

Study predicts women in power, Muslims heading West

October 18 2010, by Karin Zeitvogel

In the next 40 years, an unprecedented number of women will be in positions of power, Muslim immigration to the West will rise, and office workers will be unchained from their cubicles, a report released last week says.

South America will see sustained economic growth and the Middle East will become "a tangle of religions, sects and ethnicities," says the report by Toffler Associates, a consultancy set up by the author of the 1970s blockbuster "Future Shock."

Toffler Associates released its predictions for the next 40 years to mark the 40th anniversary of "Future Shock," in which author Alvin Toffler studied the 1970s to see what would happen in the future.

His prognosis 40 years ago was that technology and science would develop at such an accelerated pace that many people would be unable to process the enormous amounts of new information available and would disconnect from life.

Some of "Future Shock's" prognoses have come true, including that news would travel around the world instantly, that same-sex couples would wed and raise families, and that violence and [environmental disasters](#) would increase and have broad consequences -- like the BP spill in the Gulf of Mexico.

So it might be worth paying heed to what Toffler Associates foresees for

the next 40 years, including container ships getting larger to meet increasing demand for faster, cheaper delivery of goods, and the Suez and Panama Canals being "improved."

They envision more and more people growing their own food to reduce their dependence on large manufacturers and distributors, and the proliferation of high-speed Internet and low-cost video-conferencing freeing [office workers](#) from their cubicles and working from anywhere in the world.

Only a very small number of states will continue to behave as "rogue" nations, Toffler Associates says, naming North Korea and Iran.

"A true test for political leaders will be in how they handle relationships with these nations and to what extent they allow them to control geopolitical agendas," the consultancy says.

China will position itself as a global economic power, allying with Brazil and India to influence currency use and with Venezuela and African nations to ensure its energy needs are met.

The United States, meanwhile, will depend on China for 17 rare earth metals that are essential to produce everything from weapons components to radars to wind turbines and hybrid cars.

The development of alternative energy forms will create "losers in a post-petroleum world" including Saudi Arabia, Iran, Iraq, several Gulf states, Russia and Venezuela, the report says.

Christianity will rise rapidly in the global South, while Muslims will migrate in increasing numbers to the West, where their presence will reshape public attitudes and government policies.

Climate change will fuel conflict as melting sea ice exposes mineral wealth and oil fields in the Arctic and as rising sea levels force large populations from their homes.

An aging population will cause spending on long-term care services for the elderly to nearly quadruple by 2050, and social security and Medicare, the US health insurance for the elderly, will cease to "exist as we know them," Toffler managing partner Deborah Westphal told AFP.

"We don't know what will replace them; we just know that we will be in a different type of society with different types of people and different needs," she said.

As for women, they will take on leadership positions around the globe at a never-before-seen rate, as countries realize "you can't be successful with just 50 percent of the population participating in decision-making," Westphal said.

And in the next 40 years, information-gathering will speed up even more as the world enters the Petabyte Age, Toffler Associates predicts.

Petabytes -- which are 10-to-the-15th-power bytes, or measures of computer files, hard disk space, and memory -- are used today only to measure the storage space of multiple hard drives or collections of data.

Between now and 2050, measuring data in petabytes will become the norm, and so will data saturation, Toffler Associates predicts.

(c) 2010 AFP

Citation: Study predicts women in power, Muslims heading West (2010, October 18) retrieved 9 April 2024 from <https://phys.org/news/2010-10-women-power-muslims-west.html>

This document is subject to copyright. Apart from any fair dealing for the purpose of private study or research, no part may be reproduced without the written permission. The content is provided for information purposes only.