of national borders unattended, in the face of un-welcomed and illegal immigration. A government that does not protect national borders is failing in its primary duties. —Peoples and nations, like individuals, have a natural right to protect their survival, their legitimate interests and their values, in the face of transgressions, from within or from outside.

2. A second form of intervention consists in adopting a responsible immigration policy, one that respects the receptive capacity of a population. —This is the principle that immigration must make a net positive and not negative contribution to a host country.

3. Thirdly, reinforcing laws of public education in order to protect children against exactions and intimidations on the part of proselytizing religious predators in public schools, particularly with regard to the democratic principle of equality between men and women.

4. Fourth, governments may want to make the granting of citizenship to new immigrants conditional on a contract of citizenship and integration into the host society. —No country and no government is under the obligation of accepting an influx of foreign individuals who have no intention of integrating into the host country.

Conclusions

The West (European and North American countries) is currently confronted, from within and from without, with a migratory wave of cultures and ideologies that in some cases are strongly opposed to Western democratic values; such is the case with political Islamism [which is often supported covertly by Western powers]

In the medium and longer term, such a phenomenon is a serious hindrance to the social integration of new immigrants, and it can represent a real danger for the cohesion, freedom, security and prosperity of citizens in the host countries.

On this issue, it may be a quarter to midnight in some countries. One day, it could be too late to act.

Some Western democracies are already threatened in their basic democratic nature. They must adopt integration measures in order to strengthen national laws and regulations and adapt them to new realities.

The primary objective should be nothing less than preserving the Western democratic system, which is based on the power of the people, against growing and corrosive encroachments from ideologies that are hostile to democracy and fundamental freedoms.

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This article was originally published on the author's blogsite, Dr. Rodrigue Tremblay.

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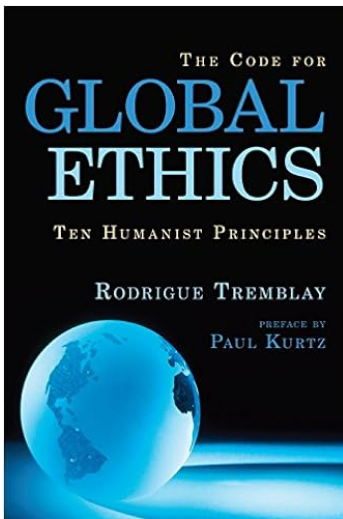
The Code for Global Ethics: Ten Humanist Principles

by [Rodrigue Tremblay](), Preface by [Paul Kurtz]()

Publisher: Prometheus (April 27, 2010)

Hardcover: 300 pages

Humanists have long contended that morality is a strictly human concern and should be independent of religious creeds and dogma. This principle was clearly articulated in the two Humanist Manifestos issued in the mid-twentieth century and in Humanist Manifesto 2000, which appeared at the beginning of the twenty-first century. Now this code for global ethics further elaborates ten humanist principles designed for a world community that is growing ever closer together. In the face of the obvious challenges to international stability-from nuclear proliferation, environmental degradation, economic turmoil, and reactionary and sometimes violent religious movements-a code based on the "natural dignity and inherent worth of all human beings" is needed more than ever. In separate chapters the author delves into the issues surrounding these ten humanist principles: preserving individual dignity and equality, respecting life and property, tolerance, sharing, preventing domination of others, eliminating superstition, conserving the natural environment, resolving differences cooperatively without resort to violence or war, political and economic democracy, and providing for universal education. This forward-looking, optimistic, and eminently reasonable discussion of humanist ideals makes an important contribution to laying the foundations for a just and peaceable global community.

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