



STUDY GUIDE

THE AMERICAN TRINITY: THE THREE VALUES THAT MAKE AMERICA GREAT

KEY TERMS: ethnicity
liberty

values
equality

assimilate
rights

NOTE-TAKING COLUMN: Complete this section during the video. Include definitions and key terms.

CUE COLUMN: Complete this section after the video.

What does *E Pluribus Unum* translate to?

What is the American Trinity?

What was the motto of the French Revolution?

How do American values differ from European values?

What is the source of moral values, according to the founding principles of America?

DISCUSSION & REVIEW QUESTIONS:

- At the beginning of the video, Mr. Prager points out that, “Race and ethnicity have defined every nation on earth. Except one - the United States of America. It is defined by values. So, to understand America, you have to understand American values.” Why do you think that America is so unique in this way? Explain. What are some advantages for Americans of being defined by values rather than by ethnic origin or race?
- Mr. Prager goes on to explain that, “It is a basic American value that all human beings are born equal, and all must be equal before the law. But ending up equal – that’s a French and European value. And if you want people to end up equal, you must deprive them of liberty. Which is exactly what happened right after the French Revolution and in every other society that made equality its national goal. America gives people the liberty to end up wherever their abilities, work ethic, and luck take them – meaning unequal... If you want equality, you will tell people how much they can earn, and that means the end of liberty.” Why do you think that so many people mistakenly conflate and/or equivocate the idea of ‘treated equally under the law’ with the notion of ‘equal outcomes?’
- At a different point in the video, Mr. Prager shares a quote from the *E Pluribus Unum* Project and notes that, “‘Over the years, *E Pluribus Unum* has also served as a reminder of America’s bold attempt to make one unified nation of people from many different backgrounds and beliefs.’ In other words, America doesn’t care about your national or ethnic origins. This explains why people who immigrate to America assimilate faster and more fully than immigrants to any other country.” Why do you think that it is the case that Americans are so fully accepting of new citizens as ‘full’ Americans right away- that Americans don’t care about national or ethnic origins? How does having such a fully accepting attitude benefit both new citizens and the already existing country? Explain. What happens when immigrants don’t assimilate into the culture and country that they move to, and what might the negative consequences be for both those that refuse to assimilate and for the destination country?
- Towards the end of the video, Mr. Prager notes that, “The American Trinity is the reason America became the world’s freest and most prosperous country. But many Americans want to, in the words of former President Barack Obama, ‘fundamentally transform’ it. They wish to replace American values with European values...” Considering that American values created the greatest nation in history, why do you think that some people want to fundamentally transform America and replace such successful values with any other set of values? Why do you think such people wish to endure an enormous struggle to change America rather than simply move to a country that already has values that match their own, if they feel so strongly about them?
- Mr. Prager concludes the video by warning, “Which set of values Americans adopt will determine whether America remains free, prosperous, and the force for good in the world that it has been. With the exception of the Civil War, this is the greatest internal battle in American history.” What do you think Mr. Prager means by ‘force for good in the world?’ Explain. Do you agree with Mr. Prager’s conclusion? Why or why not? Which set of values do you stand behind? Explain.

EXTEND THE LEARNING:

CASE STUDY: Muslim Assimilation

INSTRUCTIONS: Read the article “Is the U.S. Better at Assimilating Immigrants Than Europe,” then answer the questions that follow.

- What has ‘...a massive flood of immigrants to Europe from Muslim-majority countries...’ resulted in? How many adult Muslims are living in America today, and what percentage of the American population do they represent? What percentage of those adult Muslims are U.S. citizens? Why does the Pew center use views about homosexuality as a metric for assimilation? What is another important metric for assimilation that the Pew survey uses? In the most recent survey, what percentage of the adult U.S. Muslims claimed that ‘all or most of their friends are Muslim?’ What percentage of U.S. Muslims stated that they are proud to be American? What is the author’s reasoning for such a high number? What does the author state about what the results of the survey imply, in terms of the Muslim American community assimilating into American society? What percentage of Muslims in France would prefer Sharia Law to be the primary law of the land? What is the difference between Muslims who self-select to come to America versus the Muslims who self-select to go to Europe? What is the primary reason that Muslims are assimilating more successfully in America than in Europe? What is at the heart of European identity? What did Chancellor Merkel have to say about multiculturalism in Germany? What did President Thomas Jefferson write, in terms of what the real test of America’s success would be? What does the Pew Research Center Study affirm?
- Do you think that the same underlying factors for why Muslim immigrants are more successfully assimilating into American society than into European society would hold true for immigrants coming from other nations and cultures as well? Why or why not? Do you think that the fact that people from other cultures assimilate so much quicker and so much better into American society, and the reasons underlying this fact, provides valid support for the notion of American exceptionalism? Why or why not? What do you think it means to be an American? Explain.
- Which specific points made in the video are supported by statements in the article? Explain and give at least three examples.



QUIZ

THE AMERICAN TRINITY: THE THREE VALUES THAT MAKE AMERICA GREAT

- 1. Which of the following are American values?**
 - a. Prosperity
 - b. Equality
 - c. Fraternity
 - d. None of the above.

- 2. What three words are on every American coin?**
 - a. *E Pluribus Unum*, In God We Trust, Liberty
 - b. *E Pluribus Unum*, In God We Trust, Fraternity
 - c. *E Pluribus Unum*, In God We Trust, Prosperity
 - d. *E Pluribus Unum*, In God We Trust, Equality

- 3. Why do people who immigrate to America assimilate faster and more fully than immigrants to any other country?**
 - a. Because they often start successful businesses.
 - b. Because most immigrants are from Europe.
 - c. Because America doesn't care about your national or ethnic origins.
 - d. Because immigrants make a lot of American friends.

- 4. The moment you affirm equality, as the French Revolution did, you will lose liberty.**
 - a. True
 - b. False

- 5. America was founded on the principle that _____.**
 - a. establishing a state religion is of utmost importance
 - b. the God of the Bible is the source of moral values
 - c. making money is more important than anything else
 - d. rights are given by men



QUIZ - ANSWER KEY

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<https://nationalinterest.org/feature/america-better-assimilating-immigrants-europe-21846>

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Image: Reuters

Is the U.S. Better at Assimilating Immigrants Than Europe?

Muslims are assimilating more successfully in America because of the fundamental differences between American and European societies and their conception of citizenship.

by Megan G. Oprea

Since the rise of the Islamic State in 2014, the United States and Europe have seen a dramatic increase in the number of terror attacks and attempted attacks perpetrated in the name of Islam. Concurrently, the migrant crisis has brought a massive flood of immigrants to Europe from Muslim-majority countries, which has resulted in a rise in sexual assaults, among other things. The combination of these two phenomena has launched a debate about Muslim immigration and whether Europe is able and equipped to assimilate such a large influx of newcomers. That conversation has also spread to the United States as fears of terrorism continue.

Europe's experience with Muslim immigration is, of course, vastly different than America's, where assimilation of immigrant populations into mainstream society has been more successful. There are a number of reasons for this, all of which should give Americans confidence and provide an example for Europe to emulate as it grapples with the migrant crisis.

Last week, the Pew Research Center released its latest survey of American Muslims (previous surveys were conducted in 2007 and 2011), providing the public with an updated peek into the views and religious practices of Muslims in America. The 3.35 million adult Muslims living in America today make up about

one percent of the population. Of these adult Muslims, about 82 percent are U.S. citizens. While the center asked a large array of questions, let's just take a look at a few of the highlights.

American Muslims, according to the survey, are fairly observant, including their dress, daily prayers and mosque attendance. A slim majority appears not to adhere to fundamentalist views. Of those surveyed, 52 percent said that traditional understandings of Islam need a new interpretation and a majority (64 percent) said that there is more than one true way to interpret Islam. While a significant percentage obviously have a strict interpretation of Islam, it is encouraging that they do not make up the majority.

An important question that the Pew Research Center has asked in its three surveys of American Muslims concerns views about homosexuality. This is used as a metric for assimilation because the center has found that in most Muslim-majority countries, views toward homosexuality are extremely negative. Any evidence that this has changed among Muslim immigrants in the United States would be a sign of assimilation to liberal-social norms. The center found that "today, about half of U.S. Muslims say homosexuality should be accepted by society (52%), while 33% say homosexuality should be discouraged. By comparison, in 2011, 39% of Muslims said homosexuality should be accepted; in 2007, just 27% held this view."

Another important metric for measuring assimilation is the extent to which immigrant populations mix with members outside of their community. The survey found that Muslims are less likely to say all or most of their friends are Muslim than they were in either 2011 or 2007. Today, only 36 percent made that assertion compared with 49 percent in 2011. Also, 55 percent said that Americans are friendly toward them, which is up from 48 percent in 2011, although 75 percent said there is a lot of discrimination toward Muslims.

One major concern about Muslim immigration has to do with the compatibility between Islam and the democratic system. Islam, beginning with its inception in the seventh century, has always been a fundamentally juridical religion. Its texts, including the Quran and the Hadith, outline the laws by which Muslims should live, from laws about stealing to inheritance. Up until the end of World War I, the Ottoman Empire was the Islamic caliphate, a theocracy based on Islamic law. Pew asked whether Muslim Americans see any natural conflict between Islam and democracy. Of those surveyed 65 percent said that there is no such conflict, while 35 percent said there is.

But despite the number of Muslims who see such a conflict, almost all expressed strong patriotic sentiments. According to Pew, "the vast majority of U.S. Muslims say they are proud to be American (92%), while nearly all say they are proud to be Muslim (97%). Indeed, about nine-in-ten (89%) say they are proud to be *both* Muslim and American." Pride in one's country is a vital part of assimilating and becoming a full participating member of a society and nation. The kind of patriotism that is often found among immigrants can have much to do with appreciation of opportunities and freedoms that a country can provide, especially in comparison to their country of origin.

So what does all this mean? It would seem to imply that the Muslim American community is making significant strides toward assimilating into American society while still retaining its religious and cultural beliefs. Muslim Americans vote and participate in the democratic system and believe that through hard work anyone can succeed, the bedrock of American political philosophy.

These results stand in stark contrast to the attitudes and behavior of Muslims in Europe, where there is less pride taken in belonging to a given country and a higher degree of isolation and ostracization. A 2016 survey found that 44 percent of Muslims in Europe hold fundamentalist beliefs, described as "a belief in returning to the roots of Islam, coupled with an adherence to a strict interpretation of the Quran." The survey also found that 57 percent would not be friends with homosexuals and 54 percent think of the West as an enemy of Islam. In France, 72 percent of Muslims reportedly would prefer Sharia law to be the primary or sole law of the land. In the UK, 69 percent feel the same way, according to the survey.

Why such a contrast? As the survey data shows, Europe has struggled to assimilate not only those Muslims who have lived there for decades but also the more recent surge of migrants from the Middle East and

North Africa. One reason for this is that European nations have a history of colonialism in the Muslim world that has put them in a much more intimate and tense relationship with the peoples of those countries. For France, this meant bringing laborers from Morocco to help replenish the workforce after the devastations of World War II. While neither France nor the migrant workers envisioned this as a permanent move, that's what ended up happening. Workers arrived in large numbers and eventually their families followed, dramatically increasing the North African population in France. The bloody Algerian War also meant a lasting legacy of bitterness between France and its former subjects, complicating the relationship between the native French population and Algerian immigrants to France.

Then there's the geographic factor. It's obviously much easier to travel to Europe from North Africa and the Middle East—whether legally or illegally—than it is to make it to America. In addition, because the United States has had traditionally lower numbers of Muslim immigration, there are far fewer family reunifications to facilitate migration. For these reasons, it makes little sense for Americans to worry that what's happening in Europe could possibly happen here in the United States. We will not face anything like the sudden change in demographics that Europe is facing, which makes assimilation for any group so challenging.

There's also the issue of why Muslims come to America versus Europe. There is arguably a self-selecting group of Muslims who come to the United States in search of the very same American dream that has attracted immigrants throughout Europe for generations. Whereas European Muslims, as discussed above, came to Europe under very different circumstances and often did so purely for the economic opportunities. That's one reason European Muslims have attempted to remain separate from the society at large in ways American Muslims have not.

But the primary reason why Muslims are assimilating more successfully in America has to do with the fundamental differences between American and European societies and their conception of citizenship. European nations were founded as ethnic nation-states. As much as European leadership would like to pretend otherwise, nationalism is at the heart of European identity and civilization, making the assimilation of Muslims so difficult. Even Angela Merkel, the grande dame of inclusivity and multiculturalism, said in a speech in 2010 that the attempt in Germany to create a multicultural society had “utterly failed” and that people from different cultural backgrounds living together simply didn't work.

America, on the other hand, was founded on the principle that all humans have fundamental natural rights, and that it's these rights that put all men and women on an equal footing when it comes to citizenship and belonging to the body politic. Thomas Jefferson once wrote that the real test of America's success would be if it could welcome “even” Muslims, who at the time were considered the ultimate “other.” He even speculated that, in theory, a Muslim should be able to serve in high elected office, even become president. The unique vision the Founders had for the American project included anyone regardless of beliefs.

None of this is to say that Muslim immigration to America has been flawless or that perfect assimilation is occurring. The Orlando nightclub and San Bernardino attacks—and the more than one hundred individuals arrested in the last few years for aiding the Islamic State—vividly demonstrate that America also faces challenges. And there's no doubt that radical and fundamentalist strains of Islam are present in some of the mosques and Islamic centers around the country—after all, 17 percent of American Muslims have acknowledged that there is “a great deal” or “fair amount” of support for extremism in the United States.

But on the whole, the Pew Research Center study affirms what history and experience have shown, and help to illuminate an American Muslim community that is moving in the right direction—not just by tolerating American values but by embracing them. For this, we should be grateful, and remember how very different America's situation is from Europe's situation.