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Culture, Economic Progress and Immigration: The Hispanic/Latino Population in the U.S. and the North African/Muslim Population in European Countries

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Abstract

This paper explores the rising populations of Hispanics/Latinos in the United States and of North Africans/Muslims in European countries. It examines the “push” and “pull” factors contributing to the increase in emigration of Hispanics to the U.S. and North Africans/Muslims to Europe. Examining social and economic data for both immigrant groups, the paper argues that due largely to cultural similarities, the Hispanic population in the U.S. tends to be more easily integrated into the mainstream population than the North African/Muslim population in Europe.

Introduction

The United States and Europe are experiencing large flows of immigrants coming from developing regions to the south of them (Hispanics/Latinos in the case of the U.S. and North Africans/Muslims in the case of European countries). Both groups are emigrating to rich white majority entities or wealthy countries where people of European origin are the majority of the population. Both groups are coming from countries that at one time in history have been colonized, annexed or indirectly or directly influenced by the countries where they are now emigrating to. Another similarity between these two immigrant groups is that they are resembled racially (physical appearance) – individuals in both groups could be as white as someone from European origin (which is the case for a substantial number of Hispanics), or Black or of Black African descent, or Asian. They are all people with origins from the Old World (Africa, Asia and Europe). Another similarity between these two groups is geographic: Each is very close in geographic proximity to the rich entity they are emigrating to. One final similarity between these two groups is that they are emigrating primarily for economic reasons.

There is a very important difference between these two groups from developing countries, however. Both groups are emigrating to majority Christian countries, but while the Hispanics/Latinos are mostly Christians going to a Christian country (U.S.), the North Africans/Muslims are emigrating as mostly Muslims to Christian countries. This will play a central role in terms of their rate or pace of integration or economic success. It is in this instance where culture tends to play a substantial contributing role.

This paper examines the economic and social conditions of people of Hispanic/Latino descent in the United States and the North African/Muslim population in European countries in the beginning of the 21st century. The paper begins with brief conceptual definitions or explanations of culture to provide a background of how these two groups from developing countries came to be in such large numbers in the United States and European countries. Next, the paper briefly examines the rate of immigration by Hispanics/Latinos in the United States and North Africans/Muslims in European countries. Next, the paper briefly examines the factors responsible for such large numbers of Hispanics/Latinos emigrating to the United States and North Africans/Muslims to European countries. Finally, the paper presents a brief examination of the economic and social conditions of Hispanics/Latinos in the United States and North Africans/Muslims in European countries.

The main thesis of this paper is that culture is at the core of whether each of these two immigrant groups is positively integrated or successful in the countries that they emigrated to. The author is not claiming that any country’s culture is better than another, but only that at any given moment, the types of important economic, political and social policies practiced by any country tend to determine their success or the lack of it. So, here, culture is the independent variable that determines or influences other variables such as relative ease of integration or economic success by each of these immigrant groups in their host nations. Let us now turn to a conceptual definition or explanation of Culture and how it plays a central role in the lives of Hispanics/Latinos in the United States and North Africans/Muslims in European countries.

Conceptual Definition: What is Culture?

Culture has been cited as a big contributor to why millions of people from developing regions immigrate to developed regions such as Europe and North America. The word culture has numerous definitions. Matviuk (2007) points to a 1952 study that over a 50 year period identified over 160 definitions of culture. Matviuk presented this definition of culture: "Programming of the mind is composed of a commonly held body of beliefs and values that define the shoulds and the oughts of life for those who hold them" (254).

In an introduction to an article entitled "Culture and Cultural Analysis as Experimental Systems," Fischer (2007) summarizes several definitions of culture over a century and a half period:

Culture is (1) that relational (ca.1848), (2) complex whole... (1870s), whose parts cannot be changed without affecting other parts (ca. 1914), (4) mediated through powerful and power-laden symbolic forms (1930s), (5) whose multiplicities and performatively negotiated character (1960s), (6) is transformed by alternative positions, organizational forms, and leveraging of symbolic systems (1980s), (7) as well as by emergent new technosciences, media, and biotechnical relations (ca.2005) (1).

According to Lu (2006), culture is a concept which is complex and has many definitions. Lu cites a 1980 definition of culture as: "...the collective programming of the mind, which distinguishes the members of one human group from another" (192).

This author broadly defines culture as the way of life, beliefs and behavior of a particular group of people or a society. Within this broad definition, culture includes the religions or spirituality practiced within a country; the political laws that govern a country and the observance of such laws by the people, such as paying taxes; the economic system practiced within that country that leads to the average citizen or resident having a relatively well-off standard of living; trade laws and foreign policy of a country, etc. Culture serves as a powerful independent variable that influences dependent variables such as religion and economic system that are themselves very influential.

Examining culture from this broad point of view, the data reveal that the U.S. and European countries have implemented economic and social policies that have resulted in enormous success and a very high standard of living of their people when compared to many North African/Muslim societies and nations in Latin America. This success in European countries and the U.S. is what has resulted in the massive migration of Hispanics to the U.S. and North Africans/Muslims to European countries seeking better economic opportunities and consistent political stability or rule of law for themselves and their families. The following sections that are about to be explored will have the above explanations of culture as a background. What are the immigrant rates and demographic trends in the U.S. and European countries?

Rates of Immigration and Demographic Trends in the U.S. and Europe

Linking culture to economic development of nations in developing and developed nations, Zoakos (2006), for example, asserts that: "Privatization, financial transparency, rule of law, trade liberalization, even central bank independence, are not culture-neutral. The great themes of globalization are not culture-neutral: they are a menace to traditional culture" (21). Zoakos continued by citing a 2007 World Bank study claiming that, pertaining to the ability of an individual to start a business in many Muslim developing nations, the minimum cost in North Africa and the Muslim Middle East was 819% of those regions' per capita incomes. In East Asia and the Pacific, it was 103% of income. In Latin America, it was 66.2%; 41.4% in OECD nations, and 0.7% in the United States. According to Zoakos, "... the minimum cost for starting a business in Egypt is \$9,530, in Syria \$58,730 and in Saudi Arabia \$131,270. By contrast, this cost in China is \$5,213 and in the USA \$286 and in Singapore \$229 and in Thailand \$159" (2006: 22). It is policies such as the one above that could cause individuals in these two developing regions to seek to emigrate to European countries or the United States.

The United States and European countries have experienced a substantial increase in immigration since the early 1990s. Both the U.S. and European nations have entered into trade agreements with developing nations in order to reduce the rapid increase of immigration (Brown, 2000; Gibb, 2000; Lewis, Robinson and Thierfelder, 2003; McKinney, 2004; Erikson, 2004/2005), but large scale immigration still continues. Compared to European countries, the U.S. has a higher rate of immigration. For example, as of 2008, the net migration rate to the U.S. (with 303.8 million people) was 2.92 per every 1,000 migrants. For the European Union (with 491 million people), it was 1.46 per every 1,000 migrants(1). The Hispanic population is the fastest growing in the United States because of both immigration and high birth rates. From 1990 to 2000, the Hispanic population grew 58% (Hamilton, 2002:22). As Burchard et al. (2005) point out, Hispanics or Latinos are not only the youngest group in the U.S., but also they are the largest and fastest growing minority group already accounting for 14% of the total population. By

2005, excluding Puerto Rico, there were an estimated 42.6 million Hispanics in the country. By 2025 that population is expected to increase to 25% of the nation's total (2161).

As for the breakdown of the various Hispanic groups, as of 2002, there were 37.4 million Hispanics in the United States, with 15 million (40.2%) of them being foreign-born. Among that foreign-born total, 52.1% entered the country between 1990 and 2002 alone (Ramirez and de la Cruz, 2003:2-3). Hispanics of Mexican descent comprised the majority of the Hispanic population in the United States. As of 2002, of the 37.4 million Hispanics in the U.S., 66.9% were of Mexican descent, 14.3% from Central and South America, 8.6% from Puerto Rico, 3.7% from Cuba, and 6.5% from other parts of Latin America and the Caribbean (Ramirez and de la Cruz, 2003:1).

European Countries

European nations have also experienced a large increase in immigration, and African--especially North African immigration and Muslims from former colonies of European powers--have contributed substantially to that increase. In the year 2000, the European Union's (EU) (15 nations) total population increased by just over 1 million from 376,455,200 to 377,507,900, with immigration comprising 680,000 and natural growth (births minus deaths) comprising 372,000 ("Migration keeps the EU population growing," July 2002:1-2).

Most of the literature on North African or Muslim immigration into European nations shows that a very high number or proportion of immigrants come from North Africa, especially Algeria, Morocco and Tunisia, a geographic region known as the Maghreb. Emigration to Europe from these countries goes back to the days of colonialism. For example, more than 2 million Algerians are claimed to have lived in metropolitan France between 1914 and 1954 (Alba and Silberman, 2002:1174). Begag (1990) notes that in 1989, of the estimated 4 million foreign residents in France, 43% were of North African ancestry (3). Bowen (2004) points out that four to five million Muslims reside in France and that: "... nearly all of them immigrants and their children, and about one-half foreign nationals" (45). According to Bowen, an estimated 60% to 70% of Muslim immigrants in France come from the Maghreb, and that "...Algeria and Morocco have contributed the largest numbers, followed by Tunisia. Turks and West Africans form the next largest groups" (45).

White (1999) points out that there were 2.5 million Maghrebis in France alone (840). More than 9 million Muslims reside in Western Europe (Soper and Fetzer, 2003:40). As of 2003, there were an estimated 5 million Muslims in France and 1.5 million in Britain (Soper and Fetzer 2003:43). According to Kastoryano (2004) there were 820,000 Algerians, 516,000 Moroccans, and 200,000 Tunisians in France, and almost 2 million Turks in Germany (1234). What are the "pull" and "push" factors that have contributed to the large scale emigration of Hispanics to the United States, and North Africans/Muslims to Europe?

Factors Causing Increased Immigration into the U.S. and Europe

Culture as broadly defined in this paper plays an important role in explaining the factors causing the increase in immigration into the U.S. by Hispanics/Latinos and North Africans/Muslims in European countries. Among the many factors that have contributed to the rapid rate of immigration into the U.S. and European countries are pressure from Human Rights organizations in favor of increased immigration, gradual stagnation and decline of Europe's and the United States' white populations due to deaths and low childbirth rates, the need for cheap and reliable labor force, coupled with the persistence of economic hardship in most developing nations, and increasing tolerance in developed countries, especially those of European descent. Let us briefly examine these factors.

Pressure on the West to Accept More Immigrants

An increasing number of scholars have been pointing out in recent publications that even though an increasing number of law makers, citizens and civic groups in both the U.S. and the European nations have been insisting on a halt or reduction in immigration for various reasons (Sanchez, 1997; Bansak and Raphael, 2001; Meilaender, 2001; Tolbert and Grummel, 2003), more immigrants continue to migrate there legally and illegally. Several authors have noted this contradiction (Shanks, 2001; Joppke, 1998; Kritz and Gurak, 2001; Sniderman, Hagendoorn, and Prior, 2004).

Due to the large populations of those two developing regions, it appears as if these two immigrant groups will continue to emigrate. For example, Bruni (2003, July 11) quoted Mayor Bruno Siragusa of the Italian City of Lampedusa as saying of the persistent immigration of Africans and Arabs: "This thing [immigration] is bigger than us." Bruni also quoted Luigi Tenaglia, a medical worker in Lampedusa as saying: "There's a sort of desperation in them [immigrants crossing the Mediterranean]... If you haven't seen it, you can't understand" (A-1). An estimated 10,000 immigrants from Africa and Asia died in the decade of the 1990s alone trying to cross the Mediterranean Sea illegally (Wilkinson, 2003, January 29).

Joppke (1998) posed the question: "Why do the developed states of the North Atlantic region accept more

immigrants than their generally restrictionist rhetoric and policies intend?" (266). Joppke answers that question by explaining that economic and political globalization tend to influence the autonomy of these North Atlantic region states in their efforts to halt increasing immigration (268; also see Sniderman et al., 2004:35). In a review of the book, *Immigration and the Nation-State: The United States, Germany, and Great Britain* (by Joppke, 1999) Todaro (2004) explains how the United States and European countries such as Germany and the United Kingdom are opening up their countries to immigrants due to civil rights pressure or labor needs (p837-838). Paden and Singer (2003) expressed concerns of America's new immigration policies, and also reiterated the importance of foreigners in the country: "...the United States' openness to outsiders has long been the underpinning of the country's economic and social fabric" (8). The above examples show that there has developed a culture of tolerance within the U.S. and European countries that has resulted in a cautious acceptance of immigrants.

Demographic Changes in the U.S. and Europe

There have been numerous studies showing demographic changes in Europe and the United States (Leighley, 2001; "Demographic Consequences for the EU of," 2001; Fuller 2002; Buchanan 2002; "People in Europe" 2002; UNPD 2000; Bernstein 2003, January 21; McKinnon, 2003; "Europe: Old Europe; Demographic Change," 2004). This has a direct or indirect effect on the economies of those two entities. Writing in the *International Herald Tribune* about Europe's population decline, Thomas Fuller reports that in 2001, "...there were more deaths than births in 43 percent of the 211 regions that make up the European Union," and that in the city of Cottbus, Germany: "Thousands of schoolteachers have been laid off for lack of students. Workers have begun to dismantle, piece by piece, dozens of vacant apartments, part of a plan to demolish 5,000 units over the next decade" (Fuller, 2002, December 12).

Compared to European countries, the U.S. is not experiencing population decline, but its workers are getting older and retiring, its white women have lower rates of childbirth, and it has seen a substantial decline in immigration from Europe due to the substantial rise in living standards there. For example, Bachu and O'Connell (2001) reported that in 2000, 44.8% of non-Hispanic white women age 15 to 44 were childless, while 39% of black women and 34.6% of Hispanic women were childless in that same year (2).

In the case of Europe, not only are people in its member countries getting older, but they are also not meeting the population replacement level of 2.1 children per woman. For example, as of 2008, the total fertility rate (children born per woman) in the U.S. was 2.1(2), but averaged at 1.5 for the member nations of the European Union(3). The United Nations Population Division (UNPD) presented a scenario in which it claims that: "The population of Europe, for example, would be 101 million less (14 per cent) in 2050 than in 2000" (UNPD 2000:19). Also, while 12.7% of the 303.8 million people in the U.S. as of July 2008 were aged 65 and over(4), the average for the 491 million people of the EU during that same period was 17.1 percent(5).

The Need for Cheap Labor from the Southern Hemisphere

The increasing need for cheap labor (skilled and unskilled) has been among the factors that have led to the increasing number of immigrants from Latin America to the U.S. and the immigrant population from North Africa or Muslim nations to European countries. For example, to maintain its competitive edge, a research organization in France recommended that European countries encourage the immigration of 30 million people by 2020. It also recommended that Europe should work to collaborate with its Mediterranean Arab neighbors to improve economic conditions and encourage open political activities in that region of the world (Vinocur 2003, May 13). In addition, the economic condition of most of the developing world continues to be unproductive and weak, causing individuals to emigrate. As Amiar (1992) notes: "European cultural influence and African misery and wars are what turn the wheels of emigration, even when the process is illegal, expensive and dangerous" (42). According to Gordon (1998): "... most jobs, trade, and production are located in rich countries. Unfortunately, most job seekers are in the world's poor countries, as will be most of the one billion new workers in the next twenty years" (80).

The need for labor, especially cheap labor, has contributed to both the U.S. and the European countries to allow not only legal immigrants to work, but also undocumented workers. According to Todaro (2004), multi-national business corporations have become increasingly powerful and they have been demanding cheap labor from the developing world. Todaro observes that: "As corporate-led globalization inexorably reduces and eventually eliminates the power of individual nation-states to regulate and control the flow of goods, services, and finance across their borders, the last remaining barrier to a fully integrated world economy is to be found in the realm of restricted labor mobility" (837-38).

Most U.S. employers of any ethnic/racial and gender backgrounds tend to prefer Hispanic immigrants for jobs because of their work ethic, reliability, calm temperament, and their willingness to work for wages that the majority of citizens would not accept. Martin (1999) observes that, "...Many non-Hispanic whites seem more willing to hire Latino immigrants than blacks [and whites] for service jobs in their homes" (775). Ciscel et al. (2003) also present

similar claims about Hispanic immigrant workers, adding that they are very reliable and would work for long hours with very little pay and no benefits (336-37).

There is now evidence to show that a similar view as above of Hispanic immigrants is witnessed in European countries where, as of 2002, they comprised 1.83% of the total population in Spain, 0.73% in Portugal, 0.67% each in Sweden and Switzerland, 0.39% in Italy, 0.35% in Luxembourg, 0.33% in Norway and 0.19% in Belgium (Bail, 2008:41). This means that European employers might be seeking more workers from Latin America, instead of North Africa. For example, Polomino (2004) points out that there are 3 million legal and illegal Hispanic immigrants from Latin America in Europe (55). Polomino quoted Jorge Moragas, secretary of international relations of the Partido Popular in Spain as stating that: "We need laborers. Latin Americans who experience social instability and economic depression in their societies play an important role in the Spanish labor market" (55). According to Polomino "A similar shift is occurring in London, where Latinos take jobs that Britons and the children of earlier immigrants reject" (55). Polomino estimates that 500,000 Spanish-speakers reside in Britain. Polomino attempts to provide an explanation for the increasing preference for Hispanic immigrant workers: "Since Latino immigrants, whatever their status, possess a work ethic, a respect for Western laws, and an appreciation of the heritage of Western Europe, coupled with a foundation in Catholicism, it would seem to be easy enough for governments to receive them" (55). As a result, according to Polomino, "... some Europeans argue that drawing labor from a new source—Latin America—may help stem the flow of illegal arrivals from Muslim lands" (55).

Increasing Tolerance for People of Color in Majority White Nations

A large body of scholarly and non-scholarly evidence points to increasing racial tolerance in both the U.S. and Europe. While most people might wonder why the Dutch population in South Africa was the last group of Europeans to be tolerant of other racial groups, their mother country or country of origin, the Netherlands, is internationally recognized as one of the most tolerant nations in the world. Refugees from developing countries in the Netherlands receive benefits and privileges that are unavailable in most developed nations. For example, Statham (2004) points out that: "The Netherlands has a state-funded Islamic broadcasting network, *Nederlandse Moslim Omroep*, an Islamic school board, an Islamic pedagogic center, and more than 40 Islamic schools, all of which are government funded..." (58). Sniderman et al. (2004) note that the increase in immigration in Europe since the mid-1990s has led to "... restrictions on the scope of free speech in order to promote group tolerance" (35).

Mondak and Sanders (2003) point out that in measuring intolerance using a scale ranging from 0-15, with high scores representing intolerance, the level of intolerance in the United States declined from 7.24 in 1977 to 5.28 in 1998—a 27% decline (p493-494). According to Brace et al. (2002), from 1974 to 1998, 60% of the people in the United States (excluding Hawaii, Idaho, Maine, Nebraska, Nevada and New Mexico) were tolerant (176).

Another area where one sees increasing tolerance among Europeans and whites in the U.S. is interracial marriages or relationships. In the United States, a 1958 poll found that 96% of whites disapproved of marriages between blacks and whites. However, in 1997, 77% approved" (Kristof 2004: A23). Hispanic immigrants tend to assimilate into the larger society at a relatively high rate. They tend to fit the assimilationist model lamented by Logan et al. (2000) that the key premise of that model "... is that ethnic boundaries are temporary phenomena, representing the adaptation of minority groups to a new situation" (101).

Rosenfeld (2002) argues that "... when a new group began to intermarry 'fully and freely' with the dominant native social group, all other forms of social and cultural assimilation would necessary follow..." (152) and that, "The findings are that Mexican Americans are assimilating with non-Hispanic Whites over time..." (152). According to Malik (2004), the son of a Palestinian Muslim immigrant to the U.S. is likely to marry the daughter of a Lebanese or Kuwaiti Muslim, but very seldom would such a person marry the daughter of a Palestinian Christian. Malik cites a British sociologist named Muhammad Anwar as claiming that in Britain only 3% of Muslims are married to non-Muslims. In Denmark, a survey showed that only 5% of Muslim youths showed willingness to marry non-Muslims, and that in Detroit, Michigan, only 4% of Muslims were married to non-Muslims (73).

Social and Economic Conditions of Hispanics in the U.S. and North Africans in Europe

The social and economic conditions of immigrants in a particular country or region tend to indicate how well they are treated by the host nation or region. This is where culture tends to play an important role. For example, an immigrant from Latin America, who is most likely a Christian could arrive in the U.S. on a Saturday, attend a church on Sunday and begin to immediately interact with the native-born who might be the decision makers in the country. But for a North African/Muslim going to a European country, he or she will attend a Mosque, where most members are likely to also be immigrants.

The literature tends to show that despite the difficult challenge of coping with the language barrier, Hispanic immigrants in the U.S. show a strong record of upward mobility, if not for the new immigrants, certainly their

children. The literature on North Africans on the other hand, continues to demonstrate persistent isolation, very high unemployment rates and cultural conflicts.

Welch et al. (2001) note that, although residential segregation still persists in urban communities in the U.S., there are increasing instances of residential integration. This is especially so for Hispanics. For example, in 1992, 44% of Hispanic households had middle-class incomes, and by 1998, it had increased to 46% (Wellner, 2000:58). In 2002, 57% of Hispanics aged 25 and over had a high school education (Ramirez and la Cruz, 2003:5). Also, although Hispanics comprise 13% of the total population of the United States, they comprise 17% of all students enrolled in public schools in the country. Hispanics also have high employment rates. Williams (2003) notes that: "...employment of Hispanics has increased by 3 percent since 2001, despite a slumping economy. In March 2002, only 8.1% of Hispanics aged 16 and over in civilian labor force were unemployed (5). In 2002, 21.4% of Hispanics were living in poverty (6).

The Hispanic population in the United States is also a major consumer of goods and services, spending substantial sums of money. The buying power of Hispanics, which was \$580 billion in 2002, was projected to increase to \$926.1 billion in 2007 (Willard 2006:33). By the beginning of the 21st century, Hispanic immigrants in the U.S. were sending massive amounts of money back home to their families and friends. For example, Suro (2003) reported that remittances to Latin America and the Caribbean from the United States was \$25 billion in 2002, and was predicted to top \$30 billion in 2003. Mexican immigrants residing in the United States send \$1 billion home every month.

In the U.S. political arena, Hispanics are not only increasing their voting participation rates, but also the children and grandchildren of Hispanic immigrants are running for political office nationally and locally. Hispanic representation in Congress increased from 11 members to 21 from 1991 to 2003, a 73% increase. As of 2003, there were 197 Hispanics in state legislatures, a 46% jump since 1991 (Williams, 2003). The 109th U.S. Congress that took office in January 2005 had 25 Hispanics, including two Republican U.S. Senators, Mel Martinez (Florida) and Ken Salazar (Colorado), who won their seats in the 2004 elections (Radelat, 2004:18). Also, on May 17, 2005, Antonio R. Villaraigosa, of Mexican-American parentage, was elected Mayor of the city of Los Angeles, California. Villaraigosa became the first Hispanic mayor of Los Angeles since 1872. The 110th Congress of the U.S. had an increase of one more Hispanic Senator, Robert Menendez, from New Jersey. The second George W. Bush administration also had two Hispanic cabinet secretaries (or cabinet ministers). They are Alberto R. Gonzales, former Attorney General and Carlos M. Gutierrez, Secretary of Commerce. Cultural similarity, in this case including religion and political ideology, are substantial contributors in the above examples.

As for North Africans in Europe, most of the academic and non-academic literature continues to describe persistent problems between North African or Middle Eastern Arab Muslims especially and many of the communities in which they live. Their economic and social conditions are not as favorable or promising as those of Hispanic immigrants in the United States. Bowen (2004) notes that those Muslims who immigrated to France after World War II were mostly unskilled workers and were recruited by the government and French industries from Algeria and other French colonies. These workers were viewed as only temporary laborers. According to Bowen, "Large housing projects built in suburbs or industrial enclaves maintained their isolation from the cultural mainstream, and instruction in languages of origin was intended to facilitate the families' expected 'return home'" (44).

Writing on the plight of North African youth in France, Begag (1990) points out that they were constantly seen in the "...Public eye as a result of problems stemming from culture shock including failure in school, delinquency, clashes with police in the inner-cities and racism" (3). According to Begag, the North African youth in France experienced marginalization that seriously hindered their desire and opportunities to join the mainstream French society. They underperformed in school and saw "...their job opportunities considerably reduced....In the Lyons area, for instance, 70% of the children of immigrants between 16 and 25 years of age are unemployed and without any vocational training" and because the majority of these youth are concentrated in isolated communities, "...the risk of social outbursts in these areas is increasing" (Begag, 1990:6; also see Bail, 2008:38).

Alba and Silberman (2002) note that the second generation of North Africans in France have parents with very little educational opportunities. They point out that until the late 1970s, 75% grew up in homes where neither parent had earned any type of academic credentials: "only 10-12 percent had parents who had both achieved a diploma of some kind" (1184). According to Limage (2000), the government of France supports a high proportion of private school, with more than 90% of them being Catholic schools, but "... Virtually no recognition or public support is provided for Muslim or Jewish schools..." (73).

Judge (2004) notes that some of the geographic areas where poor Muslims reside are so dangerous that they are

sometimes treated as “no-go areas” for the French police. Half of the prison population in France is Muslim. Judge also cites high unemployment rates of North Africans/Muslims in France and the United Kingdom and the resulting “...widespread sense of grievance and frustration...” (7-8).

In the United States, on the other hand, North African or Muslim immigrants tend to do well economically, politically and socially. For example, the median earnings for all male workers aged 16 and over in the U.S. in 1999 was \$37,057, but was \$42,655 for Egyptian male immigrant workers and \$41,687 for all Arab male workers (Brittingham and de la Cruz, 2005: 14). Of all Americans aged 16 and over in 2000 in the United States labor force, 33.6% were in management, professional and related occupations, but 50.5% of Egyptians and 42% of Arabs were in such positions (Brittingham, Angela and de la Cruz, G. Patricia. 2005: 13).

One of the best ways to measure how immigrant groups are doing in host nations is through surveys or interviews. The Pew Research Center for the People and the Press (2003, June 3) examines how minority groups viewed their status, and whether they had influence in the following countries: United States, Britain, Germany, France and Italy. In the United States, 67% of Hispanics said their influence on the nation was good, while 21% said it was bad. In Germany, 47% of Turks said their influence was good, while 41% said it was bad. In France 43% of North Africans said their influence was good, while 51% said it was bad. Harvard University Sociologist Orlando Patterson, was quoted as saying of the treatment of minorities in the United States and those in other white majority societies: “The sociological truths are that America, while still flawed in its race relations ... is now the least racist white-majority society in the world; has a better record of legal protection of minorities than any other society...” (Elder, 2000:12).

Conclusion

This paper has pointed out that the number of Hispanics/Latinos immigrating to the United States and the North African/Muslim population immigrating to European countries has increased substantially. These two immigrant groups are emigrating primarily to seek better economic opportunities. The need for human labor, in addition to many other factors in the U.S. and European countries, are contributing to the increasing number of immigrants in those developed nations. Finally, the paper claims that culture plays a significant role on the whole issue of immigration from developing to developed countries, and that cultural similarities between the people from Latin America and the people of the U.S. have resulted in Hispanics/Latinos being integrated in the U.S. faster than North Africans/Muslims in European countries.

Endnotes

- 1 Compiled based on data in the 2008 CIA World Factbook [Return](#)
- 2 Compiled and calculated based on data in the 2008 CIA World Factbook [Return](#)
- 3 Compiled and calculated based on data in the 2008 CIA World Factbook [Return](#)
- 4 Compiled and calculated based on data in the 2008 CIA World Factbook [Return](#)
- 5 Compiled and calculated based on data in the 2008 CIA World Factbook [Return](#)

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