MUSLIMS IN THE UNITED STATES

Edited by

Philippa Strum
Danielle Tarantolo

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MUSLIMS IN THE UNITED STATES

Demography, Beliefs, Institutions

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY[*]

PHILIPPA STRUM

On June 18, 2003, leading scholars of the American Muslim communities spoke to a Washington audience of 175 drawn from the executive and legislative branches of the federal government, the media, Muslim-American organizations, secular civil society organizations, universities, and the general public. The conference, "Muslims in the United States: Demography, Beliefs, Institutions," sponsored by the Division of United States Studies of the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars, began a discussion that is continued in these pages.

A short summary of the proceedings appears below. The papers written for the conference, which follow, suggest that that Muslim communities in the United States are in a state of transition, developing from a people seeking tolerance to a body of citizens boldly and proactively defining their own place in the nation. They nonetheless continue to face serious problems of group identity and integration. Among the specific points made by conference participants:

- **Demography:** While no definitive count exists, an estimated six million Muslims live in the United States. Roughly 68 percent of them were born outside the United States, in over 80 countries. The largest number (over 30 percent of the total) are South Asians; approximately 17 percent are African Americans. American Muslim communities as a whole are younger, better educated, and more well-off financially than the general public in the United States. The percentage of Muslims who have graduated from college (58%) is more than double the national rate, and half of American Muslim families have an annual income of over $50,000.

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[*] Susan Nugent, Program Assistant, Division of U.S. Studies, was central to the organization of the conference. She and U.S. Studies Program Associate Ann Chernicoff provided invaluable editorial assistance as we prepared this publication. We are grateful as well to U.S. Studies intern Nicole McKimmie for her help in tracking down elusive footnotes and to Derek Lawlor of the Center's Outreach and Communications Department for publication design.

- **September 11:** Many members of the Muslim-American communities reacted to September 11, 2001 by reaching out to non-Muslim Americans and to law enforcement agencies. Their efforts have had a mixed result. Non-Muslim Americans are fairly tolerant of American Muslims but skeptical about what they see as Islamic anti-Americanism around the world. While younger, better educated non-Muslim Americans are more accepting, the non-Muslim population as a whole is inclined to be wary of Muslims as potential political leaders in the United States and of what it perceives as the Islamic encouragement of violence.

- **Civil Society and Political Involvement:** American Muslims have created a wide variety of civic organizations devoted to local and international charitable efforts, but have been less active in social advocacy. While an overwhelming majority of Muslim Americans favors involvement in politics, an interest which has been enhanced by the difficulties Muslims in the country have faced since September 11, they continue to receive mixed reactions from non-Muslim politicians. American Muslims are fairly well integrated on the local level, however, in parent-teacher associations, chambers of commerce, professional associations, school boards, rotary clubs and interfaith councils. The Muslim communities cannot be described as either liberal or conservative, as they tend to favor government programs in the areas of health, poverty and the environment but are largely conservative on social issues.

- **Gender:** Muslim women in the United States benefit from their direct access to the Qur'an, which alleviates their dependence on patriarchal interpretations that have developed in other countries and during other eras. Despite this freedom, they continue to face substantial community pressure to marry and to remain married. Many divorced women find themselves both without the financial guarantees provided by the *shari'ah* legal system in Muslim countries and reluctant to avail themselves of the relief available through the American legal system. At the same time, traditional gender roles have been altered significantly. Women are utilizing the country's associational freedom to create women's self- and mutual-help organizations. The growing number of single Muslim mothers in this country may begin to affect gender role perceptions, as may the nascent field of Islamic gender studies.

- **Mosques:** The identity of the over 1,200 American mosques is in flux. Mosques have traditionally been viewed as places of worship without members, and as a result worshippers' financial contributions to mosques have been low. Gradual adoption of the American congregational model, however, means that many worshippers are beginning to view themselves as members of specific mosques and are becoming more involved with them both financially and in day-to-day management. Similarly, the concept of the mosque leader as unpaid and responsible only for prayer leadership, rather than performing a pastoral function, is changing.

- **Intra-community Relations:** There is disagreement among some African-American Muslims and "immigrant" Muslims about which community can best define American Islam. In addition, "Black Orientalists," those African Americans who question the legitimacy of African-American Islam, are skeptical about its adoption of "immigrant" traditions.

- **Schools:** Islamic schools in the United States are striving to identify their goals and define an appropriate Islamic curriculum. While the number of Islamic schools is on the rise, their growth has been hindered by the differing approaches to Islamic education favored by many African-American and "immigrant" Muslims.

- **American Islam Abroad:** Islam in the United States has a unique opportunity to influence Islamic thinking throughout the world. This country's freedom for the exploration of ideas has already facilitated the development of new interpretations of Islam which are influential in, e.g., Malaysia and Indonesia. That freedom carries with it the responsibility for Muslim intellectuals to address current issues such as the relationship between Islam and the applications of modern science, as well as to fashion Islamic approaches to religious diversity, the environmental crisis, attacks on Islam and gender roles.

PART ONE

DEMOGRAPHY, IDENTITY, POLITICAL AND CIVIC PARTICIPATION

DEMOGRAPHY, IDENTITY, SPACE: DEFINING AMERICAN MUSLIMS

ZAHID H. BUKHARI

September 11, 2001 led to a renewed interest in Islam and American Muslims, who have become the focus not only of law enforcement agencies but of the media and the scholarly community as well. One basic inquiry, which has acquired a political as well as a scholarly character, is the question of precisely how many American Muslims there are.

The extent of the disagreement over numbers is reflected in an overview of the range of claims that have been advanced. In the 1990s, the generally accepted estimate was six million, following a 1989 *New York Times* article citing that number and commenting that Islam was the fastest growing religion in the country.[1] The figure and growth rate were based upon scholarly studies of the Muslim population undertaken in 1981 and 1989.[2] Although two Muslim sociologists projected in 1998 that their community would number around seven million in 2000, that estimate was subsequently revised to 5.7 million Muslims in 2003.[3] Ihsan Bagby's 2001 Mosque Study Project, after surveying a sample of mosque leaders, concluded that two million Muslims were associated with mosques, and on that basis "estimates of a total Muslim population of 6–7 million in America seem reasonable."[4] The Council on American-Islamic Relations (CAIR), one of the sponsors of the study, issued a press release stating that its findings "support conservative estimates of a total American Muslim population of 7 million."[5]

Two other studies published during the same period, however, presented lower numbers. In 1989–1990 Barry Kosmin and Seymour Lackman, surveying religious distribution in the United States in order to assess the size of the Jewish population, counted 527,000 adult Muslims and, after adjustments, estimated that there were 1.2 million Muslims.[6] A well-publicized 2001 study, sponsored by the American Jewish Committee and conducted by Tom Smith of the University of Chicago's prestigious National Opinion Research Center, estimated that the number was between 1.9 and 2.8 million.[7] Muslim scholars and leaders have expressed doubts about the studies' methodologies and have questioned both the timing of the last study and the motives of the organizations that sponsored it.[8]

While great attention has been given to assessing the number of Muslims in the United States, another important dimension has been largely ignored in the public and intellectual debate. There has been a paucity of scholarly work on demography and the attitudes and behaviors of the Muslim community on socio-political issues. Ilyas Ba-Yunus and Ihsan Bagby filled some important gaps in the scholarship, but there remained a need for a reliable demographic study of this emerging ethno-religious group. Project MAPS: Muslim in American Public Square, based at Georgetown University's Center for Muslim-Christian Understanding, therefore undertook the first American Muslim Poll in 2001. Its goal was not to make a population estimate but to analyze the internal dynamics of the Muslim community. A poll of 100 questions was prepared to cover the following four areas:

1) Demographics: gender, generation and ethnicity; U.S. born or immigrant; income and education level; age and occupation.
2) Religious practices: relationship with the mosque, conversion to Islam, importance of religion in one's life, and interaction between the mosque and politics.
3) Opinion about and behavior in the areas of social and political issues: party affiliation, voting in the presidential election, positions on foreign policy, and other domestic issues relating to religion and public life.
4) September 11 and its aftermath: reaction, experience of backlash, President Bush's handling of the crisis, war against terrorism, and the military action in Afghanistan.

The poll, which surveyed a nationwide representative sample of the American Muslim population by telephone, was conducted by Zogby International. Researchers interviewed 1,781 self-identified Muslims aged 18 years and older between November 8 and November 19, 2001. To identify the sample, researchers randomly selected 300 mosques and Islamic centers, matched their zip codes with their respective local telephone exchanges, and called people with common Muslim surnames who resided in those areas. An additional sample of African-American

Muslims was interviewed in person between December 7 and December 9, 2001 in New York City, Washington, Atlanta and Detroit. The additional surveys were designed to gather information about African-American Muslims with Anglo-American or non-Muslim surnames who had been omitted by the telephone survey. The percentage of African-American respondents was weighted to reflect the assumption that they constitute 20 percent of the American Muslim population.[9]

The margin of error was 2.4 percent. Margins of error were higher in sub-groups. It should also be noted that the poll suffered from two limitations. The first was that its timing was very delicate. Because the Muslim community was under pressure after the September 11 terrorist attack, some respondents may have been unwilling to identify themselves in a phone survey. Secondly, some of the interviews were conducted during the month of Ramadan, which may have produced a more positive response to questions about religious practices. With those caveats in mind, the results nonetheless suggest that the American Muslim community is diverse, affluent, activist, religious and politically savvy.[10] These characteristics are discussed in the following sections.

A DIVERSE COMMUNITY

The American Muslim community is unique in its diversity. Thirty-six percent of American Muslims were born in the United States, while 64 percent were born in 80 different countries around the world. No other country has such a rich diversity of Muslims; perhaps the only parallel is the annual Hajj in Saudi Arabia, which brings together more than two million Muslims from more than 100 countries. The American Muslim community is thus a microcosm of the Muslim world. It includes all religious schools of thought, intellectual trends, political ideologies and Islamic movements.

Twelve percent of those who were born outside of the United States arrived before 1970, one-fourth immigrated during the 1970s, and 60 percent immigrated during the last two decades.

The three major ethnic groups in the Muslim community are South Asians (32%), Arabs (26%) and African Americans (20%). Muslims from various African countries constitute seven percent of the community. More Muslims (17%) came from Pakistan than from any other country.

The 2003 Immigration and Naturalization Service effort to register legal immigrants produced 82,000 persons from 24 Muslim countries; 25,000 of them were Pakistani-Americans.[11] However, as one scholar points out, "given the extreme national diversity within the two major predominant groups, South Asian and Arabs, it is reasonable to assume that Afro-Americans make up the largest single national ethnic Muslim group."[12]

Almost one-fifth of American Muslims (19%) identified themselves as converts to Islam. Among the African Americans, 60 percent were converts; 40 percent were raised as Muslims. Nearly two-fifths (38%) of those who converted to Islam said that they converted after having read about the religion; 22 percent cited the influence of a fellow Muslim.

AN AFFLUENT AND PROFESSIONAL COMMUNITY

The American Muslim community is younger, better educated, and better off financially than the general public. The following table about age, education and family income compares the results of the Project MAPS American Muslim Poll with a national survey conducted by the Pew Research Center and the Pew Forum on Religion and Public Life in February/March 2002.[13]

Three-fourths (74%) of adult American Muslims are less than 50 years old. The percentage of Muslim college graduates is more than double the national percentage (58% versus 25%). Half of American Muslims (50 percent) have an annual family income of more than $50,000, and 44 percent describe their occupation as professional/technical, medical or managerial.

AN ACTIVIST COMMUNITY

The Poll asked several questions about social and political activities. Over three-quarters (77%) reported that they had been involved with organizations to help the poor, sick, homeless, or elderly. Seventy-one percent had been involved with a religious organization or a mosque, and over two-thirds (69%) had been involved with school and youth programs.

A little over half of those surveyed (51%) also stated that they had called or written to the media or to a politician on a given issue or had signed a petition.

Table 1. Year Emigrated to USA

Year Emigrated	%
Pre – 1970	12
1970 – 1979	25
1980 – 1989	36
1990 – present	24
Did not say which year emigrated	3

Table 2. Ethnic Composition of the American Muslim Community

Ethnicity	%
South Asian	32
Pakistani	17
Indian	7
Bangladeshi	4
Afghan	4
Arab	26
Afro-American	20
African	7
Other	14
Not sure of ethnicity	1

Table 3. Raised as a Muslim or converted to Islam

	%
Raised	80
Converted	19

Table 4. Reasons for conversion

Reasons	%
Read about the religion and was inspired to convert	38
Was influenced by a fellow Muslim	22
Married someone who was a Muslim	13
Other	24
Not sure	3

A RELIGIOUS COMMUNITY

More American Muslims consider religion to be very important in their daily lives than do members of the general American public (79% versus 63%). Similarly, more American Muslims (55%) attend religious services (go to the mosque for prayers) than do members of the general public (40%).

Table 5. Comparison of Age, Education and Family Income

	American Muslim Poll	**Pew Research Center/Pew Forum**
	% of Muslims	**% of general public**
Age Group		
18 – 29	23	22
30 – 49	51	39
50 – 64	20	22
65 +	7	17
Education		
Less than H.S. Degree	6	14
High School Graduate	12	37
Some College	24	24
College Graduate	58	25
Family Income		
$50,000 – $74,999	22	16
$75,000 +	28	17

Table 6. Occupational Distribution of American Muslims

Occupation	**%**
Managerial	12
Medical	10
Professional/Technical	22
Sales	5
Clerical	3
Service	4
Blue-Collar/Production	3
Student	8
Homemaker	10
Teacher/education	6
Retired	5
Other occupation	11
Not sure of occupation	2

Table 7. Involvement in Community Activities

(ranked by highest total participation %)

"I am now going to read a list of community activities; please tell me if you have ever donated time, money, or been an officer of any of the following…"

Community Activities	**Involved %***	**Not Involved %****
Any organization to help the poor, sick, elderly or homeless	77	22
Any mosque or other religious organization	71	29
School or youth program	69	32
Any professional organization	46	51
Any neighborhood, civic or community group	45	54
Any arts or cultural organization	42	56
Any ethnic organization	36	63
Any Muslim political action public affairs organization	33	66
Any veteran's or military service organization	24	75
Any trade or labor union	17	82

* Combines those who say they donated time, money, served as an officer or engaged ina combination of these activities.

** Not involved in any of these activities.

NB: figures are rounded up.

Table 8. Political Activity

"Have you ever…"	**% saying yes**
Called or written the media or a politician on a given issue, or signed a petition	50
Changed your lifestyle in support of a cause, like the environment	45
Attended a rally in support of a politician or a cause	40
Visited a political web site	34
Given a contribution or volunteered your time or services to a political candidate	33
Participated in a boycott of a product or a business	30

Table 9. Importance of religion in your life

	American Muslim Poll	**Pew Research Center/Pew Forum**
	% of Muslims	**% of general public**
Very important	79	63
Somewhat important	17	24
Not very important	4	12
Don't know/refused	0	1

Table 10. Attending the mosque/religious services

Attend	American Muslim Poll	Pew Research Center/ Pew Forum
	% of Muslims	% of general public
More than once a week	31	15
Once a week (for *Jum'ah*)	24	25
Once or twice a month	10	17
A few times a year (especially for the *id*)	14	18
Seldom	9	15
Never	11	9
Don't know/refused	0	1

Table 11. Agreement with Statements

“Do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

Agree or Disagree	Agree*	Disagree*
Muslims should donate to non-Muslim social service programs like aid for the homeless	96	3
Muslims should be involved in American civic and community development organizations to improve America	96	3
Muslims should participate in the political process	93	4
Muslims should be involved with the American media and the educational system to change the image of Islam	91	6
Muslims should participate in interfaith activities	88	6
Muslims should financially support worthy non-Muslim political candidates	88	8

**Agree combines strongly and somewhat agree; disagree combines strongly and somewhat disagree*

The questions asked by the American Muslim Poll and the Pew Research Center were worded slightly differently. The American Muslim Poll asked, “How important is religion or spirituality in your daily life? Is it very important, somewhat important or not very important?” Pew asked, “How important would you say religion is in your own life—important, fairly important, or not very important?” The American Muslim Poll question was, “On average, how often do you attend the mosque for *salah* and *Jum'ah* prayer?” The Pew Research Center asked, “Aside from wedding and funerals how often do you attend religious services … more than once a week, once a week, once or twice a month, a few times a year, seldom, or never?”

Table 12. Favor/Oppose Domestic Issues

"Now I am going to read you a list of issues that are being discussed in this country today. Please tell me if you strongly favor, somewhat favor, somewhat oppose or strongly oppose each issue."

	Favor*	**Oppose***	**Not sure**
Eliminating all forms of racial discrimination	96	2	2
Providing universal health care for citizens	94	4	2
Providing more generous government assistance to the poor	93	5	2
Stricter laws and regulations to protect the environment	92	6	3
Increasing foreign aid for poorer countries	87	10	3
Stronger laws to fight terrorism	84	10	6
Making it more difficult for people to buy guns	79	18	3
More cuts in the income tax	74	21	5
Allowing religious institutions to apply for government funding to provide social services	73	22	5
The death penalty for persons convicted of murder	68	27	5
Providing vouchers to families for tuition in private schools, including religious schools	68	25	7
Banning the public sale and display of pornography	65	30	5
Allowing public schools to display the Ten Commandments	59	33	8
Making abortions more difficult to obtain	57	35	8
Allowing non-denominational prayers to be read in the classroom	53	38	9
Allowing more research using stem cells	52	28	21
Eliminating affirmative action programs that give some consideration to minorities in hiring and entrance into college	42	49	9
Making it legal for doctors to give terminally ill patients the means to end their lives	33	61	7
Racial profiling to combat crime	28	63	9
Allowing research related to human cloning	27	63	10
Allowing gays and lesbians to marry legally	20	71	9

(Favor combines strongly and somewhat favor; oppose combines strongly and somewhat oppose.)*

A POLITICALLY SAVVY COMMUNITY

The Poll suggested that the American Muslim community has achieved political maturity in its opinions and behavior concerning domestic as well as international issues. The following four examples are illustrative:

- A majority (58%) believed that individuals, businesses or religious organizations in their community had experienced discrimination since September 11. An overwhelming majority (93%) nonetheless favored participation in the American political process. Almost the same number also supported contributing financially to non-Muslim candidates and social service programs (see Table 11).
- Forty percent of American Muslims described themselves as Democrats and 23 percent as Republicans, while 28 percent said they were independents or members of a minority party. That breakdown was not reflected, however, in the 2000 elections. Forty-two percent of American Muslims reported voting for George Bush in the presidential election, while 31 percent chose Al Gore and 12 percent supported Ralph Nader. Fifty-four percent of American Arabs voted for Bush (but 17 percent of them voted for Nader), as did 56 percent of Pakistani-Americans. Although 55 percent of African Americans supported Gore, 20 percent voted for Bush.
- The poll suggests that American Muslims favor big government solutions to issues like universal health care and poverty eradication but that they are conservative on other social issues such as the death penalty, gay marriage, abortion, and pornography. It would therefore be inaccurate to label the American Muslim community as either liberal or conservative (see Table 12).
- Foreign policy issues are of high importance to American Muslims. A vast majority (84%) agree that the United States should support a Palestinian state, and 70 percent believe that the United States should reduce its financial support to Israel. Three-fifths (61%) agree and one-fifth (22%) disagree with the statement that the United States should reduce its support of undemocratic regimes in the Muslim world. Almost two-thirds (63%) agree with Secretary of State Colin Powell's description of the Kashmir issue as the central issue between India and Pakistan, although one-fifth (21%) reported no opinion on the issue. Two-thirds (67%) also suggest that a change in America's policy in the Middle East is the best way to wage the war against terrorism.

AMERICAN MUSLIMS AND THE IDENTITY ISSUE

The impact of four variables and their interplay is necessary to understand the process by which an ethno-religious minority with a large number of first generation immigrants resolves its identity. Three of these variables are national origin, religion and the host country environment. The fourth important factor in moving, for example, from Indian Muslim to Muslim American to American Muslim is, as Ali Mazrui suggests, time.[14]

Thirty to forty percent of the world's more than one billion Muslims live in countries with a non-Muslim majority, but the largest number, 60 to 70 percent, are citizens of Muslim-majority countries. For first generation immigrant Muslims from Muslim-majority countries, living as a minority in a pluralistic society is a strange experience. They face more conceptual and practical problems in adjusting to their new homeland than do indigenous Muslims, second generation Muslims, and Muslim immigrants from countries in which they are a minority (India) or members of a pluralistic society (Malaysia and Lebanon). The old *fiqh* (Islamic jurisprudence) dichotomous division of the world into "land of peace" and "land of war," along with the myth of return, have always created identity problems among immigrant Muslims.

As did other ethno-religious groups in the United States, Muslim immigrants are experiencing difficulty adjusting to their new society. Ethno-religious groups experience five stages of integration: 1) establishing themselves financially and establishing a place of worship; 2) establishing educational institutions to transmit religious and other values to the second generation; 3) taking care of families back home and involving themselves in the relief and development work of Muslim countries; 4) becoming champions of Muslim issues in this country; and 5) full involvement in the issues of the host society.

The American Muslim community has been operating at the fourth and fifth stages for the last two years. Paradoxically, the events of September 11 enhanced their involvement in American politics and civil society. The American Muslim community is engaged in introspection, including not only soul-searching about extremist interpretations of Islam but also reflections on the purpose of citizenship in the United States: are we here only to change American foreign policy, or are we here to work towards social justice for everyone and the betterment of society?

Muslims are learning rapidly about alliance-building with other civic, religious and faith-based groups around issues concerning the well-being of society. They are becoming increasingly involved on the local level rather than only at the level of national presidential elections.

Three small segments of the American Muslim community are facing greater difficulties in resolving the identity crisis: 1) those who are influenced by the political ideology of *Hizb ut-Tahrir*;[15] 2) Muslims who agree with the religious teaching of *Salafiyya*;[16] and 3) some of those who were active in Islamic political movements back home and are also involved in Islamic work here in the United States. The first two groups consider American society to be one of non-believers and think that no rapprochement is possible between Muslims and non-Muslims. The bases for their arriving at the same conclusion, however, are different, as the reasons for *Hizb ut-Tahrir* people are political and for *Salafiyya* people they are theological. The third segment of the Muslim community is confused about whether to give priority to their home countries or to their adopted country. They are victims of the practical duality of belonging to both a nation state and the greater Muslim community (the *ummah*).

The vast majority of American Muslims however, are solving the identity crisis in a pragmatic way. The community is going through a transitional period as it emerges from its initial hesitation, isolation, identity crisis and anxiety. It is now entering a phase of participation in the voluntary life of the larger society, interaction with the media and other opinion-makers, and, most importantly, institution-building. Its role in the public school system, shopping malls, corporate corridors, civic institutions and the political arena has become increasingly visible. In their efforts to resolve the identity issue, American Muslims are following the same course adopted by Catholics and Jews, their counterparts in the Abrahamic tradition.

NOTES

1. Ari L. Goldman, "Mainstream Islam Rapidly Embraced by Black Americans," *New York Times*, Feb. 21, 1989.

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6. Barry A. Kosmin and Seymour P. Lachman, *One Nation Under God: Religion in Contemporary America* (Harmony Books, 1993).

7. Tom W. Smith, "Estimating the Muslim Population in the United States" (American Jewish Committee, 2001).

8. Ba-Yunus and Kone, op cit.

9. The Project MAPS team made this assumption after analyzing the lists of mosques of various groups and the growth of mosque attendance during the last decade. The mosques attached to the American Society of Muslims (ASM) of Imam W. D. Muhammad, the Muslim Community of Imam Jamil Al-Amin, and the independent African-American mosques constitute about 20 percent of the total number of mosques in the United States. According to the Mosque Study Project, African-American mosques include the greatest number of mosques whose number of participants has remained stable, and they have the lowest percentage of increase in the number of their participants. The Muslim prison population, however, was not surveyed and was therefore not included in this calculation. Bagby, Perl and Froehle, "The Mosque in America," op. cit., p. 14.

10. Complete survey results of "American Muslim Poll" available at http://www.projectmaps.com.

11. On March 1, 2003 the Immigration and Naturalization Service became part of the U.S. Department of Homeland Security and was renamed the Bureau of Citizenship and Immigration Services.

12. James E. Jones, *Immigration Debate* (Kumarian Press, 2003).

13. "Americans Struggle with Religion's Role at Home and Abroad" (Pew Forum on Religion and Public Life, 2002), available at http://people-press.org/reports/display.php3?ReportID=150.

14. Ali A. Mazrui, "Muslims between the Jewish Example and the Black Experience: American Policy Implications," in Bukhari, Nyang, Ahmad and Esposito, op. cit, p. 6.

15. *Hizb ut-Tahrir* is one of many groups that were created in the Arab world in reaction to the demise of the Ottoman *khilafah* in the 1920s. The group's organizational structure is secret. It works in several small cells and its main aim is to re-establish the *khilafah* system of government, whereby one ruler will rule all of the Muslim

lands. According to its ideology, Muslim citizenship in *kafir* (non-Muslim) countries is false citizenship. Two splinter groups, *Al-Muhajiroon* and *Khilafah*, also exist in the United States.

16. The school of *salafiyya* believes that the practice of Islam has become corrupted and must be reformed to reflect the Islam practiced at the time of the Prophet Muhammad and by his companions and followers after his death. The scholars of that era are called *salaf*. The *salafiyya* reject the development in the field of Islamic jurisprudence that was achieved by several prominent scholars of Islam in later centuries. The *Wahabis* of Saudi Arabia and *Ahl-e-Hadith* of South Asia are two prominent current manifestations of *salafiyya*. The followers of these groups in the United States advocate the puritanical interpretation of Islam, especially in gender issues, and also preach against social and political interaction with non-Muslim society.

BLACK ORIENTALISM: ITS GENESIS, AIMS AND SIGNIFICANCE FOR AMERICAN ISLAM

SHERMAN A. JACKSON

In 1978, Edward Said published his now-famous *Orientalism*.[1] A Christian Palestinian, Said devoted *Orientalism* to exposing the manner in which the prejudices and power of Europe, and later the United States, created both a geographical entity called "the Orient" and a scholarly tradition of speaking and writing about it. This was not the Orient of Japan or China; this was the "Near East" and "Middle East." While Jews, Christians and others contributed to the cultures and history of this region, Islam and Muslims were the primary if not exclusive targets of Orientalism. As the incubator and projection of Western fears, desires, repressions and prejudices, occidental discourse about the Orient normalized a whole series of self-serving and condescending stereotypes about Arab and Muslim "Orientals." These, in turn, justified the propriety and inevitability of Western domination and privilege. This self-serving, power-driven psychological predisposition, deeply rooted and often consciously indulged, constituted what Said meant by Orientalism.

Said noted that Orientalism was not a purely political affair, something that only Western governments and armies used against Oriental despots and their cowering subjects. Western intellectuals and academicians played a major role in the enterprise. Even when British, French or American scholars approached the Orient with no conscious political aims, they could neither transcend nor disengage themselves from the social, historical and institutional forces that shaped their mental schemas. The Western scholar, wrote Said, "c[a]me up against the Orient as a European or American first, as an individual second."[2] As an individual, s/he might look *across* the Atlantic or Mediterranean to the Orient; but as a Westerner, s/he could only look *down* from a self-described superior civilization, a perspective destined to shape the Orient into a projection of the most deeply ingrained Western fears, prejudices and obsessions.

If White Westerners approached the Orient as Europeans and Americans, one would expect Blackamerican thinkers and scholars to approach it as Blackamericans.[3] The meaning and implications of this would depend, of course, on where Blackamericans were in their own existential struggle and on what influence the Orient itself was perceived as exerting on their lives. Prior to the 1970s, what little role the Orient played in Blackamerican thought was almost exclusively positive. From the 1970s on, however, there was a palpable change in the image and status of the Arab/Muslim world among Blackamericans. The change coincided with the move of large numbers of Muslims from the Middle East and Asia to the United States, which produced a major shift in the priorities, sensibilities and image of Islam in this country. Whereas before the 1970s Islam in the United States had been dominated by a Black presence and thus a Black, American agenda, from the 1970s on, "real" Islam increasingly came to be perceived as the religion of Arabs and foreigners who were neither knowledgeable about nor genuinely interested in the realities of Blackamericans. With this development, Blackamericans who identified with Islam, especially Sunnis, came under increasing criticism as "cultural heretics": self-hating "wannabees" who had moved from the back of the bus to the back of the camel. This occurred in the context of the Blackamerican converts to Islam having defected either from the Black Church or some other Blackamerican movement. The result was that from the very beginning, certain elements within the Blackamerican community perceived Islam's gains as their own loss. Ultimately, all of this would culminate in the rise of Black Orientalism.

Unlike Said's "White" Orientalism, the aim of Black Orientalism has nothing to do with a desire to control or dominate the Orient. Like Said's Orientalism, however, its target is emphatically Islam. Black Orientalism is essentially a reaction to the newly developed relationship among Islam, Blackamericans and the Muslim world. It has followed the shift from Black Religion to historical Islam as the basis of Islamic religious authority among Blackamerican Muslims. Its ultimate aim is to challenge, if not undermine, the esteem enjoyed by Islam in the Blackamerican community by projecting onto the Muslim world a set of images, perceptions, resentments and stereotypes that are far more the product of the Black experience in the United States than they are of any direct relationship with or knowledge of Islam and the Muslim world. By highlighting the purported historical race-prejudice of the Muslim world and, in some instances, the alleged responses to it, Black Orientalism seeks to impugn the propriety of the relationship between Islam and Blackamericans and ultimately to call into question Blackamerican Muslims' status as "authentic," loyal Blackamericans.

In this essay, I trace the rise of Black Orientalism, its causes and nature, and its significance for American Islam. This will include a brief examination of the development of Islam among Blackamericans in order to place Black Orientalism in a meaningful historical context. It will be followed by a word about the shifts and dislocations in Blackamerican Islam that were engendered by the influx of Muslim immigrants to the United States following the changes in immigration quotas in 1965. I will then sharpen my definition of Black Orientalism, highlighting the distinction between it and valid criticisms of Arabs and/or Muslims. That will be followed by a brief, synecdochic response to one particular manifestation of Black Orientalism. I will conclude with a word about the significance of Black Orientalism for the present and future of Islam in the United States.

RELIGION, IDENTITY AND THE SPREAD OF ISLAM AMONG BLACKAMERICANS

In tracing the history of Islam among Blackamericans, it is important to begin with the fact that the United States is unique among the great Western democracies in that a significant proportion of its Muslim population was born in this country. The spread of Islam among Blackamericans did not follow any of the patterns familiar to Islam in other parts of the world: it was not the result of immigration, conquest or the efforts of traveling Sufis. The rise of Islam among Blackamericans owes its impetus, rather, to a masterful feat of appropriation of the vehicle of Black Religion. The early Blackamerican "Islamizers," Noble Drew Ali and The Honorable Elijah Muhammad, enlisted Islam not only as a strictly religious expression but as a basis for an alternative modality of American Blackness. Blackamericans at large came to see in this religion not only a path to spiritual salvation but a path to a more authentic Blackamerican self. Elijah Muhammad campaigned not only against Christianity but against those "finger-poppin', chittlin'-eatin', yes sa bossin' Negroes." Islam, in other words, as "the Black Man's Religion," was as much about identity and what E.E. Curtis IV refers to as "cultural nationalism" as it was about religion in a restricted sense.[4]

This added dimension of being enlisted as the basis of an alternative modality of American Blackness is crucial to understanding the rise of Islam among Blackamericans. It is also critical, however, to a proper understanding of the rise of Black Orientalism. On the one hand, it was this dimension of Blackamerican Islam more than anything else that thrust it into competition with the Black Church and other Blackamerican movements. At the same time, it was precisely this dimension of Blackamerican Islam that was and remains neither understood nor appreciated by the immigrant Muslims who came to monopolize the authority to define a properly constituted Islamic life in the United States. In the face of this new, immigrant authority, purportedly grounded in the super-tradition of historical Islam, Blackamerican Muslims found themselves unable to address the realities of their lives in a manner that effectively served their needs or in terms that were likely to be recognized as Islamic. At the same time, this new ideological dependency left them unable to insulate the positive features of their Blackamerican culture from the hostile reflexes of an immigrant Islam that was still reacting to its nemesis: the modern West. All of this would leave Blackamerican Muslims open to the charge of being followers of a religion that countenanced, if it did not endorse, the devaluation, marginalization and subjugation of Blacks.

FROM BLACK RELIGION TO HISTORICAL ISLAM

The history of Islam among Blackamericans begins, for all intents and purposes, in the early twentieth century, with the marriage of Islam and Black Religion. Black Religion, however, should not be understood to constitute a distinct religion per se but rather a religious orientation. It has no theology or orthodoxy; it has no institutionalized ecclesiastical order and no public or private liturgy. It has no foundational documents, like the Bible or the Baghavad Ghita, and no founding figures like Buddha or Zoroaster. The God of Black Religion is neither specifically Jesus, Yahweh or Allah. It is, rather, an abstract category into which any and all of these can be put. Black Religion can be described as the deism or natural religion of Blackamericans, a spontaneous folk-orientation grounded in the belief in a supernatural power yet uniquely focused on that power's manifestation as interventions in the crucible of American race relations. In short, Black Religion is a holy protest against White supremacy and its material effects. According to C. Eric Lincoln, its point of departure was American slavery, and had it not been for slavery, there would have been no Black Religion.[5]

The Black Church emerged out of the marriage between Black Religion and Protestantism and conferred a palpably religious dimension upon the Black struggle in the United States. Indeed, the Black Church remained the dominant host of Black Religion until the beginning of the twentieth century. In the closing decades of the nineteenth century and the opening years of the twentieth, however, Blackamericans began to migrate en masse from the South to Northern metropolises, where the relationship between the Black Church and Black Religion was ruptured and the latter was forced to look for new accommodations. Joseph R. Washington, Jr. described this alienation from the Black Church:

> Since the 1920s, black religion, the religion of the folk, has been dysfunctional. From this period on the once subordinate and latent stream of white Protestant evangelicalism has been dominant and manifest, relegating the uniqueness of black religion to verbal expression from the pulpit in such a way that action was stifled.[6]

The early "Islamizers," Noble Drew Ali and The Honorable Elijah Muhammad, emerged in the context of this ruptured relationship between the Black Church and Black Religion, offering asylum to Black Religion in what they presented as Islam. By using Black Religion as a vehicle for appropriating Islam and making it meaningful and valuable to Blackamericans, these early Islamizers were able to popularize the religion and render it the cultural property of Blackamericans as a whole. The establishment of a sense of ownership was critical to the rising rate of Blackamerican conversion. It was also an important factor in the Islamizers' ability to influence Blackamerican culture at large. One sees signs of this in the newly developed disdain for pork or in the spread of Arabic names, in both their proper and bastardized forms (i.e., those of the a-ee-a pattern, such as Lakeesha, Tamika, Shameeka). In short, this historical feat of appropriation marked the true beginning of the history of Islam among Blackamericans and gave the religion roots in American soil. Indeed, without this historical achievement, it is doubtful that Islam would have come to enjoy its current success among Blackamericans.

If only by default, Black Religion remained the primary means by which Blackamerican proto- and Sunni Islam validated itself until 1965, when the administration of Lyndon Johnson repealed the national origins law that had restricted immigration almost exclusively to Northern and Western Europeans. It was not the Qur'an or the *Sunnah* or books of law and exegesis that authenticated a view as Islamic, but the act of throwing off the yoke of White domination or the demand to conform to the dictates of the new persona of the dignified Black man. As long as this remained the case, Black Orientalism existed only as a cry on the margins of Blackamerica. With the repeal of the national origins law, however, and the massive influx of Muslims from the Middle East and Asia, a new basis of religious authority was introduced into American Islam. The primary authenticators of Islam were no longer Black Religion and Black Americans but, rather, immigrants who spoke in the name of the historical *'ulûm shar'îyah*, or Islamic religious sciences. In addition to its impact on Blackamerican Muslims, this shift in the basis of Islamic religious authority effected a fundamental change in the attitude of Blackamerican non-Muslims towards the Arab/Muslim world.

Prior to the shift from Black Religion to historical Islam, the Arab and Muslim worlds were invariably included as constituents of an idealized Third World, a regiment of Franz Fanon's *Wretched of the Earth,* grinding out the universal ground-offensive against White supremacy and Western imperialism.[7] After this shift, and the establishment of critical masses of immigrant Muslims in the United States, there was a growing number of Blackamerican scholars who denied the Arab and Muslim world this status and portrayed it instead as a precursor, partner or imitator of the West in its denigration and subjugation of Black people. Several works by Blackamerican writers from the early 1970s reflected this development: C. Williams, *The Destruction of Black Civilization*; S. Maglangbayan, *Garvey, Lumumba, and Malcolm: Black National-Separatists*; Y. Ben-Jochannan, *African Origins of Major Western Religions*; and H. Madhubuti (Don L. Lee), *Enemies: The Clash of Races*.[8] This was the beginning of Black Orientalism, a trend that has continued into the new millennium.

BLACK ORIENTALISM AND WHAT IT IS NOT

Not every criticism of the stereotypes, prejudices and practices of Muslim Orientals is an expression of Black Orientalism. Valid criticism, however, is distinct from ideologically-driven denigration. The former is based on direct experience or knowledge of verifiable facts; the latter, on imagination, ideology and projection. When Blackamericans condemn the exploitative activities of (Muslim) Arab liquor-store magnates in the greater Detroit or Chicago areas, this is no more an exercise in anti-Muslim Black Orientalism than earlier critiques of Jewish slumlords were of anti-Semitism. If the old anti-miscegenation laws prove how deeply ingrained anti-Black racism was among American Whites, de facto anti-miscegenation sentiment among Muslim Orientals cannot be written off as a benign "cultural preference." In short, if the association among Islam, Blackamericans and the Muslim world should not cause wild and unwarranted projections, neither should it require turning a blind eye to real offenses experienced at first hand.

Nor must Blackamerican criticism of Muslim Orientals be limited to contemporary facts or experience. The pre-modern Islamic legacy remains the repository of the greatest authority for contemporary Muslims and it continues to inform the thought and sensibilities of Islam in the United States. When we turn to this legacy, we find that Muslim legal, historical, exegetical and belle-lettristic literature are replete with anti-Black sentiment. It is neither Black Orientalism nor a manifestation of anti-Muslim bias to criticize and analyze such works but, on the contrary, such criticism and analysis is necessary for the establishment of a standard that can be applied fairly and consistently across the board.

Consider the following example: in his famous *Prolegomenon*, Ibn Khaldûn (808/1406) says of Blacks in the southern portion of Africa that "they are not to be numbered among humans."[9] The early Meccan jurist, Tâ'ûs, refused to attend weddings between a Black and White because, given his understanding of the Qur'ânic verse about the Satanic impulse to "change God's creation" (*taghyîr khalq Allâh* — 4:119), he deemed them to be "unnatural."[10] Numerous early Mâlikî jurists held, reportedly on the authority of Mâlik, that while under normal circumstances a valid marriage contract required that the woman be represented by a male relative (*walî*), this requirement could be relaxed in instances such as those where the woman hailed from lowly origins or was ugly or Black.[11] This, they argued, was because Blackness was an affliction that automatically reduced a woman's social standing.[12] Similarly, the twelfth/eighteenth century Mâlikî jurist, al-Dardîr, categorically affirms the unbelief (*kufr*) of any Muslim who claims that the Prophet Muhammad was Black.[13]

Nothing would excuse the casual dismissal of such statements from White Americans or Europeans, nor should their authors' status as Muslim Orientals earn them such an exemption. Holding up such statements for comment and criticism is not Black Orientalism. It is, rather, responsible scholarship whose ultimate aim and effect should be to alert Muslims to the ways in which they have failed to live up to their own ideals.

Having said this much, however, it must be acknowledged that critical references to statements and actions by Muslim Orientals can approach Black Orientalism. This is the case when they proceed on the uncritical assumption that what might be systemically racist comments in the context of the United States are isolated instances with other meanings in the context of another society. Race and color, in other words, are assumed to be consistent determinants of human relations and possibilities in Muslim society. In short, Black Orientalism implies not only that Muslim society produced expressions of race- or color-prejudice, but that such prejudice defined these societies and in so doing circumscribed the lives and possibilities of Black people within them.

Among the strongest contentions giving currency to the assumption that Black life was circumscribed in Muslim society is the erroneous claim that Blacks in Islam were a slave class as they were in the United States. This not only adds credence to the notion that Black life was circumscribed, but confers upon all seemingly racially-biased statements and actions the appearance of being part of the ruling class' effort to justify its domination over its subjugated wards. In point of fact, however, as every historian of Islam knows, most slaves in Muslim society were not Black but of Turkish origin, and there is no evidence that most Blacks were slaves.[14] Even assuming that Blacks were a slave class in Muslim society, however, there is, as Ira Berlin notes in *Many Thousands Gone*, a major distinction between "societies with slaves" (e.g., African society) and "slave societies," like the United States, where color and slavery were coterminous. According to Berlin,

> In societies with slaves, no one presumed the master-slave relationship to be the social exemplar. In slave societies, by contrast, slavery stood at the center of economic production, and the master-slave relationship provided the model for all social relations: husband and wife, parent and child, employer and employee, teacher and student. From the most intimate connections between men and women to the

> most public ones between ruler and ruled, all relationships mimicked those of slavery....“Nothing escaped, nothing and no one.” Whereas slaveholders were just one portion of a propertied elite in societies with slaves, they were the ruling class in slave societies; nearly everyone—free and slave—aspired to enter the slaveholding class.[15]

The presumption that Blacks under Islam were a slave class in a slave society is a major premise of Black Orientalists and a primary means by which they impose a single interpretation upon every racially-tinged statement or action by an Arab or non-Black Muslim. If views such as Mâlik’s regarding Blackness as an affliction are to serve as proof that Arab Muslims were all Jim Crow segregationists, however, what is to be made of Martin Luther King, Jr.’s statements about dark-skinned women, or Frederick Douglass’ reference to the “ape-like appearance of some of the genuine Negroes,” or Alexander Crummel’s labeling of West Africans as “virile barbarians,” or, for that matter, comedian Chris Rock’s declaration, “I hate niggers!”?[16] Clearly, Muslims south of the Sahara, who overwhelmingly adopted the Mâlikî school’s interpretation of Islam, ignored the view attributed to Mâlik and required a male relative to validate a marriage. Why should the prejudicial view attributed to Mâlik and some Mâlikîs be accepted as the final, definitive word?

We might also ask whether the statement of Ibn Khaldûn quoted above is necessarily an antecedent to such “scientific” racialist theories as those of Jensen, Shockley and the authors of *The Bell Curve.*[17] In making such a determination, how justified would we be in ignoring Ibn Khaldûn’s explicit statements to the effect that “race” is an imagined social construct, that the notion of Black intellectual inferiority is false, that the Old Testament story about Noah cursing his son Ham does not refer to Blackness but says only that Ham’s sons shall be cursed with enslavement, and that it is climate, not blood, that affects endowments such as intelligence or civilization?[18] According to Ibn Khaldûn’s theory, the farther people are removed from the moderate climate of the Mediterranean, the less their intelligence and civilizing potential. Thus, he imputed the same savage-status to Africans farthest removed to the south and to White “Slavs” (*Saqâlibah*) who were farthest removed to the north.[19] One must ask why the history of race relations in the United States should be the only prism through which his statements can be viewed.

It is true that the examples cited, as well as many others, demonstrate that Arab and other non-Black Muslims were afflicted with race- and color-prejudice.[20] The insinuation, however, that such attitudes stemmed from the same psychology and implied the same all-encompassing social and political reality as that created by White Americans stems more from imagination than from fact. In the year 659/1260, some seven centuries before the United States' civil rights movement, a Black man appeared in Cairo after the sacking of Baghdad by the Mongols and claimed to be a member of the 'Abbâsid House. The Mamlûk Sultan, himself a former slave, ordered the Chief Justice to make an official inquiry into the claim. After his genealogy was confirmed, the Black man took the name al-Mustansir and was inaugurated *amîr al-mu'minîn* (Commander of the Faithful); i.e., Caliph, temporal successor to the Prophet Muhammad.[21] To date, however, no Western nation has been headed by a Black man.

Clearly, facts such as these must be considered if the real significance of race and color prejudice in Arab/Muslim society is to be understood, but Black Orientalism deliberately ignores or suppresses them. This is done in order to invest race prejudice in the Muslim world with the same significance it has in the United States. The result is that cultural bias and the deliberate, race-based monopoly and abuse of power become so indistinguishable that a cultural idiosyncrasy such as Rapper Sir Mix-A-Lot's contempt for the gaunt figures and flat buttocks idealized by *Cosmopolitan* magazine takes on the same significance as Jesse Helms' and the Republican party's opposition to affirmative action.[22]

NATIONALIST BLACK ORIENTALISM: MOLEFI ASANTE

There are at least three types of Black Orientalism: the Nationalist, the Academic and the Religious. All three impugn the relationship between Blackamericans and historical Islam. Because of space limitations, only Nationalist Black Orientalism is discussed below.[23]

In 1980, Professor Molefi Kete Asante started a fire with the publication of his provocative work, *Afrocentricity: The Theory of Social Change*.[24] The book became the manifesto of the "new" Afrocentric movement.[25] It was followed in 1987 by *The Afrocentric Idea* and in 1990 by *Kemet, Afrocentricity and Knowledge*.[26] The purpose of these works was to lay out the aims, ideological underpinnings and practical methodology for an approach to historical, cultural and sociological studies that viewed the world, especially the African world, from the perspective of Africa and Africans rather than from the dominant Eurocentric perspective that claimed to be objective and universal. Asante criticized other approaches, including those of Africans and African Americans, that he felt had been influenced by bias and by assumptions accepted uncritically by the European and American academy. Chief among these was the negative assessment of the achievements of Africa and its contributions to world civilization. Afrocentrism was a clarion call to Africans and African Americans to free themselves from these negative stereotypes and return to their true African selves. It was also an appeal to non-Africans to consider the African rather than the reigning European perspective as an effective tool for re-humanizing the world.

As a professor at Temple University in Philadelphia, a city heavily populated by Blackamerican Muslims, Asante was well aware that Afrocentrism faced stiff competition. To neutralize its competitors, he argued that they were inconsistent with the dictates of Afrocentricity, which reflected the true African self. He wrote of Islam,

> Adoption of Islam is as contradictory to the Diasporan Afrocentricity as Christianity has been. Christianity has been dealt with admirably by other writers, notably Karenga; but Islam within the African-American community ha [*sic*] yet to come under Afrocentric scrutiny. Understand that this oversight is due more to a sympathetic audience than it is to the perfection of Islam for African-Americans. While the Nation of Islam under the leadership of Elijah Muhammad was a transitional nationalist movement, the present emphasis of Islam in America is more cultural and religious.[27]

Asante's critique of Islam is neither theological nor philosophical. He does not attack the foundational beliefs of Islam, such as its monotheism or belief in an Afterlife, but rather what he considers the negative, self-deprecating place of Blacks in Islam. His appeal, in other words, is to certain sensibilities developed by Blackamericans as a result of their New World experience. His message is essentially that Islam inherently promotes an Arab supremacy that is no less pernicious and injurious to Blacks than the White supremacy of the West.

Asante insists that the Arabs have structured Islam in such a way that non-Arabs (that is, Blackamericans) are forced to accept the inherent superiority of Arab idiosyncrasies and presuppositions. This leads to "the overpowering submissiveness of Africans and other non-Arabs."[28] The specific means of enforcing this submissiveness were: language (i.e., the primacy of Arabic among Muslims); *Hajj*, or pilgrimage to Mecca; the *qiblah*, or the direction in which Muslims must turn when offering ritual prayers; the doctrine that Muhammad was the last prophet; and customs such as dress that were informed by a specifically Arab culture. While space does not permit a full treatment of all these points, what follows should be sufficient to demonstrate that Asante is a proponent of Black Orientalism. In assessing the validity of this critique, it is important to remember that the determining factor is not whether his list is factually correct but whether the meaning attributed to it is grounded in objective analysis or ideology.

The first issue has to do with language. In response to the thesis that Arabic spread among Muslim populations because of its "prestige and usefulness," Asante writes, "While this is partially true, it is more correct to say that the language succeeded because of force and punishment."[29] He offers no historical proof from European, African or Arabic sources. Rather, Asante relies on his readers' tendency to utilize their Western experience as the analogue for all historical reality. The Arabs, in other words, must have forced Arabic upon their vanquished populations, because the loss of African languages among the American slave population proves that white Americans forced their language upon their slaves.

But if the ability to "force and punish" was the primary means by which language spread, Turkish would have wiped out Arabic in all the areas of the Middle East over which the Ottomans ruled for almost half a millennium. If prestige and usefulness were really marginal as incentives, what accounts for the existence in places as far removed from the Arabs as China, Russia or Surinam of Muslim populations who continue to learn the language and who pride themselves on their ability to do so? Moreover, even if one concedes that Arabic spread by "force and punishment," would the ultimate effect and meaning of this imposition be the same as Blacks' experience in the New World?

Here we come to a critical failing that virtually compels Asante to projection. He equates Whiteness with Arabness and then goes on to assume that the two function identically. This approach assumes that Arab supremacy had the same effect on Blacks as White supremacy, essentially relegating Blacks to a negative category made inescapable by their skin color. In fact, however, the attempt of the Umayyads (the first Muslim dynasty) in the first/seventh century to perpetuate a system that reduced non-Arabs to second-class citizenship failed. After that, once a people was Arabized, it became equal in its Arabness to its conquerors, as was the case, e.g., with the Egyptians, Syrians, and North Africans. This was true whether the adoption occurred through force, choice or osmosis. Arabized peoples often eventually superceded the "original" Arabs in intellectual, artistic and other pursuits, including the acquisition of power, as occurred, e.g., with Abû Nawâs in Arab poetry, al-Ghazalî in Muslim theology, Abû Hanifa in Islamic law, and the famous Barmakid family of politicians.[30] By contrast, when the language, religion and culture of New World Africans were destroyed and replaced by English and Protestantism, they were rendered neither English nor American. The naturalization law passed by the United States Congress in 1790 defined American-ness as Whiteness, and Whiteness was a boundary that Black people could not cross.[31] It is thus misleading to imply, as Asante does, that the experience of subject populations, even under a regime of Arab supremacy, was the same as the experience of New World Blacks under a regime of White supremacy. I have often been asked by Arabs who hear me speak Arabic if I am an Arab. I have never been asked by a White person who heard me speak English if I was White. If Arabization, forced or voluntary, expressed a commitment to the principle of *E pluribus unum* (from the many, one), American Whiteness emphatically excludes Blacks on the principle of *E pluribus duo* (from the many, two).[32]

The remainder of Asante's list implies submissiveness, but we might note that while White American Muslims change their names, perform the pilgrimage, offer the daily prayers, modify their customs and often replace their dress, because of their understanding of their duty as Muslims or a preference for traditions they deem to be identifiably Muslim, Asante does not speak of White American submissiveness to the culture and religion of the Arabs. The reason is that in his experience and that of Blackamericans generally, White people simply do not have culture and religion imposed upon them. Being forced into the role of passive recipient is an exclusively Black reality. It is the force of this projection of the Blackamerican experience that both leads Asante to his submissiveness thesis and sustains its currency among his Blackamerican readership.

Asante's critique reflects a desire to delegitimize Islam in the Blackamerican community. His criticisms are based more on projections from the Blackamerican experience, however, than on an objective assessment of Islam itself. In describing "White" Orientalism, Edward Said noted that it was grounded in the fears, desires, repressions and prejudices of the West. Asante's Black Orientalism, like that of all Black Orientalists, attempts to cast Islam and the Muslim world in a mold that accommodates Blackamerican imaginings, resentments, prejudices and difficulties in confronting the intractable problem of American race relations.

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF BLACK ORIENTALISM FOR ISLAM IN THE UNITED STATES

From the decades following the Civil War, Black America has maintained a cultural/political orthodoxy dedicated to policing the boundaries between Blacks and "pseudo-Blacks." Pseudo-Blacks have traditionally been identified as those whose cultural authenticity and/or political loyalty to the Blackamerican community are in doubt. This cultural/political orthodoxy has always been part of the mores and sentiments of the folk, and paying homage to it has been the *sine qua non* of success for any serious movement among Blackamericans—even those, such as Elijah Muhammad's, that sought to alter the substance of Blackamerican culture. The early Blackamerican Islamizers' understanding and respect for this tradition facilitated the popularity and growth of their movements. Immigrant Islam, however, arrived in the United States oblivious to this reality, and passed on much of this myopia to Blackamerican Muslims who came under its influence. The result has been a cognitive dissonance in which fossilized doctrines and practices from the Muslim world are imagined to be viable substitutes for effectively engaging American, and particularly urban American, reality. At the same time, the power and status that Islam once enjoyed within the Blackamerican community has been displaced in many quarters by a sense of disappointment and betrayal and a feeling that Islam and Muslims are irrelevant if not detrimental to the Black cause.

In this context, the rise of Black Orientalism must be viewed not only as a reflection of attempts by Blackamerican Christians and other non-Muslims to regain lost ground. The perspective of immigrant Islam must also be recognized as threatening the status and future of Islam in Black America. Blackamerican Muslims must confront and take concrete steps to overcome ideological dependency, for they will cease to exist at the mercy of the definitions of others only when they acquire the authority to define a properly constituted Islamic life for themselves.

Black Orientalism, however, is not a problem for Blackamerican Muslims alone. Immigrant Muslims are equally affected by the phenomenon, especially in the context of the United States after September 11. In earlier times, the criticism Black leaders and thinkers leveled at Blackamerican Muslims never reached the point of threatening Islam's place in the collective psyche of Blackamericans. In the present atmosphere, however, given the diminished relationship between Islam and Black Religion, on the one hand, and the nationwide rise in anti-Muslim mania, on the other, this danger is far more imminent. Any permanent estrangement between Islam and Blackamericans would be nothing short of disastrous for Muslims of all backgrounds, for it is primarily through Blackamerican conversion that Islam enjoys whatever status it does as a bona fide American religion. To date, Blackamericans remain the only indigenous Americans whose conversion to Islam connotes neither cultural nor ethnic apostasy. Without Blackamerican Muslims, Islam would be orphaned in the United States, with virtually nothing to save it from being relegated to the status of an alien, hostile threat. This has obvious implications for anyone associated with Islam.

The threat of Black Orientalism nonetheless lies far more in the refusal of Muslims, Blackamerican and immigrant, to recognize and address the causes that brought it into being than it does in the efforts of Black Orientalists themselves. Muslims must confront, honestly and energetically, the question of whether the shift in the basis of Islamic religious authority had to result in the kinds of dislocations that led to the rise of Black Orientalism. This question is critically important for Blackamerican Sunnis, because they cannot return to classical Black Religion in a manner that privileges it over the historical Sunni tradition. The question for them is whether they can master and supplement that tradition to speak to their realities as Blacks, as Americans and as Muslims.

As for immigrant Muslims, it may be time to recognize that their greatest interest as Muslim Americans lies not in the situations in Palestine or Kashmir but in establishing a sense of their belongingness, however problematic, in the collective psyche of Americans as a whole. This may mean devoting more energy to attaching themselves to an already-existing tradition of Islamic belongingness in the United States. In such a context, Black Orientalism will reveal itself to be as great a threat to them as it is to Blackamerican Muslims. It is a threat, however, that will only be defeated through practical and attitudinal changes, not the same old rhetorical smoke and mirrors.

NOTES

1. Edward Said, *Orientalism* (Pantheon Books, 1978).

2. Op. cit., p. 11.

3. I use the term "Blackamerican" as an alternative to both the "African" and the hyphenation in African-American. My contention is that Blacks in the United States, certainly religiously speaking, are no longer African. Politically, the hyphen in African-American does not have anything like the efficiency that it does in the case of Jewish-Americans or Italian-Americans, the latter's Jewishness and Italianness being essentially protected by their Americanness.

4. Edward E. Curtis IV*, Islam in Black America: Identity, Liberation, and Difference in African-American Islamic Thought* (State University of New York Press, 2002).

5. C. Eric Lincoln, *Race, Religion and the Continuing American Dilemma* (Hill and Wang, 1999), p. 31.

6. Joseph R. Washington, Jr., *Black Religion: The Negro and Christianity in the United States* (University Press of America, 1984), p. 37.

7. Frantz Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth* (Grove Press, 1965). Translated from the French by Constance Farrington.

8. Chancellor Williams, *The Destruction of Black Civilization* (Kendall/Hunt Pub. Co., 1971); Shawna Maglangbayan, *Garvey, Lumumba, and Malcolm: Black National-Separatists* (Third World Press, 1972); Yosef Ben-Jochannan, *African Origins of Major Western Religions* (Alkebu-lan Books, 1970); Haki Madhubuti, *Enemies: The Clash of Races* (Third World Press, 1978). On these and other works, *see* the informative article by Y. Nurridin, "African-American Muslims and the Question of Identity Between Traditional Islam, African Heritage, and the American Way," in Yvonne Yazbeck Haddad and John Esposito, *Muslims on the Americanization Path?* (Scholars Press, 1993), pp. 282 – 287.

9. Ibn Khaldûn, ʻAbd al-Rahmân b. Khaldûn, *al-Muqaddimah* (Dâr wa Maktabat al-Hilâl, 1986), p. 45. Throughout this essay, dates are given according to both the Muslim and the Christian calendars.

10. *See* Muhammad al-Amîn al-Shanqîtî, *Adwâ' al-bayân fî îdâh al-qur'ân bi al-qur'ân* (Dâr al-Kutub al-ʻIlmîyah, 1421/2000, 10 vols.), 1:330. Al-Shanqîtî refutes

the position of Tâ'ûs by referring to several marriages conducted by the Prophet between a Black and a White, e.g., Zayd b. Hâritha (White) with Barakah, the mother of Usâmah (Black); Usâmah b. Zayd (Black) with Fâtima bt. Qays (White, from the "royal" tribe of Quraysh); and Bilâl (Black) with the sister of 'Abd al-Rahmân b. 'Awf (White).

11. Malik ibn Anas (c. 713 – c. 795), a legal expert in the city of Medina, founded a school of Islamic jurisprudence.

12. *Adwâ'*, 1:330. Al-Shanqîtî, himself a Mâlikî, refutes this view and cites several poems in praise of the beauty of Black women.

13. Al-Dardîr, *Al-Sharh al-Kabîr* (Dâr al-Fikr, N.d., 4 vols.), 4:309 (on the margin of Muhammad al-Dasûqî, *Hâshîyat al-dasûqî 'alâ al-sharh al-kabîr*).

14. This is obviously not the place for a full treatment of slavery in Muslim history, though the subject certainly deserves a full study, especially given the tendency on the part of Blackamericans to assume that American slavery is the norm that all other systems of slavery followed. They thereby make no distinction between slavery in a capitalist society and slavery in a non-capitalist order, slavery that is race-based and slavery that is race-neutral, slavery that draws slaves under the full orbit of law and slavery that denies slaves any legal rights at all. This makes objective discussions of Muslim or African or Polynesian slavery virtually impossible. It also obscures the fact that it was not slavery but White supremacy that was, and remains, the cause of Black subjugation in the United States.

15. Ira Berlin, *Many Thousands Gone: The First Two Centuries of Slavery in North America* (Harvard University Press, 1998), p. 8.

16. *See* M.E. Dyson, *I May Not Get There With You: The True Martin Luther King, Jr.* (Free Press, 2000), pp. 193 – 194; Douglass quoted in W.J. Moses, *Afrotopia: The Roots of African American Popular History* (Cambridge University Press, 1998), p. 80; Crummel quoted in Moses, op. cit., p. 69. Chris Rock, comedian, used the line, "I love black people ... but I hate niggers" in one of his comic routines.

17. Richard Hernstein and Charles Murray, *The Bell Curve: Intelligence and Class Structure in American Life* (Free Press, 1994).

18. Ibn Khaldûn', *al-Muqaddimah*, pp. 89, 63, 61. Ibn Khaldûn states that al-Mas'ûdî took the fallacious notion of Black intellectual inferiority from the Arab philosopher al-Kindî, as cited by Galen.

19. *al-Muqaddimah*, op. cit., p. 60. But *see* the entire discussion, p. 44ff, for a full exposé of the theory of climate. This is confirmed by St. Clair Drake in his *Black Folks Here and There: An Essay in History and Anthropology* (University of California, 1987, 2 vols.), 2: 157 – 59. Drake relies on the French translation of Ibn Khaldûn. In my view, Drake was not a Black Orientalist. Indeed, the fact that he relies exclusively on Orientalist writings but is still able to avoid Black Orientalism shows the extent to which this phenomenon is far more conscious than unconscious. Black Orientalists, in other words, tend to find only what they are looking for.

20. *See*, for example, St. Clair Drake, op. cit., 2: 77 – 184.

21. *See* Shâfi‘ b. ‘Alî, *Husn al-manâqib al-sirrîyah al-muntaza‘ah min al-sîrah al-zâhirîyah* (‘A. Khowaytar, ed., 2nd ed., 1410/1989), p. 79. There are numerous other instances of Black rulers in the central Arab Islamic lands.

22. *See* Sir Mix-A-Lot's hit single, "Baby Got Back," on the album *Mack Daddy* (Universal, 1992).

23. All three forms of Black Orientalism are discussed in my forthcoming book, *Islam and the Blackamerican: The Third Resurrection*.

24. Molefi Kete Asante, *Afrocentricity: The Theory of Social Change* (Amulefi Pub. Co., 1980).

25. As Wilson Jeremiah Moses points out, Afrocentric thought dates back at least to the nineteenth century and was even championed in the twentieth century by a number of White scholars, most notably Melville Herskovitz in *Myth of the Negro Past* (Beacon Press, 1958) and Martin Bernal in *Black Athena: The Afroasiatic Roots of Classical Civilization* (Rutgers University Press, 1987). The term "Afrocentrism" was used by W.E.B. DuBois as early as 1962. *See* Moses, *Afrotopia: The Roots of African American Popular History* (Cambridge University Press, 1998), pp. 1 – 2, 11 – 12.

26. Molefi Kete Asante, *The Afrocentric Idea* (Temple University Press, 1987); Molefi Kete Asante, *Kemet, Afrocentricity, and Knowledge* (Africa World Press, 1990).

27. Molefi Kete Asante*, Afrocentricity* (Africa World Press, 1996), p. 2. This was the eighth printing of the work that originally appeared in 1988.

28. *Afrocentricity*, op. cit., p. 3.

29. Molefi Kete Asante*, Kemet, Afrocentricity and Knowledge* (Africa World Press, 1998), p. 131. This is a reprint of the work first published in 1990.

30. Though born of a Persian mother, Abû Nawâs (130/747 – c. 195/810) was and is considered to be among the greatest of all Arab poets. *See The Encyclopedia of Islam* (E. J. Brill, 1913), I: 102. Al-Ghazalî (450 – 505/1058 – 1111), also of Persian lineage, is thought by many to be the most famous Muslim after the Prophet Muhammad himself. His most influential works were written in Arabic. *The Encyclopedia of Islam*, II: 146 – 49. Abû Hanifa, again of Persian ancestry, was the eponym of the Hanafi school of law, numerically the largest in all of classical Islam. He died in 150/ 767, and even today many if not most Muslims believe he was a pure Arab. *The Encyclopedia of Islam*, I: 90. The Barmakid family, originally a Buddhist priestly family from Balkh, rose to power as government ministers under the Abbasid Caliph. *The Encyclopedia of Islam*, I: 663 – 66.

31. In the Act of March 26, 1790, Congress authorized naturalization for "free white persons" who had resided in the United States for at least two years and swore loyalty to the U.S. Constitution. The racial requirement remained on the federal books until 1952, though naturalization was opened to members of some Asian nationalities in the 1940s.

32. For more on this theme, *see* Matthew F. Jacobson's important *Whiteness of a Different Color: European Immigrants and the Alchemy of Race* (Harvard University Press, 1998), pp. 109 – 35.

MUSLIM-AMERICAN POLITICS: DEVELOPMENTS, DEBATES AND DIRECTIONS

AGHA SAEED

This essay traces the cartography of Muslim-American politics, the debates and challenges that are likely to influence them in the near future, and developments since September 11.

MUSLIM-AMERICAN POLITICS

Muslim-American politics is based on three circles of identity, four sets of responses from mainstream America, five key issues and six strategic dilemmas.

"Three circles of identity" is a term that was made popular by Gamal Abdul Nasser, a leader of Egyptian nonalignment and Arab nationalism. In the American context, the three circles are those of ethnic identity, religious identity and American identity. Muslim-American politics have to a large extent been based on identity politics, but the identity itself has been a subject of debate and disagreement. Identity is always in flux, always subject to negotiation and modification.

Each of these circles is based on a different principle. The circle of ethnic identity is based on the principle of authenticity; the circle of religious identity, on the principle of moral purpose; and the circle of American identity, on the principle of citizen efficacy. These principles are not always consistent and are frequently in conflict.

The tension among the circles is a creative one. On the one hand, activities within the ethnic circle, that is to say interactions among African-American and Arab-American Muslims or Pakistani-American and Indian-American Muslims or between Turkish-American and Uzbek-American Muslims, have influenced Muslim identity both directly and indirectly. At the same time, both popular perceptions and the vilification of Islam and Arabs in the American media and academia have had an effect on Muslims' American identity.

The three circles of identity exist in the context of four different but simultaneous mainstream American responses which have been sharpened since September 11. The first is indifference. Most Americans have simply ignored the existence of Muslim Americans *as* Muslim Americans. This lack of confirmed public existence has frustrated many minority and immigrant groups.

The second response is acceptance, accommodation and occasional acts of active support. The clearest example of active support was Jesse Jackson's keynote address at the 1984 Democratic Party convention, the first and last such keynote address, in which he declared, "We are bound by Moses and Jesus, but also connected with Islam and Mohammed."[1] His language and approach were inclusive.

The third approach, much in evidence since September 11, is that of conflict and containment. Many people have used the notion of containment very deliberately and self-consciously to apply to Muslims in this country and elsewhere.

Finally, the fourth approach is a drive for conversion. It is based on a belief, enunciated most dramatically by Franklin Graham and Pat Robertson, that Muslims are not only dangerous but represent an evil religion and therefore must be converted.

These four reactions to Muslims have consequences in each of the three circles that I alluded to earlier, and the differing responses to them account for debates and disagreements among Muslim organizations.

DEBATES AND CHALLENGES

These four responses are tied to five challenges that face Muslims around the world as well as in this country. The first concerns democracy, which has become a central issue for Muslims everywhere. This is not simply the issue of democracy in its narrow sense but the combination of human rights, the rule of law, due process, equal justice and, ultimately, the rationale by which democratic societies are ordered.

The second issue and challenge is gender equality, which is more advanced in the United States than in Muslim countries.

Third is the issue of religious tolerance and minority rights. This raises the question not only of the rights of Muslims in countries where they are a minority but of their obligations in countries where they are in the majority.

The fourth challenge is that of free inquiry: to what extent can Muslims support critical inquiry into official truths?

Finally, there is the issue of social justice, particularly as it pertains to the kind of poverty that is increasing rapidly in the Muslim world.

These five challenges are the defining issues for the Muslim world, for the Muslim intelligentsia in the United States, and for Muslim social and political organizations in this country. They in turn are connected to six dilemmas involving the way to proceed strategically, meeting the challenges while maintaining the three circles of ethnic, religious and American identity. One of the dilemmas is the question of whether people dissatisfied with a system should resist it or engage in reform efforts. One of the subsets of that dilemma is the perception by some American Muslims that the American political system is corrupt. Their view calls for citizen involvement as attempts to involve people in an illegitimate order. Others, however, have suggested that sometimes resistance is possible only through reform. The question of the legitimacy and desirability of political participation is now being discussed by American Muslim intellectuals.

The second challenge is that of modernization — with or without Westernization, and with or without what *kinds* of Westernization. Which West should one follow and associate with? Is it Europe, which took one position in the United Nations about the war on Iraq, or is it the United States?

Third is the issue of ethical relativism and ethical perfectionism. The Manicheans divide the world into two positions, good and evil, which originate in two totally different principles and are mutually irreconcilable. On the other hand, there is the position that compromise is possible.

The fourth challenge is the complex issue of Americanization and globalization and of whether and how American Muslims, particularly immigrant Muslims, are to participate in both of these processes.

Fifth is an issue that has existed for many peoples under occupation and in national liberation movements: that of selective armed resistance or total nonviolence.

Finally, the sixth challenge is whether to define American military interventions in the Muslim world, such as that in Iraq, as occupation or liberation.

DEVELOPMENTS SINCE SEPTEMBER 11

September 11 of course had enormous consequences for the American Muslim community. Since then, the erosion of their own civil rights has forced most Muslims, particularly immigrant Muslims, to discover other American people's histories, learn about their struggles, celebrate their victories and make common cause with them. As immigrant Muslims have learned the history of this country and of other people's struggles within it, they have rediscovered Malcolm X. This is particularly true of the younger generation of immigrant Muslims, and the phenomenon has enhanced the relationship between the two communities.

There is also an emerging coalition between African Americans and American Muslims that has gone largely unnoticed. It is based on the stand taken by non-Muslim African Americans in support of civil rights for Muslims. Congresspeople such as Cynthia McKinney, Earl Hilliard, John Conyers, Barbara Lee, Jesse Jackson, Jr., Maxine Waters and others such as Al Sharpton and Jesse Jackson, Sr. have come forward to proclaim a common cause. Two of them, Cynthia McKinney and Earl Hilliard, consciously sacrificed their positions in the United States Congress by taking controversial positions on the questions of Palestine and of Muslim civil rights in the United States, knowing that the result would be the mobilization of very powerful lobbies against them. Their sacrifices have created a powerful coalition relationship between the two communities.

September 11 has also led to institutional development among Muslim organizations, particularly immigrant Muslim organizations. It has been expressed in two main areas: greater cooperation among Muslim organizations and greater professionalization of Muslim organizations, particularly Muslim political organizations. The middle level leadership—not the top leadership, but the middle level—of Muslim ethnic groups, African American, Arab-American, Pakistani-American, has begun to move closer together, forming coalitions and taking common positions. There is far greater communication now between indigenous Muslims and the children of immigrant Muslims—a communication that has begun to create a common vision.

There is a slowly emerging dialogue between traditionalists and modernists, and a growing convergence in the area of participation. More and more people now believe that if they are going to live in this country they must participate as citizens.

Four important shifts have taken place in the way Muslim-American organizations now approach American politics.

First, there has been a major shift in agenda, from concern with overseas issues alone to a focus on a sophisticated combination of domestic and international issues.

Second, emphasis has shifted from elite to grassroots organizations. That became clear during the Immigration and Naturalization Service registration that took place in 2003. It was not elite organizations like the Association of Pakistani Physicians of North America but rather grassroots organization like the Pakistan-American Democratic Forum that came forward to provide Muslim Americans with the necessary legal and support services.

Third, control of the agenda is now in the hands of organizations in the United States itself rather than being dictated by events overseas. The major issue on the Muslim-American agenda at this moment is civil rights in the United States, rather than events elsewhere.

Fourth, American Muslims have gone from relying on back channel communication to recognizing the power of public debate and building coalitions. There is not a single large Muslim political or social organization that is not engaged in some form of public debate and in some form of coalition politics.

In addition, disappointment with the performance of the current administration has made Muslims reconsider their bloc vote for George W. Bush in 2000. They are now looking at American politics, and particularly at the third party option, more closely. So, for example, the American Muslim Political Coordination Council has endorsed a Green Party candidate for governor of California as well as candidates from the Libertarian Party. The result is a more nuanced understanding of the American political system.

Another important post-September 11 development is that fewer Muslims ran for public office in 2002 than in 2000. In 2000, there were roughly 700 Muslim-Americans candidates; 153 were elected. In 2002 the number was fewer than 50, although a higher percentage won. In 2000 four Muslim Americans were elected to state legislatures; in 2002 the number rose to six.

A related and very important development is that in 2002, the American Muslim Political Coordination Council decided to endorse Congressman Pete Stark in California's 13th District. A Muslim candidate was running against Stark, but when the candidates held a debate, the community felt that the Muslim candidate took a much weaker position on Iraq, Palestine and, most importantly, on civil rights. The community decided to support Stark not on the basis of ethnicity or religion but on the criterion of its own vital interests.

An additional post-September 11 phenomenon is the emergence of a politics of grants and stipends. Foundations and various private agencies are giving a great deal of money to what I call "grant democrats." These are people who have been given large amounts of money for the purpose of bringing democracy to the Muslim-American community and to Muslim societies abroad. This is reminiscent of Lord Thomas McCauley's statement in 1835, "We must create in India a class of people who are Indian by ancestry of blood but European by taste and culture." How do you make somebody who is Indian by ancestry of blood into a European by taste and culture? He believed the answer was principally through education and then by other kinds of social awards and status enhancement.

Since September 11, the Muslim-American community has mobilized its intellectual resources to deal with its new situation. A large number of thinkers has been brought back into the discussion. An incomplete list includes Malcolm X; H. Rap Brown; Eqbal Ahmed; Edward Said, who although not a Muslim thinker has exercised greater influence over Muslim Americans than most Muslims; Abdul Ghaffar Khan, known as the frontier Gandhi, the Muslim leader of non-violence; and Maulana Abul Kalam Azad**,** president of the All India Congress from 1940 to 1946.

This is, in short, a time of new debates and new directions for Muslim Americans, with the results yet to be seen.

NOTES

1. Jesse Jackson, Address before the Democratic National Convention, July 18, 1984, available at http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/jesse/speeches/jesse84speech.html.

SOCIAL AND POLITICAL INSTITUTIONS OF AMERICAN MUSLIMS: LIBERTY AND CIVIC RESPONSIBILITY

MOHAMED NIMER

The institutional growth of the American Muslim community has been remarkable: from one congregation in the mid-1920s to more than 2,000 organizations of all functional types by the end of the twentieth century. American Muslims are experiencing life as part of the increasingly global communications and economic systems led by the United States. All indications suggest a growing momentum among Muslims in favor of integration into America's civic and political life.

To be sure, some Muslims maintain an isolationist attitude toward American society. Some believe that American society is largely hedonistic and morally corrupt. They are proud that Muslims suffer much less than others from problems of contemporary life such as alcoholism, drug addiction, AIDS, suicide, divorce, out-of-wedlock births, abortion, crime and racism. They believe Muslims ought to avoid contact with organized society. Instead, they propose to focus only on *da'wa* (missionary call to Islam) to Americans. Some of these isolationists believe the very presence of Muslims in the West is a phenomenon that will fade away once a true Islamic caliphate is established in Muslim lands. However, polls conducted by Muslim community organizations suggest that most Muslims believe such a development to be so unlikely that relying upon it will result only in the self-imposed marginalization of Muslims.

All communities suffer from social maladies. Viewing all American society as decadent is not very different from stereotyping Muslims as fanatics. Moreover, mainstream Muslims consider many American values to be consistent with Islamic moral teachings and view them as more present in the West than in most Muslim countries. Chief among these are the cultural norms of hard work, entrepreneurship and liberty; civilian control of the military; the clear institutionalization of political power; a diffused process of making public decisions; and a functioning civil society that gives voice to competing interests within the country.

Muslim activists increasingly express views based on their own strategic interests as American citizens who earn their living in the United States and whose children are growing up in this country and being socialized by its educational systems. As Muslims of various ethnic backgrounds and ideological beliefs form institutions, they ask the same questions asked by others when they embark on collective action: Who are we? What do we need? The core values of religious and ethnic associations, and the fact-based assessment of the needs of the community and of the environment in which they operate, illuminate the answers. While mosques and Islamic schools address matters of worship and child education, charities and public affairs groups focus on the social and political domains.

SOCIAL SERVICES AND CHARITIES

Social assistance activities are generated by ethnic and religious values. Many Muslims give their alms to mosques. Others, perhaps because their community centers do not possess the institutional infrastructure to manage the collection and distribution of donations, seek out independent charity groups instead. While many of these groups specialize in sending emergency help abroad when there are international crises, a growing number of programs provide services to needy people in the local communities.

Indeed, large social service programs targeting domestic beneficiaries in various ethnic groups were created even before the emergence of international relief groups. Many such organizations are based on the religious concept of *zakat* (almsgiving). The Arab Community Center for Economic and Social Services in Dearborn, Michigan, which has been active since the mid-1970s, is perhaps the oldest and largest such agency. Its multi-million dollar programs are funded by the government and private foundations and include employment, welfare, and liaison services. Recently, much smaller social assistance groups have emerged in communities around the country, performing the traditional social assistance function of collecting and distributing food, clothing and money to those in need. Some of these groups have worked on youth problems; others have provided services to specific beneficiary groups such as new immigrants, women and uninsured patients. The Shifa Community Clinic in Sacramento, California, the University Muslim Medical Association at the University of California at Los Angeles, the Crescent Clinic of Greater Kansas City, the Confederation of Somali Community in Minnesota, and the Hamdard Center in Wood Dale, Illinois are all examples of such organizations.

A large part of community charity resources is devoted to international relief efforts in countries where people live in extreme poverty and have faced wars and natural disasters. Several relief groups were formed by members of ethnic groups and have specialized in geographic locations that reflect the ethnic backgrounds of the founders. Perhaps the first charity established by Muslims in America was the Indian Muslim Relief Committee, which was founded under the sponsorship of the Islamic Society of North America in 1981. It has established training centers to help prospective college students prepare for entrance exams, provided scholarships for students, and built teacher-training centers for women.

The establishment of the Indian Muslim Relief Committee was soon followed by the emergence of groups focusing on other parts of the Muslim world. The Islamic African Relief Agency (now called the Islamic American Relief Agency) was established in 1985 with a focus on Africa. Mercy International (now Mercy-USA), founded in 1986, first provided help in Afghanistan. It then secured public and private funds to deliver relief assistance in Albania, Bangladesh, Bosnia & Herzegovina, Chechnya, Kosovo, Mozambique, Somalia, Kenya and Turkey. The Benevolence International Foundation was created to help people in nations emerging from Communism. The Holy Land Foundation for Relief and Development, established in Dallas in 1989, provides aid to Palestinian refugees. The Global Relief Foundation, established in Bridgeview, Illinois in 1992, has focused on Kosovo, Chechnya, Afghanistan, Pakistan and Kashmir. Life for Relief and Development was founded in 1993 in response to the humanitarian crisis that developed in Iraq in the wake of the 1990 – 1991 Gulf War. In 1993, the Islamic Circle of North America (ICNA) established ICNA Relief, later renamed Helping Hand, which funds educational and social programs in Pakistan, India, and Bangladesh, the homelands of most ICNA members. Like the other agencies, Helping Hand has contributed to emergency relief efforts throughout the world during times of crisis.

Muslim community relief groups together collect an estimated $35 million per year from all sources.[1] This amount is small when compared to larger American religious and secular charities, but many of the country's large charitable organizations began with similarly limited funds. In this early stage of their development, Muslim charity groups depend on a relatively small donor base and, unlike other religious charities, most Muslims relief groups receive little public funding. The groups conduct fundraising activities through direct mail, charity dinners, advertisements in community publications, Internet sites and participation in community conventions and similar gatherings.

While continuing to pursue community funds, Muslim relief groups have increasingly sought grants from government and international agencies and from private voluntary associations. The financial statements of Mercy, for example, indicate that it is raising a growing percentage of its funds outside the Muslim community. Its 1998 statement showed that 21 percent of its funds came from federal government grants and 17 percent came from the United Nations and private foundations.[2] Other community charity groups have applied for United Nations and U.S. Agency for International Development status and some, including the Holy Land Foundation for Relief and Development (HLF), the Benevolence International Foundation (BIF) and the Global Relief Foundation (GRF), have been successful.

After the terrorist attacks of September 11, the Bush Administration decided to scrutinize Muslim community charity groups. This resulted in the closure of HLF, BIF, and GRF. U.S. government officials charged the groups with links to terrorism, a charge that the groups have denied. HLF, the largest American Muslim charity, acknowledged that some of the beneficiaries of its assistance programs may be relatives of people implicated in violence against Israel, but argued that it would be inhumane to deny food and medical assistance to refugees because of relatives under suspicion. HLF was on the U.S. Department of State's list of recognized aid providers until 2000. When recognition was withdrawn, the groups charged the government with religious and ethnic discrimination and initiated a legal challenge.

Suspicion about individual board members has troubled the other two groups, BIF and GRF. Enaam Arnaout, the founder of BIF, was associated with Osama Bin Laden in the late 1980s, when he was assisting the Afghans fighting the Soviet invasion. Ironically, that cause was financed by the United States. After Arnaout admitted in 2003 that he had diverted some charity funds to buy uniforms for Muslim fighters in Bosnia and Chechnya, the government dropped terrorism charges against both Arnaout and BIF and permitted Arnaout to plead guilty to one charge of racketeering conspiracy.[3] No specific charges have been made against GRF but its board member Rabih Haddad was imprisoned on charges of immigration violations and then deported.[4] Local and national religious and ethnic community groups have criticized the government's actions in these cases and have called for the charities to be allowed either to resume their important work or to be tried in court.

The federal government also shut down Help the Needy, a group in Syracuse, New York that was delivering aid to Iraq, charging it with violating the sanctions against Iraq and operating without a proper license. The seeming strength of the highly specific charges against the group led the community to respond in a very muted manner. The national organizations made no comment and local leaders who knew the Iraqi-born physician spearheading the group, noting that the government did no more than fine non-Muslim charities that violated the sanctions, asked only that the organization's leader be given equal treatment. Despite the large-scale disruption of Muslim charitable activities by the Bush Administration, new charities such as Kinder USA and Kind Hearts have been created.

Unlike large philanthropic institutions found in other American faith communities, Muslim agencies have not been active in social advocacy at home or abroad. Leaders of the charities usually argue that the aid they distribute is still too little to bring about quick policy results. The charities provide aid to poor people who are struggling to secure the basic needs of food and shelter. Donors usually regard any expenses other than deliverable benefits as administrative costs, and the charities have no option but to respect the donors' desire to keep the cost of delivering aid to a minimum.

At the core of the government crackdown on Muslims is apprehension about linkages between Muslims and Arabs here and those abroad. The identification of American Muslims with the general body of the *ummah* is an element of their religious beliefs. At the same time, Muslim-American citizens are aware of their obligation to abide by the law and their right to enjoy its protection. Muslim leaders have in fact welcomed the suggestion of the Department of the Treasury that Muslim charities institute better financial controls, and Muslim groups have asked the

Department to issue guidelines for best practices. The Department has done so.

Apprehension regarding the singling out of Muslim charities has nonetheless remained high and has dominated the public discourse of Muslim America, becoming an issue in the public debate over balancing security against civil liberty. To deflect charges of anti-Muslim bias, the government awarded Mercy a grant to deliver school lunches to poor Albanian children at the same time that the administration issued its closure decisions. It was hardly a coincidence that the agreement with Mercy, along with the freezing of accounts of the other charities, came in the second week of December 2001. Government critics nonetheless continue to argue for anti-terror policies designed to punish criminal behavior rather than target ethnic and religious associations.

PUBLIC AFFAIRS GROUPS

American Muslims continue to face misunderstanding and intolerance. School textbooks are rife with stereotypes and misrepresentations of Islam and Muslim life. Many Muslims believe that the religious accommodations made for Muslims thus far have fallen short of what is required to assure their dignity within a constitutional framework based on liberty and equality for all. Muslim employees must still negotiate their right to observe the essentials of their faith while they are at work and most Muslim students in public schools are not allowed to perform prayers in accordance with the requirements of their faith. Muslims have often noted that their complaints are usually handled on a case-by-case basis, although their experiences reflect a clear pattern of discrimination.

Several groups have addressed these concerns. The secularly-oriented, ethnicity-based Arab-American organizations created in the 1980s were followed in the 1990s by multi-ethnic, faith-based Muslim groups. The American-Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee (ADC) has emerged as the premiere Arab-American civil and human rights organization, working to combat discrimination at home and to promote human rights for Arabs overseas. The Arab American Institute (AAI) has attempted to mobilize Arab-American voters.

Religious Muslims' attitudes toward participation in the political process have evolved over the years. During the early decades of their experience in the United States, Muslims were too few to wield any political clout. In addition, the community had to settle the debate over whether Muslims could take part in the political process of a non-Muslim country and remain true to their faith. By the 1990s it had become clear that the majority of Muslim citizens had decided in favor of participation. Mesmerized by this growing momentum, former U.S. congressman Paul Findley, who has interacted regularly with local and national Muslim organizations since the 1980s, documented his personal account of the rising political awareness of Muslim communities and the evolution of an American Muslim voting bloc as the twentieth century came to a close.[5]

The American Muslim Council (AMC) was established in 1990 with the broad objective of increasing Muslim participation in political process. Acknowledging that public officials knew little about Muslims, the organization's leaders emphasized the creation of a new atmosphere in which Muslims would feel more welcome at government offices. The result was increased public recognition of Muslims in American society. The AMC arranged for Imam Siraj Wahhaj of New York to deliver the first Islamic invocation before the House of Representatives, in 1991, and in 1992, Imam Warith D. Mohammed became the first Muslim to deliver an invocation before the Senate. Since 1996, the White House has invited Muslims to a celebration of *Eid al-Fitr*, the feast that marks the end of Ramadan. In addition to these symbolic gestures, a few Muslims have been appointed to public office.

The Council on American-Islamic Relations (CAIR) was established in the mid-1990s to defend Muslims against discrimination and defamation. It has used moral persuasion and public pressure to resolve discrimination complaints. Complementing this community service effort, CAIR has produced educational material offering practical tips to employers, educators and health care professionals about how to accommodate Islamic religious practices. Since 1996, CAIR has issued its annual report, *The Status of Muslim Civil Rights in the United States*, which documents incidents of anti-Muslim discrimination and violence based upon such ethnic and religious features as beard, complexion, accent, name, birthplace, and national origin.[6]

Other national and local groups were founded during the last decade. The Muslim Public Affairs Council (MPAC) was established to dispel the stereotypical image of the fanatical Muslim as a central feature of popular discourse. The group sees itself as the public voice of progressive Muslims and has reached out to liberal mainstream groups. The American Muslim Alliance (AMA) works to foster Muslim participation in the American electoral process, both by voting and by running for public office. To achieve this mission, AMA has invested in political education and grassroots mobilization. The group's major achievement was the defeat of Senator Larry Pressler, author of legislation that imposed sanctions on the Muslim country of Pakistan.[7]

Although these groups have achieved rapid progress in making the public aware of anti-Muslim prejudice and in achieving public recognition of the Muslim community, they continue to face the challenge of reaching out to the Muslim grassroots that logically constitutes their political base. Recognizing that the goal can be met only through multi-group collaboration, the Muslim public affairs groups established the American Muslim Political Coordination Council (AMPCC) in 1998. The following year AMPCC started a dialogue with the Council of Presidents of Arab-American Organizations. The two umbrella organizations identified their shared priorities as increasing voter registration, eliminating the use of secret evidence and influencing U.S. policy on Jerusalem.[8]

Financial contributions to political candidates are a measurement of involvement in the political process. While many individuals contribute directly to candidates, others channel their contributions through political action committees (PACs). Federal Election Commission files indicate that Muslim PACs range from the less successful, such as the American League of Muslims, which contributed only $147 in 1999 and was subsequently terminated, to others that have survived the initiation phase. These include the Pakistani American Public Affairs Committee, which contributed $11,200 from July 9, 1998 to August 3, 2002, and the Albanian American PAC, whose contributions totaled $99,150 from March 14, 1997 to August 9, 2002. There are Arab-American PACs that are older and have contributed larger but still relatively modest amounts (the Arab American Leadership Council PAC contributed $218,129 from May 13, 1997 to September 10, 2002; the Arab American PAC gave $19,153 from December 29, 1999 to July 22, 2002).[9]

Some community contributions to congressional candidates are driven by local concerns, such as zoning permits for mosques and the resolution of parking and traffic problems. Congressmen Jim Moran (D-VA) and

Tom Davis (R-VA), for example, have established a relationship with Dar al-Hijrah Islamic Center in Falls Church, Virginia. They have written letters to Fairfax County officials opposing a motion by Falls Church residents to revoke Dar al-Hijrah's user permit and supported Dar al-Hijrah's request that Fairfax County install a traffic light to facilitate street crossing in front of the mosque. (The county finally installed the light after a worshiper crossing the street was killed by a car.) Both Moran and Davis receive contributions from local Muslims.

Muslims enter the domain of politics with a disadvantage: they lack experience—although this will of course fade with time, as has been the case of other groups that once lacked political clout. Because of the fractured nature of interest group politics, the willingness and ability to form coalitions with a wide variety of partners is a key to effectiveness. This requires assessing areas of convergence and divergence and a willingness to coalesce in spite of the latter. To date, however, political interaction and alliance-building with Muslims as core participants has been sporadic.

Other groups have nonetheless recognized the growth of Islam in the United States. Some Catholic, mainstream Protestant, Irish, Asian-American, Latin-American, African-American and secular liberal groups, including most prominently the American Civil Liberties Union, have welcomed Muslims into the United States' pluralistic society. Some conservatives have embraced Muslims as potential allies on family-centered social agendas. While friction between Muslims and Jews over the Middle East conflict is at an all-time high, there has been some encouraging local interaction between members of the two communities. But American Muslims have not always been welcome. Similarly, some of the ideologically oriented anti-Muslim groups believe in a cosmic war between Islam and the West and cannot envision a place for Muslims in U.S. society.

MUSLIMS IN POST-SEPTEMBER 11 AMERICA

The terrorist attacks of September 11 were followed by an unprecedented wave of hate crimes against Muslims. While providing ammunition to the anti-Muslim elements among neoconservatives and the far right, the attacks have presented Muslims with a chance to address the American citizenry. Muslim leaders and various community organizations stepped up their public efforts, identifying with the victims of the attacks and calling for swift punishment of the perpetrators. The AMC urged Muslims to apply for law enforcement jobs to help in the investigation of terrorism. CAIR-Florida recently held a joint press conference with the FBI to ask members of the Muslim community to come forward with information to assist in the apprehension of Adnan G. El Shukrijumah, suspected of terrorism.[10] American Muslim public affairs groups publicly supported the broad concept of the war on terror. They remained silent when the U.S. began bombing Afghanistan, but when the news media reported mounting civilian deaths, CAIR broke with other groups and called for a reassessment of the bombing targets.[11]

Muslim religious bodies have reacted publicly to terrorism by explaining Muslim religious values regarding war and peace. The Fiqh [juristic] Council of North America, in conjunction with internationally respected Muslim scholars, issued an opinion stating that it is religiously permissible for American Muslim soldiers to take part in the fight against terrorism. As justification for its opinion the Council declared that Muslims are part of American society and must assume their share in its defense, and that the campaign to apprehend those responsible for the attacks and to stop future attacks on innocent people meets the criteria of a just war under Islamic teachings. Issuance of this opinion marked the first time in U.S. history that a reputable body of Muslim scholars sanctioned Muslim participation in an American war effort.[12]

American Muslim groups also rejected al-Qaeda's attempt to blame the United States for the misery of Muslims around the world. While distressed about the deteriorating conditions of Muslim countries, U.S. Muslims have often identified poor leadership in the Muslim world as the main source of its woes. As a small community seeking tolerance and understanding, Muslims in the United States generally favor a world order that ensures peace, freedom and justice for all. American Muslim groups have opposed post-Cold War assertions that Islam is the West's new enemy. The plight of the Palestinians has taken center stage in the foreign policy positions of Muslim organizations, in response to the heavy-handed U.S. policy in the Middle East its tilt toward Israel, and the breakdown of the peace process. The question of Jerusalem has received special attention because of the Muslim religious attachment to it.

The January 2003 statement issued by AMPCC on Iraq is a reflection of the American Muslims' curious position. Military confrontation between Muslims and Westerners runs contrary to the belief of many American Muslims that their community is a bridge between the Muslim and Western worlds. Muslims would not advocate war between members of the two worlds, but they could not allow themselves to remain silent about oppression. Describing the Iraqi regime as a dictatorship incompatible with Islam, AMPCC called on the President of Iraq to step down and allow the United Nations to administer free elections for the country. Resolving that a war on Iraq would be unjustified and would be likely to cause more problems than it would solve, the Council called on the President of the United States to refrain from war.[13]

After the Bush Administration decided to go to war, toppling the Iraqi government and leaving the U.S. military in control of Iraq, MPAC issued a statement rejoicing in the fall of Saddam Hussein but cautioning against a lengthy occupation. It called for a speedy return to the rule of law and legitimate government in Iraq. It also asked the U.S. government to recognize that its past support for dictators was against U.S. interests and called for a resolution for the Arab-Israeli conflict based on Israeli withdrawal from the Palestinian lands it occupied in 1967.[14] No other group issued a statement when the U.S. began bombing Baghdad on March 20, 2003, perhaps because of prevailing misgivings about the war and the Iraqi regime.

Despite American Muslims' growing pragmatic engagement, their experience of politics has been full of uncertainties. Muslims have seen political candidates befriending them when they need their votes but giving them a cold shoulder once in office. President Bush has felt no urgency to fulfill his 2000 campaign promise to do away with the secret evidence clause of the 1996 anti-terrorism law.[15] In addition, the Bush administration showed little interest in even meeting with Muslim and Arab community organizations until the terrorist attacks of September 11, although the AMPCC endorsed Bush for President and some conservative activists publicly credited Muslims for the Bush victory in 2000. Kerri Houston, director of American Conservative Network, an outreach project of The American Conservative Union Foundation, for example, wrote, "Muslim-Americans nationwide voted for Bush by an 80% margin—closer to 90% in Florida. Without their thousands of votes in the Sunshine State, a newly inaugurated Al Gore would currently be proposing a new slate of excuses for picking the American pocket."[16]

Muslim community members were therefore perplexed at the discriminatory targeting of Middle Easterners and Muslims by federal government agencies following the September 11 disaster. The Bush Administration has used secret evidence more than its predecessors did in detaining Arab and Muslim men without charge and freezing Muslim businesses and charities chartered under U.S. law as American corporations. Supporters of those measures see them as part of the war on terror; opponents suggest that the government has failed to substantiate or, in most cases, even allege that there are links between the victims of secret evidence and terrorist attacks. In many cases, the government has pursued a policy of "arrest first and investigate later," effectively violating the constitutional guarantee of due process. In the high-profile cases of the seizure of assets from Al-Barakaat, a Minneapolis money wiring service, and Ptech, a Boston software company, the investigation cleared the suspects only after it caused irreparable damage to the businesses.[17]

Other measures initiated by the Bush Administration were no less discriminatory: the selective detentions, secret hearings and deportations of Arabs and Muslims; the special registration requirements for immigrants from Arab and Muslim-majority countries; the so-called "voluntary interviews" with thousands of U.S. visa holders from those countries, particularly men of Iraqi descent; the raids on Muslim-owned businesses and homes; and the surveillance of Muslim places of worship. These measures followed the rushed passage of the USA PATRIOT Act of 2001 through Congress.[18] Critics charged that the statute gave the Department of Justice the power to detain non-citizens indefinitely, to use foreign intelligence as evidence in law enforcement in violation of the traditional firewall between the intelligence and enforcement evidence-gathering functions, and to arrest people and seize property without regard for the Bill of Rights.

Muslim and Arab Americans have met such measures with increased outreach to other segments of American society. Community groups held joint press conferences with a wide spectrum of civic groups, calling upon the Bush Administration to uphold the Constitution and refrain from ethnic and religious profiling. AMC representatives demanded permission to accompany individuals interviewed by federal agents, while MPAC mobilized monitors to assure that the process of immigrant registration was not abused.[19] This campaign generated many media reports about the utility of the government campaign in combating terrorism, especially as the government failed to demonstrate that its crackdown on Arabs and Muslims in the U.S. produced any results related to terrorism. Over one hundred cities, towns and counties across the nation have passed resolutions critical of the PATRIOT Act.[20]

As for the general public, it quite often appeared that post-September 11 abuses of Muslims by members of the non-Muslim public were rooted in ignorance rather than malice. Muslim community organizations resolved that their communities should educate others about their faith. Islamic centers, even those that had not particularly encouraged interfaith activities in the past, have held "open mosque" activities. The public reaction has been phenomenal, as interest in information about Islam and Muslims has surged since September 11. Muslims across the nation have reported that non-Muslims attending such events were amiable, spoke candidly, asked sincere questions about Islam, or expressed sympathy to Muslims at time of crisis. The National Council of Churches reciprocated by initiating an "Open Door" program designed to invite Muslims to churches on the anniversary of the terrorist attacks.[21] Thus despite the tragedy and the growing anti-Muslim rhetoric, improved relations between Islam and the West have been reflected in personal contacts among neighbors and fellow citizens.

The growing concern about liberty forced many Muslims across the country into the public square and resulted in the growth of the community's public affairs groups. CAIR, MPAC and ADC reported increased numbers of members and local chapters. In 2003, the American Muslim Council and the American Muslim Alliance decided to merge as the Muslim American Congress, raising the prospect of greater efficiency through the consolidation of resources.

The main object of Muslim participation in mainstream politics is empowerment. Muslim public affairs groups have succeeded in making the stereotyping of Muslims a matter of public debate and in resolving many incidents of discrimination and defamation, and have demonstrated their ability to mobilize support for their concerns regarding the treatment of Muslims by government, the media and civic groups. To some Muslims, however, community public affairs groups seem to be overly engaged in soft "press-release politics" and "photo-op events," with little to show for all the funds they collect. Such sentiment is usually held by recent immigrants who lack experience in the workings of democratic political institutions. Segments of the African-American Muslim community share this view to some extent and call for a renewed focus on *da'wa* and local social activism. To the many Muslims who appreciate the difficult and time-consuming task of developing a grassroots consensus, however, the community's public affairs organizations have rendered a valuable public service by communicating their communities' concerns about domestic and foreign policy. They have also educated community members about their rights and helped them gain access to the political process.

These efforts, however modest their results, have shifted political attitudes among Muslims in favor of participation in American government and politics. The mainstream view recognizes non-Muslim citizenry groups as social entities that have rights and duties and that can be treated as allies on matters of common good. Muslim interaction with others has increasingly been characterized by an attitude of engagement that identifies negative actions and views with specific groups rather than with broad religious communities.

The growth of Muslim social and public affairs organizations must be seen as a Muslim reformation process in progress. Muslims across the country have recognized the value of organizations whose functions are specialized and defined in terms of services rendered to the community. The process has led to the emergence of leaders other than the traditional imams whose valuable contribution is increasingly associated with mosque activity. In other words, Muslims are internalizing the value of functional specialization in the very structure of their community, a process that characterized the evolution of modern Western institutions. This may not result in a separation between "church" and the Muslim public, since there is no church structure in the Islamic faith, but it is prompting a Muslim subculture that values the role of specialists and institutions in the various domains of life.

Several patterns of interdependence across religious, intellectual, and geographical boundaries have emerged in the formation and administration of Muslim community organizations. Muslims have raised funds to build community organizations from any number of legitimate sources, whether public funds or private Muslim international donors who have studied or done business in the United States. The challenge now is whether Muslim organizations can grow larger and more confident, with greater transparency and openness, and whether their detractors can appreciate that such growth reflects the fact that the United States is a much more pluralistic nation than it has ever been.

NOTES

1. Mohamed Nimer, *The North American Muslim Resource Guide: Muslim Community Life in the United States and Canada* (Routledge, 2002), p. 98.

2. Calculations based on 1998 Audited Financial Statements of Mercy-USA, available at http://www.leverlock.com/afs_1998.cfm.

3. Arnout was sentenced to 11 years and four months in prison and ordered to pay over $300,000 to refugee groups in restitution. AP, "Head of Charity Imprisoned for Diverting Funds to Militants," *Washington Times*, August 19, 2003.

4. Sarah Freeman, "Rabih Haddad Deported" (AP, July 15, 2003).

5. Paul Findley, *Silent No More: Confronting America's False Images of Islam* (Amana Publications, 2001). *See* in particular Findley's account of the Muslim participation in the 1996 and 2000 elections in chapters 10 and 12.

6. *See*, e.g., Council on American-Islamic Relations Research Center, "The Status of Muslim Civil Rights in the United States 2002: Stereotypes and Civil Liberties" (2002), http://www.cair-net.org/civilrights2002/civilrights2002.pdf.

7. Senator Larry Pressler of South Dakota was the author of a 1985 amendment to the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961 requiring a cut-off of U.S. economic aid and transfer of military equipment to Pakistan unless the President of the United States certifies that Pakistan does not possess a nuclear weapon and that continued U.S. aid will significantly decrease the probability of its developing one in the future. Section 620E(e) of the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961, P.L. 87-195; 22 U.S.C. 2375(e). The Act was amended again in 1995 to remove the prohibition on most forms of economic assistance to Pakistan in the absence of presidential certification, but not the prohibition on military assistance, although it permitted the one-time release of military equipment ordered earlier. P.L. 104-107, Section 559. Pressler was defeated in 1996 by Tim Johnson.

8. "A Joint Statement by the American Muslim Political Coordination Council and the Council of Presidents of Arab-American Organizations," press release issued by Muslim Political Affairs Council [member of AMPCC] (July 6, 1999), http://www.mpac.org/popa_article_display.aspx?ITEM=215.

9. Federal Election Commission Disclosure Reports, http://herndon1.sdrdc.com.

10. "CAIR-FL Statement at Joint Press Conference with FBI," press release issued by CAIR-Florida (March 27, 2003), http://www.cair-florida.org/ViewArticle.asp?Code=PR&ArticleID=77.

11. In October 2001, CAIR drafted a statement calling for an end to the bombing in Afghanistan, and at an emergency summit on October 20-21, 2001, fifteen

national Islamic organizations signed the statement. *See* Theresa Watanabe, "Bombing Carves a Rift Among Muslims in U.S.," *Los Angeles Times*, Oct. 20, 2001; "American Muslims call for peaceful efforts to end conflict in Afghanistan," press release issued by the Muslim American Society and the Islamic Circle of North America (Oct. 22, 2001), http://www.icna.org/wtc_pr.htm.

12. Philip Kurata, "U.S. Islamic Leaders Issue Fatwa on U.S. Muslim Soldiers Fighting Terrorists" (U.S. Department of State International Information Programs, Oct. 16, 2001), http://usinfo.state.gov/topical/pol/terror/01101611.htm. The statement was written by Taha Jabir Al-Alwani, President of the Fiqh Council of North America and President of the Graduate School of Islamic and Social Sciences, and Sheik Muhammad Al-Hanooti, a member of the Fiqh Council of North America.

13. "MPAC Statement on Brink of War," press release issued by the Muslim Political Affairs Council (March 19, 2003), http://www.mpac.org/popa_article_display.aspx?ITEM=459.

14. "Statement of Fall of Saadam [sic] Hussein/Post-War Iraq," press release issued by the Muslim Political Affairs Council (April 10, 2003), http://www.mpac.org/news_article_display.aspx?ITEM=498.

15. *See* transcript of Second Presidential Debate, Oct. 11, 2000, www.cnn.org. The bill Bush mentioned in the debate was the Secret Evidence Repeal Act of 2000 (S. 3139), proposed by Senator Spencer Abraham.

16. Kerri Houston, "Into The Mosque: The GOP Should Forge Friendship With U.S. Muslims*," Investor's Business Daily*, February 13, 2001. Also, according to an article in the *Middle East Times*, there are 60,000 eligible Muslim voters in Florida, and 91 percent of Muslims in Florida voted for Bush. "U.S. Muslims Might Have Elected Bush," *Middle East Times*, December 8, 2000, http://www.metimes.com/2K/issue2000-49/reg/us_ muslims_might.htm.

17. *See*, e.g., "Terrorist Financial Network Fact Sheet," press release issued by the White House Office of the Press Secretary (Nov. 7, 2001), http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2001/11/20011107-6.html; "Software Company Tries to Survive Terrorism Investigation," *USA Today*, Jan. 3, 2003, http://www.usatoday.com/tech/techinvestor/ techcorporatenews/2003-01-03-ptech_x.htm. According to a press release by AMC, the group's president attended one of the interviews in Dearborn, Michigan on December 6, 2001. "AMC President Attends FBI Interview as Observer," December 7, 2001, http://www.amconline.org/cgi-bin/release/viewnews.cgi?newsid1007751117,26144.

18. USA PATRIOT Act of 2001, P.L. 107-56.

19. *See*, e.g., "MPAC Conducts a Successful Monitors Training" (Jan. 7, 2003), http://www.mpac.org/home_article_display.aspx?ITEM=348, "MPAC's Guide for Monitoring INS Special Registration" (Jan. 8, 2003), http://www.mpac.org/home_article_display.aspx?ITEM=340, and "Report to White House on INS Special Registration Procedure" (Jan. 17, 2003),

http://www.mpac.org/home_article_display.aspx?ITEM=372, all press releases issued by the Muslim Public Affairs Council.

20. For a list of these cities, towns and counties, *see* "Chronology of Civil Liberties Resolutions and Ordinances," Bill of Rights Defense Committee (May 21, 2003), www.bordc.org/chronology.pdf.

21. "Churches Plan Interfaith Open Houses to Commemorate Sept. 11," press release issued by the National Council of Churches (Aug. 20, 2002), http://www/ncccusa.org/news/02news78.html.

OPEN HOUSE: VISIBILITY, KNOWLEDGE AND INTEGRATION OF MUSLIMS IN THE UNITED STATES

KATHLEEN M. MOORE

In earlier work I have argued that an emerging American Muslim identity demonstrates that Muslims are a major new group in American life and a significant part of an increasingly pluralistic society.[1] By tracing the historical shift in the consciousness of American Muslims over roughly one hundred years, precipitated by their interactions with the legal institutions of the dominant culture, I have tried to show the transformative impact of law on a particular minority community seeking toleration and cultural acceptance in the midst of the "cultural untidiness and flux that have always been present in American life."[2] My objectives have been both descriptive and normative. Examining the activities and views of a significant minority enables us to understand the ways in which Muslims contribute to and strengthen the fabric of American society. By viewing the political agency of Muslims in the United States, we can also map out the contours of cultural conflict in the United States today.

In this essay, I examine the factors that influence the integration and identity formation of Muslims and Muslim communal life in the stream of American society. While many such factors have been features of American politics since before the founding of the United States, it is important to place the current iteration of these factors in historical context. I begin with a brief review of integration politics, including a discussion of the concept of integration. Next, I describe how the factors that determine the shape of integration politics manifest themselves in contemporary Muslim public life. Finally, I offer some concluding thoughts about the possible consequences of the processes discussed here.

DEFINING INTEGRATION POLITICS

Immigration has become one of the most prominent political issues in advanced industrial nation-states and one of the most studied phenomena in the social sciences.[3] It is an area that is related to almost every aspect of the host society, as it challenges notions of citizenship, community, identity and rights, and potentially affects welfare, taxes, labor markets, education systems, housing markets, military service, social services and public health, to name but a few. While this paper is not about immigration or immigrants *per se*, the subject of Muslim life in the United States is intertwined with the complex issue of immigration. This is due in part to the well-documented history of immigrant Muslims in the United States.[4] Many early Muslim immigrants came from the Arab world and South Asia; more recently, their points of origin have ranged from Somalia to Bosnia and many nations in between. American Muslims represent a microcosm of the diverse global community of Islam. The association of the American Muslim community with immigration concerns is also due in large measure to (1) the prevailing prejudice in the American mainstream that marginalizes and discredits Islam as an irrational, violent, foreign, and undemocratic faith antithetical to the liberal self-perception of most Americans, and (2) the public's response to the threat of terrorism, believed to have its provenance in the hostilities of the Muslim world.[5]

The "host" society of the United States has long been apprehensive about welcoming Muslim migrants. Beginning long before September 11, 2001, anxiety over terrorism mitigated the willingness of the general public to accommodate Islam and to reconcile a concern for security with the longstanding American tradition of pluralism.[6] As journalists and other analysts continue to focus on violence in the Muslim world and fundamentalist sources of terrorism, the consequences for American Muslims have been devastating. American Muslims have been singled out for suspicion and accused of supporting so-called terrorist organizations such as Hamas through donations to humanitarian aid organizations that help hospitals and orphanages in the West Bank and Gaza.[7] Because of a prevailing, if inaccurate, view that Islam is a violent and anti-American creed, it is a faith that is not easily accommodated.[8] American Muslims suffer the double backlash of an increase in American restrictionist attitudes toward immigration in general, and the public's specific apprehensions about terrorism. Immigration to the United States, and Muslims' association with it, are complex matters that require multipart study.

Even the large group of Americans who are Muslims by conversion, whose "first" identity, chronologically speaking, was American (and only later became characterized as Islamic), became "oriental" and thus "other" in the eyes of the general public by virtue of their association with the alien creed of Islam. However, this elision notwithstanding, Muslim converts and their offspring enhance the history and profile of the American Muslim population. Historically, this community has been predominantly African-American because many African Americans have viewed Islam as offering an antidote to American racism. The complex host environment into which Muslims currently try to integrate includes conceptions about minority rights and institutional racism that have shaped the African-American experience.

Of late, Anglo, Hispanic, and Native American conversion also has been on the rise for reasons such as marriage, historical affiliation (in the case of Hispanics who look to the pre-1492 expulsion of Muslims from the Iberian Peninsula), and a shared reverence for nature. Muslims in the United States are far from homogeneous. Yet while these demographics characterize Islam as something *other* than an immigrant faith or culture, the crucible of American society tends to emulsify the unique and diverse derivations of Muslims in the United States. As Muslim Americans continue to work toward clarifying their collective goals and maintaining their identities in the American context, the mixed heritage of the population of Muslims in the United States should be recognized as a salient feature. The extent to which historical and political forces will allow this diversity to emerge, however, remains to be seen.

Many scholars of immigration and cultural assimilation in the United States have identified the key variables that explain social and political responses to immigration and to new immigrants in the United States and use them to determine both how and to what extent immigrants are integrated into American society. For instance, since the first Europeans set foot on the shores of North America, settlement has been a dynamic, contested and uneven process, often characterized by pressures toward Anglo conformity and a painstaking cultural assimilation involving the amputation or suppression of unacceptable "non-white" attributes. From the first scholars of American immigration history to its current leaders, this work has frequently presented responses to immigration and capacity for integration as aspects of the same process, rather than treating them as two separate questions. Yet, with some exceptions, these studies have presented integration as the endpoint of a process. Instead of studying how immigrants integrate *themselves*, most research focuses on how migrants *are integrated*, indicating the absence of political agency on the part of the outsider.

My purpose in this essay is to highlight both integration-as-process and the engagement of Muslim Americans as actors in defining recent Muslim-American history. In this short essay, I can only scratch the surface of Muslim agency or, in other words, of the means by which Muslims integrate themselves. I use "integration" to denote Muslim-American participation in the various spheres of mainstream society. Integration is broadly defined by levels of participation in society, which in turn indicate levels or degrees of political and socio-economic agency as well as a capacity for broad-based participation. Participation in various spheres (e.g., education, law, business, politics, housing markets, labor markets) at the same rates as non-Muslim citizens indicates high levels of integration.

Power and status, the subjects of much sociological literature on the integration of various "ethnic" groups, are highly relevant in integration politics. According to the classical definition offered by Max Weber, power is "the probability that an actor in a social relationship will be in a position to carry out his own will despite resistance, regardless of the basis on which this probability rests."[9] To the extent that non-Muslim citizens continue to exert power over the life-course of Muslim Americans, Muslim Americans regardless of origin (e.g., immigrant or American-born convert) are robbed of political agency, indicating a permanent state of non-integration. Specifically, through agency, Muslim Americans have sought to improve their economic and social conditions and increase their sense of security, safety, and well-being.

An important reason for this research is a desire to understand the role of Muslim agency in the transformation of Muslim life in the United States, and to define the particular American institutional constraints that restrict and/or channel (i.e., discipline) the activities of these actors. Another reason is the recognition that while not many non-Muslim Americans have realized that Muslims are now a part of "us," neither have many Muslims come to terms with the relationship between their faith and national identity.[10] The need to form a new identity in the United States raises many important questions. As Ingrid Mattson tells us, to be able to understand their role in the United States,

> Muslims need to define not only Islam but also America. Muslims need to place America in its proper theological and legal category so they can determine what kind of relationship is possible and desirable for them to have with this country. Whether or not integration initially seems like a desirable goal, this process will be affected by the immigrant's race, ethnicity, financial means, linguistic ability, and . . . what religious paradigms are available to them to interpret their particular experience with America.[11]

The cultural repertoires—including religious paradigms—available for Muslims to use in responding to the distinctive challenges of cultural hybridity are both contingent upon and productive of a certain kind of cultural information that makes some Muslims the people they are.[12]

Integration should not be viewed as an end or outcome, a policy objective or a socioeconomic good to be obtained; rather, it should be defined within the framework of the process itself. Even in communities that are relatively stable and well-established, boasting a long genealogy and a widespread consensus on notions of collective values and history, identity is in a constant state of flux. Pressures toward change—including such factors as population change, urbanization, economic fluctuations, high speed communication, computerization, wartime mobilizations and peacetime military conversions—leave their mark on local communities and highlight the importance of understanding communal definition and local conditions as variables that factor into the process of integration.

Finally, toleration and integration are not synonymous. At one point it made sense to study the ways in which Muslims in the United States sought to be tolerated and the degree to which the institutions of mainstream society were responsive to claims for recognition and tolerance. The focus was on analyzing the host culture and its social and political responses to the Muslim-American presence. However, contemporary Muslim Americans have moved beyond the struggle for recognition and tolerance to fashion the means of full participation in public life; in other words, they are now practitioners of integration. The premise of this contribution is that a political system comprises both law and institutions that govern social interaction *and* the actors who participate in the system.[13] Integration is conceptualized within the context of competition for scarce political, social, economic and cultural resources. Within this framework integration is understood as a question of justice, or of the just distribution of resources among competing actors with specific preferences.[14]

MEASURING INTEGRATION: LOCAL SYSTEMS

Integration varies significantly from community to community in part because local politics dictate the character of integration experiences, perhaps to a greater degree than national or international socioeconomic or political forces. Political scientist David Easton's political systems analysis helps identify the process as an elaborate feedback loop, with political inputs (actors' preferences) being filtered through local institutions and cultures.[15] The outputs are public policies that in turn shape social outcomes unique to the local system (e.g., integration of Muslims). These inputs and outcomes can be measured in terms of political activity and party affiliation of Muslim individuals, social movements and local nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), local government responsiveness, political and civil rights under liberal notions of citizenship, and cultural acceptance under communitarian expectations. The first two variables relate to Muslim participation on the input side by identifying the mechanisms of integration, while the latter three describe social outcomes.

Political Integration

Integration on the political scene often is measured in two ways: voting percentages and political party membership. These two variables present problems, however, including the fact that voting percentages are not tabulated by religious affiliation and must be supplemented by other more qualitative measures. The representation of Muslim concerns on the local political agenda, local participation in political parties, access to public services, and access to political representation are all variables that should be included in analyzing levels of political integration. These variables indicate the willingness and ability of Muslims to participate in local politics.

Other measures of political integration include the extent to which Muslims are represented in non-governmental and/or nonprofit local organizations, such as parent-teacher associations, chambers of commerce, professional associations, school boards, rotary clubs, interfaith councils, homeless shelters and boards of directors for youth and recreation centers, and the extent to which they receive NGO-provided services, such as public health and community services (e.g., career counseling and vocational training). Of course this sort of political and social activity cannot be restricted to the Muslim community alone. An activity that serves Muslim constituents in their separate religions and ethnic communities only, and not in the larger "host" society, has few integrative benefits. To be integrative, participation must occur both within and outside of religious communities.

Another salient feature of local systems is the presence of "anti-Muslim," or antagonistic, organizations and social movements in the vicinity. Signs of these include the incidence of hate crimes aimed at Muslims, the rhetoric of evangelical Christian groups targeting Muslims for conversion, the prevalence of anti-immigrant politics in general (as indicated in talk radio, newspaper editorials, voter initiatives, etc.), and the lack of openness of local communities to the construction of mosques, Islamic centers, and schools. Such behavior may be due to international and national events and policies that cannot be controlled at the local level. It is important to factor resistance to Muslim presence into the analysis of the level of political integration because it serves as a significant obstacle to integration and can consume a considerable amount of social capital in any community with strong traces of anti-Muslim antagonism. The converse is also true: the extent to which social movements and organizations that are supportive of Muslim integration are active affects the levels of Muslim integration. Groups such as the National Council of Churches and local interfaith councils help make the local environment more hospitable for faith and ethnic communities.

The extent to which Muslim Americans participate in the political systems of the United States can vary, from places where Muslims have difficulty expressing themselves within the rigid party structure to other places where representation of Muslim concerns on the local agenda is exchanged for political support. Ideally these measures can be used on a community-by-community basis to determine a scale of hospitality. For instance, a low score of hospitality could be given to a city or region with a strong presence of "anti-Muslim" organizations, while communities with informal networks, where public discussion on questions concerning integration can be heard, act as safe spaces in which local participation and input can flourish.[16]

Muslim Integration

Organizational activity on the part of Muslims increased several fold over the course of the twentieth century. While several ethnic organizations, such as the American Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee (ADC), the Association of Arab-American University Graduates (AAUG), and the National Association of Arab Americans (NAAA) included Arab Christians, there was also a substantial Muslim membership. The common purpose of these organizations has been to engage in political, social, cultural and educational activities in order to maintain a political presence in the United States. More recently, specifically Muslim organizations have been created in different parts of the country and have been spurred to experiment with political activity.[17] These include the Muslim Public Affairs Council (MPAC), founded in Southern California; the United Muslims of America (UMA) in Sacramento and Los Angeles, California; and the Islamic Society of North America Political Action Committee (ISNAPAC). The Council on American Islamic Relations (CAIR) was founded in and has its main headquarters in Washington, D.C., with several local offices throughout the United States. Sulayman Nyang has documented the evolution of institution-building efforts aimed at providing support services for American Muslim citizens and immigrants. At local levels, support services are intended to help immigrant Muslims adapt successfully to American life while maintaining their religious and cultural practices. Services focus on providing employment, disseminating information on the quality of neighborhoods and schools, and making referrals for housing and medical services.[18]

The anti-Muslim rhetoric that seemingly permeates American society at all levels, from the presidency to editorial columns and the concerns of ordinary citizens, has been of great concern to members of these organizations during the last decade or more.[19] Since the fall of the Soviet empire as the primary security threat to the United States, a discernible shift has been under way to identify the Muslim world as the most credible enemy on the horizon. As Yvonne Haddad points out, "Muslims living in North America are weary of being scapegoated for the activities of others overseas just as they resent the maligning of Islam in the American public forum."[20] American Muslims have felt particularly besieged since the terrorist strikes of September 11. The guilty plea and sentencing of hate crimes suspect Charles D. Franklin, who drove his pick-up truck into the building of a Florida Islamic center and claimed he was doing it to avenge September 11, was an example of effective law enforcement for the Muslim community but also represented just the tip of a very ominous iceberg.[21] Feelings about terrorism run deep, and actions taken in retribution are not simply rare occurrences for the Muslim and Arab communities that are affected.

Open Houses

Political activity on the part of Muslim Americans since September 11 has run two courses, the first of which is the path of open houses. In the immediate aftermath of the terrorist strikes, organizations such as CAIR urged Muslim communities to hold open houses in mosques and Islamic centers, so as to bring people of other faiths into their neighborhoods. The intention was to build bridges within the local environment and thereby promote a better understanding of Islam and Muslims. CAIR posted guidelines on its web site for Muslims to follow when planning open houses. The guidelines state that, because of recent events, mosque authorities should request proper security for the open house from local law enforcement. The guidelines provide suggestions such as informing the members of the faith community of the benefits of a positive neighborhood image; inviting the city mayor, the chief of police, and members of the city council; avoiding embarrassment by informing guests about mosque etiquette before they arrive; cleaning the mosque and making sure the bathrooms are spotless; providing refreshments; and furnishing "sisters" to be sure female guests are comfortable.[22] This type of response to the national crisis mobilized local communities to counteract the fallout of events at Ground Zero.

Not only did the negative media portrayal of Islam and Muslims serve as a catalyst in forging an important Islamic identity before September 11, but since the tragic events of that day the individuals and groups that perceive themselves to be the target of misinformation and stereotyping have been urged to participate in efforts to rectify false accusations. The "open house" model reflects a revitalization of faith in the face of adversity, and is a "new" means of combating the damaging reactions that were anticipated. This avenue will slowly create a more cohesive community as the community rallies to put on a common face, utilizing modern organizational techniques to promote engagement with its non-Muslim surroundings while affirming adherence to certain details of the practice of the faith (e.g., informing guests about mosque etiquette, keeping men and women separate, answering questions about prayer, etc.).

The final suggestion on the list of guidelines for conducting open houses is to "PRAY that your efforts will open the hearts of your guests." This suggests a relatively passive model of integration because it indicates a limited engagement with local surroundings. It encourages Muslims to take a conservative approach in their pursuit of political and social ends, advice that may have been prudent given the national and local conditions existing in the aftermath of the incidence of terrorism on such an unprecedented scale. This is not to say that this was the only approach advocated by CAIR, which, before and after September 11, has been active in confronting instances of employment discrimination against Muslim women and men who want to observe Islamic requirements such as personal piety and dietary restrictions. Certainly, the open houses concept is not static. While it is designed to elevate the faith community's visibility and promote knowledge, however, the "open house" model promises only moderate progress along the path of integration.

Constructive Engagement

Another means of responding to the events of September 11 that has produced more immediate results, and has at the same time fostered a sense of identity based on past victimization and current threats, is "constructive engagement." This approach focuses on direct lobbying. MPAC, for example, has orchestrated efforts to create community-based linkages between Muslims and law enforcement officials in order to project an image of Muslims as law-abiding, peaceful American citizens who are serious about their social obligations. During times of "orange alert," MPAC has served as a liaison with local police departments and FBI offices to create an environment of openness and cooperation. Meeting with FBI Director Robert Mueller on May 28, 2003, MPAC founder Salam al-Maryati presented a ten-point plan to enhance the "partnership" between American Muslim organizations and law enforcement personnel.[23] The purpose of the partnership is to strengthen efforts against terrorism. The concept behind the plan is proactive, and should dispel the belief that Muslims collectively represent a threat to American security. The onus is then placed on the intelligence agency to say why it would not embrace the reasonable suggestions put forth by the very community often targeted for investigation.

The first recommendation of the ten-point plan is for the FBI to set up community-based task forces working with federal and local law enforcement officials to discuss measures for protecting the nation. Another is to create forums to consider how members of religious and ethnic communities can enhance dialogue with the FBI and homeland security agencies in local areas. A third is to work with schools to educate students about White House efforts to combat terrorism; a fourth is to discourage vigilantism by providing citizens with clear suggestions about how to report suspicious behavior.[24] These points represent "constructive engagement" with the very agency that might be tempted to become overzealous in its mission to protect the safety of American citizens, thereby possibly abusing the rights and liberties of one part of the citizenry (namely, Muslims) in the process.

The U.S. Senate considered a resolution in 2003 condemning bigotry and violence against Muslim Americans, Arab Americans, South Asian Americans, and Sikh Americans, all groups that have been targeted for hate crimes since the terrorist attacks of September 11. The resolution explicitly notes that these communities are peaceful and law-abiding, and that thousands of individuals from these communities serve in law enforcement and the military, thereby demonstrating their loyalties to the United States.[25]

CONCLUSION

The transition of Muslims in the United States from a group seeking tolerance to a bold and proactive community determined to define its own place in the nation has not been an easy one. There is still no consensus about the dynamics or wisdom of engagement with the mainstream, non-Muslim society. As Muslims have become more involved in the American political process, the community itself has changed. Today's leaders are Muslims who arrived after the liberalization of immigration laws in 1965, or second generation Muslim Americans, or at least "a generation and one half" (i.e., born overseas but educated in American primary, secondary and post-secondary schools).[26] Significantly, they have been reared in the post-civil rights environment of the United States, in which the proclaimed values of equality and justice have become at least "law on the books," if not "law in action." The discrepancies between these proclaimed values and actual experiences in their schools, courts, housing markets, and work places have catalyzed many of today's Muslim leaders to struggle for a more just distribution of political, social, economic and cultural resources.

The apparent gap between promise and reality has led Muslim Americans to join in the political competition and to seek positive social outcomes for their preferences. This has inevitably resulted in the evolution of the nature and identity of the Muslim-American community as a whole. Concerns no longer remain focused on interpreting the past and the present in accordance with scripture and prescribing the normative Islamic lifestyle, although this does remain a central concern for some Muslims. Instead, for most, the framework has been broadened to include a functional understanding of American society, and as Muslims interact with the surrounding political systems, they become more attentive to the authoritative institutions within them. The institutional setting has had a transformative impact. The way in which Muslim identity continues to flourish while being integrated into the mainstream of American society constitutes a story that will warrant sustained attention.

NOTES

1. Kathleen M. Moore, *Al-Mughtaribun: American Law and the Transformation of Muslim Life in the United States* (State University of New York Press, 1995).

2. Kenneth L. Karst, "Does Integration Have a Future?" in Austin Sarat and Thomas R. Kearns, eds., *Cultural Pluralism, Identity Politics, and the Law* (University of Michigan Press, 1999), p. 140.

3. Harlan Koff, "Let's Talk: Dialogue Across Disciplines on Immigration and Integration Issues," Center for Comparative Immigration Studies Working Papers (University of California-San Diego, 2002), available at http://repositories.cdlib.org/ccis/papers/wkrg60.

4. Many date the first Muslim migration to the United States from the middle to late nineteenth century (*see* Moore, *Al-Mughtaribu*) despite the fact that some scholars currently argue that Muslims sailed from Spain and Northwestern Africa to both South and North America and were even crew members of Christopher Columbus' expedition. *See* Jane I. Smith, *Islam in America* (Columbia University Press, 1999).

5. Popular wisdom assumes that post-September 11 American attitudes favoring immigration restriction are logically responsive to the fact that the alleged hijackers

who perpetrated the heinous crimes of September 11 were non-citizens. However, this author conducted survey research in August 2002 that indicates that the threat of future terrorist attacks has no significant bearing on Americans' attitudes toward immigration policy. Rather, the usual economic concerns and distrust of Asians and Hispanics (and to a lesser extent, Arabs and Muslims) are determinants of Americans' attitudes toward immigration. *See* Kathleen M. Moore and Chase H. Harrison, "War on Diversity? American Attitudes on Immigration Post 9/11" (forthcoming; originally presented as a paper at the 2003 Annual Meeting of the Law and Society Association, June 5 – 8, 2003, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania). S*ee also* Kathleen M. Moore, "'United We Stand': American Attitudes toward (Muslim) Immigration Post-September 11th," 92 *The Muslim World* (Spring 2002), pp. 39 – 57.

6. *See* Kathleen M. Moore and Stephen R. Pelletier, "Weaving New Fabric: The Challenge of Immigration for Muslim-Christian Relations," 10 *Islam and Christian-Muslim Relations* (1999), pp. 177 – 196.

7. Aminah Beverly McCloud, "Islam in America: The Mosaic" in Yvonne Haddad, Jane Smith and John Esposito, eds., *Religion and Immigration: Christian, Jewish and Muslim Experiences in the United States* (AltaMira Press, 2003), p. 168.

8. Moore, *Al-Mughtaribun*, op. cit., p. xi.

9. Max Weber, *Economy and Society: an Outline of Interpretive Sociology* (ed. Guenther Roth and Claus Wittich) (University of California Press, 1978), p. 53.

10. *See* Kathleen M. Moore, "A Part of U.S. or Apart from U.S.? Post-September 11th Attitudes toward Muslims and Civil Liberties," 32 *Middle East Report (MERIP)* (Fall 2002), pp. 32 – 35; Yvonne Haddad and John Esposito, eds., *Muslims on the Americanization Path?* (Oxford University Press, 2000).

11. Ingrid Mattson, "How Muslims Use Islamic Paradigms to Define America" in Haddad et al., *Religion and Immigration*, op. cit., p. 201.

12. J. M. Balkin argues that we are all "the bearers of this cultural information; indeed, we are constituted by it. And its constitution of us is our constitution as historical beings. It is the source of our historical existence." J. M. Balkin, *Cultural Software: A Theory of Ideology* (Yale University Press, 1998), p. ix.

13. Institutions are understood to have formal and informal rules that determine how collective decisions are made; they channel the ways in which things get done.

14. This is in line with Harold Lasswell's classic definition of politics of "who gets what, when and how," and politics-as-distribution. See Lasswell, *Politics: Who Gets What When and How* (McGraw-Hill, 1936), and a brief discussion of it in Koff, "Let's Talk," op. cit.

15. David Easton, *A Systems Analysis of Political Life* (Wiley, 1965).

16. For information about the presence of hate groups in various communities and regions in the United States, see the web site of the Southern Poverty Law Center, http://www.tolerance.org.

17. Yvonne Yazbeck Haddad, "Make Room for the Muslims?" in Walter H. Conser, Jr. and Sumner B. Twiss, eds., *Religious Diversity and American Religious*

History: Studies in Traditions and Cultures (University of Georgia Press, 1997), p. 227.

18. Sulayman Nyang, *Islam in the United States of America* (ABC International Group, Inc., 1999*). See also* discussion of social services in Fariyal Ross-Sheriff, "Immigrant Muslim Women in the United States: Adaptation to American Society," 2 *Journal of Social Work Research* (2001), pp. 283 – 294.

19. Op. cit., p. 288.

20. Op. cit.

21. The Associated Press State & Local Wire, "Tallahassee man pleaded guilty to driving truck into mosque," November 8, 2002.

22. Council on American Islamic Relations, "Mosques Urged to Hold Open Houses," action alert, Sept. 28, 2001, http://www.cair-net.org/downloads/aa311openhouse1.pdf.

23. Muslim Public Affairs Council, "MPAC Offers Ten Tips to Enhance Partnership Against Terrorism," press release, May 28, 2003, http://www.mpac.org/home_article_display.aspx?ITEM=554 .

24. In 2003 the FBI in Illinois had to issue an apology to the six Muslims detained on the basis of a "tip" from a woman who was reacting in anger over a personal quarrel.

25. Sen. Res. 133, 108th Cong. 1st sess. (passed by the Senate on May 22, 2003), sponsored by Senator Durbin of Illinois and 13 cosponsors; see also the FBI Hate Crimes Statistics Report for 2001, available at http://www.fbi.gov/ucr/01hate.pdf, indicating a 1,600 percent increase between 2000 and 2001 in the number of bias-motivated crimes against Muslims and Islam. Presumably the increase is related to the terrorist attacks of Sept. 11. An anti-hate resolution was also introduced in the House of Representatives in 2003 (H. Res. 234) but as of this writing had not been scheduled for a vote.

26. Muslims now engaged in organizing advocacy groups, as well as those encouraged to file formal complaints of religious discrimination, tend to be young, often native-born Muslim Americans whose parents arrived in the United States from the late 1960s or thereafter. While not entirely persuaded by the "myth of rights," these Muslims are more demanding of the institutions of a democratic government than their parents' generation was. Rights are seen as more than mere abstractions. They are embedded within the social practices and relationships of the contemporary generation. Groups such as AMC, MPAC and CAIR either counteract or elaborate upon public representations of Islam and Muslims in order to project an identity politics beyond the reactive mode. *See* Kathleen M. Moore, "Representations of Islam in the Language of the Law: Some Recent Cases," in Yvonne Y. Haddad, ed., *Muslims in the West: From Sojourners to Citizens* (Oxford University Press, 2002).

A significant connection between key changes in demographics among Muslim communities in the United States and higher levels of political integration has produced a new American Muslim identity. With respect to "first generation" immigrants, earlier research has shown that newcomers' experiences prior to entering the

United States have profound effects on their levels of integration (Ross-Sheriff, op. cit.). Education in countries of origin prior to migration is one of the most significant predictors of labor force participation and long-term self-sufficiency once in the United States. Thus, Muslin "first generation" immigrants arriving after 1965, who tended to have attained higher levels of education than their predecessors, are more likely to be able to enter the labor market.

A CHALLENGING INTELLECTUAL HERITAGE: A LOOK AT THE SOCIAL AND POLITICAL SPACE OF AFRICAN-AMERICAN MUSLIMS

Aminah Beverly McCloud

African-American Muslims' responses to and participation in American social and political space are affected by a challenging intellectual heritage with a topography that is a product of their unique and peculiar life experiences. The history of African Americans is one of being treated first as non-humans, then as three-fifth human beings, next as humans but not citizens, then as citizens but without rights, and finally as citizens who possessed some rights but were stigmatized. African Americans' political history has been characterized by persistent dependencies and protest. How African-American Muslims, as individuals, relate to their intellectual and cultural heritage as African Americans determines a great deal about how they understand themselves as Muslims.

The African-American intellectual heritage, like that of other groups, is a composite of cultural mores and intellectual products. In *Drylongso*, John Langston Gwaltney defines some of the contours of "core black culture" as the notion of sacrifice for kin, the belief in the natural sequence of cause and effect, a classical restricted notion of the possible, esteem for the deed rather than the wish, and a wit that knows that "everybody talking 'bout Heaven ain't going there." He describes one striking feature:

> People of every conceivable human color, creed, political persuasion, income and level of education share the cramped confines of black towns. It is not regarded as particularly noteworthy when members of one family subscribe to different versions of Christianity and Islam. "I don't condemn anyone as long as they don't bother me. You never know what you may come to." This spontaneous response to a television apology for lesbianism was offered by a strictly heterosexual, Baptist lady whose delightful seven-year old has unimpeded access to the African Methodist Episcopal knees of her favorite paternal uncle and the Muslim lap of her paternal grandfather. [1]

The intellectual products of the African-American cultural heritage began with works such as Phyllis Wheatley's 1773 book of poems and, in the 1850s, "the only known novel by a female African-American slave," Hannah Craft. The earliest known piece of African-American Arabic writing was by Omar Ibn Said, who wrote a slave narrative in 1831. While African Americans produced thousands of pamphlets in the nineteenth century, distribution was largely local. Wide distribution began in the twentieth century with a proliferation of newspapers and other publications. The *Pittsburgh Courier*, for example, serialized George Schuyler's "Ethiopia Stories" during the 1930s. These stories became a part of popular culture with their portrayal of a powerful black nation setting out to defeat fascism. Schuyler's *Black Empire*, also serialized, presented stories of "black genius against the world" and "a great new civilization in modern Africa" as an act of creative protest. Along with these stories, several other Negro newspapers and magazines, such as the New York-based *The Messenger* (1917 – 1928) and *Challenge* (1920s and 1930s), provided analyses of the social and political circumstances of black Americans.[2] Formed in protest over a life of oppression but not bound by its constraints, the black intellectual heritage contains both a horrifying picture of the black reality and a seemingly endless discussion of black potential in every area of human endeavor.

Unlike South Africa, which first engaged the native population on its own land as an enemy and then subjugated, separated, and regulated it, the United States first committed genocide on the native American inhabitants. It then kidnapped foreign peoples, enslaved them, kept intimate brutal control over their bodies, and relegated them to an existence as a permanent and tightly regulated subculture. The men and women of the subculture have nonetheless insistently pursued the American dream, with its opportunities for education, wealth, security, and a taste of whiteness. Politics and social understandings in African-American communities have revolved around attempts to obtain a fair share or at least a share.

There is a symbiotic relationship between African-American Muslims and other African Americans, on the one hand, and between both of those groups and European Americans on the other. African Americans, as a minority, are forced to depend for their well-being on the largesse of the majority white population. African-American Muslims, though tangentially connected to the larger Muslim world, are still dependent on the larger American public, and are additionally dependent on the Muslim world for Islamic knowledge. Since the beginning of the twentieth century, the African-American Muslim presence has provided an alternative "way of being" for many African Americans. It is important to remember that the twenty-first century is the first one in the history of the Western hemisphere in which the majority of people of African descent have not been born in slavery. Some African-American Muslims and other African Americans have sought to alter their life experiences by forcing inclusion, using various means to gain entry into the American system. Others have formed segregated communities in protest against this particular system of apartheid. The ways in which African-American Muslims draw on the African-American intellectual heritage and other intellectual traditions, especially Islam, have social and political consequences within the general black community, that community's Islamic elements, and the immigrant Muslim community.

Many aspects of the intellectual heritage of the African-American community have played critical roles in shaping the parameters of black politics and social life, especially among African-American Muslims. That heritage and its effects fall roughly into five categories, which admittedly are not static and do not encompass all the existing permutations:

1) The politics of physical slavery, its immediate aftermath, and Islamic retentions
2) Esoteric knowledge
3) Re-emergent Islamic knowledge
4) Politics of demand for civil rights
5) Interactions with immigrant Islam

The political is defined here, broadly, as the process of deciding who gets what, when, where, and how. Those in power have the ability to permit, change, or prevent inclusion in the political process. Inclusion can range from acquiring knowledge, both popular and hidden, to voting in a presidential election.

THE POLITICS OF SLAVERY AND ISLAMIC RETENTION

Slave writings are still being discovered 150 years after the signing of the Emancipation Proclamation. Information about the variety of slave cultures is far from complete, and information about Muslim slaves is even less so. Many Christian historians, both black and white, claim there were no Muslim slaves, though a number of documents clearly attest to a Muslim presence and researchers have been able to begin the monumental task of tracing the history of Muslim slaves.[3] We now know that a significant number of the West Africans forced to American shores were Muslims. Among them were a considerable number of learned men—teachers, imams, and others of high status.[4] They created Qur'an schools (presumably learning circles) for instruction in religion and, presumably, the Arabic language.[5] As men of letters, they communicated their plight in writing to public officials and to those in their homelands, in hopes of securing freedom. They also wrote communications for illiterate slave masters.

The politics of survival for these Muslim slaves was complex. As men of letters and of an established world religion, they were acquainted with Christianity as explained by the Qur'an. They also knew slavery as it was practiced in various African regions. Their writings indicate that they were nevertheless puzzled by American chattel slavery, since it was not indentured servitude, not the spoils of war, nor any recognizable temporary economic enterprise.

In the 1930s, the federal government assigned a number of interviewers in the Works Projects Administration to collect stories about slaves from their descendants. Some interviewees discussed the Islamic practices of their grandparents.[6] While their recollections reveal distortions in language and practice, they also provide evidence of retention, though not a clear continuation, of the religion. Knowledge of this information has circulated in the black community since the beginning of the twentieth century in pamphlets, through word of mouth, and through secret organizations.

ESOTERIC KNOWLEDGE

The brutality and denigration of blacks that has existed throughout American history created the need for "other" knowledge. This knowledge often described the origins of the world, the reasons for white American chattel slavery and unrelenting racism, and descriptions of special knowledge—their "real purpose in life"—that has been kept by a few blacks. While secret and often marginalized, this wisdom has been "something white folks can not take away" from the black community. The Prince Hall Lodges of "black masonry" claim to have a history dating back to the American Revolution, under names such as the Chapter of the Eastern Star and Knights of the Invisible Colored Kingdom. Legend has it that they are connected by initiation ceremonies to Mecca, the Ottoman Sultan, the Bavarian Illuminati, and the Bektashi Sufi Order.[7] Much of the wisdom from these groups has been disseminated to the African-American community by their members and through their pamphlets. Though mystical knowledge is often considered suspect, "it is nonetheless essential if one is to properly understand the complex social, political, and intellectual forces contributing to the extraordinary rise of modern Islamic conversion."[8]

Resistance to the psychological and physical horrors of slavery and, later, to segregation, did not only take the form of escape to the North or refusal to work. Knowledge of different world orders and of connections with the rest of the world, promoted by these organizations, was important in helping African Americans sustain a sense of humanity. Networks of Masonic lodges existed from New York to Georgia and Louisiana. Many if not all members rebelled against slavery, resisted segregation and rejected Christianity, although the ideas of freemasonry later entered both the black churches and nascent Islamic groups.

Legends describing an alternative ancient history for Africans enslaved in the United States abounded in many marginalized groups. One such history included *Wonderful Ethiopians of the Ancient Cushite Empire* by Drusilla Dunjee Houston, in which she questioned the history of Arabia as generally recounted. Ms. Houston wrote several other non-published works such as *Origin of Civilization* and *Origins of Aryans*.[9] These accounts assert that black settlements in ancient Yemen were responsible for the civilizations of the Arab peninsula. The most important aspects of these alternative histories are the notions of descent they contain, which were crucial for people without a discernible identity except the color of their skin, and the knowledge they present of a past unconnected to slavery which continues to influence many African Americans.

Egyptology also helps counteract the denigration of African Americans by spreading awareness of the global community of African people. Egyptologists, many of whom trace their discipline to the beginning of the nineteenth century and to the works of Pauline Hopkins and Arthur Schomburg, have taken on the task of providing an accurate view of world history.[10] W.E.B. Dubois and Malcolm X were among the most widely known proponents of the history; others included Cheikh Anta Diop and Yosef ben Jochannan.[11] Although Egyptology and the study of the various Kemetic groups focus primarily on black contributions to civilization, they also build upon scientific evidence demonstrating that modern humanity originated in Africa and that the first inhabitants of Asia must have been black. The histories involved cover the Sumerian civilization of early Iraq, the Indus Valley civilization and the civilization of Champa (modern day Vietnam, part of which was a Muslim kingdom) in Southeast Asia.[12] As noted previously, alternative knowledge of Western domination has been an important element of sustenance for the black community. The nascent African-American Muslim communities in the twentieth century drew upon all these histories, including information from Islamic retentions, as well as their awareness of the American political landscape, when they formulated their Islamic presence.

RE-EMERGENT ISLAMIC COMMUNITIES

The term re-emergent may be problematic, but it does connect a great deal of intellectual work with concrete communities in the twentieth century. Two communities in particular, the Moorish Science Temple and the Nation of Islam, did not emerge in an intellectual vacuum. They were surrounded by a vibrant black community characterized both by its responses to the slavery of share-cropping and by its budding intellectualism in the Harlem Renaissance and Negro newspapers and magazines. Both communities were aware of the Qur'an, the Prophet Muhammad, Arabia, earlier black civilizations, Masonry, and retentions from slavery, and they utilized this information in shaping their Islamic identity.

Noble Drew Ali identified Morocco as the site of the heritage of most Americans of African descent and named his community the Moorish Science Temple.[13] Moor is one synonym for Muslim, and it later become a synonym for Muslims with dark skin. By using the word, Noble Drew Ali established a connection with a Muslim civilization with a unique intellectual heritage. The history of the Maghrib (identified by the Moorish Science Temple as Morocco) included the advance of Islam into the Iberian Peninsula. This era was a significant one for intellectual achievement. The world's first free libraries were established in Cordova during a time of successful Muslim rule over a religiously diverse community that included Christians, Muslims and Jews. The importance of the Moors did not end with their presence in Spain but lives on in their influence on classical European literature. Works such as *La Chanson de Roland*, *The Merchant of Venice*, and *Don Quixote* attest to the superiority of the Moor over those in the North.

One piece of evidence supporting the claims made by Noble Drew Ali is the fact that Morocco was indeed a site of holding pens during the Atlantic slave trade. Noble Drew Ali further advanced black political thought by advocating both American patriotism and the establishment of a direct connection to the Moors and the existence of a glorious empire. The Moorish Science Temple communities were made up of activists who emphasized civic activity and self-help, both of which are essential elements of American politics and society. This community expressed its heritage in its dress: red Moroccan fezzes for men and turbans for women, both generally accompanied by modest clothing. Moors adhered to Islamic dietary rules barring pork and alcohol but also syncretized Islamic practice with esoteric knowledge to form distinctly American Moorish practices.

Although it did not emerge until later, the Honorable Elijah Muhammad's Nation of Islam became a better known community and eclipsed the Moorish Science Temple in membership. The Honorable Elijah Muhammad offered a connection to a past that went beyond nameable ancestors to an alternative creation myth: a story of black people that could be owned by the community. Mythology has been both necessary and powerful in the development of African-American philosophical thought. Wole Soyinka has suggested the need of every culture for its own cosmic truths:

> In Asian and European antiquity, therefore, men did, like the African, exist within a cosmic totality, did possess a consciousness in which his own earth being, his gravity-bound apprehension of self, was inseparable from the entire cosmic phenomenon. (For let it always be recalled that myths arise from man's attempt to externalize and communicate his inner intuitions.)[14]

The contribution of the Nation of Islam's philosophical notions to black thought is best understood within this larger context of myths. Part of the myth of creation has become known as the Yakub story, summarized below.

In the story, the island of Pamos is home to the planet's first inhabitants, who are black. The community enjoys governance, education, and civic activities. Scientists occupy the top of the intellectual hierarchy and pursue knowledge that will advance technology, ease living, and provide security. Yakub, a precocious child, is born with a talent for science and quickly masters the available scientific knowledge. His interest lies in biogenetics/gene mutation, focusing on manipulation of alleles to create a mutant (non-black) recessive gene pool and, thus, a new group of people. He refuses to reconsider the potentially lethal outcomes of his experiments. The elders are at a loss as to how to rein him in.

In the new race Yakub creates from mutated genes, the lightening of the new creatures' color is accompanied by an exponentially significant decrease in preferred psychological traits such as non-violence and self-control. The punitive response of the community to the rampages of Yakub's creation eventually causes a breach. In a carefully constructed truce in which the scientists give Yakub knowledge about how to make humans more than animals, Yakub and his mutated creatures agree to leave the island. They wander and eventually reach the caves of Europe. The creatures become the European race, characterized by a tendency toward imperialism and the brutal treatment of people of color.

There are at least two universal lessons in the myth of Yakub. One is that insular societies can reach the pinnacle of technological, scientific and military achievement, but that in order to maintain civil order and coherence and retard greed and avarice, they must apply ethical norms and discipline even to their most gifted members. Another lesson teaches that while the talents of gifted children should indeed be nurtured, there must simultaneously be an early focus on discipline because later punitive measures will have little or no effect.

Unfortunately, the brilliance of the story has been reduced to the last part and to race-baiting.[15] For the Nation of Islam, however, this creation story depicted an ideal state toward which community members could strive. The end of the story implies that white people will rule only for a time, and if black people actively resist efforts to destroy their minds and bodies, they can return to the ideal state of self-sufficiency and become contributors to the world. Toward that end, the Nation of Islam developed an active self-help program. It ran, and continues to run, one of the most successful drug rehabilitation programs in the United States. Its members ensure their good health by consuming only one meal a day and eschewing pork and alcohol. Family is of central importance, as is austerity in the midst of a consumer society. When the Nation of Islam's efforts at self-sustaining economic life created the towns of Tulsa, Oklahoma and Rosewood, Florida in the early twentieth century, white Americans demonstrated their anger at this show of independence by burning both towns down. The Nation of Islam survived by diversifying its economic ventures and spreading them over the entire United States. Most members worked for the community, thereby avoiding the trap of dependency that, as noted earlier, has been part of black political and social history. The story of the Nation of Islam is one of sustained resistance to economic, intellectual and spiritual dependence.

This short overview necessarily omits several Islamic communities that preceded or existed simultaneously with the Nation of Islam. One other voice, however, that of Shayk Daoud Faisal, must be mentioned as part of the legacy of contributors to the African-American Muslim intellectual heritage. His community is an example of the many early black Sunni Muslim communities that attempted to disconnect from the African-American intellectual tradition. Even while contributing to that tradition, the community attempted to transcend blackness and become "just Muslim." Its engagement of Islam was predicated on the abdication of black nationalism. The psychological ramifications were numerous. Just as the Nation of Islam used "X" as a surname to indicate its rejection of former slave masters, those who embraced mainstream Islam adopted Arabic names either wholly or partially. Their dress first mimicked Arab dress and, later, West African or South Asian dress. Many members of the black Sunni communities limited their interaction with other black communities and leveled vicious verbal and, occasionally, physical assaults against those in nationalist Islamic communities. It was as though the weariness resulting from prolonged oppression forced a need to be "just Muslim," or to pass for a moment as someone else—a foreigner to the black heritage.

Communities organized around a fragile understanding of mainstream Islam did not escape or even resist their new dependency on immigrant

Muslims' interpretations. Immigrant Muslims presented themselves as the owners of Islam, an ownership that African-American Muslims could only strive for and hope to attain in the distant future. In many of these communities, members were ahistorical: they could not own the heritage of another culture and were separated from their own. The Moorish Science Temple and the Nation of Islam focus on a clean body and on anchoring the mind in the positive and empowering embrace of a glorious black past, rather than on gaining Islamic knowledge. Mainstream black Sunni communities, on the other hand, focus on erasing as much of the black heritage as possible while embracing a different cognitive and cultural base.

THE POLITICS OF THE CIVIL RIGHTS MOVEMENT.

Many Americans have been taught to equate the civil rights movement, Martin Luther King, and white remorse at wrongdoing with the 1960s. Although there was much activity aimed at eliminating segregation in American society during that decade, protest existed long before. It was articulated earlier, for example, in the work of W.E.B. Dubois. In 1920, DuBois published his often neglected *Darkwater: Voices from Within the Veil*.[16] That this text is largely unknown when compared with his well-known and celebrated *Souls of Black Folk*s, and is rarely if ever cited, says volumes about the efforts to shape DuBois' legacy.[17] DuBois' "Souls of White Folks" is a biting yet eloquent description of the souls of American white folks:

> Of them I am singularly clairvoyant. I see in them and through them. I view them from unusual points of vantage… rather I see these souls undressed and from the back and side. I know their thoughts and they know that I know. They deny my right to live and be and call me misbirth![18]

DuBois, the sociologist and historian, locates one challenge in "personal whiteness":

> The discovery of personal whiteness among the world's peoples is a very modern thing—a nineteenth and twentieth century matter

> indeed. The ancient world would have laughed at such a distinction. This assumption that of all the hues of God whiteness alone is inherently and obviously better than brownness or tan leads to curious acts…But what on earth is whiteness that one should so desire it? Then always, somehow, some way, silently but clearly, I am given to understand that whiteness is the ownership of the earth forever and ever, Amen! How easy, then, by emphasis and omission to make children believe that every great soul the world ever saw was a white man's soul; that every great thought the world ever knew was a white man's thought; that every great deed the world ever did was a white man's deed; that every great dream the world ever sang was a white man's dream.[19]

A portion of the black community began to demand access to some of the opportunity and status conferred by "personal whiteness," an access newly defined by DuBois as a part of the American Dream. This aspiration formed unconsciously in many African Americans, regardless of religious tradition, perhaps as a manifestation of the angst of living as black in the United States. Some individuals ignored the black intellectual heritage and aimed only at integration into white society or into an imagined cultureless Islam, even though assimilation was and is not possible for the masses of African Americans, and forced racial co-mingling results in resentment and failure. Movements built from a position of power, however, draw nourishment from the opposition as long as they possess a plan for the future. The first condition describes the Civil Rights movement and the second was at the core of the Black Power movement, which also failed. African-American Muslims, as well as other blacks, were raised in one or the other of these traditions.

The Civil Rights/Black Power era yielded limited integration for a select few and a set of statutes that created different dependencies. Martin Luther King and El-Hajj Malik El-Shabazz became symbols of the two opposing sides during the remainder of the twentieth century, much as DuBois and Booker T. Washington had been in the first half of the century. "Good Negroes" were those blacks who were willing to forgive past injustices and opt for some access to white circles of power rather than freedom. "Negroes" like Malcolm X, who internalized the black intellectual heritage, were problematic for those who sought only a piece of "personal whiteness." Most African-American Muslims straddled the fence. Many became Muslims because they discovered truths in the Qur'an that their experiences told them were real; some became Muslims to escape the angst of the continuing drama of apartheid; others turned to Islam as a way to reclaim their heritage; and still others sought a new or at least a different "way of being in the world" by creating new racially neutral affiliations. Protest at some level formed the core of the transformation.

African Americans also learned about communism, socialism and colonialism from black writers, activists, musicians and performers. Many of these talented black people had to leave the United States in order to realize their gifts. The more the United States went to war "to spread democracy" or "to ensure human rights," the angrier and more humiliated many black Americans became. The accomplishments of black artists, however, provided different lenses through which to view American apartheid. One path to freedom for African Americans is to remove themselves physically from the reach of European Americans; another is to engage in a quest for Qur'anic literacy and mastery of the Arabic language.

Their Islamic beliefs and practices have not generally separated African-American Muslims from the larger black community. The Nation of Islam, for example, maintains contact with other black religious and political leaders and collaborates with them in community activities. It also embraces larger black Sunni Muslim and immigrant Muslim communities. Such African-American Muslim communities' ownership of Islamic beliefs and practices, even as they continue to develop and gain knowledge of their history, makes them an important part of the developing American Islam.

All cultures develop stories about themselves, maintain a social/political organization as part of their cosmology, articulate beliefs about life cycles, establish an ethical code, provide a venue for artistic expression, and develop language. Cultures traditionally maintain themselves over generations. African Americans are unique in having been disconnected by slavery from many of the fundamentals of their various cultures, and they have had to spend the last 400 years trying to uncover and reclaim that past. The white American attempt at cultural genocide almost succeeded but, fortunately, it has met continued resistance. Islam has always been a part of African-Americans' intellectual history, and the way in which African-American Muslims embrace Islam has political and social consequences. Some debates within the African-American Muslim community have focused on right belief and practice; others have involved the role of immigrant American Muslims.

While the debates about right belief and practice are crucial, it is also important for African-American Muslims to consider how they will preserve their intellectual heritage when it is confronted by new and different traditions. One might ask why there is any question that American Islam should be articulated by Americans, particularly by African Americans. Why do new immigrant groups purport to own Islam in the United States? What would make any Muslim think that American Islam would look and act like Islam in another culture?

Islam in China, West Africa, India and Indonesia is as distinct as those cultures are different from one another. They did not become Arabic in their embrace of Islam, although the fundamentals of Islam connect them intimately to the Arab world. They all add their cultural distinctiveness to world Islam. It is not the goal of the Qur'an to eradicate distinct cultures. Historically, Islam has developed over centuries and continues to develop in many cultures. Why should not the same phenomenon occur in the United States?

African-American Muslims are unique in being a discriminated-against minority, a subculture marked by race that has in turn created an Islamic sub-subculture. In other Muslim cultures, those who embraced Islam have been a part of the majority culture, at least in ethnicity. This difference may constitute one reason for the lack of a clear definition of Islam in the United States. Another reason might be the unusual outside interference that has impeded the natural development of a worldview. Whatever the reason, some African-American Muslims have ventured to do the socially and politically impossible: own the intellectual heritage of another culture.

African-American Muslims' life experiences and legacy are in the United States. They own Islam just as people in other cultures have come to own it, through the study of the Qur'an, the Arabic language, and the Islamic sciences. By studying so trustingly and without caution, some have inadvertently adopted other Muslims' cultural interpretations of Islam, assuming that the interpretations and practices are Islamic rather than cultural. African-American Muslims, for example, give charity to Muslims overseas rather than to African Americans at home. Immigrant

American Muslims, however, rarely if ever give charity to African-American Muslims or other African Americans.[20]

The perceptions of African-American Muslims are beginning to change. Where in the past they assumed that Islam as taught was value-neutral, their travels have shown them the corruption, perversion, value-laden practices and ethnocentrism of the Muslim world. The challenge that presents itself is to disentangle the Qur'an, the guidance of the Prophet Muhammad, and the benefits of the law from the cultural legacies of other Muslims in the effort to build an American Islam. Another challenge lies in defining how Islam will benefit the American community as a whole.

The various cultural expressions of Islam in the world have their own problems. The concern for American Muslims is that the carriers of those expressions in this country claim that their interpretations of Islam are the only true ones. In their pursuit of the American dream and whiteness, the new arrivals have largely ignored African-American Muslims and have assumed that they can impose their own understanding of Islam on African Americans.

One of the tasks faced by African-American Muslims today is to make Islam part of the intellectual heritage of all Americans. Doing so will require strengthening the ties between African-American Muslims and the rest of the black community, as well as with that portion of the larger white community which understands that democracy is still an experiment and that all experiments demand vigilance.

NOTES

1. John Langston Gwaltney, *Drylongso:A Self-Portrait of Black America* (Vintage Books, 1980), p. xxvii.

2. *See* James Weldon Johnson, *Black Manhattan* (DaCapo Press, 1930), reprinted 1991 with introduction by Sondra K. Wilson.

3. *See*, e.g., John W. Blassingame, ed., *Slave Testimony: Two Centuries of Letters, Speeches, Interviews, and Autobiographies* (Louisiana State University Press, 1977); Henry Louis Gates, Jr. and William L. Anderson, *Slave Narratives* (Library of America, 2000); Sylvaine Diouf, *Servants of Allah: African Muslims Enslaved in the Americas* (New York University Press, 1998); Allan D. Austin, *African Muslims in Antebellum America: Transatlantic Stories and Spirited Struggles* (Routledge, 1997).

4. *See* Michael A. Gomez, *Exchanging Our Country Marks: The Transformation of African Identities in the Colonial and Antebellum South* (University of North Carolina

Press, 1998). Gomez's chapter 4, "Prayin' on duh Bead: Islam in Early America," is a significant review of these issues.

5. Op. cit.

6. *See*, e.g., George Lankford, ed., *Bearing Witness: Memoirs of Arkansas Slavery: Narratives from the 1930s WPA Collections* (University of Arkansas Press, 2003) and T. Lindsay Baker and Julie P. Baker, eds., *The WPA Oklahoma Slave Narratives* (University of Oklahoma Press, 1996). The Schomberg Library's collection is also valuable for research on this subject.

7. Peter Lamborn Wilson, *Sacred Drift: Essays on the Margins of Islam* (City Lights Books, 1993).

8. Robert Danin, *Black Pilgrimage to Islam* (Oxford University Press, 2002), p. 15.

9. Drusilla Dunjee Houston, *Wonderful Ethiopians of the Ancient Cushite Empire* (The Universal Publishing Co., 1926); republished as *Wonderful Ethiopians of the Ancient Cushite Empire: Nations of the Ancient Cushite Empire (*Research Associates School Times Publications, 1996). For information about Houston, *Origin of Civilization* and *Origins of Aryans*, *see* Peggy Anne Brooks-Bertram, "Voices from the Gaps," http://voices.cla.umn.edu/authors/HOUSTONdrusilla.html.

10. *See* Maulana Karanga, *Reconstructing Kemetic Culture: Papers, Perspectives, Projects* (University of Sankore Press, 1996), available at http://www.kemet.org.

11. *See* http://www.nbufront.org/html/MastersMuseums/DocBen/DocBenVMuseum.html, in addition to DuBois' *Darkwater: Voices From Within the Veil* (AMS Press, 1969) and Benjamin Goodman, ed., *Malcolm X: The End of White World Supremacy—Four Speeches* (Merlin House, Inc., 1971).

12. *See*, e.g., http://www.angelfire.com/vt/vietnamesemuslims/hstry.html.

13. E.U. Essien-Udom, *Black Nationalism: A Search for an Identity in America* (University of Chicago Press, 1962), p. 34.

14. Wole Soyinka, *Myth, Literature and the African World* (Cambridge University Press, 1990), p. 3.

15. *See* Stanley Crouch's "Farrakhan, 1985 to 1996: The Consistency of Calypso Louis" in *The Farrakhan Factor* (Grove Press, 1998), pp. 251 – 269; Elreta Dodds, *The Trouble with Farrakhan and the Nation of Islam* (Press Toward the Mark Publications, 1997); and Karl Evanzz, *The Messenger: The Rise and Fall of Elijah Muhammad* (Vintage Books, 1999).

16. W.E.B. DuBois, *Darkwater*, op. cit.

17. W.E.B. DuBois*, Souls of Black Folks* (Candace Press, 1996).

18. W.E.B. DuBois, *Darkwater*, op. cit., p. 30.

19. Op. cit., p. 31.

20. *See* donors' lists for The Negro College Fund, the membership lists for the NAACP and CORE, and donor or membership lists for social service organizations for the homeless or shelters in major cities.

ISLAMIC SCHOOLS IN THE UNITED STATES: PERSPECTIVES OF IDENTITY, RELEVANCE AND GOVERNANCE

ZAKIYYAH MUHAMMAD

Islamic schools in the United States are faced with a myriad of challenges not unlike those that were faced by other religious schools. Externally, they demonstrate excellence in character education, citizenship training and academic achievements. Internally, the core issue for both students and schools is identity. What is an authentic Islamic school? Toward what goals should it strive? Who or what empowers it so that it can achieve? How should it be governed? These core identity concerns impact Islamic schools significantly as they assess their role and responsibility in the cultivation of vicegerents—trustees of the earth for the pleasure of The Creator and the service of humanity.

The issues of identity in Islamic schools are complicated by two primary factors: 1) the state of education throughout the Muslim world for the last centuries, which has been characterized by dualism in the educational system, curricula that do not reflect the worldview of Islam, lack of relevant teacher education and preparation programs, and the fragmentation of knowledge and disciplines that is contrary to the Islamic concept of *tawheed*—the unity of knowledge; and 2) the disconnect between immigrant Muslims and the indigenous Muslim community of African Americans, and the consequences of that disconnect on the spiritual, psychological, physical and economic status of American Muslims in general and American Muslim youth in particular. Evidence today suggests that the landscape of Islamic schools resembles that of the United States before *Brown v. Board of Education*—separate and unequal. This condition goes to the key question of the role and responsibility of a Muslim and the purpose of Islamic schools.

In answering that question, the *hejira*, the Muslims' flight from persecution in Mecca to Medina, is of great significance. The *mu'akhah*, a unique universal model of mutual cooperation based on the Islamic injunction of unity and brotherhood (which includes women), was decreed by Muhammad the Prophet for the Ansars in Medina and the Muhajirun who fled Mecca. Muslims in the United States today can benefit from this model as they navigate through the identity issues that result from colonialism and slavery.

THE QUESTION OF IDENTITY

A third grade student flung herself into my office, panic-stricken and crying hysterically. “What is the matter?” I asked. She pleaded through her tears, “Tell them, Dr. Zakiyyah, tell them, please, please tell them!” “Tell them what, my dear?” “Tell them, please, please tell them *I am white*, please, please tell them I am white!! I *am* white, I *am* white!” She fell into my arms exhausted and crying like a baby. She was not “white” and I did not tell the other students that she was. I did tell her and her family that she was not white.

Over the course of five years as Principal, I have frequently had to tell the entire school and the community of parents that Black is not bad or ugly. Every student in the school with black or brown skin has been in my office offended or crying because of harsh physical treatment or disingenuous remarks made about or to him or her. There are no African Americans in the school of which I am Principal, the oldest Islamic school in southern California and the largest, going from kindergarten to eighth grade. We often boast of being a mini-*ummah*: a little United Nations, with individuals of 28 ethnicities from around the world united under the banner of Islam.

Parents, teachers and the governing authority of the school have been shocked at the idea that racial conflict exists in the environment of an Islamic elementary/secondary school. It is particularly unsettling because of our consistent collective effort to make the Qur’an the central focus of the school and to emphasize positive character traits by encouraging exemplary student behavior. We frequently refer to the following popular *ayah* (Qur’anic verse):

> Oh Mankind, we have created you from a single pair of a male and a female, and we have made you into nations and tribes that you may know and do good to each other and not despise each other. Surely the most honored of you in the sight of Allah is he who guards

> against evil and is the most righteous. And Verily Allah has full knowledge and is well acquainted with all things.[1]

As I began to document these phenomena at our school and at other schools and related educational activities, it became evident that issues of identity were central to students and the people responsible for educating students. In fairness, it should be noted that the instances described are rare in proportion to the acts of kindness and cooperation that students and teachers exhibit and in comparison to behavior exhibited elsewhere in the larger society. Nevertheless, the challenges of identity are significant enough to warrant concern because Muslims must hold themselves to different standards than those of the larger society. In particular, the standard for Muslims is truth-telling, even against our selves; this is a moral mandate from The Creator. The issue of identity is at the core of what a Muslim is and what a Muslim is supposed to think and do, and identity must be clarified and supported first in the environment of the home and then in the school—the institution responsible for educating future generations.

SCHOOL AND EDUCATION

School is defined by the Oxford English Dictionary as a place or establishment where one gains instruction or training.[2] In Arabic the meaning is similar but has more depth and complexity. *Kuttab* means reading and writing and is the word for primary and Qur'anic education*; madrasah* literally means school (and should not be mistaken for the politicized version shown on the evening news).

> The *madrasah* culminates the vision of learning in Islam. Its teaching activity is a live-in process where teacher and student constantly live and work together with one objective in view, namely, the articulation of the patterns of The Creator, Allah, in creation. Its pedagogy rests on the impeccable character of the *shaykh* whom the student is to emulate. And its commencement is the investiture of the student by the *shakyh* with his *'immah* (the origin of the cap and gown graduation ceremony) as the symbol of total confidence that the student can now speak with the teacher's authority and on his behalf. The

> *madrasah* is the forerunner in every field of human inquiry, the molder of human character and personality and the projector of the *ummah*'s splendid achievements in culture and civilization.[3]

The *Encyclopedia of American Education* defines education in two ways: 1) the acquisition of knowledge, skills and values that permit an individual to function and make decisions perceived as self-enhancing; and 2) knowledge acquired through formal instruction.[4] In Islam, however, the concept of education is vastly different, as the basis of Islamic education is moral development and begins with awareness of The Creator's Divine Will and the responsibility of the learner to submit to that Will.

The great American intellectual and philosopher John Dewey wrote, "The most important problem of moral education in the school concerns the relationship of knowledge and conduct."[5] Education in Islam supports this philosophy, because learning is based on *tawheed*, the Islamic concept that suggests that mental, physical, spiritual and material lives are comprehensive, holistic, interrelated and interdependent.

THE CONCEPT OF EDUCATION IN ISLAM

Education in Islam begins with the knowledge of Qur'an, the last Divine Revelation to humanity from The Creator, and the life of Muhammad the Prophet, who brought forth the revelation to humanity. The Arabic word Qur'an is derived from the verb *qara'* and means, "he read," "he conveyed or delivered a message," and "he gathered or collected things together."[6] "Qur'an" refers to all three root meanings, and the process of education includes all three of these patterns of development. The life of Muhammad the Prophet is an integral part of Islamic education and must be studied to develop awareness and understanding of the human context in which the Revelation came forth and the exemplary model Prophet Muhammad is for all humanity. The words of Muhammad, the Prophet, are called *ahadith*; the behavior he exhibited is called his *Sunnah*. Together, the Qur'an and the *Sunnah* constitute the foundation of Islamic education.

The word for education in Arabic is *tarbiyah*, meaning "to cause something to develop from stage to stage until it reaches its full potential."[7] Islamic education is therefore "the perfected process of human development that evolves the consciousness of the human being into the excellence of one's human potential."[8] This process of development begins with Qur'an, which teaches one's role and responsibility to The Creator, to fellow human beings and to the natural creation that sustains humanity.

Islamic education is transformative and is designed to enable students to reach the excellence of their potential and to assume their responsibility and accountability as vicegerents. Islamic education focuses on drawing out the gift within the student rather than pouring information into the student. This concept is predicated on the principle that the human being is created in excellence. The implementation of this philosophy requires a unique social environment, curricular content and a distinctive teaching methodology; hence there is a need for Islamic schools.

The purpose of Islamic education is to enable students to:

1) know The Creator and the Divine revelation, Qur'an;
2) know the Messenger of Allah who brought forth the Qur'an, Muhammad the Prophet;
3) be an obedient and righteous servant of Allah;
4) know that one is a part of the *ummah*;
5) prepare for one's role as a vicegerent, a harbinger of freedom, justice and equality for humanity.

It is important to note, however, that Islamic schools are not necessarily synonymous with Islamic education. Many Islamic schools are simply schools with Muslims in attendance.

CURRENT INTEREST IN ISLAMIC SCHOOLS

The current interest in Islamic schools by the United States government and the general society is motivated primarily by a concern about whether Islamic schools constitute a threat to the United States. The lens of September 11 has made virtually all things Islamic suspect, especially to the uninformed. However, the historical record indicates not only that Islamic schools in the United States are not a threat but that Islamic schools have made significant contributions to quality education in this country. Those contributions began as *halaqas* (circles of Islamic learning), constructed by sixteenth century slaves to keep the Qur'an alive in their lives and the University of Islam Schools (elementary, secondary and high schools) which began in 1934 and pioneered the instruction of the Arabic language on the elementary and secondary level. These early efforts have led to the present 375 full-time Islamic schools, many of which have contributed to the American public schools' three major goals: 1) character education, 2) academic excellence, and 3) the promotion of responsible citizenship.[9]

Collectively, Islamic schools have the potential to be one of the greatest institutional contributions the Muslim community can make to the United States; simultaneously, the United States could benefit from schools which, as exemplary models of moral, human and academic excellence, contribute immensely to solving this country's current and continuing educational problems. This benefit can only occur, however, if Islamic schools seize the opportunity before them to address the greatest challenge they face: identity. To do so, they must reexamine their purpose, processes and goals. Founders of Muslim schools have an opportunity to demonstrate the courage to adhere to the principles and practices of Islam and not acquiesce in what is perceived as "acceptable in contemporary society." If they fail to do so, Islamic schools will nonetheless continue to increase in number because of population growth, and some of their students will continue to be "successful," but overall, the next generation of Muslims and the schools that prepare them will be irrelevant to American society because they have not been true to their faith and their purpose for being.

The Problem

The internal issues of identity that beleaguer Islamic schools stem from colonialism, slavery and "the dream of whiteness," the ideal that permeates the American ethos. These phenomena create conflict, not simply for future generations vis-à-vis their Islamic identity, but also for Muslim educators who seek to redirect these institutions towards more representative Islamic school models. Concerns about identity have far-reaching intellectual, spiritual, social, and economic implications for Muslims today, and if they are not addressed they will continue to generate confusion, anger, resentment, hostility and division, thereby hindering the establishment of the institutional support systems required for progress.

Concomitantly, they will suggest to all who observe these phenomena that the revelation of Qur'an and Islam is irrelevant and inconsequential.

The issue of identity, which lies at the heart of the American Muslim community, can be measured by the perceptions and social interactions of students, of the teachers and boards involved with Islamic schools and, more clearly, by the physical state of the schools themselves.

What are Identity, Relevance, and Governance?

For the purposes of this discussion, *identity* is defined as "the condition or fact that a person or thing is itself and not something else." *Relevance* is measured by the quality of the product (the student) produced and what that product does; *governance* is defined as the engine that propels a person or thing (the school) in a particular direction.[10]

Historical Perspective

In 1977, more than 350 of the most renowned scholars in the Muslim world attended the First World Conference on Muslim Education, held in Mecca, to discuss the "Crisis in Muslim Education" that resulted from the physical and intellectual Muslim defeat at the hands of the Christian crusader invaders from the West and the Mongols from the East, and the later fall of the Ottoman empire. The conference concluded that colonization and a sophisticated plan of destabilization had destroyed the Muslim educational system and, thus, the Islamic intellectual tradition.[11] This destabilization came about because colonization did the following:

1) It bifurcated the system into religious and secular components;
2) It empowered the secular and neglected the religious;
3) It separated the Qur'an and *Sunnah* from the everyday life of Muslims by making Islam a rigid formalized system rather than an inspirational, dynamic one;
4) It permitted missionaries, Orientalists and others to establish schools that introduced Eurocentric and Judeo-Christian philosophies and ideologies;
5) It divided Muslim lands into autonomous territories, thereby limiting support and unity;

6) It installed rulers who would support and carry out plans of destabilization; and
7) It brutally extinguished any form of resistance.

The result of this onslaught was the loss of Muslim identity and intellectual thought, and the "imitation of the other;" i.e., British, French, and Western civilization generally. Muslim scholars at the conference offered a series of recommendations to address the malaise of the *ummah*, the first and most critical of which was to rescue and restore the Islamic educational system from secularization through a process referred to as the Islamization of Knowledge.

The Islamization of Knowledge is a process designed to reconstruct and redefine Islamic epistemology and to design a methodology of Islamization for all areas of education.[12] The concept was constructed by outstanding Muslim thinkers and articulated in a seminal essay by Dr. Ismail al-Faruqi, a distinguished scholar, founder (in 1981) of the International Institute of Islamic Thought in Herndon, Virginia, and author of *Islamization of Knowledge: General Principles and Work Plan.*[13]

The Second World Conference on Muslim Education was held in 1980, in Islamabad, to examine the preparation of integrated Islamic curricula at all levels in all subjects. The Third World Conference, held in Dhaka in 1981, scrutinized the preparation of textbooks for Islamic schools. The Fourth Conference in Jakarta in 1982 discussed the evolution of new methods of teaching from the Islamic perspective; the Fifth Conference, held in Cairo in 1987, reviewed the achievements of previous conferences and examined means of implementing their resolutions.[14] Finally, the Sixth World Conference, in which this writer participated, was held in Cape Town in 1996. It was unique in that teacher-practitioners were present, and discussion focused on practical application of the concepts previously developed, using them to form lesson plans and teaching guidelines for Islamic schools.

In the United States, serious efforts have been made to further the Islamization process. This writer participated in the 1986 Islamic Education Conference in Abiqui, New Mexico, which was attended by several renowned international scholars of the Islamization philosophy. A large delegation from the Clara Muhammad Schools was present as were teachers, principals and other educators from around the United States.[15]

Dr. Ghulam Nabi Saqeb, one of the organizing secretaries of the first Conference, wrote in "The Islamization of Education Since the 1977 Makkah Education Conference: Achievements, Failures and Tasks Ahead,"

> It may be stressed that the movement for Islamization has taken off. Slowly but surely, the guidelines enshrined in the recommendations of the World Conferences on Muslim Education have become a subject of serious study and research among Muslim and even non-Muslim scholars…However, the percolation of the process down to the grass-root levels, to become available to practitioners in the field for use in their teaching and guidance work, remains a far cry.[16]

Dr. Saqeb noted that while the conclusions and recommendations of the conferences were sent to all Muslim governments and their ministers of education with a strong plea for implementation, only one Muslim country (Malaysia) responded in any significant way. He viewed this as the result not of lack of resources but of lack of political will.[17]

Dr. Saqeb indicated other areas of implementation in which there were shortfalls, all with an immediate impact on Islamic schools in the United States: insufficient instruction of non-Arabs in Arabic; increased privatization of schools, removing the economically disadvantaged; and the lack of authentic and well-written textbooks, other reading materials, and teaching aids. He noted that most such materials are printed in the West and do not have an Islamic worldview. Other problems include a lack of a comprehensive social studies curriculum and "unplanned" and "haphazard" instruction for Muslim teachers about the Muslim world.[18]

These last circumstances, in particular, contribute to the paradox of Muslims and Islamic schools in the United States, discussed below.

THE PARADOX

Immigrant and indigenous U.S. Muslims have distinctively different philosophical perspectives on education and Islamic schools. The differences result from the psychological effects of colonialism and slavery, but these effects should not be construed as entirely negative. Immigrant Muslims come from every country in the world; the largest groups are from the Middle East and South Asia. Indigenous Muslims, both born and converted, include Caucasians, African Americans, Latinos, and Native Americans. Although there is occasional cross-group interaction, for the most part the Caucasian Muslims (who are greater in number than Latinos or Native Americans) align with the immigrant community while the African-American community remains separate.[19] The divergent perspectives of each community on education, coupled with each one's self-perceptions, have caused the landscape of Islamic schools to resemble the United States before *Brown v. Board of Education*. The African-American Islamic schools (Clara Muhammad Schools in particular) have a superior Islamic education model; the immigrant schools enjoy superior facilities.

A recent study by Project MAPS: Muslims in American Public Square suggests that there are ideological and financial as well as cultural differences between these groups.[20] Muslims who migrated to the United States in the last three decades of the twentieth century had attained relatively high socioeconomic status, held advanced degrees and, for the most part, attended "secular" or missionary schools in their homelands. They tend to be impressed by Western education and with few exceptions favor the establishment of Islamic schools that follow a Western or British model and frequently hire non-Muslim American teachers.

By contrast, the African-American Muslim community is not enamored of the Western educational model, which historically did not educate African Americans. Instead, it oppressed, omitted and misrepresented them and their history and culture, as well as their Islamic past.[21]

The African-American Muslim community supports two major categories of schools: 1) Islamic schools that follow the tradition and cultural identity of the immigrant community with which its founders identify, and 2) the Clara Muhammad Schools, which acknowledge the long tradition of independent education that began after slavery and continued through the University of Islam schools and the continuous struggle of African Americans for self-empowerment. The Clara Muhammad schools and the community that supports them refuse to embrace the ethnic and cultural identity of any other Muslim group.

Early in its development (1975), Imam W. Deen Mohammed guided the African-American Muslim community to the Qur'an and the *Sunnah* of Prophet Muhammad. He declared that education was the community's top priority and articulated the model upon which the Clara Muhammad

Schools were built. Supporters embarked on vigorous ventures to actualize Imam Mohammed's directive. Clara Muhammad Schools, which together constitute the oldest and largest association of Islamic schools in the United States, now number twenty-seven and include one high school, W. Deen Mohammed High, in Atlanta, Georgia.[22] Each school educates Muslim and non-Muslim youngsters and has received numerous commendations from local and state education officials.

At the historic conference he called in Sedalia, North Carolina in 1982, Imam W. Deen Mohammed told Muslim educators, "The psychology for making life better is not in the public schools, it is not in their universities, it is in your Qur'an."[23] His community's approach to addressing the malaise in Islamic education is encapsulated in the preceding statement, as well as the following one, which he made to Muslim educators when he advised them to write their own curricula. "Do not go out there and look for any psychology book or social behavior book in the library," he said. "You lock yourself up, throw out all their books, only use a dictionary. Only use a book that will give you terminology, the meaning or term if you don't know it. But don't use any book that suggests a philosophy or suggests a principle, or suggests a way of behavior or psychology. No, just reject it all and take your Qur'an, and take what we have in this community and sit down and lock the door and design the course we should take."[24]

The African-American Muslim community organized numerous workshops and conferences and produced a wide range of articles and books espousing Qur'anic education and an authentic Islamic school model. Imam Mohammed also directed his community to make social studies its first curricular concern because, he said, social studies addressed the issue of identity. Believers also established the nation's first Islamic college (the Muslim Teachers College) in 1988.[25] Unfortunately, lack of financial resources plagued the schools, forcing several closures and stunting curricular development efforts. The Muslim Teachers College in particular suffered from this lack of funding. It received no financial or other support from the government or immigrant Muslim community.

The growth of Islamic schools in the United States has been explosive during the last decade. The Muslim community in the United States is estimated to number between seven and eight million people. In 1985 there were approximately 70 Islamic schools throughout the United

States, 38 of them Clara Muhammad Schools. The first study of Islamic schools in the United States, conducted in 1989 by the Islamic Schools Department of the Islamic Society of North America, found 80 full-time Islamic schools.[26] By 1996, the New Horizon Schools of California, a second association of four Islamic schools, had emerged. The nation's other Islamic schools are independent and have a myriad of philosophies, practices and governing policies. The models that are emerging run the gamut from a British prep school, to an elite American private school with all non-Muslim teachers, to a duplicate of a traditional public school, to a traditional *madrasah*.[27]

While data are incomplete, some figures suggest that approximately 75,000 Muslim children attend Islamic schools. The remainder are enrolled primarily in public schools, although some attend private schools. There are approximately 375 full-time Islamic schools today, most of them kindergarten through eighth grade. There are also eight Islamic high schools, three of which are all-girl schools, in addition to numerous weekend, after-school and home-school programs across the country.[28]

CHALLENGES OF IDENTITY

How are some of these challenges of identity experienced by the schools, and what are some of the consequences for students' subsequent development?

1) The continued physical, psychological and language bifurcation of "religious" and "secular" studies in the curricula (a phenomenon also called dualism).

Dualism contributes to the separation of spiritual from intellectual matters in students' psychological development. For many youngsters, it results in the perception that Islam's contribution to intellectual matters is limited. Further, youngsters unconsciously conclude that Allah is good but not necessarily smart and certainly not the smartest entity.

2) The hiring of non-Muslim Caucasian teachers and administrators, even incompetent ones, in an effort to "validate" the Islamic school.

This practice gives the impression that "white is right, even when it is wrong" and, by limiting students' exposure to other ethnic groups, conflicts with the Islamic idea of diversity. Teachers have observed parents' euphoria when they learn that their child is to be taught by a Caucasian teacher, yet in most instances such teachers demonstrated mediocre skills, performed poorly, and were apathetic.

3) The failure to hold Muslim teachers in high esteem and pay competitive wages.

This failure has resulted in the best qualified teachers refusing to take positions at Islamic schools. No other professionals in the community of Muslims are asked to make the financial, physical, and emotional sacrifices required of Muslim teachers and administrators. This downgrading of the profession runs counter to the historical legacy of the Teacher in Islamic civilization. Muhammad The Prophet described himself as a teacher and praised the value of the learned and the scholar in numerous *ahadith*, but this value is not reflected in Islamic schools. The American Muslim community is missing a unique opportunity to demonstrate the value of education and teachers by failing to accord educators a higher status and professional wages.

4) Failure to establish and support Islamic schools.

Parents complain about public education yet sacrifice their children to it, as indicated by the fact that only six percent of Muslim children attend Islamic schools. Far too many parents still perceive Islamic schools as conceptually inferior to Western schools.

5) The immigrant Muslim community seeks the support and labor of African-American Muslims for various projects but rarely supports or funds projects conceptualized or headed by the African-American Muslim community.

Immigrant Muslim youngsters are being taught indirectly to perceive African-American Muslims as laborers, and members of their own ethnic group as leaders.

6) Local schools are disconnected from the Islamization process.

The Islamization process, although widespread, is not completely accepted in concept or application by all Muslim educators or Islamic schools. For example, I recall one well-known Islamic scholar stating that it is not necessary to Islamize what is already Islamic, and that the problem is not the knowledge, but the Muslims themselves. Others have also expressed concern over the use of the term "Islamize," which suggests domination. Because the Islamization process is a "voluntary" one, it is not supported by structured mandates or accountability systems. On average, Muslim educators attend only one national or regional education conference annually, in order to be inspired or to improve skills. Inevitably, the daily tasks at their local schools keep them preoccupied and often overwhelmed for the rest of the year.

7) Muslim educators lack power to direct or override governing authorities.

Local school boards govern most Islamic schools. In the immigrant community, these primarily consist of businessmen and other professionals. It is rare to have educators serve on school boards in the immigrant community, as education is not an "esteemed" profession among the immigrant community (although educational achievement is). Teacher compliance with local mandates is a prerequisite for continued employment and acceptance, thereby limiting many Muslim educators from acting in ways perceived as adversarial to the established policies. In fairness, a few boards of education are open-minded, progressive, and willing to consider efforts to establish "authentic Islamic schools." Yet they perceive the system of education they personally experienced as having contributed to their success, and have also witnessed the failure of the "religious system" in the lives of many and the lack of esteem in which it is held. Consequently, they are ambivalent about an authentic Islamic school model and instead support what they believe will enable Muslim youngsters to be successful.

In the African-American community, most champions of the schools are educators and parents, who approach the business community for support. Historically, education has been a means of liberation for African Americans; consequently, teachers and preachers historically have wielded considerable influence in the community. The challenge has been and continues to be the negative impact of the schools' lack of resources, evident in the physical quality of the programs. The perceived "lower quality" of the schools, which includes not having the best teachers, resources, and buildings, is a key reason that the higher socioeconomic class of Muslims, African-American or otherwise, choose not to send their children to Islamic schools.

8) Lack of infrastructure/support systems for Muslim educators and Islamic schools.

"Much of the continued frustration and organizational stress that Islamic schools experience is a direct result of overtaxing teachers and administrators to develop the essential support systems (infrastructure) schools need while simultaneously struggling to perform their daily tasks."[29] Educators have too little time and too many tasks. Associations have emerged to support Islamic schools, but they are few, new, and do not comprehend the depth and breadth of the problem.

Additionally, there are currently no university-level teacher education or preparation programs in the United States that offer any courses on Islamic education or that address the educational needs of Muslim educators. This circumstance prompted the writer to establish the Universal Institute of Islamic Education, designed to address this void, in 1990.

Teacher education remains critical because most teachers who want to teach in Islamic schools either come from lands that did not have authentic Islamic schools, or attended schools in the United States that offered no high-quality courses. Currently, the American Institute on Islamic Education has been in consultation for over a year with a major university in the hopes of establishing such a teacher and administrative preparation program.

9) Lack of unified curricula, adequate textbooks, resources and instructional materials for Islamic schools.

Islamic schools, even the better-established ones, use state-issued curricula and textbooks. Supplemental materials in Islamic studies are currently available, but they are minimal. Though the Clara Muhammad association of schools, as well as other schools, have committed to the ongoing effort of unified curricular development, no unified curriculum has yet been completed. The costs in human and financial resources of developing these necessary supports are considerable, and the task of convincing Muslim funding sources of their necessity is daunting.

THE FIRST ISLAMIC SCHOOLS IN THE UNITED STATES

As noted above, informal Islamic schools existed in the United States in the early sixteenth century.[30] Their students, teachers and organizers were slaves brought to the American continents from sub-Saharan Africa.

Adhering to the core Qur'anic mandate of literacy, Muslims established Qur'an schools to teach, learn, and maintain the integrity of Islam. That they achieved their goals within a brutal system of slavery reflects the reverence in which they held Islam, the Qur'an and their human identity.

Samuel Lewis described the way these Muslims regarded Islamic learning in their native land:

> The Koran [Qur'an] is almost always in their hand. It seems to be their labor and their relaxation to pore over its pages. They love to read and recite it aloud for hours together. They seem to possess an enthusiastic appreciation of the rhythmical harmony in which it is written. But we cannot attribute its power over them altogether to the jingling sounds, word-plays, and refrains in which it abounds. These, it is true, please the ear and amuse the fancy, especially of the uncultivated. But there is something higher, of which these rhyming lines are the vehicle, something possessing a deeper power to rouse the imagination, mould the feelings, and generate action.[31]

It is indeed this power to "generate action" which we describe as the transformative power of the Qur'an that expands and empowers the intellect and the soul. This power, generated by the Qur'an, enabled enslaved Muslims to establish Islamic schools; to teach others to read, even under the threat of death; to endure when necessary and resist when they were able; all while grappling with the question of why they had been enslaved. It is this historical legacy of tragedy and triumph that reinforces the Qur'an, as Muhammad the Prophet did, as the center of the sphere of learning and action for Muslims. This is, therefore, the role that Islamic schools in the United States and elsewhere must fulfill.

In spite of slavery's disruption of social patterns and the resulting destruction of family life, oral traditions, customs, and general cultural and self-knowledge, Islam, invisible to the eye and indiscernible to the forces that sought to tear it from the souls of the slaves, prevailed and has now resurfaced in the United States. It is adhered to both by people born in this country and many who migrated from other nations to practice it freely. The challenge before the Muslim community is whether they will function as one *ummah* according to the mandate of the Qur'an and *Sunnah*. The answer will determine the fate of future generations of Muslims in the United States.

NOTES

1. *Al Hujurat* (The Inner Apartments), *Holy Qur'an*, chapter 49, verse 13.

2. *Oxford English Dictionary*, Volume 2 (Oxford University Press, 1971), pp. 2665 – 2666.

3. Ismail R. al-Faruqi, *Preface to The Islamization of Knowledge, General Principles and Work Plan* (International Institute of Islamic Thought, 1982), pp. 3 – 4 (italics added).

4. *Encyclopedia of American Education* (Facts on File, 1996), p. 320.

5. John Dewey*, Democracy and Education; An Introduction to the Philosophy of Education* (Macmillian, 1929), p. 418.

6. Allama Nooruddin, Amatul Rahman Omar (trans.), and Abdul Mannan Omar (trans.), *Holy Qur'an* (Noor Foundation, 1997), p. 2-A.

7. Al Raghib al-Asfahani, *Mufradat Alfaz al-Qur'an* (al Dar al Shaimiyah, 1992), p. 336.

8. Zakiyyah Muhammad, "Islamic Education in America: An Historical Overview with Future Projections," 25 *Religion and Education* (Winter 1998), p. 88.

9. Sylviane A. Diouf, *Servants of Allah: African Muslims Enslaved in the Americas* (New York University Press, 1998), pp. 4, 6, 7.

10. *The Random House Dictionary* (Random House, 1983), pp. 447, 767, 391.

11. International Institute of Islamic Thought, *Islamization of Knowledge, General Principles and Work Plan*, Second Edition, Series 1 (International Institute of Islamic Thought, 1989).

12. Op. cit.

13. Op cit.

14. Dr. Ghulam Nabi Saqeb, "The Islamization of Education Since the 1977 Mekka Education Conference: Achievements, Failures and Tasks Ahead," 18 *Muslim Education Quarterly* (Autumn 2000), p. 58.

15. I completed my dissertation on Islamic education shortly after that Conference and was invited to lecture at the International Institute of Islamic Thought (IIIT) on "The Dilemma of Islamic Education in America, Possible Solutions." The lecture was published in *Muslim Education Quarterly* (1990), p. 27 – 35. I subsequently served as a consultant for IIIT and the Islamization Program.

16. Saqeb, op. cit., pp. 58 – 59.

17. Op. cit., p. 60.

18. Op. cit.

19. A Cornell University study indicated that "there is little interaction between the immigrant and African American Muslims." Cornell University Study on American Muslims, April 2002.

20. Project MAPS: Muslims in American Public Square, "American Muslim Poll" (2001), available at http://www.projectmaps.com.

21. This is discussed in Dr. Carter G. Woodson's *Mis-education of the Negro*, which is the seminal work in the examination of the persistent problems the African American has experienced with "education" in the United States. Carter G. Woodson, *Mis-education of the Negro* (Hakim's Publications, 1933).

22. Hakim Rashid and Zakiyyah Muhammad, "The Sister Clara Muhammad Schools: Pioneers in the Development of Islamic Education in America," *The Journal of Negro Education* (1992), pp. 178 – 185.

23. Speech given in Sedalia, North Carolina, on April 9, 1982. Imam W. Deen Mohammed, "Sedalia Education Conference" cassette tape (Office of Imam W. Deen Mohammed, 1982).

24. Op cit.

25. The Muslim Teachers College was established in 1988 in Richmond, Virginia by Imam Qadir Abdus Sabur.

26. This writer participated in the study. Islamic Schools Department, Islamic Society of North America, "In-Depth Study of Full-Time Islamic Schools in North America, Results and Data Analysis" (1989).

27. The reasons for the rapid growth of Islamic schools are discussed in Muhammad, "Islamic Education in America," op. cit.

28. The figure of 75,000 is a calculation by the American Institute on Islamic Education, based on estimating 200 pupils each at 375 schools. The Institute's study is forthcoming.

29. Muhammad, "Islamic Education in America," op. cit., p. 95.

30. Diouf, *Servants of Allah*, op. cit.

31. Edward W. Blyden, "Mohammedanism in Western Africa," *Methodist Quarterly Review* (January, 1871), p. 67.

IMAMS AND MOSQUE ORGANIZATION IN THE UNITED STATES: A STUDY OF MOSQUE LEADERSHIP AND ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE IN AMERICAN MOSQUES

IHSAN A. BAGBY

The institution of the mosque in the United States is in its formative stage. The vast majority of mosques (87%) were founded after 1970—62 percent since 1980. Mosque leadership reflects this formative stage, with the current leadership being composed of either first-generation Americans or first-generation Muslims. The American mosque today is therefore best understood as an emerging institution that is adjusting to the new environment of the United States, simultaneously questioning the cultural constructs of the Muslim world and remolding itself in an Islamic image. The major challenges before Muslims are the uneasy position of the imam in the mosque organization and the as yet unformed identity of mosques as congregations.

In spite of its short history, the American mosque is quite a success story. As indicated above, mosques are increasing in number; they are also growing in size. According to *The Mosque in America: A National Portrait,*[1] which serves as the basis for this paper, there were 1209 mosques in the United States as of 2000. This constitutes a 25 percent increase from the 962 counted in 1994. Attendance at the average *jum'ah* (Friday congregational prayer) increased 94 percent, from 150 in 1994 to 292 in 2000. During the era of mosque construction, which began in the 1980s, approximately 313 mosques were built, including 83 constructed in the 1990s.

Mosque communities are extremely diverse but fall into the two general categories of African-American and immigrant.[2] Over one-fourth (27%) are attended primarily by African Americans; 73 percent by immigrants. The two groups have distinct histories which were largely separate until the 1990s, but this is changing rapidly as the two communities develop and deepen relations and contacts. One sign of change is that only seven percent of all mosques are attended by only one ethnic group.

Figure 1

Mosques Grouped According to Dominant Ethnic Groups* Percentage of Mosques in Each Category	
African-American	27%
South Asian	28%
Arab	15%
South Asian and Arab, mixed evenly**	16%
All Other Combinations	14%

* Dominant groups are calculated as follows: 35 ±39 percent of participants in one group and all other groups less than 20 percent; 40 ±49 percent of one group and all others less than 30; 50 ±59 percent of one group and all others less than 40; any group over 55 percent.
** Mixed groups calculated by two groups with at least 30 percent of participants each.

Over 90 percent are attended by some African Americans and some Arabs or South Asians.

MOSQUES AS CONGREGATIONS

Mosques in the United States function as congregations but in general do not think of themselves as congregations—their identity as such is still very tenuous. A congregation can be defined as a "voluntary religious community" that organizes various activities such as worship, religious instruction, community services, stewardship and fellowship.[3]

"Voluntary" in this context implies two factors. The first is that members choose to participate in a congregation. Membership is not ascribed in the sense that a person is neither born into a congregation nor automatically made a member of a religious group by virtue of nationality. Second, congregations are not parishes, where believers are bound to attend the church in a particular area. In the voluntary spiritual marketplace of the United States, congregations must recruit members.

The other key word used to define congregation is "community." A congregation as community entails a self-conscious, self-contained and self-supporting group that might have significant ties to a denomination or an archdiocese but retains a distinct identity and autonomy, however limited those may be in many cases. Congregations are above all else fellowships, constituted by their members. Membership, which is therefore the backbone of the congregation, carries with it a certain amount of power that can often be at odds with that of the clergy or religious leader. Such communities function to serve the religious needs of their members and to give full expression to their religious vision and mission. As a result, congregations are not just places to worship but centers for diverse activities that reflect the religious impulses of their members. Congregationalism, initially a Protestant phenomenon, has become the norm in the life of virtually all religious groups in the United States. However, as in the case of Islam, it is not necessarily the accepted theory of all religious groups. Most of the world's mosques are simply a place to pray. They lack the concept of membership and do not for the most part function as congregations. In addition, certain Islamic notions do not support the idea of congregationalism.

Since classical times, mosques either have been built by a government or a rich donor or have been endowed as a *waqf* (trust). The role of the mosque's imam, who is appointed by the government or a mosque trustee, is to lead the five daily prayers, deliver the Friday sermon and, possibly, conduct classes. The imam as depicted in classical religious literature is primarily a prayer leader, meaning that he has memorized portions of the Qur'an and can recite them properly. Based on the degree of his training, the imam also supplies religious guidance and interpretation. There is no clergy class in Islam and while virtually anyone can lead the prayers, the role of the imam as formal prayer leader and religious guide has been largely professionalized in the Muslim world. Imams are qualified to serve by completing at least a program in a Qur'anic school (*madrasah*) or by receiving a B.A. from an Islamic college. They are trained only to lead prayers and give religious guidance, however, not to lead a congregation, pastor to the needs of believers, or organize religious activities.

A Muslim cannot be a member of a particular mosque. As indicated in the Qur'anic passage, "Mosques belong to God" (72:18), Muslims do not believe that a mosque belongs to a particular group of people. A Muslim should be able to go to any mosque and feel at home. The fellowship in Islam is not the fellowship of the mosque but of the *ummah* (the worldwide community of believers). It is the *ummah* that is the congregation; the mosque is simply the place where the *ummah* performs certain worship functions.

Most religious groups that came to the United States did not bring a tradition of congregationalism with them. The absence of government support for any one religion was the impetus for the transformation of religious groups into congregations. Without other societal institutions to serve religious needs, the congregation became the sole vehicle for fulfillment of the various purposes and missions of religion. Another reason for the development of American congregationalism is that during the seventeenth century, lay members wielded great power because of the absence of clergy and because they were bolstered by the democratic spirit of the new republic.[4] As the clergy became more professionalized, its power increased but did not supplant lay leadership.

American Muslims quickly adopted the congregational model because the mosque was an existing institution that could serve diverse needs. The mosque became a place where children could be instructed about their religion, possibly in the language of their parents; where religious holidays could be celebrated with dinners and games; and where life-cycle events such as *aqiqah* (births), marriages and deaths could be solemnized.The non-American mosque model would not have been central to any of these functions, but in the United States, mosques replaced the extended family, social networks and social and educational institutions. As centers of a variety of activities, mosques have now come under pressure to expand their services to accommodate all of the needs of believers.

Mosques function as congregations, then, because almost all immigrant mosques in the United States were founded by groups of lay leaders who organized themselves to establish and run a mosque, rather than by a government or rich individual. As in the formative stage of other religious institutions, lay Muslim leaders rather than imams initially held power in their congregations. To this day, newly arrived immigrant groups create mosques in which lay leadership is central.

Many mosque participants nonetheless do not accept the concept of membership and full participation as congregants in a particular mosque. For some, the mosque is only a place of prayer; for others, it is a place that serves certain needs but to which complete commitment is unnecessary. A few give their full commitment to the mosque but do not participate in the formal mosque organization.

Mosques in the United States, therefore, are voluntary religious communities or congregations, but the notion of congregation as a distinct entity that commands loyalty and commitment is not well-established in the minds of many Muslims. While on the surface mosques act like congregations, they do not feel like congregations internally. Mosques are still evolving. In essence, American Islamic theology has not developed sufficiently to include a vision of Islamic congregationalism.

LEADERSHIP STRUCTURE

Mosque organizational structures are of two general types. One is the imam-led mosque where the imam or mosque leader (most often called the *amir*) exerts considerable power and authority over all aspects of the mosque. The other type of mosque organization is the *majlis*-led type where the governing body, the *majlis ash-shura* (literally, "consultative council": an executive committee or board of directors) holds the decision-making power and the imam's role is limited to the traditional one of leading the prayers and teaching Islam.

Over 81 percent of all mosques have an imam. In roughly half of those, the imam is considered its leader; in the other half, he is not.

Ninety-four percent of mosques have a *majlis ash-shura*. The final decision-making power in 59 percent of those mosques is held by the *majlis*; in 28 percent, by the imam; and in 11 percent, by a mosque leader.

The decisive distinction between these two models is ethnicity. Ninety-three percent of all African-American mosques are imam-led, and in over three-fourths of these, the imam is the leader and final decision maker. Only 38 percent of immigrant mosques utilize the imam-led model; almost 62 percent follow the *majlis*-led model.

The preference in African-American mosques for the strong imam model is most likely due to the cultural influence of the Black church, where the Black preacher tends to dominate, and to the strong authoritarian male leader model of the revolutionary/Black nationalist organizations of the 1960s. These influences find ready parallels in the dominant Islamic tradition in which the Muslim political leader held all power in his hands, although he was advised to consult with other worshippers.

In many African-American mosques, once an imam is elected he cannot be replaced, so worshippers cannot seek change through elections. Strong imams often resist the influence of knowledgeable Muslims, especially those who have been trained abroad, because of the potential threat to the imam's authority. This often leads to the departure of the more knowledgeable Muslims, limiting the mosque community's exposure to Islamic knowledge, and of other members who are frustrated by the lack of avenues for opposing the imam.

Figure 2

Leadership of Mosques	
Imam (leader of mosque)	41%
Imam (not leader)	40%
No imam	19%

Figure 3

Final Decision Maker in All Mosques	
Majlis ash-Shura	59%
Imam	28%
Mosque Leader	11%
Other	2%

Figure 4

Breakdown of Imam-Led and Majlis-Led Mosque	
Imam-Led Mosque	**53%**
Strong Imam – imam is leader and final decision maker	28%
Balanced – imam is leader and majlis is the final decision maker	13%
Mosque leader is the leader and final decision maker	12%
Majlis-Led Mosque	**47%**
Strong *Majlis* -imam not leader; *majlis* is final decision maker	32%
No imam; *majlis* is final decision maker	15%

Figure 5

Mosque Organizational Types by Predominant Ethnicity					
	Ethnicity of Mosque				
	African-American	**South Asian**	**Arab**	**South Asian and Arab**	**All Others**
Organizational Types					
Imam-led mosque	93%	36%	32%	25%	63%
Majlis-led mosque	7%	64%	68%	75%	37%

The typical African-American mosque is small, urban and low-budget, and tends to be imam-led. *Majlis*-led mosques tend to be larger, high-budget, and evenly divided between urban and suburban.

When African-American mosques are removed from the calculations and only immigrant mosques are considered, some differences between imam-led and *majlis*-led mosques disappear but others remain. One difference that disappears is the urban-suburban split: the location of immigrant mosques is evenly divided between urban and suburban areas. Another major difference is size. Immigrant imam-led mosques tend to be smaller than immigrant *majlis*-led mosques: while eight percent of imam-led mosques have *jum'ah* attendance of over 500, 20 percent of *majlis*-led mosques have attendance over 500.

There is also a slight association of mosque leadership with budget. While 25 percent of immigrant imam-led mosques have a budget over $100,000, 32 percent of *majlis*-led mosques have a budget over $100,000.

Figure 6

Mosque Organizational Types by *Jum'ah* Prayer Attendance
(Immigrant Mosques Only)

Jum'ah Attendance	Imam-led mosque	*Majlis*-led mosque
4 ±50	23%	18%
51 ±100	22%	13%
101 ±200	18%	15%
201 ±500	29%	34%
500 +	8%	20%

N=297 a is icall s i i ica a 017

Figure 7

Mosque Organizational Types by Mosque Income
(Immigrant Mosques Only)

Mosque Income	Imam-led mosque	*Majlis*-led mosque
0 ±$9,999	24%	13%
10,000 ±39,999	29%	27%
40,000 ±99,999	22%	28%
100,000 +	25%	32%

N=270 a is icall s i i ica a 082

It can be argued that the larger the mosque, the greater the need and pressure to be more inclusive of mosque participants, and the greater the need to have an effective *majlis*; the smaller the mosque, the easier it is for a strong imam to maintain authority. From this point of view, a strong imam organizational model may be a deterrent to mosque growth.

The *majlis*-led organizational model, where the *majlis* is the final decision maker and the imam is not considered the mosque leader, is almost exclusively an immigrant phenomenon. The adoption of this model reflects two factors. One is that immigrant mosques were founded as a result of the efforts of a group of people who gave their time and money for that purpose. This investment by the group confers a deep psychological sense of ownership. As in the formative period of congregations in American history, lay leadership held central power in the congregations because they were the founders and because clergy were for the most part absent. Lay leaders who built and maintained the mosques did not want to give up authority to an imam.

The second factor is that many immigrant Muslims do not have full trust or respect for imams. Many in South Asia, particularly the educated elite, have little respect for poorly educated village imams who are graduates only of Qur'an schools. In the United States, graduates of *madrasahs* are given responsibility for leading prayers and teaching the children Qur'an, but little else—they sometimes do not even deliver the Friday sermon. In the Arab world, the status of imam has suffered in the past decades as the best and brightest students chose the world of science while only the less capable opted to pursue religious degrees. In addition, the simple reality is that imams in the Muslim world are not trained for the job of leading a congregation and are viewed as qualified only to lead prayer and teach Islam. Most mosques in the Muslim world define the role of imams as dealing with anything that directly relates to Islam: prayers, sermons, performing marriages, funerals and giving Islamic counseling. All other activities and mosque business are the responsibility of the *majlis*.

In addition to the imam's lack of qualifications for leading the mosque, his role is limited by the concern that if he had too much power he might take the mosque in unacceptable directions or simply wrest power from the *majlis*. In some mosques the *majlis* is concerned that the imam might be too conservative for the more liberal direction of the *majlis*. One female *majlis* member of a multimillion dollar Islamic center that does not have an imam commented that the *majlis* had looked for an imam but could not find one that fit its mentality. Her hope was that a medical doctor, who gave most of the sermons at the mosque, would retire and then serve as imam.[5]

The *majlis*-led model presents a number of problems, however. Frequently, when a *majlis*-led mosque has a well-liked imam, mosque participants support a more powerful role for him. In these cases, the *majlis* can be viewed as an arena for self-interest politics while the imam is viewed as pure and concerned only about Islam. Another problem that can befall *majlis*-led mosques is the frequent firing of imams who are perceived as stepping out of line, especially if the *majlis* disapproves of their sermons.

In American history the professionalization of the clergy led to its greater power in the congregation. A fair assumption is that when imams are better trained to serve congregations, their power in congregations will grow and that of the *majlis* will diminish. Such professionalization will occur when American-based Islamic seminaries are established to train American-born imams or systematic training programs are developed for imams educated overseas.

The introduction of professionally trained imams in African-American mosques might also cause change in the imam-led model. If a mosque is wealthy enough to hire an imam, it is likely to maintain the power to fire him as well, increasing the *majlis'* power.

Most mosques currently tend to one of two extremes, in which either the imam has total power or the *majlis* has power and the imam is not considered the leader. The middle ground and the model that seems to offer the best means for shared governance is a mosque in which the imam is the leader but the *majlis* is active and has final decision-making authority. Only 13 percent of mosques have this type of organizational structure, and the number of these mosques in the *Mosque in America* sample is too low to permit accurate assessment of their effectiveness. It might be assumed that the model will become more popular as mosques grow in size and imams become more professionalized.

PAID AND VOLUNTEER IMAMS

The tenuous position of the imam is reflected in the fact that only one-third (33%) of mosques have paid, full-time imams (16 percent of these

Figure 8

Paid/Volunteer and Full Time/Part Time Imams	
Paid, Full-Time	33%
Paid, Part-Time	7%
Volunteer, Full-Time	11%
Volunteer, Part-Time	30%
No Imam	19%

imams work a second job). A little over seven percent of mosques have paid, part-time imams. Over 40 percent of all mosques have volunteer imams.

Based on comments in the survey, the volunteer, full-time imams are in some cases retired or disabled and therefore able to give a large amount of time to the mosque. The majority, however, are imams who have a secular full-time job but give so much time to the mosque that they consider their imam position to be a full-time job. A few indicated that they are paid as the principal of the mosque's Islamic school and their position as imam is unpaid although full-time.

The full-time, paid imam is almost entirely a phenomenon of the immigrant mosque. Over 93 percent of all full-time, paid imams hold their position in immigrant mosques; only seven percent are in African-American mosques. Of the immigrant mosques, South Asian mosques have the greatest number of full-time, paid imams. This is probably due both to the South Asian custom of having the *madrasah*-trained imam lead prayer in mosques and to the fact that since few South Asians are fluent in Arabic, most mosque participants would not feel qualified for the position of imam.

The majority of volunteer imams are African-American. Almost three-fourths (74%) of full-time, volunteer imams are African Americans. Almost half (49%) of all part-time, volunteer imams are from African-American mosques.

In most cases, paid imams are not the leaders of the mosque, while volunteer imams are the leaders. Approximately 71 percent of paid, full-time imams and 60 percent of paid, part-time imams serve in mosques where they are not the leader. Two-thirds of volunteer, part-time imams function as leaders.

Figure 9

Paid, Full-Time Imams and Mosque Ethnicity	
South Asian	41%
Arab	17.5%
South Asian/Arab	17.5%
Other	17%
African-American	7%

Figure 10

Mosque Leadership and Paid/Volunteer and Full-Time/Part-Time Imams				
	Paid Full-Time	Paid Part-Time	Volunteer Full-Time	Volunteer Part-Time
Imam is leader	29%	40%	86%	66%
Imam is not leader	71%	60%	14%	34%

Unpaid volunteers clearly run the vast majority of American mosques. This reflects the dual reality that African-American mosques do not have paid imams and immigrant mosques do not give the paid imams major leadership responsibilities.

Mosques with an annual income of over $40,000 and *jum'ah* attendance of over 201 are most likely to have a paid imam, whether full- or part-time. While 25 percent of mosques with an income between $10,000 and $39,999 have paid imams, 53 percent of mosques with an income between $40,000 and $99,999 have a paid imam.

Jum'ah attendance of over two hundred seems to be a decisive threshold in having a paid imam. While 35 percent of mosques with attendance between 101 and 200 have paid imams, 63 percent of mosques with attendance between 201 and 500 have paid imams.

Mosques have a remarkably low number of paid clergy in comparison with other religious congregations in the United States. Only 33 percent of mosques have full-time, paid imams, while 89 percent of other congregations have paid ministers.[6] All small congregations have difficulty employing a full-time, paid pastor. About 48 percent of Presbyterian churches with Sunday attendance below 90, for example, have no full-time pastor, but the vacancy rate is only 12 percent for churches with attendance roughly between 90 and 250.[7] Similarly, 83 percent of mosques with *jum'ah* attendance under 100 do not have full-time paid

Figure 11

Paid/Volunteer Imams by Mosque Annual Income				
	Mosque Annual Income			
	0 ±$9,999	$10,000 ± $39,999	$40,000 ± $99,999	$100,000 +
Paid Imam	19%	25%	53%	68%
Volunteer Imam	59%	48%	34%	17%
No Imam	22%	27%	13%	15%

Figure 12

Paid/Volunteer Imams by *Jum'ah* Prayer Attendance					
	***Jum'ah* Attendance**				
	4 ±50	51 ±100	101 ±200	201 ±500	501 +
Paid Imam	12%	30%	35%	63%	75%
Volunteer Imam	61%	45%	51%	25%	8%
No Imam	27%	25%	14%	12%	17%

imams. While only 12 percent of Presbyterian churches with attendance of 101 – 200 lack paid ministers, 84 percent of mosques with similar attendance do not have paid imams.

The low number of paid imams is largely attributable to the low priority given to hiring them, which stems from the lack of respect for them and suspicion of imams trained overseas. In one East Coast mosque in the *Mosque in America* survey, as the mosque leader talked about the extensive plans for building a new mosque, a Christian visitor asked him when the mosque intended to hire an imam. The mosque leader looked a little puzzled and explained that an imam was not necessary and that in any event the congregation was not certain it could find a man whose views of Islam did not clash with theirs.

Another reason for the low number of paid imams could be the relatively low incomes of mosques. This observation in turn suggests another difference between mosques and congregations of other faiths. Mosque incomes are small because of the relatively small donations given by mosque attendees. The average number of attendees at a Southern Baptist church, for example, is 161, and the average annual giving per attendee is $952.[8] The average *jum'ah* attendance at mosques with an income of 0 –

Figure 14

Projection of Mosque Income Using Southern Baptist Giving Rate

Mosque Income	Average *Jum'ah* Attendance	Projected Income Using Southern Baptist Formula ($952 per person)
0 ±$9,999	87	$82,824
10,000 ±39,999	125	$119,000
40,000 ±99,999	312	$297,024
100,000 +	712	$677,824

$9,999 is 87. Using the Southern Baptist formula of $952 donated per attendee, 87 attendees should result in a budget of $82,824—a far cry from $9,999.

Mosque attendees clearly do not donate at the same rate as Southern Baptists or any other Christian congregation. This is not attributable to lower individual income levels of mosque attendees, as most researchers point to the relatively high income levels for Muslims in general and immigrant Muslims in particular. The recent *Muslims in the Public Square* survey found that over 50 percent of Muslims earn more than $50,000 annually.[9] The low mosque income stems instead from the tenuous identity of mosques as congregations. Overseas mosques are not supported by the body of attendees; they depend largely, as indicated earlier, on rich patrons or the government. The idea of being committed to a mosque community of which one is a member, and of contributing funds to it, is not well established in the immigrant Muslim mind. The result is that the wealthy members of the mosque provide the primary support for the mosque.

PAID/VOLUNTEER IMAMS AND MOSQUE ACTIVITIES

Paid imams are not associated with increased *masjid* (mosque) activity except in the area of traditional Islamic activities such as classes, congregational prayer, and holding all five daily prayers in the mosque. The *Mosque in America* study used five scales for *masjid* activities: 1) Islamic activities (weekend school, various classes, youth activities, etc.), 2) *salah* (prayer—whether a *masjid* held all five prayers), 3) community involvement (various social and community services such as giving food and anti-

Figure 15

High Levels of Mosque Activities by Paid/Volunteer Imam (Percentage of mosques with paid/volunteer imam that score high in activity)			
	Paid Imam	**Volunteer Imam**	**No Imam**
High Islamic activities (8 – 10 activities)	61%	45%	31%
All five *salah* held	87%	56%	58%
High community involvement (6 – 7 activities)	19%	32%	9%
High outreach (3 activities)	55%	62%	46%
High political involvement (4 activities)	26%	18%	14%

Figure 16

High *Masjid* Activities by Mosque Ethnicity		
Activity	**African-American Mosques**	**Immigrant Mosques**
High community involvement	48%	13%
High outreach	70%	51%
High political involvement	26%	19%

crime programs, which benefit both Muslims and non-Muslims), 4) outreach (visiting churches, contacting the media, interfaith activities), and 5) political involvement (contacting politicians, having politicians visit the mosque, voter registration).

Ironically, mosques with volunteer imams are more active in community involvement and outreach than mosques with paid imams. Mosques with paid imams do better than those with volunteer imams only in the political arena. Mosques with volunteer imams are more active primarily because African-American imams, who are almost all volunteer imams, are more externally focused and more concerned with issues of social justice, outreach and politics.

Even when African-American imams are excluded from the calculations, mosques with paid imams are no more active than mosques with volunteer imams. The only exception is in the area of political activities. Twenty-five percent of mosques with paid imams have a high level of

Figure 17

High Mosque Activities by Paid Mosque Staff (immigrant mosques only)			
Activity	No full-time paid staff	One full-time paid staff	Two full-time paid staff
High community involvement	7%	10%	28%
High outreach	46%	52%	64%
High political involvement	8%	16%	46%

political activity in comparison to nine percent for mosques with volunteer imams and 15 percent for mosques with no imams. The greater political involvement of mosques with paid imams probably has less to do with whether imams are paid or volunteer than with the fact that political involvement is often associated with larger, wealthier mosques, which are also the mosques with the greatest number of paid imams.

The overall association of paid imams with high levels of Islamic activities and low levels of other mosque activities confirms the observation that the job of trained imams is in most cases limited to Islamic activities and does not include other mosque activities such as community service and outreach.

Although paid imams are not associated with high levels of external mosque activities, paid mosque staff is, but only if African-American mosques are excluded from the statistical analysis. The difference is linked to having full-time staff beyond the imam. Mosques that have two or more paid staff are typically those with larger attendance and higher incomes. Logically, when a mosque is large and wealthy, it can afford to hire extra staff that can focus on external activities.

EDUCATIONAL BACKGROUND OF IMAMS

Almost two-thirds (63%) of imams do not have at least a B.A. in Islamic studies. Only 13 percent of imams have an M.A., which would be roughly comparable to the kind of professional degree required of most Christian and Jewish clergy. Approximately 16 percent of imams have a "certificate." For South Asians, that signifies a person who has graduat-

Figure 18

Islamic Education of Imams	
B.A. from overseas Islamic university	24%
M.A. or Ph.D. from overseas Islamic university	10%
M.A. or Ph.D. from American university	3%
Certificate	16%
No formal Islamic education	47%

Figure 19

Islamic Education of Imams by Mosque Ethnicity					
	Ethnicity of Mosque				
Islamic Education	**African American**	**South Asian**	**Arab**	**South Asian and Arab**	**All Others**
B.A. from overseas Islamic university	3%	30%	48%	38%	29%
M.A. or Ph.D. from overseas Islamic university	1%	15%	15%	14%	15%
M.A. or Ph.D. from American university	0%	5%	2%	7%	4%
Certificate	18%	19%	0%	22%	12%
No formal Islamic education	78%	31%	35%	19%	40%

ed from a Qur'an school or *madrasah*; for African Americans, it means completing a short training program for imams offered by various organizations.

Only four percent of African-American mosques have an imam with at least a B.A. degree in Islamic studies, and over three-fourths (78%) of African-American mosques have an imam with no formal Islamic training. Since the 1970s a handful of African Americans have completed B.A.s in Islamic universities overseas and even more have completed the Arabic language programs (often two to three years) offered by Islamic universities, but few of these African Americans serve as imams in mosques. The reasons are multi-faceted. First, most African-American mosques cannot afford to pay a full-time imam and therefore most of these trained imams have taken chaplain jobs in the prison system. Second, tension has existed between the established, non-trained imams and the trained, often younger imams. The non-trained imam frequently feels threatened by the trained imam, and the trained imam often views the untrained imam with condescension.

Arab mosques have the highest percentage of imams with at least a B.A.: 65 percent, as compared to 49 percent for South Asian mosques. Over 19 percent of South Asian mosques and 22 percent of mosques evenly divided between South Asians and Arabs, but none of the Arab mosques, have imams who possess a certificate.

As with paid imams, imams with Islamic degrees are more typical of large, higher income and suburban mosques; mosques with imams who lack formal Islamic education tend to be smaller, lower-income and urban. Imams with certificates are more evenly distributed among all mosques. Islamic education is not associated with higher external activities, and mosques with imams who have no formal Islamic education have fewer Islamic activities but more external activities. The association of Islamic education with higher levels of Islamic activities is equally true for imams with certificates and imams with Islamic degrees.

ATTITUDES OF IMAMS AND MOSQUE LEADERS

The Mosque in America does not provide definitive answers about the social and political attitudes of imams and mosque leaders. Approximately 40 percent of all imams in the study were interviewed. Almost three-fourths (74%) were from mosques where the imam is the leader, and 26 percent were from those where the imam is not the leader. The views of imams who are not the leaders of their mosques, and who are also largely the imams with Islamic degrees, are therefore not well represented. With this limitation in mind, I have divided interviewees between African-American imams, immigrant imams and mosque leaders. African-American imams are almost all in mosques where they are the leader. Immigrant imams are evenly divided between mosques where they are the leader and those mosques where they are not.

What emerges overall are only subtle differences among African-American imams, immigrant imams and mosque leaders. All three groups favor Muslim involvement in American society, most worry about the immorality of American society, and most are fairly middle-of-the-road in terms of Islamic conservatism.

Figure 20

Interviewees for the Mosque Study	
African-American imams	21%
Immigrant imams	19%
Mosque leaders	60%

Survey respondents were asked to agree or disagree with the statement that Muslims should be involved in American politics. Overall, a higher percentage of immigrant imams agreed with the statement than any other group. A large number of immigrant imams "somewhat agree," indicating that they do not feel that participation is a high priority or that they are worried about its utility. Nonetheless, this dispels any notion that immigrant imams are committed to isolationism. A small but significant number of African-American imams oppose political participation. Many of them believe that the United States government and its entire political system are oppressive, suppressing Black people and the poor and hating Islam for opposing that system. One leader commented that "we live in the belly of the beast." From the point of view of these imams, politics has won little for poor people and has not changed the basic plight of African Americans. On the contrary, these imams believe that political involvement entails compromise and corruption of one's principles and dignity.

Another survey question asked whether the United States is an immoral society. Over two-thirds of each group agreed with the statement that the United States is immoral, indicating the deep concern that imams and mosque leaders have about the moral climate of American society. Immigrant imams do not have a harsher view of the United States than do other imams and mosque leaders.

The Mosque in America attempted to measure the level of conservatism/traditionalism among imams and mosque leaders by asking a question about their interpretations of the holy texts of Qur'an and *Sunnah* (normative practice of the Prophet). The study delineated three categories: 1) a literal interpretation of the texts without reference to the classical legal schools. This group includes leaders, found largely in the Arabian Gulf region, who follow the highly conservative interpretation of *salafi* thought; 2) those who follow one of the classical legal schools (*madhhabs*) and would be considered traditionalists; 3) those who follow the

Figure 21

Percentage of Imams/Leaders agreeing/disagreeing with the statement “Muslims should participate in the political process”

Political participation	**African-American Imams**	**Immigrant Imams**	**Mosque Leaders**
Strongly agree	72%	68%	73%
Somewhat agree	12%	28%	15%
Strongly/Somewhat Disagree	16%	4%	12%

N=410 Statistically significant at .011

Figure 22

“America is an immoral,corrupt society” by Imams/Leaders
Percentage agreeing/disagreeing with the statement

America is immoral	**African-American Imams**	**Immigrant Imams**	**Mosque Leaders**
Strongly agree	32%	32%	25%
Somewhat agree	35%	34%	43%
Strongly/Somewhat Disagree	33%	34%	32%

N=402 Not Statistically significant

Qur’an and *Sunnah* but are willing to use a contextual interpretation. This last group includes a wide spectrum of leaders, some of whom are fairly liberal but the majority of whom remain close to the fairly conservative classical consensus of the great scholars.

Over two-thirds of imams and mosque leaders took the position that the Qur’an and *Sunnah* should be interpreted in light of modern circumstances. Surprisingly, only eight percent of immigrant imams said that they follow one of the traditional *madhhabs*, which would have seemed to be the logical preference of graduates of South Asian *madrasahs*. The more middle-of-the-road response indicates that imams, especially immigrant imams, are not strong advocates of traditionalism or extreme conservatism.

A greater conservatism is evidenced in the responses to a question about women’s participation on the governing board of the mosque. The mosques of African-American imams are relatively open to women par-

Figure 23

Islamic Approach by Imams/Leaders			
Islamic Approach	**African-American Imams**	**Immigrant Imams**	**Mosque Leaders**
Contextual	23%	26%	20%
Literal	76%	66%	73%
Madhhabi	1%	8%	7%

N=404 Not Statistically significant

Figure 24

™Are women allowed on the governing board? by Imams/Leaders			
	African-American Imams	**Immigrant Imams**	**Mosque Leaders**
Yes	82%	61%	68%
No	18%	39%	32%

N=403 Statistically significant at .01

ticipating in mosque governance: 82 percent allow women on the board. A significant number (39%) of the mosques of immigrant imams and mosque leaders, however, responded that women are not allowed on the board. This seems to indicate that while theological conservatism might not be dominant, immigrant mosques retain a significant degree of social conservatism. It should be noted that immigrant imams do not seem to be the sole bearers of this conservatism; instead, it is part of a set of cultural values that Muslim immigrants have transported to the United States.

CONCLUSION

Mosques are in their formative stage in the history of Islam in the United States, and changes are inevitable as the Muslim community matures. A solid foundation for the future growth of mosques has been laid, but critical issues such as the tenuous identity of mosques as congregations and the uneasy leadership position of imams remain to be resolved.

While mosques are congregations, the idea of congregationalism does not fit well with Islamic theology. In Islam, mosques belong to God, not to a particular group. Muslims are members of the *ummah*, not a mosque.

For mosques to flourish, however, it is clear that they must garner a greater commitment of human and financial resources from participants. The challenge lies in balancing the Islamic impulse for unity against the practical need for strong congregations. Mosques need Muslims to feel a sense of membership in the mosque, even if it is not the equivalent of a Christian commitment to membership in a particular church.

Today's mosques are either imam-centered (primarily African-American mosques) or *majlis*-centered (largely immigrant mosques). There are problems with both models. Can the American mosque find a balance between the imam and lay leadership? The central fact is that the traditional position and role of imam does not fit the needs of mosques in the United States. When effective Islamic seminaries are established in the United States, a new stage will begin in the history of Islam in this country. Imams who are trained for the American mosque should accelerate the development of the mosque and its activities, but this development portends a battle within mosques with a strong *majlis* or strong imam. While the *majlis* and entrenched imam are likely to resist the trained imam, it nonetheless seems inevitable that the trained imam will eventually triumph.

The challenge, however, will be to balance the power and authority of the imam with the Islamic tradition's lack of a clerical class and the belief that the Islamic community as a whole is the focus of God's relationship to humans. To be true to both the needs of the congregation and the Islamic worldview, a mosque should not follow the clergy paradigm of an imam-centered institution where the imam is the nexus of congregational life. While imams should be the leaders of mosques, the real authority must remain with the community of believers. Leadership will then be more collaborative, with the imam a partner in the congregation's mission, empowering the human resources within the congregation as a whole.

NOTES

1. Ihsan Bagby, Paul M. Perl, and Bryan T. Froehle, *The Mosque in America: A National Portrait* (Council on American-Islamic Relations, 2001), http://www.cair-net.org/mosquereport/Masjid_Study_Project_2000_Report.pdf. The study was con-

ducted in cooperation with Hartford Seminary's Faith Communities Today (FACT) study. The FACT study brought together virtually all American denominations, which devised a common questionnaire. Each group then administered the questionnaire to leaders of its congregations. The MIA study first identified all the mosques in the United States. A total of 1209 mosques were counted, and 631 were randomly sampled for the study. Telephone interviews were successfully conducted from March to September, 2000 with 416 leaders (a completion rate of 66 percent). The results have a margin of error of ±5 percent.

2. "Immigrant" includes people who were born in the United States but whose parents or grandparents were born abroad. There are, however, only a handful of mosques that are dominated by second or third-generation immigrants.

3. Stephen R. Warner, "The Place of the Congregation in the Contemporary American Religious Configuration," in James P. Wind and James W. Lewis, eds., *American Congregations: New Perspectives in the Study of Congregations* (University of Chicago Press, 1994), v. 2, pp. 54-99.

4. Jay P. Dolan, "Patterns of Leadership in the Congregation," in Wind and Lewis, op. cit., pp. 225-256.

5. Conversation between author and mosque official at the Islamic Association of Cincinnati, April 18, 2003.

6. Carl S. Dudley and David A. Roozen, *Faith Communities Today: A Report on Religion in the United States Today* (Hartford Seminary, 2001), p. 64.

7. Presbyterian Research Services, "Congregations, How They are Served, Giving Information, and Worship Attendance by Church Membership Size–2001," http://www.pcusa.org/research/compstats/cs2001_table15.pdf.

8. Dean R. Hoge, Charles Zech, Patrick McNamara, and Michael J. Donahue, *Money Matters: Personal Giving in American Churches* (John Knox Press, 1996), pp. 29, 32.

9. Zogby International and Project MAPS: Muslims in American Public Square, "American Muslim Poll (Nov/Dec 2001)" (December 19, 2001), p. 6, http://www.projectmaps.com/pmreport.pdf.

PART TWO

MUSLIM AMERICANS IN THE WORLD

AMERICAN ISLAMIC INTELLECTUAL ACTIVITY AND THE ISLAMIC WORLD

SEYYED HOSSEIN NASR*

The subject of "American Islamic Intellectual Activity and the Islamic World" might lead skeptics to ask, what American Islamic intellectual activity? Few Muslims are currently present in the main intellectual arena in the United States, with the exception of a handful involved in Islamic studies. That, however, is gradually beginning to change.

There are two types of Muslim scholars who engage in intellectual activities of various kinds in this country. One type is those who were born Muslims and are immigrants or the children of immigrants to this country. The second is those, essentially from European backgrounds but also some African Americans, who have become Muslims.

Members of the second group are usually more engaged in the wider agenda of intellectual activity in this country than those in the first group. This is quite natural, and happened with Catholic immigrants in the nineteenth century as well as Jewish and Greek Orthodox immigrants in the early twentieth century. This phenomenon, however, is gradually changing for the Islamic community as well.

What conditions affect Islamic intellectual activity in this country? One of the greatest obstacles is the lack of criteria for evaluating Islamic intellectual activity and scholarship. Anyone with an Arabic or Persian or Urdu or Turkish name can claim to be a "Muslim thinker." This is unfortunate, especially at a time when the value of a Muslim name has gone up. There are many people who present themselves as authorities on Islam but are not. This situation tests the mettle of the virtues that the human soul must have in order to be a good scholar, because the temptation is very great. But it has had a negative effect upon what is considered in certain circles to be Islamic intellectual activity.

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* This is a lightly edited transcript of remarks made by Dr. Nasr at the luncheon session of the conference.

There is also the problem of lack of momentum within the Islamic community to further the cause of Islamic intellectual activity. While the Muslim community in the United States is well off economically in comparison with almost all other minorities (except the Jewish minority), there is very little momentum in most Muslims families for pushing the young in the direction of intellectual activity, as distinct from the pursuit of professions such as medicine and engineering. Having trained students for several generations here as well as in Iran and other parts of Islamic world, I always say jokingly that if parents who are devout Muslims and who love Islam have a son or daughter who announces that he or she has decided to enter the field of Islamic studies, philosophy, sociology or another intellectual field rather than medicine or engineering, the mother faints upon hearing of the decision. There is no push from the family towards an intellectual career for the children. This is in great contrast to the immigrant Jewish community in the early and middle part of the twentieth century; the Jewish experience then is something from which the Islamic community has a great deal to learn.

There are also, however, positive factors for the cultivation of authentic Islamic intellectual activity in this country. First and foremost of these is access to sources. One might say that the Internet makes it no longer necessary to be at the Library of Congress to have access to eighteen million books, but by sources I do not mean only written material or information transmitted by the Internet but human beings, first hand experiences of events, institutions, and objects of art and of historical significance. Even the information transmitted by the Internet, however, is a great deal more accessible in this country than in much of the Islamic world.

Secondly, it is almost impossible to be intellectually alert and active in this country and not be engaged with the issues of the day. No matter how much the earlier generation of the Islamic community tried to close itself off into a corner, the children, once they went to college, had to be involved with current issues and events. Therefore, in a sense, the Muslim community in this country, whether it likes it or not, is at the forefront of all the challenges facing the Islamic world as a whole.

Finally, and very importantly, there is the question of freedom. Freedom is a double-edged sword, in the sense that one can be free to be wrong and to destroy as well as be free to create. We have made a shibboleth out of freedom—we all love freedom—but we certainly do not love freedom to murder people or destroy sacred truth. In the field of religion and intellectual life there are those who have said that the Enlightenment was wonderful because it massacred Christian philosophy and theology, and those who have said that it was terrible because it secularized thought in the West. Freedom acts as a double-edged sword in the same way for the Islamic world and especially for Muslims in this country.

Even if it is a double-edged sword, intellectual freedom is very important; without it, there would be no intellectual creativity. Creativity implies the possibility of making mistakes, and Muslims must accept this risk as must Buddhists or Christians, Americans or Chinese or anybody else. If I write a piece of music or a poem, there is always the possibility that I may write a bad piece of music or a bad poem. But one has to take the risk even if one is afraid of doing something imperfect and negative. Of course, the risk in the case of Muslims in the United States is much greater than for those who already breathe in a completely secularized world, as far as religious truth is concerned, but freedom in this country has many more positive aspects than negative ones.

First, in the United States one is more free from the kind of local pressures that exist in different forms in the societies of the Islamic world. There are several types of governments within that world. Some, like Tunisia and Turkey, are secularist; some are pro-Western and some, like Egypt, are half-and-half; others, such as Pakistan, Iran and Saudi Arabia, consider themselves to be Islamic states (though all three have different understandings of what that term means). But in each instance, whether the government is trying to propagate a secularist position against Islam or a particular view of Islam for its own political reasons, other views are under pressure. What you can write about Ghazzali in Cairo is not always the same as what you can write about him here, because in Cairo you might write something that somebody in the government or al-Azhar does not like and then you can get yourself into trouble.[1] Here, nobody will bother you because of what you write on the subject, even if it is nonsense. As I mentioned, this also has a negative aspect: there is no distinct and reputable body of scholars in this country with Islamically acceptable religious and intellectual criteria for judging matters pertaining to Islam, in the same way that there are acknowledged scientific and academic experts and criteria for subjects such as American philosophy or chemistry or the history of the Civil War.

Second, the United States offers freedom from any direct political pressure, as far as writing on Islam is concerned, although there are at times invisible pressures. This makes the position of Muslims not only in the United States but also in Western Europe unique. This is the first time in Islamic history in which a number of very important Islamic thinkers live outside the borders of Islam and have an influence on the Islamic world itself. Nobody knows what the consequences of this will be.

What are the subjects of particular significance for Islamic intellectual activity which can enable the community to play a role in the Islamic world as a whole while advancing its own welfare within this country? I consider the following to be among the most important areas in which Islamic intellectual figures in the United States, Canada and, to some extent, Europe, are bound to play a significant and creative role in the years to come.

The first is modern philosophies and ideologies. For the last two or three centuries, Western civilization has set the agenda for the rest of the globe, even when other countries have opposed it. The non-Western world was witness to forces of anti-colonialism in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries when, for example, members of the Arab liberal movement in Egypt wrote against the British colonization of Egypt. On the intellectual level, challenging ideas were generated by the colonial powers; Muslims merely responded to them. Very few non-Western civilizations, whether Islamic, Hindu, Chinese, Buddhist, or others, have been able to set a global agenda, even intellectually; this is now more true than ever. The philosophical ideas usually float with the wind from the West to the rest of the world (except in certain special fields, such as mysticism, which go the other way), setting the context in which issues are discussed.

Nearly all "isms" of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries—Marxism, liberal capitalism, existentialism, feminism, socialism, nationalism—have come to the Islamic world from the West, and I believe that the first and most important duty of Islamic intellectual activity in this country is to respond to these ideas in their place of birth, not through a third hand translation that eventually reaches the Muslim intellectual elites in the Islamic world. There have been and will be excellent responses from there, but I think the role of the community here is crucial in this all-important matter.

During the past few decades, the relationship between religion and science has become another major issue for the Islamic world. The question of Islamic science, the so-called "Islamization of knowledge" first carried out under this rubric by my late colleague Ismail Ragi al-Faruqi, is one on which I have been writing since the 1950s. The relationship between religion and science affects so much of our lives because science is not just science: it has become an ideology and even another "religion" for many people, so the conflict is like that of one religion against another. For many people, truth and falsehood, ethics, and the meaning of life are drawn from science; this is called "scientism." This crucial issue includes the challenges of the applications of modern science. Many of these applications, such as abortion, euthanasia, cloning, biotechnologies, and robotics, are significant to the field of religion and crucial for the future of the whole of humanity but they are issues most traditional scholars in the Islamic world rarely discuss in depth. Whether we are Christian, Muslim, Jewish, a member of any other religion, or atheist, we will all be affected by these issues. Again, this is a more crucial matter for Islamic thinkers in this country than for those in the Islamic world itself because the United States is the center of this type of technological creativity. The technology can also be extremely destructive on a certain level and in a sense is now seeping into the very understanding of what it means to be human. Given that fact, it is quite remarkable how passive many major Islamic thinkers have been about these issues during the last few decades. Most concentrate on political and economic issues, as if the world is going to go on exactly as it is for centuries while we solve those problems. These issues are fundamental and cut across religions and cultures in many ways.

The environmental crisis is closely related to the issue of religion and science. I do not think I need say much here about the importance of the environmental crisis, with which I have been concerned for a long time. I was in fact one of the very first people to predict the environmental crisis. Six months before Lynn White, Jr., gave his famous talk at the American Association for the Advancement of Science meeting in 1966 on the historical roots of the ecological crisis,[2] I gave the Rockefeller Lectures at the University of Chicago, published as the book *Man and Nature*, in which I predicted a major environmental crisis and posited that its roots were really religious, spiritual and philosophical rather than merely bad engineering.[3] The book was received with deafening silence in most of the Islamic world for a long time. At that time, though, I had some influence in Iran and was able to help the government to establish the first national park system there. I arranged for courses on matters pertaining to the environment to be taught at Tehran University and at Aryamehr University, where I was president. The public nonetheless had no interest whatsoever in the subject, as if the air pollution in Tehran or Karachi had nothing to do with Tehran or Karachi but only with Los Angeles. It is the duty of Muslim thinkers here to awaken the rest of the Islamic world concerning this crucial issue. This is one of those fields in which freedom of expression is extremely important, because opposition on environmental grounds to a Muslims government's program can get you into political trouble. Here, at most, you might not get promoted next year if you make in-depth criticisms; there, you might be fired from your university post or land in prison.

Another issue which needs to be addressed is that of religious diversity. Although everybody in the United States talks about religious and cultural diversity, during the last two years the fruit of fifty years of ecumenical discussion between Christianity and Islam has been largely washed down the drain by ill-intentioned people who call the Islamic religion an evil religion. The discourse they generate is abominable and works against religious diversity. It must be answered by Muslim scholars and thinkers here before its bitter consequences reach the Islamic world.

Paradoxically, the Islamic world is very much interested in religious diversity. In a country like Iran, which is considered to be the arch Islamic fundamentalist state, there is a lot more discussion of religious diversity on the radio than there is on national radio stations in the United States. It is in fact one of the major issues on Tehran radio. The same is true in Malaysia and Indonesia. While it is not the case in every Islamic country, even in places like Egypt discussions in depth on this subject have begun in the last few years, and discussion on this matter is on the rise in countries such as Turkey. Jordan has hosted several conferences on this matter because of the intense interest of Prince Hassan and a few other people there. It has become a major intellectual issue for Muslims throughout the Islamic world.

The issue of religious diversity is being discussed in the literature in a variety of places and languages—Arabic, Persian, Turkish, Malay, Urdu, and so on. In Pakistan the tension between Muslims and the small Christian minority is being discussed, as is the question of Hinduism and the Muslim minority in India. This is a field to which the Muslims living in the United States have a duty to contribute. They not only must promote an understanding between Islam and both Christianity and Judaism, but must also bring out the salience and the significance of religious diversity in the kind of world in which we live.

Closely related to this issue is a Muslim response to specific Christian attacks. Attacks have been made against Islam by certain Christian writers going back to the ninth century, when after the conquest of Andalusia the translation of the book of John the Damascene on Islam from Greek into Latin became a source of misunderstanding of and attack against Islam. There is a thousand year history of these types of attacks.

What is going on now, however, is worse: pseudo-theological attacks motivated by politics and expediency on the part of some of the Christian far right. Not all but some of these figures made the same attacks against Judaism thirty years ago, but since attacks against Judaism are no longer politically expedient, they have turned their attacks against Islam. Who is going to answer these attacks? What will be the consequences when the attacks are known to every person in the bazaars of Damascus and Cairo? Some Muslim governments have tried to censor information about these attacks against Islam, yet many people have of course found out and there is already a great amount of anger. It is the duty of Islamic scholars in this country to respond to these attacks with reason and logic, with compassion rather than anger, and to appeal to religious teaching as well as human and historical situations, in order to provide effective answers.

Yet there have not been many such responses; most people have been afraid to speak. We live in times when a man who does not have the courage to give his own name uses instead a pseudonym taken from a medieval writer; that is, Ibn Warraq; and writes pernicious books against Islam which are widely distributed.[4] If these books had been written against any other religion, they would have been called hate literature and would not have been published; yet they are found in every Barnes & Noble and Borders bookstore in this country. At the same time, many good books written by Muslims are sold only in *halal* meat markets, because mainstream bookstores refuse to carry them. This is obviously a major problem. The Islamic intellectual community is not going to survive easily if it is forced to live in an expanding atmosphere of hatred, with the proponents of this hatred hoping that it will take over the whole of society. Fortunately, that is not yet the case, but the trend is clear and the Islamic intellectual community has the responsibility to deal with it now before it is too late.

Closely related to this task is the duty of Muslim scholars in this country to provide a reasonable, intellectual and scholarly response to those Western scholars of Islamic studies who are in fact agnostics or atheists or who hate Islam. Some of them are excellent scholars who, although they do not hate Islam, do not write with sympathy with the goal of understanding it and yet think that they know more about Islam than Muslims do. People who have taken two years of Arabic sometimes claim that they know more about what the Qur'an means to Muslims than somebody who has read the Qur'an every day of his or her life for fifty years. They claim that they are simply carrying out an objective study of Islam. Every study, however, implies a point of view, an ideology, a doctrine; philosophically speaking, it is impossible to study anything except from a certain point of view. It is the same way with the experience of the physical world. You cannot look at an object except from the particular point from which your eye looks at that object. Yet on the pretext that this type of scholarship is objective, many people are afraid to criticize it.

Fortunately, there is now a whole generation of younger Muslim scholars in the field of Islamic studies teaching or studying in this country. Many of them are very gifted, and I have a great deal of hope for them, but they will need the courage to face these invisible opponents. Happily, they have allies in a number of non-Muslim Western scholars of Islam who study it with empathy rather than disdain. If the young Muslim scholars do not say the right things at the right times, however, their promotion might be delayed for a year, or some similar punishment may be meted out. Nevertheless, it is really their duty to respond, even more so than it was fifty or a hundred years ago when, for example, Ameer Ali published *The Spirit of Islam* to answer the English missionaries who had gone to India to convert the Muslims.[5] Today the debate about the study of Islam from a Western point of view, presented simply as the objective study of Islam, must be carried out in this country and in Europe more than anywhere else and the answers must be provided above all by the Muslim intellectual community in the West. Furthermore, Western Muslims will not be able to get into other fields of endeavor unless they are intellectual in an Islamically meaningful way.

To formulate intellectual Islamic responses, what is required is authenticity. The Islamic community in this country can write thousands of books, give thousands of lectures, but if the rest of the Islamic world does not listen to them, they will be irrelevant. I have said jokingly that for the Islamic scholars who establish themselves in Western circles and even become famous, the test of authenticity is to go and proclaim their ideas in the bazaar of Cairo or Damascus. If tomatoes are not thrown at them, I will consider them to be speaking on behalf of those people; otherwise, they speak on behalf of nobody but themselves. The great danger that exists today, and that concerns the question of authenticity, exists in many different fields; law is an example. It is possible, of course, to interpret Islamic law in new situations, but you not only have to know the existing conditions well, but you must also have the necessary legal knowledge. An eminent English Muslim friend of mine said recently that there are 1,800,000 Muslims in Great Britain and 1,800,000 muftis and specialists in Islamic law. Many people open up the Qur'an and say, "I read this or that verse in translation and my interpretation is this." Authenticity requires knowledge and tradition. Without them, the impact of the Islamic community in this country on the Islamic world will be trivial and irrelevant. In fact one hopes that views based on totally inadequate knowledge will not dominate thinking among the more than billion people in the Islamic world. That would simply strengthen the allegations already being made by some political opponents of the United States who speak negatively about American Islam. This type of criticism already exists in the streets of the Middle East, and is going to become much more accentuated if far-fetched interpretations of Islamic matters by Muslims living in the West begin to inundate the Islamic world.

It would be a great asset for the United States if an American Islamic scholar living in this country could write something that the people of Iraq or Iran or Pakistan or Egypt could read and appreciate and enjoy, and with which they could identify. They will say, "Look, this man is an American, but whether he has blond or black hair does not matter; he is writing in the United States but he is writing something that is authentically Islamic." If everything in the United States is written in such a way that it appears to those in the Islamic world as a kind of subversion, the political situation will become much more difficult.

Despite all of these difficulties, there is every possibility that the Islamic intellectual community in the United States, Canada, and Western Europe can and will play an important role in the future of the Islamic world. But the community must live up to its responsibilities and retain its authenticity.

The Islamic world even five hundred years ago was very vast, stretching from the Atlantic to the China Sea, yet almost always the center of ideas and influence remained in an area between Cairo and Lahore. This area was like a mountain top: when it rains on top of a mountain, the rain comes down to the bottom of the mountain and to the valley, but the opposite is not true. Throughout Islamic history nearly all the influential Islamic thinkers came from this area, with one great exception: Andalusia. Andalusia was the home of major ideas in fields from botany, medicine and philosophy to mysticism, theology and literature. The influence of the Iberian experience was felt in the heartland of the Islamic world, and there is no intellectual figure of the last seven hundred years more influential in the Islamic world than Muhyi al-Din ibn ‘Arabi, who came from Murcia in Andalusia.

The modern-day Islamic community in the United States could possibly become another Andalusian intellectual community for the rest of the Islamic world. Although we do not have the contiguity they had then (one had only to cross the Gibraltar Straits to be in Morocco), it does not matter because we now have modern means of communication. I hope and pray, at this very important historical moment not only in the Islamic world but also in the United States and in the rest of the world, that the Islamic intellectual community will realize what a tremendous challenge, and at the same time opportunity, it faces by virtue of the gifts God has given to the people who live in this country: the possibility to think, write, and live in peace and freedom, and to tackle the fundamental issues which concern the rest of the Islamic world and, ultimately, the whole of humanity.

QUESTION AND ANSWER PERIOD

QUESTION: You raise the question of authenticity as a requirement for intellectual activity in the United States. We know, however, that there is tension between the African-American Muslim community and the so-called immigrant Muslim community about the definitive American approach to Islam. How do you reconcile that with your call for authenticity?

PROF. NASR: Throughout history Islam has manifested itself in very different cultures and societies, creating in each case an expression of Islamic culture that resonated with authenticity for the people living there. The American Islamic community, whether immigrant, African-American or Euro-American, must create its own American Muslim culture, one that is both American and Islamic, unless it is to survive only in a ghetto form.

In this context it is important to study the experience of Islam in China. For the first few centuries Chinese Muslims effectively ghettoized themselves. They wrote only in Persian and Arabic, rather than in Chinese, until the seventeenth century. Then the Islamic community decided to be a Chinese Islamic community and began to write in Chinese, using Neo-Confucian terms.

There have been tensions between Islamic communities in the past: between the *Ansar* and the *Mahajirun*, the Persians and the Arabs, the Turks and the Punjabis, and so on, but a *modus vivendi* gradually emerged. The black African community has every right to develop a black African Islamic culture that is not necessarily going to be identical to the Indian, Persian or Arabic one. In the same way, the Nigerian or Senegalese Islamic culture is not the same as the Iranian or Egyptian. In India, there are different Islamic cultures in Gujrat and Punjab. There does not have to be one homogeneous Islamic culture here.

QUESTION: The current American administration seems determined to reform Islam, and has developed programs to reform the educational system in Afghanistan. Now it is speaking about reforming the educational system in places like Saudi Arabia and Iraq. What is the challenge for us in that?

PROF. NASR: It might be a good idea to begin by reforming the curriculum of places like Bob Jones University, given the message of hate they propagate, and then turn to Afghanistan. But if there is going to be a change of curriculum, it should be undertaken by the people who are going to be involved in it. The British tried to impose curricular reform on both the Hindu and Muslim schools in nineteenth century India. The effort backfired and in fact led to great opposition to the West. We should remember that almost all of the most virulent opponents of the United States in the Arab world were graduates of the American University of Beirut (AUB) in the 1950s, 1960s and 1970s. AUB was established in the nineteenth century to convert the Arabs to Presbyterian Christianity and was utilized to brainwash them in the twentieth century when AUB became more secular. Our role must be to explain that if reforms are to be made, they must come from within. It is impossible to coerce religious reform from another religion. Islam would love to reform Hinduism, but that will not happen; God will not permit it. Islam cannot reform Christianity—although many wish that they could reform Christianity so that there would not be so much nudity on television and the Internet in the United States and, through their influence, elsewhere.

Question: For the average Muslim in the United States or in the Muslim world, the life of the community is still mediated largely through Islamic law. The question is how can I, sitting here in Washington, D.C., speak to issues of Islamic law in Cairo or Kuala Lumpur and, similarly, how can someone sitting in Riyadh or Damascus speak effectively about issues in the life of a community in the United States?

Prof. Nasr: There are certain aspects of the law which are universal, such as whether you should say your prayers four or five times a day. But there are many domains which are particular to a culture, and this again has historical precedents when, for example, Islam went to black Africa. Practices were followed there that were not followed in, let us say, Jordan or Iraq. The *'ulama* initially had trouble understanding how that culture functioned. It took some time before they developed legal criteria to see what was *halal* (permitted) and what was *haram* (forbidden) in a particular context.

Question: Can you discuss the phenomenon of the aversion to and alarm about Islam in this country?

Prof. Nasr: I was very saddened by the fact that the small window of opportunity which opened in this country for about a month after the tragedy of September 11 was not taken advantage of, and there were no serious answers provided for the profound questions, "Why did this tragedy happen? Why do some people have this hatred? Where does it come from?" Even the word terrorist was never defined for the public at large.

The consequence was that a picture was painted in black and white, with one side considering itself as the embodiment of pure goodness and viewing the other side as pure evil. Because the other side, the one which was considered to be pure evil, was misusing Islam for its own ends, the religion was opened to attack by people who had always wanted to attack it. Not long ago, whether we had a Democratic president like President Clinton or a Republican president like President Reagan, no one in this country would have been able to say the kind of things that have been said during the last couple of years about Islam. That would immediately have been called hate speech. But it has now became common parlance. What is behind this? What is the reason for the aversion?

The events of the Middle Ages led to a deep fear of Islam in the Western mind, almost as if Muslims were still powerful enough to overrun the West. This suppressed fear has now emerged. It is very important to remember that Western civilization, to which the United States is heir, knew only one other as "other" during its period of genesis and early crystallization. The "other" was Islam.

Societies love to function by having an "other" to define as an enemy. As soon as the Soviet empire fell, many in the West began to look for a new "other," which they again identified as Islam. What would happen, after all, if the United States had no enemies? Some of the economy would collapse. The Islamic world is a kind of ideal "other" in the current situation, especially now that Islamic civilization is again seeking to assert its own identity after the experiences of the colonial period.

But it is the duty of Christians and Muslims and Jews, all of them, to try to prevent this demonization of an "other," because a schism of this kind can only end in catastrophe for all sides. Those people who speak about the clash of civilizations and religions are not only killing the other; they are also committing suicide. The killing of the other is a killing of the self. We live in a world in which it is impossible to separate the two.

NOTES

1. The great Muslim philosopher and theologian Abu Hamid Muhammad al-Ghazzali lived during the eleventh century. Al-Azhar, the world's oldest university, is in Cairo.

2. Published as Lynn White, Jr., "The Historical Roots of Our Ecological Crisis," 55 *Science Magazine* (March 10, 1967), pp. 1203 – 1207.

3. Seyyed Hossein Nasr, *Man and Nature: The Spiritual Crisis of Modern Man* (ABC International, 1999).

4. Ibn Warraq is the author of, e.g., *Why I am Not a Muslim* (Prometheus Books, 1995).

5. Syed Ameer Ali, *The Spirit of Islam; A History of the Evolution and Ideals of Islam, With a Life of the Prophet* (Christophers, 1935).

THE INTELLECTUAL IMPACT OF AMERICAN MUSLIM SCHOLARS ON THE MUSLIM WORLD, WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO SOUTHEAST ASIA

Osman Bakar

Shortly before the tragic events of September 11, several leading Malaysian newspapers carried a feature article by Bernama, the country's National News Agency, based on an interview with me. The subject was Islam in America. Two of the points I raised aroused considerable interest. One was the extraordinary diversity of Islam in the United States. The other was the possible emergence of the United States in the next few decades as the most creative and productive center of Islamic intellectual life in the world, in spite of the fact that Muslims constitute only a small minority in the United States and an even more numerically insignificant part of the global *ummah* of 1.4 billion people. This prediction about the future of Islam in the United States may sound overly optimistic, but the optimism is not without a rational basis. Numerous factors favor the emergence of an American Islam that is spiritually dynamic and intellectually robust—provided that American Muslims remain faithful to the tenets of their religion. The intellectual freedom and cultural openness that characterize the United States stand out as the most important of these favorable factors.

In the interview, I spoke of the United States as "the second Mecca," referring to the extraordinary ethnic, cultural and theological diversity of Islam in this country. What I meant was that apart from Mecca—and Medina—the United States is the only place in the world in which every ethnic Muslim group in the *ummah* and every Muslim school of thought current in the world are found. Islam in the United States is indeed a microcosm of the Muslim world. Its potential significance for both this country and the Muslim world is obvious. If the American Muslim community succeeds in coping with its diversity and pluralism and produces a distinctive and cohesive American Islam, interacting harmoniously and creatively with American diversity and pluralism, it will be in a position to serve as an influential model for the rest of the *ummah*. This will have far-reaching consequences for the entire world.

The idea of the United States of the near future becoming a major world center of Islamic learning and intellectual life and thought, even if not the most advanced in the world, is exciting. The idea is not new, but has existed in various Muslim circles for some time. After all, the phenomenon of a twenty-first century Western Islam exercising significant influence on the rest of the *ummah* would not be without historical precedent. Medieval Spanish Islam, which Maria Rosa Menocal calls "The Ornament of the World," was once the enlightened western wing of Islam.[1] There is broad agreement in these discussions that if the United States were to emerge as the leading center of Muslim intellectual life, its influence on intellectual developments in the Muslim world would be enormous. While real achievements for the American Muslim community in the two domains of the development of an American Islam and the impact of an American Islam on Islam elsewhere are within its practical reach, progress in the two spheres is not proceeding at the same pace. The creation of a distinctively American Islam is still in its initial stage. American Islamic identity and culture itself is not yet well-defined. In contrast, the intellectual relationship between American Muslims and the Muslim world has been forged gradually over the last two decades to the benefit of both. American Muslim scholars are already having a visible impact on contemporary intellectual life and developments in various parts of the Muslim world.

This essay provides a more detailed discussion of the intellectual impact of American Muslim scholarship—a subject which, in spite of its inherent interest, has received no detailed scholarly treatment to date—on Southeast Asia, home to about one-sixth of the *ummah*. Most of them are in Indonesia, the largest Muslim nation on earth. The community of American Muslim scholars has grown in both intellectual influence and numerical strength during the last two decades; what follows is an examination of the impact of the three who are most influential.

ISMAIL RAGI AL-FARUQI, FAZLUR RAHMAN, AND SEYYED HOSSEIN NASR

Ismail Ragi al-Faruqi (1921 – 1986), Fazlur Rahman (1919 – 1988) and Seyyed Hossein Nasr (b. 1933) are generally regarded as among the best known and intellectually influential Muslim scholars of the twentieth century.[2] While there are striking differences among them, there are also notable similarities. All three are naturalized American citizens who, for different political or religious reasons, all related in some way to Islam, fled their native countries and settled in the United States. Their *hijrah* (migration) to the United States was a loss to their respective countries but a significant gain for Islam in the United States and for American scholarship. Interestingly, the global *ummah* also benefits from their presence in the United States, as it is doubtful that their contributions to the *ummah* would have surpassed those they have made as American Muslims had Faruqi remained in Palestine, Rahman in Pakistan, and Nasr in Iran.

Faruqi, who became governor of Galilee in 1945 at the age of 25, was uprooted from his native Palestine upon the creation of the state of Israel in 1948. He and his family emigrated to Lebanon, where seven years earlier he had earned a bachelor's degree in philosophy from the University of Beirut. Turning to academia as his new pursuit, Faruqi decided to undertake advanced studies in the United States. Here, he earned master's degrees in philosophy from Indiana University (1949) and Harvard (1951). Although he had fulfilled the requirements for the Department of Philosophy's Ph.D. program at Harvard, he decided to return to Indiana University and submitted and successfully defended his doctoral dissertation there in September 1952. The dissertation, which was essentially on Western philosophical thought, was entitled *On Justifying the Good: Metaphysics and Epistemology of Value*.[3] "Both a scarcity of jobs and an inner drive," according to John Esposito and John Voll, "brought him back to his Islamic intellectual heritage and roots."[4] He spent four years, 1954 – 1958, as a post-doctoral researcher in Islamic studies at Cairo's al-Azhar University. His first teaching job was at McGill University, where he was both a visiting professor at the Institute of Islamic Studies and a Rockefeller Foundation fellow at the Faculty of Divinity, where he did research on Christianity and Judaism.

Rahman had joined the Institute of Islamic Studies' teaching staff as an associate professor a year earlier. He and Faruqi apparently were the first Muslim scholars of Islamic studies in North America. After three years as professorial colleagues at McGill, where they became well acquainted with each other's intellectual outlook and perspective and developed a personal relationship, both received invitations from director Ishtiaq

Husain Qureshi to join the newly formed Central Institute of Islamic Research in Karachi as full professors. As a Pakistani citizen, Rahman was recruited for a long-term appointment but Faruqi, a non-citizen, was offered a two-year contract. Rahman was also appointed as a religio-political advisor to President Ayub Khan's government. Both scholars accepted the invitations with great enthusiasm, viewing them as offering a golden opportunity to put into practice their philosophical ideas about Islamic responses to modernity and the modern societal reconstruction of the *ummah*. As later recounted by Faruqi, they had dreamed in Montreal about making Pakistan the center of "a new level of Islamic scholarship in the Muslim world."[5]

Unlike Faruqi and Nasr, Rahman was not educated in the United States. His master's degree was from Punjab University in Lahore (1942) and his Ph.D. in Islamic philosophy was from Oxford (1949). His doctoral dissertation about the medieval Muslim philosopher-scientist Ibn Sina was later published under the title *Avicenna's Psychology* (1952).[6] Rahman soon emerged as an authority on classical Islamic philosophy. In 1950 he became a lecturer in Persian studies and Islamic philosophy at Durham University, England, a post he held until his move to McGill.

Rahman's new job and role in Pakistan were to land him in controversy. He was called upon to formulate an Islamic response to the challenges of modernity that could serve as a basis for Pakistan's societal reconstruction. In his words, his responsibility was to interpret Islam "in rational and scientific terms to meet the requirements of a modern progressive society."[7] In attempting to realize these objectives, Rahman received a strong helping hand from Faruqi. Soon, however, they were embroiled in Pakistani sectarian politics, involving the secular political elites and religious scholars (*'ulama*)—among them, people whom Rahman had dubbed neo-fundamentalists. Eager to push their program through, Rahman and Faruqi called on the director to make changes to the academic programs and administration of the Institute. When they failed to get a response, they wrote a letter to the President, signed by Rahman, hinting strongly that the director should be replaced. In less than a year after having joined the Institute, Rahman was made its new director.

Rahman then encouraged Faruqi to prepare a new academic curriculum for the Institute that would be more in keeping with the two scholars' vision for future Muslim intellectual endeavors and scholarship. Faruqi submitted the draft curriculum to Rahman on March 16, 1963. He tendered his resignation from the Institute on August 5 of the same year, disappointed that Rahman had not implemented the curriculum. According to Faruqi, "Rahman was not pursuing the real objectives of the Institute, but rather was playing politics just as his predecessor has done."[8] As Faruqi himself once declared, the Rahman-Faruqi Karachi experiment in Islam and modernity had failed.

Several factors were responsible for the breakup of the Rahman-Faruqi intellectual partnership. The most important was the strong religious opposition to their liberal modernist interpretations of Islam. The Pakistani '*ulama* opposed Faruqi's controversial concept of Arabism (*urubah*), which he had developed at McGill and which seemed to his critics to glorify Arabness at the expense of Islam. The opposition made it apparent that he was unwelcome at the Institute. Faruqi's evaluation of his stay in Pakistan was a negative one: "But not one of the original purposes I had in Montreal for Pakistan has been fulfilled," he said.[9] Though he may have failed to affect Islamic learning in Pakistan during his brief academic appointment there, his stay had a significant impact on his thinking. As one of his former Pakistani students puts it, "Pakistani orthodoxy forced him to reconsider his stand on Arabism…He learned that orthodoxy was very strong, a fact that he must have thought about long and hard in order to devise a strategy for dealing with it in the future."[10]

When Faruqi returned to the United States in 1963, he managed to secure a one-year contract as a visiting professor in the history of religion at the University of Chicago's Divinity School. From 1964 to 1968 he was an associate professor in the Department of Religion at Syracuse University, where he established an Islamic studies program. This made him the first Muslim scholar in the United States to dedicate himself to the field of Islamic studies. He moved to Temple University in September 1968 as professor of Islamic studies and history of religions at the Department of Religion, a position he held until his death on May 24, 1986. It was during his Temple days that Faruqi developed strong academic and intellectual and political ties with Southeast Asian Islam, particularly in Malaysia.

In the four years after Faruqi's abrupt departure, Rahman had to weather the storm of religious protests against his ideas. In 1964, President Khan appointed him to the newly formed Advisory Council of

Islamic Ideology to aid in its task of "making specific recommendations in the field of Islamic policy and law."[11] The Council quickly became the target for conservative and '*ulama* opposition. As Earle H. Waugh noted, "Fazlur Rahman was at the center of the ensuing storm. His philosophical views of Islamic history were openly contested by the opposition, and his understanding of Islam was widely criticized."[12] The conservative and fundamentalist opposition was so fierce and unruly that Rahman had to leave Pakistan. He returned to North America in 1968, teaching briefly at the University of California-Los Angeles and then moving to the University of Chicago as professor of Islamic thought. In 1986 he was named Harold H. Swift Distinguished Service Professor, a title he held until his death in July 1988. His tenure at Chicago was as fateful as Faruqi's at Temple University because of the influence of his controversial ideas on the Southeast Asian Muslim intellectuals there. This was especially true of the students from Indonesia, who made the ideas of the scholar disowned by his native Pakistan a major force in their land.

Nasr had the earliest exposure to American education and learning of the three American Muslim scholars discussed here.[13] Born in Tehran, he was sent by his parents to attend school in the United States at the age of twelve. He arrived in New York on December 17, 1945 and a month later entered the eighth grade at Peddie School in Hightstown, New Jersey. After graduating from the school in 1950 with the Wycliffe Award, bestowed on the most outstanding all-around student, Nasr became the first Iranian physics major at MIT. He received his bachelor's degree in 1954 and went on to graduate studies in geology and geophysics at Harvard. He received his master's degree in 1956 and, with his intellectual interests now focused on more traditional studies, he transferred to the department of history of science. There he wrote his doctoral dissertation on *Conceptions of Nature in Islamic Thought*, becoming the first Iranian to receive a Harvard Ph.D. (1958).[14] Although he was offered an assistant professorship at MIT, he decided to return to Tehran and did so in the fall of 1958.

Shortly after his arrival in Iran, Nasr began his academic career as an associate professor of philosophy and the history of science at Tehran University's Faculty of Letters. In 1963, at the age of thirty, Nasr became the youngest full professor in the history of Tehran University. He continued to hold that academic position until the Iranian

Revolution of 1979. His rise through the administrative ranks was equally rapid. He was named dean of the Faculty in 1968 and became the academic vice chancellor in 1972. He was vice chancellor only briefly, however, as he was almost immediately chosen as the president of Aryamehr University, whose patron was the Shah. An illness cut short his tenure as the University's president and he resigned from that position in 1975.

Paradoxically, it was during the twelve-year period of his formal education in the United States, a land that takes great pride in everything modern, that Nasr was transformed into a universal traditionalist. He frequently complained, after his return to Iran, that the country had become too modernized. It is interesting to note that while Rahman and Faruqi saw their mission in Pakistan as modernizing the life and thought of its people within the framework of Islam as they interpreted it, Nasr saw his main task in Iran as one of defending tradition in all its dimensions. His influential positions at Tehran University enabled him to begin transforming the teaching of philosophy in accordance with Islam's universal perspectives on tradition and knowledge. He succeeded in expanding and strengthening the teaching of Islamic philosophy both in content and method, expanding the scope of the study of Western philosophy, and in introducing non-Islamic Oriental philosophies. As Nasr himself sees it, his enduring legacy in Iran is a philosophical studies program in which Iranian students are able to "study other schools and traditions of philosophy from the point of view of their own tradition rather than studying their tradition from the perspective of Western thought."[15]

Nasr's interest in tradition is spiritual and intellectual in nature and civilizational and universal in scope. His commitment to the revival of tradition around the world was best symbolized by his key role in arranging for the first exhibition of Islamic science ever held in London's Science Museum, which took place during the 1976 Festival of the World of Islam in London. In Iran, his activities, intellectual and cultural programs, and institution-building revolved around the revival and restoration of tradition in areas such as philosophy, literature, science, art, education, architecture, music, and Sufi spirituality. Some of his activities and programs in these fields necessitated a close association and collaboration with the Shah and, particularly, Empress Farah. Nasr's relationship with the royal couple enabled him to create the Iranian Academy of

Philosophy and led to his appointment as head of the Empress' special bureau, overseeing most of Iran's cultural activities.

His close relationship with the Shah and Empress led to Nasr's being victimized during the 1979 Revolution. He had left Iran with his wife and daughter on January 6, 1979 for a two-week trip to Tokyo via London to represent the Empress at the opening of a major exhibition of Persian art. As the pace of the Revolution quickened, however, Nasr received news that the Tokyo exhibition had been cancelled; shortly thereafter, the Shah and the Empress left Iran for Egypt. Nasr's house was plundered and his library, scholarly notes and other personal belongings confiscated or destroyed. He and his family were stranded in London for two months.

Nasr could not find a teaching job in the United Kingdom. His sole offer came from the University of Utah, which offered him a distinguished visiting professorship, and so he left once again for the United States. Thus, in Salt Lake City Nasr "began that exile which was a return to the land in which I had studied for so many years and which was to become my new permanent home," he wrote in his intellectual autobiography.[16] Although he was offered a tenured full professorship by the University, he decided to accept instead the offer of a professorship at Temple University. In the fall of 1979 Nasr moved to Temple's department of religion to join Faruqi in expanding its Islamic studies program. Five years later, he left Temple for his current position as university professor of Islamic studies at the George Washington University in Washington, D.C.

When Nasr arrived at Temple, its department of religion had the country's largest doctoral program. It became even bigger during the years that he and Faruqi were there together, with Southeast Asian students constituting the largest group among those who came from the Muslim world. Faruqi played an instrumental role in bringing these foreign Muslim students to Temple. Nasr had never before had the opportunity to teach students from Southeast Asia, although some of his work was known to a few Malaysian students in the United Kingdom as early as the late 1960s. It was primarily through their Malaysian and Indonesian students at Temple that both Faruqi and Nasr became well known in Southeast Asia, where their numerous works became more widely disseminated and read than ever.

HOW DO WE MEASURE INTELLECTUAL INFLUENCE OR IMPACT?

Before assessing the intellectual impact of the three scholars introduced above, we must address the questions of what is meant by intellectual impact and how the impact of an individual scholar is to be measured.

Intellectual impact derives from the extent in both time and space of the reception and dissemination of the individual's ideas, the extent to which those ideas are discussed and debated, and the extent to which they are put into practice or find concrete application in society. The currency of ideas may be understood as having both a temporal and a spatial aspect, with the spatial aspect referring to how widely the ideas in question are disseminated. Literacy, language, intellectual culture, print media and political freedom are among the most important factors influencing the spatial spread of ideas. The temporal aspect refers to the length of time during which the ideas are influential. Are they easily discarded and forgotten or of more lasting value and influence? Again, the answer may depend on a number of factors, but obviously the intrinsic worth of the ideas themselves is one of the most important.

The extent to which ideas are discussed and debated in a particular society also depends on their forcefulness and the degree of their relevance to the needs and problems of that society. The needs of a society are of course substantially determined by the level of its economic, educational, and intellectual development. Finally, the extent to which ideas are put into practice and applied to societal problems, if indeed these ideas have a practical value, depends on factors such as human and financial resources, political patronage and intellectual freedom.

The currency, forcefulness and application of ideas are dependent on both human and material agents. In the context of this discussion about the intellectual impact of scholars, it is obvious that students of the scholars emerge as the most important of the human agents in question. For this reason it is relevant to discuss the various educational institutions which have provided the scholars with opportunities to educate and train Muslim students from Southeast Asia. When these students completed their graduate studies and returned to their respective countries, they became the most effective agents in disseminating the ideas and perspectives of their teachers. Most of these returning graduates came to occupy influential positions in their societies, enhancing their roles as agents of their teachers' ideas. Most of the former students became academics, placed to transmit ideas to succeeding generations of university students; others became public administrators. Although the latter's role in disseminating ideas was much more limited than that of the academics, they had a greater advantage in applying the ideas they brought to concrete situations and problems. This was true of the Indonesian students studying under Rahman at Chicago and Malaysian students studying under Faruqi and Nasr at Temple. Political patrons are second to students in importance as human agents. Political patronage is especially important in Muslim societies. Ideas, no matter how good they may be, cannot be implemented in these societies without the support or blessing of political leaders. Scholars who are interested in getting their ideas implemented in Muslim societies by, for example, establishing educational and religious institutions, usually have to approach national leaders and enlist their support. All three scholars discussed here have had varying degrees of success in cultivating the necessary political patronage in the pursuit of academic and intellectual goals.

The categories of measurement of these scholars' intellectual impact are as follows:

1) The number of their works known to the region, either in the original language or in translations;
2) The number of their works being used as either textbooks or references in institutions of higher learning in the region;
3) The number of their former masters and Ph.D. students from the region. Of special importance is how many of their students now occupy positions of influence;
4) The number of academic and public lectures they have been invited to give over the years in the region, including keynote addresses in seminars and conferences;
5) The frequency with which they have appeared in the local media;
6) The number of times they have been appointed as external examiners of doctoral dissertations and external assessors of university candidates for promotion to the academic ranks of associate and full professors;
7) The number of times they have been appointed as consultants to universities, governments, and the private sector;

8) The extent of their informal advisory roles in various kinds of local non-governmental organizations such as youth, religious, cultural, and educational organizations;
9) The number of writings about their life and works.

This assessment of the intellectual impact of each of the three scholars will be guided by the above nine categories. The following is not meant as a detailed, up-to-date assessment, which would require a more extensive study of their respective influence in Southeast Asia in each of those categories. However, it is possible to determine how they fared generally with respect to each of the nine indicators of intellectual achievements. The discussion below is limited to the intellectual impact of the scholars on Indonesia and Malaysia, the heartland of Southeast Asian Islam, which is both where most Southeast Asian Muslims live and the homeland of most of the Southeast Asian students who studied with the three scholars.

RAHMAN'S INTELLECTUAL IMPACT

According to the bibliography of Fazlur Rahman included in *The Shaping of an American Islamic Discourse: A Memorial to Fazlur Rahman* published in 1998, Rahman wrote ten books, only four of which had been translated into the Indonesian language.[17] Unlike the situation in Malaysia, where English is widely used, the great majority of Indonesians are not conversant with English and must rely on translations. There may be a small number of Indonesian intellectuals who have access to all of Rahman's books in the original and to his sixty-odd articles in journals and chapters of books edited by other scholars, but most Indonesians have come to know his ideas primarily through those four translated works. His ideas have circulated widely among Indonesians who are attracted to his modernist philosophy and interpretations of Islam. This is evident from the numerous publications of commentaries and critiques of his ideas in books and articles in journals, magazines and newspapers.

The selection of the four of Rahman's works that have been translated has been unintentionally appropriate, at least from the point of view of Indonesian Muslim interest. The four books translated are: 1) *Major Themes of the Qur'an* (translated in 1983); 2) *Islamic Methodology in History* (1984); 3) *Islam and Modernity: Transformation of an Intellectual Tradition*

(1985); and 4) *Islam* (1985).[18] In a sense, these are his more popular works on Islam, dealing with a wide range of issues that are of interest to the majority of Muslims. The other works not yet translated into the Indonesian language are works that are philosophical in nature and are therefore of intellectual interest only to a small group of people. Still, considering the fact that intellectual life and thought in Indonesia is more robust and open than in Malaysia, it is surprising these other works have not been translated, and this calls for an explanation. In Malaysia, where the number of readers of serious works is much smaller, Nasr's philosophical works such as *An Introduction to Islamic Cosmological Doctrines* have been translated into Malay. The reason is financial: the translators' fees and the costs of publication are borne by the Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka, which is a government agency. The situation is different in Indonesia, where translations and publications are a private venture and where only popular books on Islam are likely to have profitable sales.

It is interesting to note that the first of Rahman's books to be translated into Indonesian, in 1983, was *Major Themes of the Qur'an*. That was a year before Nurcholis Madjid, the first Indonesian doctoral student under Rahmans's guidance, obtained his Ph.D. This provides clear evidence of the importance of teacher-student intellectual relationships as a factor in the dissemination of a scholar's ideas in his students' cultural region. Rahman had very few Indonesian doctoral students compared to Faruqi and Nasr at Temple, who between them had dozens of both Malaysian and Indonesian students. Rahman in fact had only two, the other one being Shafie Maarif. But Nurcholis and Shafie are two of Indonesia's leading intellectual-activists, nationally known even before they studied with Rahman. Shafie is now the leader of the 20 million strong Muhammadiyah, Indonesia's second biggest religious organization, noted for its modernist inclinations. Muhammadiyah's former leader, Amien Rais, currently the speaker of the People's Consultative Assembly, also studied at Chicago. Because his field was political science he did not do his Ph.D. with Rahman, but he did take courses with Rahman. Nurcholis was a former national student leader who rose to fame in his fight against the communists. He founded and became the rector of a private university known as Paramedina. He is currently being promoted as a candidate in the upcoming Indonesian presidential election.

Rahman's ideas continue to be studied, discussed and debated in academic and intellectual circles in Indonesia primarily because his translated books are used as textbooks in Islamic studies programs in numerous Indonesian colleges and universities, including the *pesantrans* (Islamic boarding schools). Rahman clearly has a significant intellectual following that is in large part responsible for perpetuating his ideas in the national Islamic discourse. It was through his former Indonesian students that Rahman was appointed as an advisor to the Indonesian government in the establishment of Higher Education in Islamic Studies. Today the nation has a string of provincial institutions known as IAIN (State University of Islamic Studies), the very educational institutions where Rahman's ideas are quite influential.

While Rahman is currently the best known and most influential of the three scholars in Indonesia, it may not be long before Nasr overtakes him. More and more of Nasr's books are being translated into Indonesian. Rahman is less influential in Malaysia. Wan Mohd Nor Wan Daud, the former deputy director of ISTAC (Institute of Islamic Thought and Civilization) headed by the well-known Syed Naquib al-Attas, is the only Malaysian to have obtained a Ph.D. under Rahman's guidance. Rahman's ideas are still debated among Muslim intellectuals and scholars of Islam in Malaysia, but in a more critical manner.

FARUQI'S INTELLECTUAL IMPACT

Faruqi wrote thirteen books in English and two in Arabic, translated six books into English from Arabic, and edited three books in English.[19] It is an indication of his close association with Malaysia that two of his thirteen books in the English language were originally published there. The first was *Islam and Culture*, published by ABIM (Malaysian Youth Movement of Malaysia) in 1980 when Anwar Ibrahim, Prime Minister Mahathir Mohammed's former Deputy Premier, was still its leader.[20] The other was *Tawhid: Its Implications for Thought and Life*, published by IIIT (International Institute of Islamic Thought) in 1982.[21] Faruqi had founded IIIT in the United States but later moved its head office to Kuala Lumpur. By 1982 Anwar, who was close to Faruqi, had left ABIM to join the ruling party UMNO (United Malays National Organization).

Only four of Faruqi's books have been translated into Malay: 1) *The Cultural Atlas of Islam*; 2) *Tawhid: Its Implications for Thought and Life*; 3) *Islamization of Knowledge: The Problem, Principles, and the Workplan*; and

4) the previously cited *Islam and Culture*.[22] While Rahman's works were translated into Indonesian at the initiative of his students, Faruqi's books were translated into Malay by the government translation center, Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka, largely under the direction of Anwar. The most widely read of the four translated books is *Tawhid*, but *The Cultural Atlas of Islam* has proved to be the most useful as a reference for courses on Islamic civilization in Malaysian universities. *Islam and Culture* has been read primarily by ABIM members and its intellectual impact on Malaysians in general has not been significant. Because of a greater interest in the issue of Islamization, the translated *Islamization of Knowledge* appears to be more widely read by the Malaysian public.[23]

As noted earlier, Faruqi, who was active in recruiting doctoral students from the region, had a substantial number of Muslim students from Malaysia and Indonesia. At one point between 1981 and 1986, there were twenty Malaysian and Indonesian graduate students at Temple. Faruqi's tragic death in 1986, at the hands of a murderer in his suburban Philadelphia home, prevented him from seeing all of his students complete their studies. He did produce four Ph.D.s, all Malaysians, the earliest one earning his degree in 1981. Three of them became professors in Islamic studies at the National University of Malaysia; the fourth became a top civil servant in his country. Of the four Ph.D.s, Faisal Othman, who wrote a dissertation on the role of Malaysian Muslim women in national development, emerged as Faruqi's most faithful disciple, embracing the greater part if not all of his modernist philosophy and outlook.

Faruqi served from time to time as an external assessor for promotions and doctoral defenses in several Malaysian universities. He traveled to Malaysia regularly to speak at conferences and to promote the activities of IIIT, particularly the promulgation of his ideas about the Islamization of knowledge. An intellectual-activist whom Rahman dubbed "the Jamaludin Afghani of his time," Faruqi had cultivated a close relationship with both Anwar and Mahathir in the hope of furthering his goal of a modern reconstruction of the *ummah*.[24] Mahathir and Faruqi apparently share fundamental ideas about the development of a modern Islam and the societal reconstruction of the *ummah*. Faruqi played an instrumental role in bringing about the Mahathir-Anwar political partnership that was to last until 1998, when political differences led Mahathir to fire Anwar as his deputy.

It appears that whatever intellectual impact Faruqi had in Malaysia was achieved in large part because of Anwar's personal initiatives. Anwar's and Mahathir's patronage, along with frequent appearances in the media, resulted in Faruqi's becoming a familiar intellectual figure in Malaysia. Faruqi's ideas about Islamization of knowledge are strongly contested in the Malaysian discourse by Syed Naquib al-Attas and his school. Al-Attas, another scholar courted by Anwar, has claimed with much evidence that he was the one who introduced the idea of Islamization of knowledge to Faruqi when he was invited to Temple as a visiting professor. In Indonesia, Faruqi's intellectual influence is minimal when compared to that of Rahman and Nasr. IIIT did attempt to gain influence for Faruqi's ideas in Indonesia through its relationship with Bacharrudin Jusuf (B.J.) Habibie, especially when Habibie succeeded Suharto as President. After Anwar's exit from power, IIIT sought to move its center of operations to Jakarta. Regardless of the future of IIIT, which has been plagued by troubles in the aftermath of September 11, Faruqi has left behind work that will continue to be debated by students of Islam for many years.

NASR'S INTELLECTUAL IMPACT

The most prolific of the three scholars, Nasr has written thirty books in English and a few books in Persian and French, edited and co-edited ten books, and translated three others, two from Persian into English and one from English into Arabic.[25] His articles and reviews in several languages number more than five hundred. Out of this vast and still growing corpus, nearly half of his books in the English language have been translated into either Malay or Indonesian. It is important to note that since Malay and Indonesian are basically the same language, work translated into Indonesian is usually not translated into Malay and vice versa, and Nasr's volumes in Indonesian translation can be obtained in many bookshops in Kuala Lumpur.

Six of Nasr's books have been translated into Malay and eight into Indonesian, exceeding the number of Faruqi's and Rahman's translated works combined. Nasr's works are more widely read in Malaysia than in Indonesia, which seems odd in light of the number of translated works in the two neighboring countries. The explanation is that several books translated into Indonesian were actually available in Malaysia in English, and in large numbers of copies, because they were reprinted in the country. This writer, the first Malaysian Ph.D. under Nasr's supervision, established a publishing house to print Malaysian editions of his books. The following titles were published in Kuala Lumpur: 1) *Man and Nature: The Spiritual Crisis of Modern Man* (translated in 1986); 2) *Science and Civilization in Islam* (1984); 3) *Islam and the Plight of Modern Man* (1987); 4) *Traditional Islam in the Modern World* (1989); 5) *A Young Muslim's Guide to the Modern World* (1994).[26] Three of these works were translated into Indonesian. Because many of his works are available in English, and because of his universalism, Nasr's Malaysian readers include a significant number of non-Muslims. The volume most widely read by non-Muslims is *Man and Nature*.[27]

Nasr's ideas were first introduced to Malaysia in the 1960s and 1970s, by a group of Malaysian students who were active in London's Islamic study circle at the Malaysian Students Center. Four of Nasr's early writings were read and discussed by members of this circle, including this writer. The titles that influenced many Malay students then are: 1) *An Introduction to Islamic Cosmological Doctrines*; 2) *The Encounter of Man and Nature: The Spiritual Crisis of Modern Man*; 3) *Science and Civilization in Islam*; 4) *Ideals and Realities of Islam*.[28] When this writer returned to Malaysia in 1973 to help introduce a course on history and the philosophy of science in Islamic civilization at the National University of Malaysia and, later, the University of Malaya, I used these works as the main references. At about the same time that the London Malaysian Islamic circle was reading Nasr's work, a group interested in traditional Islam and led by Uthman El-Muhammady, then an assistant professor at the department of Islamic studies at the University of Malaya, held frequent discussions about them at the University Mosque. Anwar, then a student leader at the same university, attended the discussions. El-Muhammady is now a leading *'alim* (religious scholar) whose works frequently cite Nasr. Thus Nasr's ideas have been circulating among educated Malaysians since the 1960s.

Nasr produced four Malaysian Ph.D.s, three of them at Temple and the last at the George Washington University, all of whom became professors at Malaysia's leading universities. He was also a member of the dissertation committees of several other Malaysian Ph.D.s. Baharuddin Ahmad, one of the four Ph.D.s Nasr supervised, was responsible for all the Malay translations of Nasr's work beginning with the edited *Philosophy, Literature and*

Fine Arts in 1989.[29] The subsequent success of Nasr's Malaysian former doctoral students is in part responsible for the dissemination of his ideas in Malaysia, with Ahmad's Malay translations helping to extend Nasr's intellectual influence.

Although Nasr had taught two Indonesian students from Sumatra at Temple, the people primarily responsible for the translation and dissemination of his ideas in Indonesia did not study under him. The country's former president, Abdul Rahman Wahid, was particularly instrumental in spreading Nasr's ideas. This intellectual-activist had translated Nasr's *Ideals and Realities of Islam* in 1981, making it his first work to appear in any local language in Southeast Asia. Before becoming President in October 1999, Wahid led *Nahdatul Ulama*, Indonesia's largest and most influential religious organization, which has about forty million members. Interestingly, another major disseminator of Nasr's ideas is Nurcholis Madjid. Although a former student of Rahman, he embraced many of Nasr's ideas, particularly the latter's perspective on religious pluralism.

Nasr has not traveled to Malaysia and Indonesia as frequently as Faruqi did. Nonetheless, Nasr gave numerous academic and public lectures during the few trips he made to Malaysia (and one to Indonesia) in the late 1980s and early 1990s. Among them were several organized by Anwar in his capacity as a government minister. Thanks to his numerous books in the Malaysian market, writing about him and his appearances in the media, Nasr is quite a familiar face in the country.

CONCLUSION

The three scholars discussed here are controversial and colorful intellectual figures in contemporary Islamic thought. All of them have demonstrated their loyalty to Islam in clear terms. They shared a common desire to find an Islamic response to the challenges of the modern world, but they differed in their understanding of the past and in their vision of the ideal Islamic response that the global *ummah* needs. They have all spoken for a mainstream Islam that rejects extremes. Malay-Indonesian Islam has taken the historic step of welcoming them and their ideas when they were not welcome in their native lands. It is important to note, however, that the respective visions of Islam they took to Southeast Asia were conditioned by the American intellectual culture. Each of them has a core intellectual constituency in the region. Through the creative debates on their ideas that continue today, Malay-Indonesian Islam has shown not only the meaning and significance of diversity and pluralism within the unity of Islam but also the way in which American Islam can have a significant influence in the Muslim world.

NOTES

1. Maria Rosa Menocal, *The Ornament of the World: How Muslims, Jews, and Christians Created a Culture of Tolerance in Medieval Spain* (Little, Brown and Company, 2002).

2. Nasr is the only one of the three to have survived the century, having just celebrated his seventieth birthday this year. Many of his former students honored him with a volume appropriately entitled *The Beacon of Knowledge.* Muhammad J. Faghfoory, ed., *The Beacon of Knowledge: In Honor of Seyyed Hossein Nasr* (Fons Vitae, 2003). On Faruqi's life and works as an intellectual-activist, *see,* for example, John L. Esposito and John O. Voll, *Makers of Contemporary Islam* (Oxford University Press, 2001), chapter 1; Muhammad Shafiq, *Growth of Islamic Thought in North America: Focus on Isma'il Raji al-Faruqi* (Amana Publications, 1994). On Rahman's intellectual life and thoughts, see Earle H. Waugh and Frederick M. Denny, eds., *The Shaping of an American Islamic Discourse: A Memorial to Fazlur Rahman* (Scholars Press, 1998).

3. Ismail Ragi al-Faruqi, *On Justifying the Good: Metaphysics and Epistemology of Value*, unpublished doctoral dissertation, Indiana University (1952).

4. Esposito and Voll, *Makers of Contemporary Islam*, p. 24.

5. *See* Shafiq, *Growth of Islamic Thought in America*, op. cit., p. 19.

6. Fazlur Rahman, ed. and tr., *Avicenna's Psychology* (Oxford University Press, 1952).

7. Waugh and Denny, *Shaping*, op. cit., p. 39.

8. Shafiq, op. cit., pp. 18 – 19.

9. Op. cit., p.19.

10. Op. cit., p. 20.

11. Waugh and Denny, op. cit., p. 39.

12. Op. cit., p. 28.

13. On Nasr's education, intellectual life and works, *see* his intellectual autobiography in Lewis E. Hahn, Randall E. Auxier and Lucian W. Stone, Jr., eds., *The Philosophy of Seyyed Hossein Nasr* (The Library of Living Philosophers, 2001), vol. XXVIII.

14. This dissertation was later published under the title *An Introduction to Islamic Cosmological Doctrines* (Harvard University Press, 1964). This work has seen several editions since then, the latest being the revised edition published by State University of New York Press, 1993.

15. Op. cit., p. 33.

16. Op. cit., p. 73.

17. Waugh and Denny, op. cit., pp. 261 – 269.

18. Fazlur Rahman, *Major Themes of the Qur'an* (Bibliotheca Islamica, 1980); *Islamic Methodology in History* (Iqbal Academy, 1965); *Islam and Modernity: Transformation of an Intellectual Tradition* (University of Chicago Press, 1982); *Islam* (University of Chicago Press, 1979).

19. Muhammad Shafiq, *Growth of Islamic Thought in America,* pp. 117 – 124. *Islam and Culture* was published by ABIM (Malaysian Youth Movement of Malaysia) in 1980.

20. Ismail Ragial-Faruqi, *Islam and Culture* (ABIM, 1980).

21. Ismail Ragi al-Faruqi, *Tawhid: Its Implications for Thought and Life* (International Institute of Islamic Thought, 1982).

22. Ismail Ragi al-Faruqi, *Cultural Atlas of Islam* (Macmillan, 1986); *Tawhid: Its Implications for Thought and Life*, op. cit.; *Islamization of Knowledge: The Problem, Principles, and the Workplan* (National Hijra Centenary Committee of Pakistan, 1982); *Islam and Culture,* op. cit.

23. On Faruqi's and IIIT's global activities and programs on Islamization of knowledge, *see* Leif Stenberg, *The Islamization of Science: Four Muslim Positions Developing an Islamic Modernity* (Lund Studies in History of Religions, 1996, vol. 6), pp. 153 – 215.

24. Sayed Jamaludin Afghani (1839-1947) was an Afghan scholar, writer, poet, and anti-colonist whose writings on Islamic reform influenced intellectuals across the Islamic world.

25. On Nasr's complete bibliography, see Hahn, Auxier and Stone, *The Philosophy of Seyyed Hossein Nasr*, op. cit., pp. 835 – 964.

26. Seyyed Hossein Nasr, *Man and Nature: The Spiritual Crisis of Modern Man* (Unwin Paperbacks, 1976); *Science and Civilization in Islam* (Harvard University Press, 1968); *Islam and the Plight of Modern Man* (Longman, 1975); *Traditional Islam in the Modern World* (K. Paul International, 1990); *A Young Muslim's Guide to the Modern World* (Library of Islam, 1993).

27. *Man and Nature* has a wider appeal to non-Muslim Malaysians compared to the other books for two main reasons. First, it is not exclusively a treatment of Islam but rather a comparative discussion of the global ecological crisis from the points of view of the different major spiritual traditions of the world. Second, for many years it was recommended reading material for the course on history and philosophy of science at the University of Malaya where nearly half of the students are non-Muslims.

28. Seyyed Hossein Nasr, *An Introduction to Islamic Cosmological Doctrines* (Harvard University Press, 1964); *The Encounter of Man and Nature: The Spiritual Crisis of Modern Man* (Allen & Unwin, 1968); *Science and Civilization in Islam*, op. cit.; *Ideals and Realities of Islam* (Allen & Unwin, 1966).

29. Seyyed Hossein Nasr, ed., *Philosophy, Literature and Fine Arts* (Hodder and Staughton, 1982).

THE ROLE OF WOMEN IN THE AMERICAN-MUSLIM COMMUNITY AND THEIR IMPACT ON PERCEPTIONS OF MUSLIM WOMEN WORLDWIDE

AMINA WADUD

In this essay I will present some ideas about Muslim women in the United States. I am an American Muslim woman and my story is one of many overlapping stories about Islam in the modern West. The questions to be answered below are: What is Islam, and how do its history, traditions, multiplicity of cultures and development, affect its definition? How have differences and similarities between Islam and the modern West evolved? What particular concerns do Muslim women have as Muslims and as women? How have Muslim women in the United States constructed their unique identities as Muslims and Americans, given both the tendency of non-Western cultures to claim that they alone are Islamic and the propensity of Islam for patriarchy? What, if anything, can Muslim women around the world learn from Muslim women in the United States?

WHAT IS ISLAM, AND HOW DO ITS HISTORY, TRADITIONS, MULTIPLICITY OF CULTURES AND DEVELOPMENT AFFECT ITS DEFINITION?

While Islam has never existed without both male and female Muslims, it is men who have been and remain the predominant public articulators of the meaning of Islam. Traditionally, definitions of Islam have been drawn from a variety of sources; the same is true of Islam in the United States today. In both cases, the two primary sources for all of Islamic thought and development are the Qur’an and Prophetic *Sunnah*. These two have been reflected upon and implemented in endless ways, creating a vast number of secondary sources. The Qur’an and *Sunnah* have been employed within the American context in a unique way, however, often remaining divorced from the centuries-old intellectual and practical approaches to implementation that exist within an established Muslim *ummah*. It is therefore especially important to observe the interactions between the two primary sources and Muslims themselves when examining the identities and experiences of Muslim women in the United States.

Like Judaism and Christianity, Islam is a religion of revelation descended from the patriarch Abraham. The Qur'an is the penultimate act of Allah's Self-disclosure.[1] The Creator of all humankind was not content merely to place human beings on this planet, but also intercedes in the affairs of humankind through His or Her own Self-disclosure. God becomes known through the two types of revelation: implicit and explicit. There are implicit signs of *ayat* (revelation) in all of nature. All of creation, including our selves, is an aspect of Allah's Self-disclosure (14:53, 30:20 – 21). According to the Qur'anic story of Abraham's search for truth (6:73 – 83), it is possible to come to know Allah, to accept His oneness as well as to experience Her, through intimate interaction with natural creation as a whole.[2] Islam has therefore never known a severe split between science and religion, because the Qur'an encourages human beings to study, contemplate, and theorize about the realm of nature (67:3 – 4).

The other kind of revelation is explicit. Allah becomes known through words, but revelation through language is both deficient and exuberant. The Qur'an is deficient because it cannot claim to be the complete disclosure of the Creator: Allah cannot be contained within any one act, no matter how sacred to Its worshippers. The text is exuberant because it often says more than we can comprehend fully and what is said can be interpreted and re-interpreted for new meaning.

As the Qur'an is an act of Allah's Self-disclosure and the primary source of all that has been determined to be "Islam," the Qur'anic position on women is of great significance. Many American Muslim women seek guidance and inspiration in the Qur'an. Whether they do so by studying one of the many English translations, along with commentary in Arabic or English, or by drawing assistance from other Arabic sources and interpretation, and whether they are descendents of Muslim cultures or come from non-Muslim American culture, the Qur'an is a major influence on their identity formation.

There are so many understandings of the Qur'an that the degree to which the Qur'an's position on women shapes American Muslim women's identity cannot be documented. It is nonetheless clear that the extent to which Muslim women in the United States claim to follow the Qur'an and *Sunnah* is unparalleled, and differs substantially from that of Muslim women in cultures with a sizeable Muslim majority and established Islamic institutions and public organizations. The filtering of the Qur'an through these institutions decreases the reliance of the world's Muslim women on the Qur'an itself. One might argue that Muslim women in the United States benefit from their direct access to the Qur'an, both in its original language and in translation, rather than having it filtered through centuries of Arab-Islamic patriarchal literature. Both women and men in the United States use the Qur'an as its own interpretive tool. While this approach may be somewhat naïve, it may also suggest the influence that American Muslim women could have on Muslim women globally.

There are also disadvantages to the "Qur'an only" method, including the haphazard nature of interpretation and application of the larger body of Islamic texts in the American context. The *Sunnah* of the prophet Muhammad is the second primary source, though its need for an historical record and the fact that it has never had the support of all Muslims make it a lesser source. Despite that, without the embodiment of the Qur'anic ethos in the person of the Prophet, we would hardly know what it means to be Muslim. The prophet's example as expressed in the *Sunnah* is therefore indispensable for understanding what Islam is. His embodiment was so significant that later developments of historical *shari'ah* were dependent upon the *Sunnah* in more concrete ways than they were upon the Qur'an.

In the context of indigenous American Muslim cultures and ideology, the *ahadith* have become a secondary and somewhat arbitrary foundation for the understanding and practice of Islam. Muslim communities in the United States formulate their own unique praxes, whether consistent or inconsistent with established *shari'ah* practices in other countries. American Muslims from cultures with various *shari'ah* courts and judicial systems, which exist alongside or in lieu of secular laws, also make up a part of these American communities. It is hard to say whether the presence of Muslims in the United States with background experiences in the established *shari'ah* stabilize or challenge the ad hoc nature of American Muslim legal observations and practice. During the past century-and-a-half, Islam has developed in the Americas with no single formula outlining the relationship of *shari'ah* to secular law. As a result, Muslims in the United States do not understand "law" in the exclusive, historically rigorous, and diverse sense of *shari'ah*. When the way of life incumbent upon a Muslim is a hodgepodge, unsystematically selected from the Qur'an and the *ahadith* and both often only in translation, the perceived meaning of Islam is unprincipled, unpredictable and haphazard. Muslims in the United States will routinely cite "the Qur'an and the *Sunnah*" but have little sense of the development of coherent legal rules and applications.

The ad hoc nature of interpretation has a negative effect on Muslim women's experiences of social justice. Although *shari'ah* as it has developed historically is extremely patriarchal, its goal is still social justice. It therefore contains measures for establishing justice that many of those involved in progressive Islamic reforms have depended upon, not only to solidify their approach but also as a source of practical mechanisms for implementation. This approach does not seem to be available to those Muslim women in the United States who formulate responses only to particular verses from the Qur'an or *ahadith* without reference to the long history of response to those same verses or *ahadith* by Muslim scholars in a variety of cultural, political, economic and social settings.

American Muslim women are simultaneously open to the flexibility of this haphazard *ijtihadic* methodology and prevented from relying upon established social justice principles of operation and implementation—specifically, rulings in classical Islamic thought that pertain to the protection of human dignity and women's rights. An example of this phenomenon can be seen in *nafaqah* (maintenance, or alimony). The Qur'anic verse 4:34 is interpreted to mean that men are required to provide material maintenance for women.[3] Women have both lost and gained privileges from the extensive juridical discussions of this matter. On one hand, they gain from the affirmation that men must provide economic support for women and are subject to legal intervention if they fail to do so. On the other hand, women suffer in the area of their autonomy within and outside of the family. A woman loses freedom to make her own choices and to participate in various aspects of family life because she is dependent upon her husband not only financially but also socially and culturally. She is considered more virtuous if she is married, which necessarily affects the degree to which she can shape her own identity. Young girls shape their behavior to improve their marriage prospects and older women limit their public participation to conform to the dominant male perception of the good Muslim woman.

Despite the absence of actual material support from male members of the Muslim family and their consequent experience of greater financial responsibility, American Muslim women, especially in African-American communities, defer to the dominant patriarchy of Islamic tradition. Though there is relatively less social pressure on Muslim women in the United States to conform to traditional Islamic patriarchal ideals than there is in Muslim countries, women take less advantage of these diminished restraints than one might expect. The somewhat conservative nature of Muslim communities in the United States is particularly apparent in the area of gender relations.

How have differences and similarities between Islam and the modern West evolved?

Perhaps the most interesting aspect of any culture as it Islamizes is the interaction between the unique elements of the culture and the tenets of Islam to form a complete way of life. Although Islam has existed throughout history in vastly divergent cultures, it is often difficult to distinguish the Islamic from the cultural. This is particularly true in the area of gender relations, as the manifestation of patriarchy is strongly influenced by cultural and environmental contexts. Some aspects of patriarchy are more overt in Bedouin cultures than in agrarian cultures, for example, as the latter rely more on cooperation between women and men.

Much has been said about patriarchy in modern, technologically advanced, postindustrial cultures, which differ from their predecessors but draw on their pasts in interesting ways. Capitalism and consumerism, which characterize these present day cultures, value men's activities over women's. Their economic systems literally pay more to men than to women. They value activities in the public sphere, which is dominated by men, over the private sphere, which is still viewed as the women's domain. Even as women leave the exclusively private sphere and enter the public domain, they remain responsible for their duties and responsibilities in the private sphere.

In the context of the larger American society, sharing across public and private spheres between males and females seems to be increasing, while in Muslim-American cultures there is less of this kind of sharing. Women are still inextricably identified with the private or domestic sphere, despite their increased participation in wage-earning employment. In this respect, American Muslim women have more in common with traditional and modern Muslim-majority societies than they do with the larger American society. It is still considered inappropriate for women to relinquish child care and housework to the husband in a Muslim family, whether in the United States or abroad. That these dynamics still exist here in the United States is perplexing, because the larger society has more easily accepted women and men's shared participation in the home, and values the greater family income that results from women's paid work.

WHAT PARTICULAR CONCERNS DO MUSLIM WOMEN HAVE AS MUSLIMS AND AS WOMEN?

Single female heads of household, especially in African-American Muslim communities, are of particular interest. Single parenting is a legitimate and valuable contribution to the concept of family in Islam and in the United States. It is nonetheless disturbing that Muslim-American women heads of household assume roles that *shari'ah* delegated to men, and which are actually performed by men in many Muslims cultures, while simultaneously extolling the virtues of a traditional Islamic culture where only men fulfill *nafaqah* and where a woman's earnings belong exclusively to her. The contradiction here is between the actual experience of the women and their rhetoric. They do not seem to view the task of fulfilling both the traditional female and male roles as evidence of their greater freedom and autonomy, but rather as a burden they would gladly lay aside, should they have the opportunity to divide the roles according to the "real" Islam. In this split between theory and practice, theory seems to be given precedence.

Whatever principles and virtues may be seen as fundamental to Islam, there is a need for radical reform to bring action into line with ideals. The reality of single female heads of households presents an opportunity to promote greater reforms in gender relations, but to date the opportunity has largely been missed. American Islam therefore shows no sign of leading or setting an example for the radical improvement of gender relations in Muslim communities worldwide. On the contrary, Muslim women in the United States have fewer of the privileges granted them by Islamic law, as well as fewer of the advantages of non-Muslim (i.e., American) culture and law. They experience the least desirable aspects of both, getting less from Islam and less from the American culture.

Muslims worldwide believe that the United States has lost the value of family. This sentiment was first engendered by the breakup of the extended family network and the dominance of the nuclear family, but the "blended" families of modern American society also present challenges to the traditional Islamic notions of family, in spite of the flexibility of Muslims.[4] The larger American culture does not stigmatize a female divorcee as do Muslim cultures inside and outside of the United States. In immigrant American Muslim communities, greater autonomy for women may lead to greater confidence outside of marriage, but the Islamic disapproval of female divorcees is strong enough to lead many Muslim women to remain in less than satisfactory marriages. In African-American Muslim communities, divorce itself may not be stigmatized, but being unmarried still is. While this is equally true for Muslim men, the preference for marriage over celibacy is nonetheless a greater advantage for men than women, as it is women who lose their autonomy and mobility when they marry. Though autonomy is a principal feature of agency, women are directed away from independence and towards their role within a male-dominated family structure.

The concept of agency, by which I mean *khilafah,* is important here. I draw from the Qur'anic passage about human creation, "*inni jaa'ilun fi-l-'ard khalifah*" ("verily I will create on the earth an agent, trustee or vicegerent").[5] This statement establishes the ontology of all human creation: humans are created as agents of Allah on the earth. The exact nature of their agency has been explored but not fully defined in Islam's intellectual history. There is no consensus on the relationship between free will and predestination: the extent to which agents are subject to Allah's will and the extent to which they are independent. Both free will and predestination are accepted as matters of faith in Islam, but as in other religious traditions, the exact details remain part of the mystery of belief in a Creator who would create free beings. These concepts inform the question of how women simultaneously have agency and are subject to a divine decree greater than their individual or collective will.

Throughout Muslim history, women's agency has been subjected to larger entities such as the family. This is the case even in the United States, where a Muslim woman is defined by her relationships. While all humans are extensions of a vast network of relationships, a Muslim man must act as an independent agent in order to fulfill his *khilafah* and be fully Muslim. He is also accepted as an independent agent in social terms. A woman, on the other hand, begins as the daughter of her father, is transformed into the wife of her husband, and then becomes the mother of his and her children. Any role she may fill in between these familial relationships or as a consequence of their disruption becomes problematic not only before the law but as a matter of social recognition and stigma. A divorced woman finds herself in the difficult state between her initial accepted position as a daughter and her acceptable status as a wife.

According to the law, a woman who is no longer a wife returns to the household of her father. In reality, few Muslim women actually return and instead must make their way independently, with or without children. While *shari'ah* calls for a father's continued financial maintenance of his children, the divorced wife has no expectation of alimony. Some legal systems, such as those in Iran, expect a woman's *mahr* (bride gift) to be sufficient for alimony. The *mahr* is agreed upon at the time of the marriage contract, and functions as contingency support should the woman be divorced. In the context of Muslims in the United States, *mahr* is more symbolic or tokenistic. A man extends a gift to his prospective wife as an acknowledgement of her agreement, but not as a major contribution to any eventual support for an independent woman. Many women therefore find themselves empty-handed at the time of divorce.

As in the Maliki school of law, American Muslim women are more likely than women in some Islamic countries such as Iran to have custody of their children should their marriage dissolve.[6] A divorced Muslim woman in the United States, however, cannot automatically rely upon her ex-husband for assistance. The father's financial support for his children is unconditional in *shari'ah*, but it is conditional in the United States. Many women therefore begin this stage in their lives with neither spousal nor child support. How does a woman avail herself and her children of that support without a *shari'ah* court system? Though the extent to which American Muslim women take advantage of American custody and child support laws is undocumented, general observation suggests that few

Muslim women who find themselves divorced without alimony seek the legal recourses available to them. Because a woman is unlikely to avail herself of either her local secular legal rights or her religious rights, she is often left dependent on the good will of her ex-husband to provide for their children.

It should be noted that U.S. child support laws are not gender-specific: both parents are responsible for child maintenance. Ironically, this shared responsibility can cause a woman and her children to lose their *shari'ah* rights to paternal maintenance of children. The percentage of women who have experienced financial equity during their marriage is very small, perhaps because of the Muslim understanding from the Qur'an that the man is the provider. Divorced women therefore tend to have severely limited financial resources. Although the only recourse is to local custody and support law, some Muslim women feel unable to use the secular legal system as a replacement for Islamic law. This is one way in which the dual experience of being both American and Muslim has hurt women, and demonstrates the way in which Muslim-American women seek their identity through Islam even when it is to their own financial disadvantage.

HOW HAVE MUSLIM WOMEN IN THE UNITED STATES CONSTRUCTED THEIR IDENTITIES AS MUSLIMS AND AMERICANS, GIVEN BOTH THE TENDENCY OF NON-WESTERN CULTURES TO CLAIM THAT ONLY THEY ARE ISLAMIC AND THE PROPENSITY OF ISLAM FOR PATRIARCHY?

As we begin the twenty-first century, one of the most interesting topics within the study of Islam and women concerns Muslim women's identity formation. There are increasing numbers of women activists and scholars establishing both a theoretical framework for and a practical manifestation of what it means to be Muslim and female today. The field of Muslim women's studies, which stands at the intersection of Islamic studies in the field of religion and women's studies across disciplines, has emerged within American academia only in the last decade. Even as Islamic thought promoted certain ideas about women, it developed without specific attention to gender, and so scholars who have recently begun to think about this topic have many unanswered questions. Most of the work on Islam and women is in the form of case studies, as for several decades scholars have done research on particular historical and modern groups or individual women and have moved from these to offer broader ideas about the role of women in Islam. There are few coherent theories about gender in the copious literature, so the studies do not suggest a consistent approach to the study of women as full agents in the context of Islamic society and history. Comprehensive analyses of the meaning of gender are still needed, especially given the diversity among women and the reflection of this diversity in the case studies.

The strength of the scholarly movement towards Muslim women's studies lies in the fact that women are participating as both subjects and agents. Historically, Islamic thought showed women as subjects, mere reflections of men's agency and meaning, with women's historical record being generated only by men studying Islam. The opportunity for women to speak as their own agents, generating substantial records of their own identities and roles in Muslim society and thought, has emerged only in the past few decades. Such studies met with great resistance in the Muslim world. As a result, many scholars emigrated, either because they were forced to flee or chose to migrate to the more welcoming Western academic and intellectual circles.

Intellectuals from all parts of the Muslim world, seeking greater freedom to interrogate Islam, and interested in reconstructing it towards more egalitarian ideals and praxis, have found homes in secular institutions across Europe and the United States. Recent work on Islam and women suggests that there are important distinctions between the experiences of men and women in Islam that require further investigation, and Muslim women in the United States have become leaders in this area. The ideas developed from these inquiries are funneled back to the Muslim world, which can either react positively, by meeting the challenges presented, or negatively, as happens when academic and religious ministries ban works generated in the West. Whichever reaction predominates, both intellectuals and laypersons in the Muslim world are being exposed to the challenges presented by these new scholars.

The most exciting part of the new scholarship is its quest to redefine Islam in gender-inclusive terms. Rather than applying gender theories from the realm of secular studies, these efforts seek gender-inclusive components in Islam's own primary sources. They examine the ways in which the long-standing Islamic tradition can be utilized to create an egalitarian framework that acknowledges the diverse meanings of what it is to be Muslim. This process is both an affirmation and a redirection of that tradition. Gender-inclusive studies are also part of the new reformist and post-structuralist studies of Islam in modernity, and they represent an important part of the way Muslims have sought to answer the challenge of modernity. To create an authentic Islamic identity out of this intellectual and political process it is necessary to preserve and protect the tradition while subjecting it to new interpretations.

The other exciting area of development in Muslim women's identity formation is the growth of Muslim women's grassroots organizations and networks. Women gather within almost all local communities for a number of reasons, among which are learning and furthering their personal development within Islam. This is viewed as a re-creation of the practice during the lifetime of the prophet, when women not only sat alongside the men to learn, but also, with the help of the prophet's wife Umm Salamah, organized a study session exclusively for themselves as women. The study circle is one of two major initiatives by small groups of women in American Muslim communities that serve as precursors to other community activities by women. The second major initiative consists of providing ad hoc services designed to meet immediate social needs. If a family's home burns down, for example, or its major wage earner suffers illness, women gather to provide emergency services. Some types of services, especially those in support of women and children, are easily transformed into larger, more organized public welfare projects such as the creation of shelters for battered women. In this way, women are forming support services in areas such as child welfare, early education and domestic violence. Many full-time alternative schools run by women started as home schools where several parents worked not only with their own children but also with children from other families; as the need grew larger, it led to more elaborate planning and coordination.

Muslim women's networks may begin as sisters' auxiliary groups, designed to work alongside community services performed by men, or as combined efforts by women and men. Organizations such as Muslim Women United, Women of Peace, or the Committee to Enhance the Role of Women in Society (CERWIS), all of which began as volunteer work by individual women, were not only founded by women but responded particularly to women's needs individually and within the family. The organizations often evolve into more complex, professional or corporate structures with chairpersons, secretariats and even physical locations. They move from servicing the needs of a few members of the community to organizing regional and national conferences, workshops and retreats. These women's grassroots networks, which demonstrate women's independent capacity to create alternative structures, have therefore become an extremely important aspect of American-Muslim women's identity formation.

Some minor efforts have been made to create permanent national-level Muslim women's organizations. However, these have more often taken the form of regional organizations that choose to call themselves national. Muslim women have not yet solved the problem of organizing both the East and West coasts without a central organizational headquarters, nor does there seem to be a single issue around which a national-level organization could form. Although there are many issues of shared concern, the questions of which of them will dominate the national agenda and who the representatives of these interests might be have yet to be resolved.

One significant challenge for the future, therefore, is to create a nationwide umbrella organization made up of representatives from various local and regional women's groups. Such an umbrella organization, especially given Internet communications and listservs, might be able to move the organizational efforts of Muslim women to the next logical phase. It would not only be a source of direct contact with the diverse Muslim communities but would also be able to represent Islam and Muslim women in national Islamic and non-Islamic institutions and organizations. As Muslim women's lives and activities become included in the modern study of Islam in the United States, such an umbrella organization could provide information not only to Muslim women and their organizations but to others, such as Islamic scholars. Regular reports on best practices and on issues of particular concern to women in Muslim communities would demonstrate the vitality of Islam and Muslim communities nationwide. It is unclear, however, if such an umbrella organization could form along the same lines as the Muslim women's networks discussed here. Major funding resources would be needed to spearhead such an initiative, and the many inevitable questions about Muslim women's autonomy in organizations could thwart such an effort. There is the additional danger that a major funding organization that began such an effort might acknowledge only some groups and ignore others as a way to promote its own vision of what it means to be Muslim and female.

WHAT, IF ANYTHING CAN MUSLIM WOMEN WORLDWIDE LEARN FROM MUSLIM WOMEN IN THE UNITED STATES?

I have worked with Muslim women and Muslim women's organizations for the last three decades. My work has been within the United States, on behalf of national, regional, and local efforts, as well as outside the United States, as part of international efforts. As I straddle these two realms, I am confident about the important strides Muslim women have been making towards their own identity formation worldwide. Neither the developments of Muslim women's networks and grassroots organizations nor Muslim women's scholarship are unique to North America; rather, Muslim women in the United States are part of the global arena of Islam and women. While Muslim-American women face distinctive challenges and enjoy distinctive opportunities as a result of their American citizenship, neither the challenges nor the opportunities have placed them in a unique or exemplary role vis-à-vis the world community.

In the area of personal status or family, American Muslim women are more influenced by their own notions of Islam and family than they are by the civil, legal and social privileges available to them as Americans. In this sense, they impose on themselves non-egalitarian gender relations despite the existence of more egalitarian civil codes and practices. Although American Muslims in general avail themselves of their First Amendment rights of freedom of speech and freedom of religion, Muslim women do not exercise these rights as a means to alleviate inequitable Muslim practices or interpretations of Muslim law. In contrast, secular constitutional codes have been called upon to oppose Islamic laws in countries such as South Africa and Malaysia, both of which have substantial non-Muslim populations and the concomitant need for their laws to accommodate more than Islam. American Muslim women have also failed to lobby about gender issues in Islam rather than about issues relating to all American Muslims and their minority status. Indeed, Muslim women continue to be victimized because of their adherence to symbolic reflections of Islam, particularly in dress, and national prejudice against Islam results in insufficient efforts to prevent the sometimes blatant violation of Muslim women's civil liberties. No one addresses their rights as women, above or beyond their rights as part of the Muslim minority in a sometimes hostile country.

In spite of the great intellectual freedom in the United States, Islamic studies suffer both when compared to the study of other religions and because of the historical and political preference for things Western in fields other than religious studies. Even the strides made in the area of Muslim women's studies are achieved against a continued backdrop of hostility and double standards. Though there are many legitimate reasons for Islamic reform, the extent to which it must be an independent and authentic Islamic movement has not been stressed in the American context. Muslim women must distinguish themselves from a large body of contested needs and agendas in order to have their particular struggles as women and as American Muslims acknowledged.

NOTES

1. The ultimate act of Divine Self-disclosure would eradicate any distinction between the Creator and creation and thus achieve an annihilation of all of creation.

2. In this paper, Allah is referred to as He/She/It interchangeably.

3. The verse reads, "*wa bi-maa yanfiquu min amwalihim alayhinna*," meaning, "and on [the basis] of that which they [masculine plural] provide from their wealth for them [feminine plural]" (4:34).

4. "Blended" families here refers to the many forms of familial relations that have been established in addition to the "traditional" family of a husband and wife in a lifetime partnership with parentage only over their shared biological offspring.

5. *Khilafah* means "agency"; *khalifah* means "agent."

6. Malik ibn Anas (c. 713-c. 795), a legal expert in the city of Medina, founded one of four schools of Islamic jurisprudence.

AMERICAN PUBLIC OPINION ABOUT MUSLIMS IN THE U.S. AND ABROAD[1]

SCOTT KEETER AND ANDREW KOHUT

The horrific events of September 11, 2001 focused the attention of the American public on the Islamic world and Muslims, both in the United States and abroad. While the reactions of Americans are a testament to their core values of tolerance and religiosity, they also signal a cautionary note about the future of relations between cultures that share many values but still differ in significant ways.

Public opinion surveys conducted between March 2001 and May 2003 indicate that the American public responded to the terrorist attacks with surprising equanimity, for the most part making important and subtle distinctions in its evaluations of Muslims.[2] American opinion about Muslims actually became more favorable after September 11, and most Americans do not regard Muslim Americans as hostile to the interests of the United States. President Bush's efforts to promote tolerance in the aftermath of the tragedy appear to have played a role in this public response. Citizens knowledgeable about Islam are more accepting of Muslim Americans than those with less knowledge, but they are also more likely to understand that much of the Islamic world is skeptical or hostile toward America. Despite a high degree of toleration, mainstream American culture has not yet fully accepted Muslims and considerable suspicion remains. There is certainly a willingness to see Muslims profiled for security checks, as well as other signs of growing hostility to Islam and Muslims as time has passed.

FAVORABLE VIEW OF MUSLIMS, LESS SO FOR ISLAM

Despite a number of incidents of anti-Muslim bias and hate crimes in the aftermath of September 11, public opinion toward Muslims in the U.S. has been very temperate. Favorable ratings of Muslim Americans rose from 45 percent in March 2001 to 59 percent in November 2001 before falling slightly to 54 percent in March 2002. Fewer than a quarter (22%)

Rating Muslim-Americans			
	March 2001 (%)	Nov 2001 (%)	Mar 2002 (%)
Favorable	45	59	54
Unfavorable	28	17	22
No opinion	31	24	24
	100	100	100
Rating Islam			
	Oct 2001* (%)	Jan 2002* (%)	Mar 2002 (%)
Favorable	47	41	38
Unfavorable	39	24	33
No opinion	13	35	29
	100	100	100

*ABC/Beliefnet. All other data from Pew Research Center polls.

in March 2002 expressed an unfavorable opinion of Muslim Americans, up slightly from 17 percent in January.[3]

But the larger distinction is between ratings of Muslims as individuals and perceptions of Islam generally. When asked for its opinion of Islam, the public is divided, with 38 percent saying they have a favorable view of the religion, and 33 percent unfavorable. This represents a nine point drop from an October 2001 ABC/Beliefnet poll, which found 47 percent expressing a favorable opinion of Islam in the immediate aftermath of the tragedy.[4]

While predominantly favorable, positive public views of Muslims continue to lag behind those of most other religious groups. Protestants, Catholics and Jews are rated favorably by roughly three-quarters of the public, with only around one in ten respondents expressing unfavorable opinions of these groups. It is worth noting that Americans are far more critical of atheists than they are of Muslims: 54 percent have an unfavorable view of atheists, compared with only 29 percent unfavorable toward Muslims and 22 percent toward Muslim Americans. The United States is a profoundly religious nation—the most religious of the wealthy industrialized countries—and has considerable respect for religious people of all persuasions as well as skepticism about those who lack religion.

COMPARISONS WITH WORLD WAR II

Public opinion about Muslims in the aftermath of September 11 presents an interesting contrast to the way the Japanese and Japanese Americans were viewed during and after World War II. There are important differences between the situations, including the fact that Japan as a nation waged a lengthy and bitter war on the United States. Nonetheless, American prejudice toward Japanese Americans as well as the Japanese was very different from the moderate reaction of public opinion today about Muslims.

In a March 1942 poll by the National Opinion Research Center, 43 percent of Americans polled agreed that the Japanese would always want to go to war to make themselves as powerful as possible, and another 25 percent said the Japanese might not like war but were easily led to it by powerful leaders.[5] (Sentiment that the Japanese were innately warlike rose even further during the war.) Half of Americans (48%) interviewed in December 1942 thought that Japanese Americans who were forcibly moved inland from the Pacific coast should not be allowed to return after the war. Among those who opposed returning the Japanese Americans to their homes, nearly two-thirds favored sending them to Japan or to another country. About three in ten admitted that they hated the Japanese people. In 1944, 61 percent said that white people should get preference over Japanese Americans for any jobs that were available.

After the war, opinions were not much different. Half of Americans polled in December 1946 (47%) said that the Japanese would go back to their old ways. That same year, one-fourth of the American public said that the average Japanese American was disloyal to the United States. Two-thirds (66%) believed that the average Japanese living in this country did some spying for the Japanese government. Majorities polled at the end of the war (December 1945) said that the Japanese people were naturally cruel, and 63 percent said the Japanese people entirely approved of the killing and starving of prisoners.

MIXED VIEWS ON RELIGION AND VIOLENCE

By comparison with attitudes during World War II, public opinion about the Islamic world is more moderate—though growing numbers of people nonetheless believe that much of the Islamic world is anti-American. Nearly half (49%) think that a significant proportion of Muslims around the world hold anti-American views, up from 36 percent in March 2002. Polling in predominantly Muslim nations by the Pew Research Center and

Favorability Ratings
(March 2002)

	Favorable (%)	Unfavorable (%)	Can't rate (%)
Opinion of			
Protestants	74	8	18
Catholics	74	13	13
Jews	74	9	17
Evangelical Christians	55	18	27
Muslim-Americans★	54	22	24
People who aren't religious+	51	30	19
Muslims+	**47**	**29**	**24**
Atheists★	34	54	12

★ asked on Form 1
+ asked on Form 2
Source: poll conducted by Pew Research Center

Perceived Number of Anti-American Muslims around the World?

	March 2002 (%)	June 2003 (%)
Almost all	6	7
Most	12	17
About half	18	25
Some	24	24
Just a few	21	15
Don't know	19	12
	100	100
NET 1/2 or more	*36*	*49*

by Gallup has found high levels of anti-Americanism among Muslim populations.[6] These views are especially widespread in the aftermath of the war with Iraq but were substantial long before preparations for the war began.

The public sees much less anti-Americanism among Muslims in this country. Fully 62 percent of Americans polled in March 2002 say some or just a few Muslim Americans hold anti-American sentiments. One in five nonetheless think that at least half of the Muslims living in the United States are anti-American.

Substantially higher numbers of Americans in 2003 than in 2002 believe that Islam is more likely than other religions to encourage violence among its followers. There has also been a significant increase in the percentage of people who say that, in general, religion plays a large role in causing wars (44 percent in July 2003, 34 percent in March 2002).

The July 2003 Pew Research Center survey found that 44 percent of Americans believe that Islam is more likely to encourage violence than other religions, up from 25 percent in the March 2002 poll. This opinion is as prevalent among better educated individuals and those who are more knowledgeable about Islam as among the less educated and less knowledgeable. And where white evangelicals once stood out for their belief that Islam is more likely to encourage violence, there are fewer religious differences now.

In 2002, more highly committed white evangelical Protestants than people of other religious traditions held this opinion—41 percent compared with 25 percent of white mainline Protestants, 24 percent of white Catholics, and 24 percent of black Protestants. Seculars were least likely to hold this view; only 18 percent agreed in 2002. Today, evangelicals and mainline Protestants have the same opinion: 51 percent of evangelicals and 50 percent of mainline Protestants agree that the Islamic religion is more likely than others to encourage violence, while this opinion also has grown among white Catholics (39%), black Protestants (37%), and seculars (38%).

THE IMPORTANCE OF LEADERSHIP

In the aftermath of the terrorist attacks on September 11, President Bush and other national leaders quickly made public appeals for tolerance toward Muslims. The Pew Research Center survey conducted in November 2001 found evidence that Americans heeded the president's call, and most notably that the president's own core constituency of conservative Republicans showed by far the biggest turnaround. In November, nearly two-thirds of conservative Republicans (64%) felt favorably toward Muslims, up 29 percentage points from the March 2001 survey.

YOUNG PEOPLE MORE POSITIVE ABOUT MUSLIMS AND ISLAM

Another reason for the moderate public response to September 11 is that younger Americans are significantly more tolerant and accepting of diversity. On a range of attitudes regarding race, religion, and many social issues, the United States has seen a significant trend of new generations

Is Islam More Likely to Encourage Violence?

	March 2002 (%)	July 2003 (%)	*Difference*
Yes	25	44	*19*
No	51	41	
Neither/DK	24	15	
	100	100	
Percent "Yes" among…			
White Evangelical	36	51	*15*
High Commit	41	52	*11*
Low Commit	32	51	*19*
White Mainline	25	50	*25*
White Catholic	24	39	*15*
Black Protestant	24	37	*13*
Secular	18	38	*20*
Conservative	33	54	*21*
Moderate	22	43	*21*
Liberal	20	32	*12*
Knowledge of Islam			
High	26	43	*17*
Medium	21	45	*24*
Low	26	43	*17*

Views of Muslims Improved among Conservatives

	Mar-01		*Nov-01*	
Opinion of Muslim Americans	Favorable	Unfavorable	Favorable	Unfavorable
	%	%	%	%
Total	45	24	59	17
Conservative Republican	35	40	64	19
Moderate-Liberal Republican	50	18	61	18
Independent	51	20	60	17
Conservative-Moderate Democrat	46	24	56	19
Liberal Democrat	56	16	68	18

Source: Pew Research Center polls

entering adulthood showing greater tolerance than their elders. This trend has helped to minimize the degree to which the public has blamed Muslims in general for the terrorists' actions. In March 2002, a majority of those under age 30 expressed a favorable view of Muslim Americans, Muslims, and Islam alike (57 percent, 57 percent and 51 percent respectively). Older Americans generally have a favorable opinion of Muslim Americans, but express more skepticism toward Muslims and Islam.

Americans age 65 and older in particular hold mixed views when it comes to Muslims and Islam. By 43 percent to 25 percent, members of this group say they feel favorably about Muslim Americans, but seniors who were asked about Muslims rated them less positively (30 percent favorable versus 30 percent unfavorable). Just one in four has a favorable opinion of Islam, while 37 percent express an unfavorable opinion.

Increased levels of education in America also help account for differences between public reactions in 2001 and those seen during World War II.[7] College-educated Americans express more favorable views of Muslims and Islam than those who did not attend college. Education has a particularly strong effect on perceptions of the Islamic religion. While about half (52%) of college graduates have a favorable view of Islam, just 29 percent of those who never attended college agree.

Among religious groups, white evangelical Protestants have the least favorable view of Islam. Fully 45 percent of white evangelicals say they view Islam unfavorably, compared with just 29 percent who rate it favorably. White evangelicals also are most likely to say they have an unfavorable view of Muslim Americans. As many as three in ten feel unfavorably toward Muslim Americans, compared with about two in ten among other major religious groups. Still, this is less than the 38 percent of white evangelicals who rated Muslim Americans unfavorably a year ago.

Negative views of Islam also have ideological and regional components. Political conservatives express substantially more unfavorable views of Islam than do liberals, and negative opinions of Islam tend to be greatest in rural areas and in the South.

ISLAM IS DIFFERENT

Clearly, many Americans make a distinction in their opinions of Muslims and their view of Islam, which is much more negative. It is perhaps not surprising, therefore, that relatively few non-Muslim Americans think that their own religion and Islam have much in common. Just 27 percent see similarities between the Muslim religion and their own religion, while more than half (57%) see Islam as very different. This gap rose after

Young More Tolerant
(March 2002)

	--------- *Age* ---------			
	18 ±29	30 ±49	50 ±64	65+
Muslim Americans⋆	%	%	%	%
Favorable	57	60	53	43
Unfavorable	23	21	22	25
Can't rate	20	19	25	32
	100	100	100	100
Muslims⋆⋆				
Favorable	57	49	48	30
Unfavorable	26	28	30	30
Can't rate	17	23	22	40
	100	100	100	100
Islam⋆⋆				
Favorable	51	36	38	25
Unfavorable	29	36	30	37
Can't rate	20	28	32	38
	100	100	100	100

⋆ asked on Form 1
⋆⋆ asked on Form 2
Source: Pew Research Center poll

White Evangelicals Critical of Islam (March 2002)

	--- *Opinion of* ---			
	Muslim-Americans		*Islam*	
	Favorable	Unfavorable	Favorable	Unfavorable
	%	%	%	%
College grad	64	16	52	31
Some college	61	20	41	33
H.S. or less	48	26	29	34
White Evangelical	**51**	**30**	**29**	**45**
White Mainline	52	17	40	28
White Catholic	63	18	37	33
Secular	44	25	44	34
Black Protestant	59	21	n/a	n/a
Secular	44	25	44	34

Source: Pew Research Center poll

November 2001, when 52 percent saw major differences between their religion and Islam, and 31 percent saw similarities.

Opinion on this issue among college graduates, who hold the most favorable views of Islam, shifted dramatically in the months following September 11. In November 2001, just after the attacks, roughly half of college graduates saw common ground between their own religion and the Muslim religion, while 38 percent did not. By March 2002, just 40 percent saw similarities between their religion and Islam, while substantially more (49%) saw major differences. Even so, college graduates remained twice as likely as those who did not attend college to see similarities between their religion and Islam (40% versus 19%).

While roughly a third of white mainline Protestants, black Protestants, and white Catholics say their faith and the Muslim faith have a lot in common, only 16 percent of white evangelicals agree, and while 11 percent of highly committed white evangelicals say there is common ground with Islam, 78 percent see wide differences.

These religious divides parallel regional differences. More residents of the Northeast and West see Islam as having a lot in common with their own religion than those in the South and Midwest. Residents of small towns and rural areas feel they have less in common with Islam than those in larger cities and their suburbs.

Age and gender also are related to perceptions of Islam. Overall, three in ten respondents under age 65 say the Muslim religion and their own have a lot in common, compared with just 17 percent of those 65 and older. More men than women see Islam as similar to their own faith (34% versus 22%).

The Role of Knowledge

Knowledge about Islam plays an important role in helping the public make crucial distinctions in thinking about the role of religion in momentous events as well as everyday life. Those who are more knowledgeable about Islam are more tolerant toward Muslims and Muslim Americans and more favorable toward the Islamic religion, but they also have a greater understanding and awareness of anti-American sentiment among Muslims in other countries.

Few Americans feel they know a lot about the Muslim religion. Roughly two-thirds of Americans (65%) say they know little or nothing about Islam and its practices, while just five percent say they know a great deal about the religion. This is virtually identical to the way Americans responded in mid-November 2001.

While just 34 percent say they know a great deal or some about Islam, nearly half (47%) know that Muslims use the term "Allah" to refer to God

Little in Common (March 2002)

	*Your religion & Islam…**		
	A lot in common	Very different	Don't know
	%	%	%
Total	27	57	16
Men	34	55	11
Women	22	59	19
College grad	40	49	11
Some college	31	55	14
H.S. or less	19	63	18
White Evangelical	16	69	15
High Commitment	11	78	11
Low Commitment	21	58	21
White Mainline	31	53	16
White Catholic	36	45	19
Black Protestant	32	55	13

*Asked only if respondent gives a religious identification other than Islam.
Source: Pew Research Center poll

Knowledge of Islam (March 2002)

	Percent correctly identifying …	
	Allah	Qur'an
	%	%
Total	47	43
18 ±29	56	41
30 ±49	50	48
50 ±64	43	44
65+	35	33
College grad	70	74
H.S. or less	32	25
Some college	54	49
H.S. or less	32	25

Source: Pew Research Center poll

and nearly as many (43%) know that the Islamic equivalent to the Bible is the Qur'an.

Despite lower aggregate levels of education, African Americans are just as knowledgeable on these questions as whites. Young people in general tend to be more knowledgeable about Islam than their elders. Among those under age 30, 56 percent can identify Allah as the correct answer, compared with 35 percent of those age 65 and older. Overall, more than half of seniors (56%) could answer neither question correctly, compared with just 37 percent of those under age 30.

Americans who are familiar with basic aspects of the Muslim faith—those who can correctly identify the Qur'an and Allah—rate Muslims and Islam far more favorably than those who know little or nothing about Islam, and are almost three times as likely as those who know little or nothing (41% versus 15%) to think the Muslim faith has a lot in common with their own religion.

Familiarity Breeds Good Feelings …

(March 2002)

	Knowledge about Islam		
	High	Mod	Low
Favorable view of …	%	%	%
Muslim Americans	65	64	40
Muslims	57	50	38
Islam	53	44	24
Islam and my religion …			
Have a lot in common	41	31	15
Are very different	50	55	64
Don't know	9	14	21
	100	100	100
… But Doesn't Lessen Concerns			
Think many Muslims are anti-American			
In world	40	33	33
In the U.S.	18	16	23
Think some religions encourage violence	51	53	40
Think Islam encourages violence	26	21	26

Source: Pew Research Center poll

Yet knowledge of Islam does not necessarily lead people to believe there is less anti-American hostility among Muslims or that Islam is no more violent than other religions. Americans who know rudimentary facts about Islam are, if anything, more likely to see anti-American sentiment among half or more Muslims around the world. Familiarity with the religion has no effect on people's evaluations as to whether Islam is more likely than other religions to encourage violence, or whether some religions are more likely than others to encourage violence.

RELIGION IN THE WORLD

Regardless of their feelings about Islam, Americans remain staunchly supportive of religion's influence both in America and in the world. Half think that religion's influence in the world is currently in decline, and the vast majority who believe this think it is a bad trend (85%) rather than a good one (9%). Among the minority (38%) who think that religion's influence in the world is currently on the rise, there is only slightly less uniformity. Three-quarters (73%) say the increasing influence of religion in the world is a good thing, while only 18 percent think it is bad.

When asked to consider lessons from the terrorist attacks, the public's view does not change. By nearly two to one, more believe that the bigger lesson of September 11 is that religion has too little influence in the world (51%) than think the lesson is that religion has too much sway (28%).

Religion's Influence in the World

(March 2002)

	Total	
	%	
Increasing	38	
Losing	50	
Staying the same	3	
No opinion	9	
	100	
	If Increasing	*If Losing*
Is this a…	%	%
Good thing	73	9
Bad thing	18	85
Other/DK	9	6
	100	100

Source: Pew Research Center poll

Perspectives on the role of religion in the world depend largely on the importance of religion in a person's own life. Highly religious Americans, by nearly ten to one, see the terrorist attacks as a sign that religion has too little influence in the world these days (73%), not too much (8%). Among those for whom religion is not particularly important, however, a 48 percent plurality say the bigger lesson is that religion is too influential, while 32 percent take the opposing viewpoint. This "commitment gap" exists within all religious groups.

Aside from those who are not strongly religious, men and younger people express somewhat more skepticism about the role of religion in

Lesson of 9/11

(March 2002)

	Religion has …		
	Too much influence	Too little influence	Other/DK
	%	%	%
Total	28	51	21
Race/Religion			
White	28	52	20
Evangelical	11	71	18
Mainline	27	51	22
Catholic	26	50	24
Black	22	58	20
Protestant	16	67	17
Secular	57	23	20
Religiosity			
High	8	73	19
Low	48	32	20
Moderate	23	55	22
Low	48	32	20

Source: Pew Research Center poll

Role of Religion in Causing Wars and Conflicts

(March 2002)

	Total	Men	Women	Secular
	%	%	%	%
A great deal	34	40	28	46
A fair amount	31	31	32	31
Only a little	20	19	21	15
None at all	9	6	12	4
Don't know	6	4	7	4
	100	100	100	100

Source: Pew Research Center poll

CHANGE IN OPINION ABOUT MUSLIM-AMERICANS AFTER 9/11

Question: Now thinking about some specific religious groups... Is your overall opinion of Muslim-Americans very favorable, mostly favorable, mostly unfavorable, or very unfavorable?

	— March 2001 —			*— Mid-November 2001 —*			Change in
	Favorable	Unfavorable	DK	Favorable	Unfavorable	DK	Favorable
	%	%	%	%	%	%	
Total	45	24	31=100	59	17	24=100	+14
Sex							
Male	49	25	26=100	59	21	20=100	+10
Female	41	24	35=100	59	14	27=100	+18
Race							
White	43	25	32=100	60	18	22=100	+17
Non-white	51	22	27=100	55	16	29=100	+4
Black	52	24	24=100	52	19	29=100	0
Hispanic★	48	21	31=100	56	18	26=100	+8
Race and Sex							
White Men	47	26	27=100	59	21	20=100	+12
White Women	40	24	36=100	61	15	24=100	+21
Age							
Under 30	55	24	21=100	62	18	20=100	+7
30 ±49	48	23	29=100	63	17	20=100	+15
50 ±64	39	29	32=100	58	16	26=100	+19
65+	33	22	45=100	48	19	33=100	+15
Sex and Age							
Men under 50	57	21	22=100	60	21	19=100	+3
Women under 50	46	26	28=100	65	15	20=100	+19
Men 50+	38	30	32=100	58	21	21=100	+20
Women 50+	34	23	43=100	51	14	35=100	+17
Education							
College Grad.	55	18	27=100	73	11	16=100	+18
Some College	49	21	30=100	62	17	21=100	+13
High School Grad.	39	27	34=100	56	19	25=100	+17
<H.S. Grad.	35	35	30=100	37	26	37=100	+2
Family Income							
$75,000+	56	22	22=100	68	15	17=100	+12
$50,000 ±$74,999	44	24	32=100	72	14	14=100	+28
$30,000 ±$49,999	46	25	29=100	59	20	21=100	+13
$20,000 ±$29,999	43	26	31=100	60	18	22=100	+17
<$20,000	41	27	32=100	52	23	25=100	+11
Region							
East	47	18	35=100	65	14	21=100	+18
Midwest	43	24	33=100	57	20	23=100	+14
South	42	30	28=100	56	21	23=100	+14
West	49	21	30=100	60	13	27=100	+11

	— *March 2001* —			— *Mid-November 2001* —			Change in
	Favorable	Unfavorable	DK	Favorable	Unfavorable	DK	Favorable
	%	%	%	%	%	%	
Religious Affiliation							
Total White Protestant	37	31	32=100	59	20	21=100	+22
White Protestant Evangelical	34	38	28=100	55	22	23=100	+21
White Prot. Non-Evangelical	40	23	37=100	64	17	19=100	+24
White Catholic	51	16	33=100	70	14	16=100	+19
Secular	51	19	30=100	54	16	30=100	+3
Community Size							
Large City	50	26	24=100	57	18	25=100	+7
Suburb	50	23	27=100	64	16	20=100	+14
Small City/Town	44	22	34=100	59	15	26=100	+15
Rural Area	36	29	35=100	55	22	23=100	+19
Party ID							
Republican	40	32	28=100	62	19	19=100	+22
Democrat	47	22	31=100	58	18	24=100	+11
Independent	51	20	29=100	60	17	23=100	+9
Party and Ideology							
Conservative Republican	35	40	25=100	64	19	17=100	+29
Moderate/Liberal Republican	50	18	32=100	61	18	21=100	+11
Conservative/Moderate Democrat	46	24	30=100	56	19	25=100	+10
Liberal Democrat	56	16	28=100	68	18	14=100	+12
Bush Approval							
Approve	n/a	n/a	n/a	61	17	22=100	--
Disapprove	n/a	n/a	n/a	61	18	21=100	--
2000 Presidential Vote							
Bush	41	30	29=100	65	17	18=100	+24
Gore	51	19	30=100	65	12	23=100	+14
Marital Status							
Married	44	25	31=100	60	16	24=100	+16
Unmarried	46	24	30=100	58	19	23=100	+12
Parental Status							
Parent	47	23	30=100	61	18	21=100	+14
Non-Parent	44	25	31=100	58	17	25=100	+14
Labor Union							
Union Household	45	27	28=100	60	16	24=100	+15
Non-Union Household	45	24	31=100	59	18	23=100	+14

* The designation Hispanic is unrelated to the white-black categorization.

the world. Whereas women predominantly say the lesson of September 11 is that religion has too little influence in the world (58%), men are more divided (44 percent say too little, 35 percent too much). Those under age 30 are split as to whether the lesson of September 11 is that there is too much (37%) or too little (44%) religion in the world, while older people strongly believe the latter.

At the same time, Americans believe that religion's effect is not always positive. One-third of Americans (34%) say religion plays a major role in causing most wars and conflicts in the world, and nearly as many (31%) say it has a fair amount to do with wars and conflicts. This view is most prevalent among seculars, men, and college graduates.

CAVEATS AND CONCERNS

Despite the generally favorable opinions Americans express about Muslims and Muslim-Americans, much public suspicion and misunderstanding remains. One can view the 54 percent favorable rating toward Muslim-Americans as a half-empty glass as well as a half-full one. Similarly, compared with the immediate aftermath of September 11, the public is more likely now to view the September 11 attacks as part of an impending major conflict between the peoples of the West and those of the Islamic world: 35 percent said this in August 2002, compared with 28 percent in October 2001.[8] There has also been a rise in the percentage of the public that says it has become more suspicious of people who appear to be of Middle Eastern descent—from 28 percent in September 2001 to 37 percent a year later—and large majorities favor racial profiling at airports in an effort to reduce the chances of terrorism.

Anti-Muslim bias is also reflected in the way the public views Muslims as potential political leaders. Just as Al Smith and John F. Kennedy battled anti-Catholic bias in seeking the presidency, a Muslim candidate for president today would face a significant amount of prejudice in seeking the office. Although overt bias against Jews and Catholics has declined substantially in the United States in the past decades, polls indicate that a Muslim candidate would still face considerable barriers in public acceptance. According to a Fox News/Opinion Dynamics Poll taken in January of this year, 49 percent of the public say a Muslim candidate's religious affiliation would be a negative factor that would make them less likely to vote for the candidate; three percent said it would be a positive factor. In contrast, only 12 percent said this about a Jewish candidate and 11 percent said it about a Catholic candidate.[9]

LITTLE POLLING ON PUBLIC ATTITUDES ABOUT ISLAM UNTIL SEPTEMBER 11

As a concluding caveat, it is worth noting that our understanding of trends in opinion about Islam is hampered by the fact that national polling organizations in the United States did very little polling on the subject of public attitudes about Islam and Muslims until after the terrorist attacks on September 11. A search of the comprehensive polling database of 400,000 questions dating from the 1930s maintained by the Roper Center at the University of Connecticut found 161 survey questions since September 11 that included the terms "Muslim," "Muslims," "Moslem," or "Moslems."[10] Prior to that date, only the Pew Research Center had asked general questions in 2001 regarding opinion about Islam (a Spring 2001 poll asked about favorability toward Muslims, and approval of allowing mosques to apply for federal funds if faith-based social service organizations were permitted to receive government support; the *Washington Post*/ABC News poll asked about the Nation of Islam in this context).[11] A few questions were asked by national organizations in November 2000.

In the 1990s, many questions about Muslims appeared in the database, but most were related to attitudes about American involvement in Bosnia, Kosovo, or the Persian Gulf. In the 1980s, items focused on attitudes about Louis Farrakhan and the Nation of Islam, or on conflict in the Middle East. A few national questions about Islam were found in the database in the 1970s, all related to the hostage situation in Iran. In the 1960s, only a few items mentioning black Muslims were located. No questions on the topic were found prior to the 1960s.[12]

NOTES

1. The authors wish to thank the staff of the Pew Research Center who collaborated on the analyses reported here. Those who contributed to this paper include Carroll Doherty, Michael Dimock, Nilanthi Samaranayake, Elizabeth Mueller Gross, Peyton Craighill, and Jason Owens. Much of the survey data reported here was collected in conjunction with the Pew Forum on Religion and Public Life.

2. Polls based on random samples of the U.S. public typically include Muslim-American respondents, but not enough for a separate analysis unless the overall sample size is very large. On average, about 0.5 percent of Pew Research Center respondents give their religious affiliation as Muslim.

3. Most of the data discussed in this paper, unless otherwise indicated, come from polls conducted by the Pew Research Center for the People and the Press. Reports and raw data files are available at the center's web site, http://people-press.org. The principal study for most analyses is described in the center's report, "Americans Struggle with Religion's Role at Home and Abroad" (released March 20, 2002). The March 2001 study is entitled "Faith-Based Funding Backed, But Church-State Doubts Abound" (released April 10, 2001). A study conducted in November 2001 was also used extensively. Its report is entitled "Post September 11 Attitudes: Religion more prominent; Muslim-Americans more accepted" (released December 6, 2001). The most recent data are taken from "Religion and Politics: Contention and Consensus" (released July 24, 2003).

4. Poll archived in the iPoll databank of the Roper Center for Public Opinion Research, University of Connecticut http://roperweb.ropercenter.uconn.edu/iPOLL/. Access to iPoll is also provided through Lexis Nexis.

5. All World War II-era polls cited here are available through the iPoll databank of survey questions compiled by the Roper Center for Public Opinion Research at the University of Connecticut: http://roperweb.ropercenter.uconn.edu/iPOLL/.

6. Pew Research Center for the People and the Press, "What the World Thinks in 2002: How Global Publics View: Their Lives, Their Countries, The World, America" (December 4, 2002); Gallup Organization, "Gallup Poll of the Islamic World" (February 26, 2002).

7. In 2002, 26.7 percent of Americans age 25 or over had completed four years of college or more, compared with only 5.4 percent in 1947. U.S. Census Bureau Educational Attainment data, Historical Table A-2: "Percent of People 25 Years Old and Over Who Have Completed High School or College, by Race, Hispanic Origin, and Sex: Selected Years 1940 to 2002," based on data from the Current Population Survey, available at http://www.census.gov/population/socdemo/education/tabA-2.pdf.

8. Pew Research Center for the People and the Press, "One Year Later: New Yorkers More Troubled, Washingtonians More on Edge: The Personal Toll Persists, Policy Opinions Change" (September 5, 2002).

9. Poll archived in the iPoll databank of the Roper Center for Public Opinion Research, University of Connecticut http://roperweb.ropercenter.uconn.edu/iPOLL/.

10. Data compiled by the authors using the iPoll databank at the Roper Center.

11. Poll archived in the iPoll databank of the Roper Center for Public Opinion Research, University of Connecticut http://roperweb.ropercenter.uconn.edu/iPOLL/.

12. Data compiled by the authors using the iPoll databank at the Roper Center.

GLOSSARY

Ahadith – a collection of books containing the words, sayings, and traditions of the Prophet Muhammad.

‘*Alim* – leading religious scholar; a person learned in Islam. (Plural is *‘ulama*.)

Amir al-mu’minin – one who acts as head of state, or head of the mosque, for the community of Muslim believers.

Eid – a feast; the specific one celebrated by Muslims after fasting during the month of Ramadan is an *Eid al-Fitr*.

Fiqh – understanding, comprehension, knowledge; used to describe Islamic jurisprudence.

Halal – something that is lawful and permitted in Islamic tradition.

Haram – activities prohibited to Muslims, such as stealing, lying, eating unclean foods.

Ijma’ – consensus among religious scholars/jurists rendering a ruling binding.

Ijtihad – exerting the sum total of one’s ability attempting to uncover Allah’s rulings on issues, using sources such as the Qur’an, *Sunnah*, and *Ijma*’.

Jum’ah – Friday. Attendance at collective prayer at the mosque on Friday is a requirement for Muslims.

Khalifah – caliph, title taken by Mohammed’s successors as secular and religious heads of Islam.

Khilafah – the Caliphate system.

Madrasah – school; frequently refers to a Qur’anic school.

Majlis – an assembly or a gathering for a specific purpose or at a specific place; used to describe the body of worshippers at a mosque.

Masjid – a place of worship; in English, a mosque.

Qur’an – the holy book as revealed to Muhammad.

Salah – a spiritual relationship and communication between the creature and his or her Creator; one of the five pillars of Islam. Distinct from prayer.

Shari'ah – provisions in the Qur'an and the *Sunnah*, interpreted by a *Faqih*, one who is an expert in Islamic legal matters.

Sunnah – the words and deeds of the Prophet Muhammad; along with the Qur'an, one of the two major legal sources of jurisprudence in Islam.

'Ulama – religious scholars; the learned, knowledgeable people in Islam. (Singular is *'alim*.)

Ummah – the worldwide community of believers in Islam; i.e., Muslims.

Urubah – the idea of Arabism; also, the nationalist movement.

Zakat – almsgiving, charity; one of the five pillars of Islam.

PARTICIPANT BIOGRAPHIES

Ihsan Bagby is the author of *The Mosque in America: A National Portrait* (2001), the first comprehensive study of mosques in the United States. An Associate Professor of Islamic Studies at the University of Kentucky, he is working on a book on African-American Muslims and as part of that effort he has published "A Profile of African American Mosques" in the *Journal of the Interdenominational Theological Center* (Spring 2002). Prof. Bagby serves on the advisory board of Hartford Seminary's Hartford Institute for Religion Research, and is active in other organizations including the Council of American-Islamic Relations (CAIR) and the Muslim Alliance in North America (MANA).

Osman Bakar, Malaysia Chair of Islam in Southeast Asia at the Center for Muslim-Christian Understanding, Georgetown University, has been Professor of Philosophy of Science and Deputy Vice-Chancellor/Vice President in charge of Academic Affairs at the University of Malaya (Kuala Lumpur). He was co-founder and president of the Malaysian Islamic Academy of Science. His 12 books and more than 100 articles on Islamic philosophy and science, religion and science, Sufism, Southeast Asian Islam and contemporary Islam include *Classification of Knowledge in Islam*; *Islam and Confucianism: A Civilizational Dialogue* (ed.); and *Islam and Civilizational Dialogue.*

Zahid H. Bukhari is director of Project MAPS: Muslims in American Public Square, and Fellow, Center for Muslim-Christian Understanding at Georgetown University. His research interests have focused on religion and politics in the United States and South Asia, and he has published and presented papers on Islam and development, Muslim public opinion in the U.S. and other related topics in national and international forums. A former executive director of the Pakistan Institute of Public Opinion (PIPO) and former Secretary General of the Islamic Circle of North America, Dr. Bukhari was one of the founders of the National Islamic Shura Council.

Sherman A. Jackson is associate professor of Islamic Studies, Department of Near Eastern Studies at the University of Michigan, specializing in Islamic law and theology. He earned his B.A., M.A., and Ph.D. at the University of Pennsylvania between 1982 and 1990. The author of *Islamic Law and the State: The Constitutional Jurisprudence of Shihab al-Din al-Qarafi* as well as numerous articles on Islam, and past interim president of the Shari'ah Scholars Association of North America, Prof. Jackson speaks classical Arabic, Egyptian, Levantine, Saudi Arabian and Sudanese dialects, and has a reading knowledge of French, German and Persian.

Scott Keeter, associate director of the Pew Research Center for the People and the Press in Washington, D.C., has been an election night analyst of exit polls for NBC News since 1980. Prof. Keeter is the former director of Virginia Commonwealth University's Survey Research Laboratory and is currently on leave from George Mason University. He is co-author of *The Diminishing Divide: Religion's Changing Role in American Politics*, *What Americans Know about Politics and Why It Matters*, and *Uninformed Choice: The Failure of the New Presidential Nominating System* as well as articles and book chapters on survey methodology, political communications and behavior, and health care topics.

Andrew Kohut is director of the Pew Research Center for the People and the Press. He was president of The Gallup Organization from 1979 to 1989 and is the founder of Princeton Survey Research Associates, an attitude and opinion research firm specializing in media, politics and public policy studies. Kohut, who was president of the American Association of Public Opinion Research 1994 – 1995, was also president of the National Council on Public Polls 2000 – 2001, a member of the Market Research Council and a member of the Council on Foreign Relations. He is co-author of *The Diminishing Divide: Religion's Changing Role in American Politics*, as well as other books and articles on public opinion, American politics, and foreign policy.

Aminah McCloud is associate professor of Islamic Studies in the Department of Religious Studies at DePaul University. The author of *African American Islam*, *Immigrant American Islam* and *Questions of Faith* as well as over twenty articles on topics ranging from Islamic Law to Muslim women, Prof. McCloud is currently working on *The Religion and Philosophy of the Nation of Islam* and *American Muslim Women*. She is the founder of DePaul University's Islam in America Conference and current managing editor of *The Journal of Islamic Law and Culture*, as well as a consultant for encyclopedia projects on Muslims in America and Islam.

Kathleen Moore, associate professor and chair of the Law & Society Program at University of California-Santa Barbara, is the author of *Al-Mughtaribun: American Law and the Transformation of Muslim Life in the United States*. Her articles in journals such as *Legal Studies Forum* and *Muslim World* examine how Islam has fared in American courts in cases involving child custody, incest, female genital cutting and the veil, as well as articles on U.S. immigration policy. The National Science Foundation has funded her research on American attitudes post-September 11 on issues of civil liberties, security, and immigration.

Zakiyyah Muhammad is the Founding Director of the American Institute on Islamic Education and Principal of Orange Crescent School. She is the author of "A History of Islamic Education in America" and has published in the *Muslim Education Quarterly*, the *Journal of Negro Education*, the *Journal on Religion and Education* and the *Encyclopedia of African American Education*. A consultant to public and private schools and an affiliated scholar with the Council on Islamic Education, she has been Director of Education for Clara Muhammad Schools and has lectured at Stanford University, DePaul University, and the University of Chicago.

Seyyed Hossein Nasr, University Professor of Islamic Studies at George Washington University, has been a professor and administrator at Tehran University (dean, vice chancellor), Aryamehr University (president), Harvard University, and the American University of Beirut. He is the author of over thirty books and more than 300 articles about various aspects of Islamic studies as well as comparative philosophy and religion, philosophy of art and the philosophical and religious dimensions of the environmental crisis. The founder and first president of the Iranian Academy of Philosophy, Dr. Nasr has been a member of the directing committee of the Fédération Internationale des Sociétés Philosophiques for ten years and is a member of the Institut International de Philosophie.

Mohamed Nimer, author of *The North American Muslim Resource Guide: Muslim Community Life in the United States and Canada*, is Research Center Director at the Council on American-Islamic Relations. A political scientist, Dr. Nimer is the author of *The Status of Muslim Life in the United States, 2001: Accommodating Diversity*, CAIR's annual report on Muslim civil rights in the U.S. He has also written a series of educational and other materials for CAIR about Muslim life in America, focusing on the structural development of the American Muslim community and the involvement of Muslims in public life.

Agha Saeed, chair of the American Muslim Alliance, teaches courses on culture, religion, politics, immigration and citizenship in the University of California-Berkeley's African American Studies Department. The author of the widely quoted "The Last Dream in Exile" and "A Debate Inside the Isolation Camp," Dr. Saeed has also written the forthcoming book, *Pakistan in its Own Mirror: Elite Autobiographies and National Consciousness*. Personality profiles of him have been published in major newspapers and magazines such as the *New York Times, Los Angeles Times, San Francisco Chronicle, San Jose Mercury News* and *Washington Report on Middle East Affairs*.

Philippa Strum, director of the Division of U.S. Studies at the Wilson Center, is a political scientist specializing in U.S. government and constitutional law, civil liberties and human rights, and women, law and politics. A professor emerita of the City University of New York, she has taught and lectured widely in the U.S. and abroad, including in Turkey, Tunisia and Palestine. Her books and articles include *The Women Are Marching: The Second Sex in the Palestinian Revolution* and *When the Nazis Came to Skokie: Freedom for the Speech We Hate*. She is a long-time member of the Board of Directors of the American Civil Liberties Union.

Amina Wadud is associate professor of Philosophy and Religious Studies at Virginia Commonwealth University. Her *Qur'an and Woman: Rereading the Sacred Text from a Woman's Perspective* has been translated into Arabic, Dutch, and Spanish, while her *Qur'an and Woman* is available in Turkish and Indonesian as well as English. Her articles have appeared in numerous journals and encylopediae. The current chair of the Women's

Coordinating Committee of the World Conference on Religions and Peace, Dr. Wadud has lectured widely in the United States and Malaysia as well as in Nepal, Bangladesh, Nigeria, Jordan, Canada, the Maldives, Italy, and South Africa.