

5-31-2012

Mosques in the U.S. and Europe: The Growth of Westernized Islam

Thomas P. Smith

Lawrence University, smitht4223@gmail.com

Follow this and additional works at: <https://lux.lawrence.edu/luhp>



Part of the [Religion Commons](#), and the [Sociology of Culture Commons](#)

© Copyright is owned by the author of this document.

Recommended Citation

Smith, Thomas P, "Mosques in the U.S. and Europe: The Growth of Westernized Islam" (2012). *Lawrence University Honors Projects*. 8.
<https://lux.lawrence.edu/luhp/8>

This Honors Project is brought to you for free and open access by Lux. It has been accepted for inclusion in Lawrence University Honors Projects by an authorized administrator of Lux. For more information, please contact colette.brautigam@lawrence.edu.

**Mosques in the U.S. and Europe:
The Growth of Westernized Islam**

By Thomas Smith

Advisor: Martyn Smith

Introduction

In the twenty-first century, we are witnessing a confrontation that some describe as a conflict between Islam and the West. One proponent of this view is Pastor Terry Jones, who has spoken out against Islam on several occasions. In a press conference promoting a visit to the Islamic Center of America, a key mosque in this study, he said, "Islam is the greatest threat to our national security. The Muslim community refuses to integrate, instead they demand and push their religion, their rituals, upon us" (Light 2012). In actuality, we are seeing the side effects of religious and cultural transformations instigated by globalization and interactions with Western culture.

There is nothing inherent in Islam that makes it incompatible with Western culture. As Islam interacts more and more with Western societies and spreads across cultural boundaries and national borders, the cultural and religious traditions that developed together and became intertwined separate. Here we see the real issue: the breaking away from traditional cultural norms and the separation of religious and cultural identities. This essay will examine the ways in which immigrant Muslim populations adapt to Western cultures, and discuss trends in contemporary mosque practices in the United States and Europe based off of my research experiences at eight mosques. The framework I use to measure and compare mosques is based off of the theories of French sociologist of religion Olivier Roy. I will also refer to the work of Tariq Ramadan, a contemporary Islamic scholar, as a reference. Using case studies, I will discuss the process of adopting Western

Islam in these mosques, and explain why this transition comes easier for American Muslims than European.

A key point in Roy's argument is the separation of culture and religion. What he means by this can be glimpsed in Cairo. As a society develops historically, its culture and religion grow together and affect one another. Cairo was a major Islamic capital, serving as the administrative head of the Fatimid and Mamluk empires. The popular form of religion during these periods was suffused with elements of mysticism, commonly known as Sufism. Contemporary versions of Islam in Egypt have moved away from this historical tradition. While movements like Salafism have spread in Egypt and other nations under the banner of religious revivalism, in actuality these fundamentalist sects represent religious transformation. They enforce a version of Islam that is unique, and deviates from the mysticism of traditional Islam.

The defining trait of Sufism was an emphasis on an experiential connection to God. The biography of the Sufi poet Umar ibn al-Farid discloses many details about traditional Sufism in Mamluk Cairo. This account gives examples of mystical practices such as entrancement. In the biography of the poet, Umar ibn al-Farid's son recalls, "in most of his moments of inspiration (the Shaykh) was perplexed, eyes fixed, hearing no one who spoke, not even seeing them" (al-Farid 313). This story highlights Umar ibn al-Farid's ability to interact with the divine. Throughout his biography, Umar ibn al-Farid experiences divine inspiration a number of times. Although he is never imparted with revelation, he displays the ability to communicate with God through meditation. There is no clear Quranic foundation

for entrancement; however, we know that this form of meditation was common among Sufis, and accepted by the general public as suitable Islamic practice.

How is it that such a practice could become associated with Islam without support from the Quran? Islam developed in an environment flooded with religious traditions. While it evolved as its own unique religion it drew inspiration from the ascetic and mystical traditions of other competing religions. This development shows how emerging autonomous religions are interrelated to their surrounding culture. When Islam was practiced in a society where mysticism was a cultural norm, Sufism developed forming a practice of Islam that incorporated this tradition. It was not with deliberate effort that mystical practices were imbedded within traditional Islam, this was merely the result of the interconnection between religious and cultural markers as both developed within the same society. By marker I mean the symbols people use to identify religious and cultural traditions and the meanings they convey. This can be as broad as language or clothing and as specific as holiday rituals. Sometimes the differences between these markers is obvious, and other times cultural traditions have become so imbedded in religious practices that separating them can be nearly impossible.

In Saudi Arabia there are tight restrictions on the rights of women. These include what jobs and public offices they can hold, and the right to drive a car. Although there is no piece of scripture that explicitly discusses these gender issues, the Wahhabi religious establishment in Saudi Arabia makes these distinctions based on their cultural interpretation of Islam. If we compare examples of Islam being intertwined with culture, mysticism in historic Cairo and women's rights in Saudi

Arabia, we see that the practice of Islam is influenced by both region and time period. In Mamluk Cairo, it was commonplace for religious zealots to live ascetic lives and practice forms of mysticism, which would now be considered heresy in Saudi Arabia. Conversely, women in Cairo would not face legal penalties for being uncovered in public, as is the case in Saudi Arabia. Both of these examples describe Islamic practices in the same region, and show the affects of changing cultural contexts on them over time.

Now that we have seen how religions can become connected to culture through their development, it is time to turn to the focus of this paper: how modern Islam separates itself from the cultural markers that were significant to its development, but are no longer vital to its practice. Olivier Roy is a French scholar at the forefront of contemporary sociology of religion. One of his primary arguments is that the spread of secularism through globalization is the driving force behind religious transformations in contemporary Islam. By secularism here we mean the propagation of cultural markers and the removal of religious markers, sometimes forcefully, from the public sphere. The rise of fundamentalist movements such as Salafism in the twentieth century has been a reaction to the growing influence of globalization. As societal norms emphasize the standardization of lifestyles and values, there is a push to break away entirely from cultural markers that threaten the 'purity' of religion. Religious literalists become apprehensive towards increasing secularization, and use religion as the face of their opposition to an increasingly globalized society. Fundamentalist movements

represent forms of religion that are largely disconnected from cultural markers.

Roy calls the process of separating religious markers from cultural deculturation.

Deculturation is the primary way in which religions transform in the modern world. Roy defines deculturation as the loss or abandonment of culture or cultural characteristics (Roy 219). Looking back on our example from Umar ibn al-Farid's biography, we see how mysticism became connected to Islam because of the cultural significance it had prior to Islam's arrival in Cairo. Its practice was perpetuated through Islam because of the cultural connection it had with the people living there at that time. As Islam spread throughout the world in the following centuries, practices such as this that were founded in cultural traditions, not religious, did not spread with it to the same extent. When religions travel across cultural boundaries, they disseminate religious practices and leave behind cultural. Religions that present themselves as separate from culture have an easier time proselytizing. It is far easier to conform one's spirituality to a specific set of beliefs and doctrines than to transfer the cultural markers of a tradition.

The intersection between religion and culture is particularly important in Islam because of the significance of the language of Arabic to the religion. The preservation of the Qur'an in its original language is of vital importance to Muslims. Because of this, Islam has had a direct impact on the construction of Arabic. As Roy puts it, "there is no such thing as a neutral language: all languages are rooted in a complex cultural context, every language has a history" (Roy 10-11). This reflects how language is a primary medium through which cultural markers are passed on. The phrase 'al humdu lillah', which translates directly from Arabic to 'praise to God'

is used everyday in non-religious contexts as a response to the question 'how are you'. 'As-salamu Alaykum' is a greeting that translates directly to 'peace be upon you', and the etiquette for the use of this phrase derives from passages in the Qur'an.

As later generations of Muslims living in the U.S. and Europe adopt native languages and know less and less Arabic, there is a significant increase in deculturation. This is because as children grow up speaking a language different from their parents and grandparents, they relate more to the culture they live in than the one their family came from. Understanding is the key to appropriating a new culture. So much cultural meaning is embedded in language that it is impossible to fully grasp social and cultural connotations without it. Therefore, language can be seen as the major determinant for Muslim populations appropriating culture. Second generation immigrants in the U.S. and Europe find themselves practicing Islam but speaking the native language at the same time. With further generations this leads to a practice of Islam that develops along with the appropriation of Western culture. It is clear that language is one of the strongest connections to culture, and is significant in the process of deculturation.

Religious groups can also acculturate to a new society. They adjust and take on the cultural traits specific to the new society, while often times losing some of the practices common in other nations where the religion is practiced. Deculturation and acculturation are two sides of the same coin; one cannot hope to appropriate the culture of a new society without first disconnecting from the old. When we speak about a mosque being progressive in Western society, we are referring to the degree in which that mosque has acculturated itself to its new cultural environment.

When a religious group deculturates itself in the form of changing its customs or losing past cultural practices, this is often done in order to acculturate. Roy writes, “religion is not culture, but it cannot exist outside culture” (Roy 62). Therefore, in any society there will be contact, and possibly even conflict, between religion and culture. In order for a mosque and its adherents to thrive in mainstream Western society, it must replace old traditions and habits that do not align with cultural norms with new ones. Acculturation is the act of moving away from one culture, and adopting a new one.

An example of acculturation is the steady increase in Halal food items being included on the menus of fast-food chains. Leading the charge is ‘Halal McDonalds’, which can be found in Muslim population centers in the United States and Europe. The blending of Islamic dietary tradition and American big business represents the incorporation of Islam into American culture. The McDonalds Corporation has taken a religious marker and transposed it onto their food items, without incorporating the rich culinary history attached to Halal cooking. A ‘Halal McDonalds’ does not feature traditional dishes such as Karahi Gosht, a fried lamb dish popular in Pakistan and Afghanistan. It simply places this religious marker on its products, which are undeniably culturally American, and presents them to Muslims as a fusion of their religion and Western culture. Although these food items are prepared according to religious dietary restrictions, they lack the cultural connection inherent in Halal cooking. Halal McNuggets will never carry any cultural significance the way traditional dishes do.

The opposite of acculturation is exculturation. Exculturation is when a religious group shuts itself off from the mainstream culture of which it feels has taken on an irreligious aspect. When exculturation is strong there can be pockets of people that are disconnected from mainstream society. Exculturation leads to feelings of animosity, and even racism, developing within minority groups who feel uncomfortable and chastised by the outside world. As we will see, many European Muslim populations are exculturated because they are composed of migrant workers concentrated in particular regions. The stereotypes immigrants have regarding the explicit nature of Western societies and historical conflicts, such as those related to colonialism, also instigate exculturation.

In the United States, the Fundamentalist Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints (FLDS) exemplifies an exculturated community. The FLDS is the largest of Mormon Fundamentalist groups and is centered in Colorado City, Arizona. Colorado City is located in the northwest corner of Arizona in a region called the 'Arizona Strip', an area with one of the lowest population densities in the continental United States (Krakauer 10). Here some 9,000 residents live with almost complete autonomy from the U.S. government and practice polygamy, the major theological tenet that separates them from mainstream Mormons. The FLDS believes the mainstream Mormon Church abandoned the religion revealed to the prophet Joseph Smith when it denounced plural marriage in 1890. They see the dismissal of this doctrine as the leaders of the mainstream church conceding to political pressure from the United States government when it took a strong stance against polygamy at the end of the nineteenth century. Today, the FLDS has physically and ideologically

separated itself from the mainstream culture that it considers to have been led astray.

Now that we have these theories under our belts, I want to make one final point before continuing onto case studies of mosques. In any society with distinct cultural traditions, there will develop unique religious practices. It can be argued that there are innumerable interpretations of Islam because of variations in practice and ritual resulting from differing cultural influences. As we discuss various immigrant groups and their religious practices we must remember that each comes from a different cultural tradition of Islam. All too often Muslim immigrants are grouped together because of their single unifying element, religion. In Europe, Muslims have become a quasi-ethnic group where their identity is based solely on their religious affiliation and not their national heritage. This categorization often undermines stark cultural differences between ethnic groups. When we discuss Western Islam we are speaking of, “an Islam that respects the common creed, practices, and principles and makes the various Western and European cultures its own” (Ramadan 42). This is yet another form of Islam, one that reflects the influences of Western culture.

Mosque Case Studies

Over the course of 2011, I visited and attended prayers at eight mosques located in the Midwestern United States, England, and the Netherlands. In this section I will describe each of these mosques using details from my observations. At the beginning of my discussion on each region I will provide an overview of Muslim immigration to that area. In discussing each mosque I will begin with a history and description of the building followed by my explanation of signs of deculturation.

As I visited these mosques, I focused on three indicators of deculturation. The most important is the primary language used in the mosque and for Friday sermons. Prayers are read and performed in Arabic but on Fridays the Imam gives a khutbah, a sermon directed at the mosque congregation and given in the most widely understood language. This is an indicator of the demographic of a mosque. Many of the mosques in the U.S. will give sermons in both English and Arabic. But in the Netherlands, I did not visit a single mosque that offered Friday sermons in Dutch or English. Although these mosques reflect signs of deculturation, they do not show acculturation. As I discussed earlier, language is one of the strongest cultural markers, and indicates the degree in which an immigrant group is adopting cultural norms.

Another indicator of acculturation into the Western world is the treatment and involvement of women at a mosque. Islam is often labeled as an anti-feminist religion because of stereotypes associated with it. However, many of these labels refer to cultural traditions and not the official cannon of Islam. The media often cite

cases in countries like Saudi Arabia where there are strict laws regarding women's dress and adultery. These examples are often brought up to discuss generalizations about Islam; however, these practices only reflect outdated social and political systems, not an archaic religion. Because Islam can be practiced to its full extent without enacting gender restrictions, something this essay will show, this practice reflects regional cultural standards. I believe Tariq Ramadan explains it best: "Islam has no problem with women, but Muslims do clearly appear to have serious problems with them" (Ramadan 62). As mosques become more acculturated to Western societies, we see an increase in the number of women regularly attending the mosque for prayer, their involvement with the mosque's inner-workings, and the number of women-only facilities. This shows that the appropriation of Western gender norms in mosques reflects acculturation.

Finally, I looked for signs of cultural traditions being preserved through Islam so as to strengthen Muslims' feelings of intimacy with their ethnic heritage. For simplicity I have labeled this section as exculturation. When populations migrate across national borders, they often feel secluded and alienated. A reaction to this seclusion is to preserve and reinforce aspects of one's life that connect to their nationality or ethnicity. This can be evinced in the clothing people wear, stores they visit, and their practice of religion. In Islam, an example of preserving cultural traditions is broadcasting the call to prayer. As we will see, many mosques in the U.S. and Europe have ceased playing the call to prayer outside of the mosque to show respect for non-Muslim neighbors. However, some mosques have gone to great lengths to ensure the continuation of this tradition. Observing how different

populations of Muslims disassociate cultural practices with Islam gauges if a mosque is becoming exculturated or acculturated to a society.

After discussing these three signs of deculturation and how they appear in each mosque, I will explain how these mosques represent Westernized Islam; that is to say, how these mosques represent a form of Islam that is influenced by either European or American culture. In essence, I am discussing how Muslims transition from forms of Islam tightly associated with cultural traditions, to a practice that reflects Western culture in the three areas I have identified: language, women's presence, and exculturation. Using these three categories of deculturation as measures of acculturation, I will conclude by discussing the larger social and political elements that induce or deter acculturation.

Before we start looking at mosque case studies I must make one last procedural note concerning my use of sources. The aim of this project is not to rewrite the history of these mosques or the movements of immigrant populations. Therefore, I have relied heavily on the information that these institutions offer on their websites and the details I gathered through interviews. I have provided information concerning mosque histories and Muslim immigration to help set the context for which these groups can be viewed; however, this is not the focus of this essay. In the bibliographical section I have included a source essay that lists the resources used for each mosque.

Dearborn, Michigan

The first city I visited for my research was Dearborn, Michigan. Arabs started immigrating to the Detroit area as early as the 1920's, but the Immigration Act of 1924 effectively put an end to Arab immigration to the U.S. It wasn't until the Immigration and Nationality Act of 1965 that U.S. borders opened to the point that substantial Arab populations could form. Lebanese and Armenian immigrants moved to Dearborn in large numbers to work in the Ford factory located there. Since then, Yemeni and Iraqi immigrants have joined them, which led to a drastic influx of Arab Americans in the 1990's. According to the 2000 U.S. census, about thirty percent of the population in Dearborn is of Arab descent, giving it the highest density of Arab Americans of any U.S. city.

The American Muslim Society



Overview: The Arab residents in Dearborn are predominantly Lebanese with a significant Yemeni population. Of the three mosques I visited here, one had majority Yemeni members and was Sunni, and the other two were Lebanese and Shia. The American Muslim Society, the Yemeni mosque, is one of the most attended mosques in North America. On any given day it receives two to five hundred worshippers. When I attended a Friday prayer here the main hall was nearly filled to capacity. Prayers are open to anyone; it offers after school Quran studies for children, and funeral services at the cemetery located across the street where the mosque has a large plot of land reserved for its members. Although the American Muslim Society was founded in 1938, the mosque as it stands today shows signs of economic struggle, which reflects the still developing nature of the Yemeni community in

Dearborn. Unlike the Lebanese immigrants who started migrating in large numbers to Dearborn in the 1970's and 80's, the Yemeni population didn't really develop until the 1990's. This occurred while the Lebanese community was moving out of the Southend of Dearborn, where the American Muslim Society is located. We will see this same process of movement and ethnic change to an area that comes with immigration when we look at the Bangladeshi community in London. This growing Yemeni community inherited the American Muslim Society, and it reflects a mosque at the early stages of deculturation, showing more signs of exculturation than acculturation.

Language: In the American Muslim Society Arabic is the most commonly spoken language. When I first visited, it took several attempts before we managed to find someone who spoke enough English to lead us to the man with whom we had made an appointment. On Fridays, the American Muslim Society provides two khutbah's, one in Arabic and one in English. Although most members of the mosque speak Arabic and attend the first khutbah, enough American Muslims and second or third generation immigrants attend the mosque to offer a sermon in English. This shows that the mosque is in the process of adopting English as a primary language as the number of second and third generation immigrants begin attending prayers. That said, this is a slow process and many of the older members of the mosque speak exclusively in Arabic. When I attended the American Muslim Society for Friday prayer, the Imam gave the Arabic khutbah and a much younger guest speaker was asked to give the English version. This man was much less experienced and not an

official part of the mosque clergy. This shows the priorities of the American Muslim Society, which wants to accommodate younger English-speaking constituents, but still gears many of its services towards its older members. We have already discussed how language can be a deterrent to acculturation, and while the mosque has not yet adopted English as its primary language, it is working to accommodate the needs of its constituents.

Women's Presence: Women have a minor presence at the American Muslim Society and strict gender segregation is in place. The vast majority of prayer space is reserved for men. Women are given a small section in the back of the prayer hall and are completely separated from males during prayer times. It was impossible to distinguish how many women were praying and their area was much smaller than the main prayer room. While most mosques separate men and women for prayers, few take these measures to ensure privacy. Often men and women will be separated by just a screen or artificial wall placed in the prayer hall. The only regular programs for women are Quran studies and group prayer. This shows that the American Muslim Society has little to offer women, which explains their limited presence in the mosque. The women's entrance to the mosque is located in the front of the building next to the men's entrance. This strict separation of men and women reveals the importance that traditions particular to Middle Eastern culture have at the American Muslim Society. Reinforcing cultural norms like this within mosques perpetuates exculturation.

Exculturation: The American Muslim Society displays signs of clinging to cultural traditions, but also shows a willingness to acculturate. During the early 1980's, the American Muslim Society won the right to play the call to prayer over loudspeakers outside of the mosque in federal court, being the only mosque in America to ever do so. This is the only mosque I visited that went to such lengths to ensure that this tradition continued. A member of another mosque in Dearborn explained that it was not worth the trouble and they did not have the sufficient numbers to pursue such an endeavor. This effort put toward preserving the call to prayer shows a resistance to acculturation.

On the other hand, the American Muslim Society is flexible in working around people's job schedules when they conflict with prayer times. I talked with a volunteer at the mosque who worked nights in a factory on an assembly line and could not make it to evening prayer. In Middle Eastern nations, workdays incorporate breaks during prayer times so this problem does not exist. He performed as many prayers at the mosque as his life and work would allow, and made up for those he missed when he could. This shows an ability to adapt to Western society.

Summary: In spite of excultivating tendencies, like the use of Arabic in the khutbah and the playing of the call to prayer, the American Muslim Society does show openness towards acculturation. Allowing members to reschedule prayers shows flexibility, which is essential for religions surviving in Western societies. This

leeway allows members of the mosque to balance their work schedules with their personal life and still attain the same spiritual fulfillment they are accustomed to. This is deculturation in the form of Islam adjusting its traditions to meet the needs of its constituents in a Western environment. This flexibility in addressing the needs of its members is a sign that the American Muslim Society has begun to acculturate to American society.

Islamic Institute of Knowledge



Overview: The next mosque I visited in Dearborn was the Islamic Institute of Knowledge. This Shia mosque has mostly Lebanese constituents. It was founded in 1983 under Imam Abdul Latif Berry, with whom I managed to have an extensive conversation. In 2010 Imam Berry established himself as marjaeye for North America. Marjaeye is a position of jurisprudence within Shia Islam, giving Imam Berry authority to issue fatwa's and other Islamic decrees that his followers must obey. In 1998 the Islamic Institute of Knowledge moved to its current location on Schaefer Road, and in 2001 it opened the American Islamic Academy, a K-12 school neighboring the mosque. This is the first full Islamic school in the Dearborn area that also satisfies state academic requirements.

When you walk into the Islamic Institute of Knowledge you notice that the majority of the building is comprised of a large, well-decorated social hall. This can be rented out and is used by the mosque for holiday dinners and additional prayer space. In particular, this hall is used to celebrate the holiday of Ashura. The prayer hall itself is surprisingly small in comparison to the size of the building. This comfortably suits the fifty or so worshippers that the mosque holds on a daily basis. This limited prayer space de-emphasizes daily prayers and puts more value on community lectures during holidays like Ramadan. In spite of a small community, the Islamic Institute of Knowledge is well established and appears to be well funded. Next-door is the impressive American Islamic Academy, which holds a coed student body of over 300 students. I was also shown renderings of the new funeral preparation facility, an addition in its final stages of planning. This will provide similar funeral services as at the American Muslim Society.

Language: At the Islamic Institute of Knowledge, Arabic is the most commonly spoken language but English is still prevalent. When I visited the mosque, I spoke with a member who had a thick accent but spoke fluent English. In fact, it appeared that everyone in the mosque, certainly the clergy members, had a firm grasp on English and could speak it fluently. On Friday, the khutbah is offered in Arabic and English. The American Islamic Academy offers classes in English along with instruction in Arabic. This helps bridge the gap between generations and prepares children for an English-speaking world, one of the first steps toward acculturation. Although the Islamic Institute of Knowledge has not become fully acculturated to

American society, the incorporation of English into the American Islamic Academy and the programs of the mosque show they are along in this process.

Women's Presence: When I visited the Islamic Institute of Knowledge I only saw two women at the prayer out of the twenty or so people there. I was surprised because that night one of the Imams read a supplication to God in celebration of the holiday the Night of Desires. It should be noted that it was a Thursday night and this is not a major holiday in the Shia religion, so this may not be the most accurate portrayal of the composition of the mosque. However, the limited prayer space implies that women do not regularly attend prayers. I was never given the opportunity to talk with any women members. As I said before, the main prayer hall is surprisingly small and the area set aside for women is separated by an adjustable waist high barrier. The different genders can see each other, and in spite of the minor obstruction, it feels like everyone is praying together. This is a stark contrast from the American Muslim Society, which strictly segregates genders at prayers.

Exculturation: At the Islamic Institute of Knowledge, I observed a number of signs of deculturation concerning the adoption of Western practices that lead to acculturation. Like the American Muslim Society, they allow flexibility in attending prayers at the mosque. One person even told me that worshippers have the choice of combining either the two morning prayers or evening prayers. While this is not explicitly encouraged, the Islamic Institute of Knowledge has reacted to the busy culture of American society. This surpasses the level of flexibility shown by the

American Muslim Society, which practices a slightly stricter version of Sunni Islam. The Islamic Institute of Knowledge has altered the structure of its ritual pattern to accommodate the schedules of its constituents. This is the most far-reaching form of acculturation because it reinforces the idea that a religion can be modified to accommodate a Western lifestyle. As generations progress, small changes like this will define American Islam.

The Islamic Institute of Knowledge also shows an openness to adapt to Western circumstances in the way they utilize their call to prayer. One of the administrative members mentioned to me how the American Muslim Society had won the right to broadcast the call to prayer. He said that the Islamic Institute of Knowledge had attempted the same thing in the past but decided the effort was fruitless because of their small size. Their alternative is to broadcast the call to prayer on local television and radio stations. This allows them to sound the call to prayer without disturbing the nearby neighborhood. This is a solution to a potential confrontation through utilizing Western resources. Here the Islamic Institute of Knowledge shows receptivity to Western culture and attempts to acculturate to it.

The Islamic Institute of Knowledge takes on more community roles than many of the mosques I visited in Europe and the U.S. They advertise numerous services including: marriage and wedding arrangements, marriage counseling, divorce, funeral services and arrangements, engagements, and Islamic parties. They also offer a plethora of educational resources for youths at the American Islamic Academy. This includes youth leadership classes and instruction in English and Arabic. The future addition of a funeral parlor adds to the long list of community

services the Islamic Institute of Knowledge provides. By taking on these roles, the Islamic Institute of Knowledge has altered the structure of the religion without changing the theology. Here we have Imams acting as spiritual leaders and teachers in the same context. Religion is incorporated into many facets of members' lives and replaces other communal infrastructure. However, because it is a small community that attends the mosque, they show the ability to acculturate collectively. This is an example of an immigrant community advancing religion and culture as they develop in the U.S.

Summary: The majority of these signs of deculturation reinforce acculturation. English is becoming more and more common in the mosque and the American Islamic Academy offers opportunities for instruction. Although women have a limited presence in the mosque, the Islamic Institute of Knowledge has relaxed gender segregations. The American Islamic Academy is also coed, with a student body of majority females. The Islamic Institute of Knowledge is in an early phase of acculturation, and when it progresses further I believe women will frequent the mosque often. This mosque has displayed sincere efforts to adapt to Western society. Combining prayers and broadcasting the call to prayer on television and radio stations are ways in which the Islamic Institute of Knowledge has adopted Western means to acculturate to American society. This shows a desire to reinforce the religious markers of Islam, and not the cultural markers associated with it. As a small mosque, the Islamic Institute of Knowledge is able to progress collectively as a community.

Islamic Center of America



Overview: The third mosque I visited in Dearborn was the Islamic Center of America. This mosque is ecumenically Shia and the population is majority in origin Lebanese. The center was founded in 1963 under the leadership of Imam Muhammad Jawad Chirri, who is considered somewhat of a local hero amongst the community. It moved to its current location in 2005, a 120,000 square foot community center featuring an expansive prayer hall, bookstore, and auditorium. It also retained the Muslim American Youth Academy, or MAYA, a K-12 private school that opened in 1997 at the original location. This is the most impressive mosque I

visited overall, both in terms of its building and practice of Islam. The large building has a bronze dome and two minarets ten stories tall that catch your eye when you drive by on the highway. When you walk in the main entrance it feels like you are in the reception area of a business office. The walls are well decorated and the interior architecture is exquisite. The golden calligraphy lining the interior of the main hall is highly detailed. In addition, there is a large auditorium that can easily accommodate the three thousand-member community. The bookstore has a number of works along with toys and other memorabilia.

The only thing I can equate the Islamic Center of America to is a contemporary megachurch. Non-denominational protestant megachurches have been growing in popularity in the U.S. for the last few decades. These churches try to appeal to a large demographic of worshippers, and often offer many of the same services a mall would along with a variety of spiritual resources. Although the Islamic Center of America is Shia, it is open to every practice of Islam. In fact Eide, the man who gave me a tour, mentioned the phrase 'Sushi Muslim', a combination of Sunni and Shia. I had never heard of this term and this was the first time I talked with someone who described the uniting of sects like this. The Islamic Center of America is a shining example of Islam acculturating to Western society.

Language: The Islamic Center of America has fully adopted English as its primary language. Unlike any other mosque I visited, I did not hear a single person conversing in Arabic. In fact, I did not speak with anyone who even had an accent. Other than the current Imam Sayed Hassan Al-Qazwini, who was born in Iraq and

studied in Iran, there was no one in the mosque who showed they understood Arabic outside of quotations from the Quran. Eide told me that he could not speak Arabic and had limited training in reading the Quran. The khutbah on Fridays is only offered in English. In the Quran classes offered by the mosque, instructors alternate between Arabic and English translations of scripture, which reinforces understanding along with memorization. This observation shows that the overwhelming majority of members attending the mosque are second and third generation immigrants. Because of this, the community has adopted American culture as their own, and this is reflected in the internal language of the mosque.

Women's Presence: The Islamic Center of America is the most progressive of all the mosques I studied with regards to women's activities. The first thing I noticed when I initially entered the mosque is the lack of a specified women's entrance. There is only one gender-neutral doorway that leads to the reception area. Upon meeting Eide, he immediately introduced me to two college women who direct programs for the mosque's women's society. Both women were wearing headscarves, and after some leading questions from Eide, they explained that they adopted this practice in spite of their mothers, not because of. The night I visited the Islamic Center of America they were presenting scholarships to newly graduated high school and college students. These two women organized, prepared, and executed the event, and were aided by a number of other girls ranging from children to high school students. The group took a break during the event for the evening prayer, where the congregation prayed together, men and women together.

Although the women did stand behind the men, there was no physical barrier to separate them. I have never visited a mosque with this level of gender mixing. Women play a pivotal role in the day-to-day operations of the mosque, and contribute an astounding amount of their time and effort to the organization.

Exculturation: The Islamic Center of America feels Americanized. It has the same non-denominational feel of a protestant megachurch. While most of its members are ethnically Lebanese, the mosque does not display the same cultural connection still present at the Islamic Institute of Knowledge or the American Muslim Society. Most people dress in Western outfits, Eide was wearing a suit when I visited. The bookstore resembles a gift shop that you might find in a museum. At the scholarship dinner there were gift bags for everyone who attended, which included a USB flash drive with the Islamic Center of America written across the front. Like the Islamic Institute of Knowledge, worshippers can combine their morning or afternoon prayers to conform to their work schedule, and the call to prayer is broadcasted over the radio. While I am sure the Dearborn community preserves its cultural heritage in some ways, there are no direct links between cultural traditions and religious practice at the Islamic Center of America. The community has developed within and embraced American society, and this is reflected in the demeanor of the mosque.

Summary: The Islamic Center of America sets the bar for what it means to be a progressive mosque. Well established and supported by the surrounding

community, the Islamic Center of America embodies American Islam. This is the only mosque I visited where the majority of the members' first language was English. Every other mosque in this study offers at least one khutbah on Friday in a foreign language. The Islamic Center of America also showed the most gender equality out of all the mosques. There was nothing in the mosque that suggested that men and women should be segregated. Women also play an important role in organizing events and managing the women's society. Although many of the members of the Islamic Center of America are of Lebanese descent, the mosque is culturally American.

Dearborn by itself offers a wide variety of mosque behavior and development. The American Muslim Society represents a young community of majority immigrants beginning to develop. They are making the initial steps towards acculturating to Western society by providing khutbahs in English and working prayer times around work schedules. However, overall they display exculturating tendencies by retaining Arabic as the commonly spoken language and enforcing cultural traditions like the sounding of the call to prayer. The Islamic Institute of Knowledge embodies a mosque in a transitional phase of acculturation. Everyone I met was accustomed to speaking English even though for many it was not his or her first language. They are adapting to Western culture by playing their call to prayer over the radio and combining prayers. The mosque acts as a community center for Muslims in Dearborn, and through it the population is collectively acculturating. Finally, The Islamic Center of America is the best example of an acculturated U.S. mosque.

English is the primary language used in the mosque, and Arabic is only spoken when reciting the Quran or in prayer. Women are just as involved as men with the inner workings of the mosque, and there is limited separation between sexes during prayers. The Islamic Center of America resembles a contemporary megachurch in the sense that it offers a variety of services to its members. This ranges from youth groups and the women's society to inter-religious seminars. This mosque is an example of a Muslim community fully acculturated to Western society, and embodies American Islam.

Milwaukee, Wisconsin: Islamic Society of Milwaukee



Overview: Along with the three mosques located in Dearborn, MI, I also visited the Sunni mosque the Islamic Society of Milwaukee. Unfortunately this was the most recent picture of the mosque on the Islamic Society of Milwaukee's website, taken soon after the building was bought in 1982. Muslim immigration to Milwaukee was first noticeable in the 1950's, but was not significant until the 1970's. Prior to this, most Muslims in Milwaukee were students that studied there temporarily. An initial draw to Milwaukee was the sizeable Arab Christian population that was already established there. Immigrants from Syria, Lebanon, and Palestine began moving to the Milwaukee area in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, and in 1911 they established an 'Arab' Melkite church. In the 1950's and 60's this established Arab community began to draw in more Muslim immigrants, many of who attended Wisconsin universities. In fact, the first Muslim holiday prayer on

record in Milwaukee took place in a student's dorm room at Marquette University. Also, the first established Muslim group in Milwaukee was the Muslim Student Association at the University of Wisconsin Milwaukee in 1970. These educational institutions were central to the development of an organized Islamic community in Milwaukee. Today it is estimated that there are about 15,000 Muslims residing in Southeastern Wisconsin. The building space for the Islamic Society of Milwaukee was purchased in 1982 when the New Road School was closed and the building auctioned off by the Milwaukee public school system. Since then there have been two major expansions, the creation of a state recognized k-12 school called the Salam School, and plans to build a second mosque in Brookfield, WI to meet the needs of Muslims in Western suburbs.

Language: In the Islamic Society of Milwaukee, English and Arabic seem to be used equally by the congregation. More so than any other mosque I saw in the U.S., the Islamic Society of Milwaukee's population is split between first generation immigrants and younger members who have grown up in the U.S. Each time I visited, I overheard conversations in Arabic and in English, and there seemed to be an even split between elderly members and youths. On Fridays the khutbah is given in English, although they include extensive Quran quotations and Arabic phrases. These sometimes came so often that the imam would go on in length in Arabic before he resumed speaking in English to explain or translate these quotes. The fact that the khutbah is given in English points to the sizable portion of the congregation that is part of a younger generation, but it is also connected to the ethnic makeup of

the mosque. There is no clear ethnic majority at the ISM, but most of the congregation can be placed into one of three categories: Arab Muslims, Muslims from Pakistan, India and Kashmir, and African American Muslims. The lack of an ethnic majority, and also the inclusion of many African American Muslims, leads to the use of English as a common language at khutbahs. Furthermore, the default language on their website is English, which reveals the American demographic it appeals to. Overall, the Islamic Society of Milwaukee shows efforts to meet the needs of an ethnically dispersed and acculturated congregation.

Women's Presence: Both Fridays that I visited the Islamic Society of Milwaukee there was a strong female presence. The women's prayer space is located on a balcony above the main prayer hall. This means that women have a view of the imam as he speaks. While there is physical gender separation, women have better access to the khutbah than at a mosque like the American Muslim Society, where women pray in a different room. There are two entrances at the front of the mosque, but on my second visit to Milwaukee they were not asking women to use one or the other, another rare occurrence in my experiences with mosques. Upon exploring the Islamic Society of Milwaukee's website, I could not find any religious or educational programs that were male only. In fact, in the section on the Salam School there were several pictures that show boys interacting with unveiled girls. This shows the appropriation of U.S. gender norms within the Salam school. The Salam School's mission statement reads: "seeks to educate the students of the community to be comfortable with both, their Muslim faith and their American

culture". The Salam School aids in the acculturation of this Muslim community because it frames the practice of Islam within an American social and cultural context from an early age. A key part of acculturation is the appropriation of gender norms.

Exculturation: The Islamic Society of Milwaukee shows little evidence of exculturation other than the presence of a sizeable first generation immigrant population. This can be attributed to the lack of an ethnic majority. In mosques with large ethnic majorities we see that acculturation is slowed down, and it is more common to find mosques with diffuse ethnic populations appropriating culture quickly. Because there is not even an Arab majority at the Islamic Society of Milwaukee, Arabic cannot be used as a common factor for all of the mosque's members. Also, there are just as many men wearing traditional thobes and taqiyahs to prayer as those wearing jeans and t-shirts. However, this does not mean that the form of Islam practiced at the Islamic Society of Milwaukee is any less conservative. There is a link to their website on the home page of the Muslim American Society, an organization founded in 1992 as an offshoot of the Muslim Student Association. Former members of the Islamist group the Muslim Brotherhood started the MSA in 1963. The Islamic Society of Milwaukee and a network of other mosques around the U.S. affiliated with this and other Islamist groups preach a conservative Sunni practice of Islam. This also means that the form of Islam practiced at the ISM does not have any cultural connections, at least none that would be relevant to the

members of the Islamic Society of Milwaukee, because it is propagated by an international, Western organization.

The two khutbahs that I attended focused on the balanced practice of Islam within Western society. The first khutbah talked about the importance of adhering to the rules of fasting during the month of Ramadan. The imam discussed a study that found that a certain amount of matter is ingested each time a person uses an inhaler. He then implored the members of the mosque to stop using their inhalers while fasting unless it was absolutely necessary. This demonstrates the conservative nature of the mosque practice itself, but at the same time the mosque members incorporate very modern aspects of Western society into their form of Islam. The second time I visited the Islamic Society of Milwaukee there was a MAS convention in Milwaukee for the weekend and they had Jamal Badawi, a Canadian Muslim author and speaker for the MAS, give the khutbah. The focus of his khutbah was the importance of maintaining just balance in life. To do this he encouraged the members of the mosque to acculturate their practice of Islam with their lives in the U.S. He warned against assimilating into society and leaving behind Islamic values, but he also cited the violence that results from populations' exculturating themselves. The only way to have a life with just balance prescribed by the Quran, according to Badawi, is to appropriate the culture of the region into your practice of Islam. This is certainly what the Islamic Society of Milwaukee is doing, and with coming generations they will practice a continually more Westernized form of Islam.

Summary: The Islamic Society of Milwaukee is similar to the Islamic Center of America in many ways. Both use English for their khutbahs, although Arabic is spoken more often in the mosque and in the khutbah at the Islamic Society of Milwaukee. Many members of both mosques wear Western style clothing. However, while some traditional wear was found among the members of the Islamic Center of America, mostly among the clergy, elderly, and young women wearing hijabs; this was nowhere near as prevalent as at the Islamic Society of Milwaukee. But, like the Islamic Center of America, it has managed to fuse the practice of Islam with American culture, and make a Sunni counterpart to the Islamic Center of America's Westernized form of Shia Islam. The Islamic Society of Milwaukee appropriated this form of Islam because of their affiliation with the Islamist group MAS, and also because of the ethnic diversity among its members. These same factors have also encouraged these constituents to integrate the surrounding Western society with their practice of Islam.

London, England

At the end of August, 2011 I traveled by myself to Western Europe. My first stop was London, where I visited two mosques. England has had connections to Islamic nations as a result of its colonial history. These ties are still evident, as the vast majority of Muslims in the United Kingdom are from Bangladesh or Pakistan. The two mosques I visited were both Sunni and majority Bangladeshi. Bangladeshi emigration to London began in the 1950's and 60's, and greatly increased in 1971 when then East Pakistan fought for its independence from West Pakistan. The rate of immigration also increased during the 1970's when England put in place immigration policies that encouraged Bangladeshi's to move to the United Kingdom. The majority of Bangladeshi immigrants are from the Sylhet region in Bangladesh. Sylheti's are a distinct ethnic group within Bangladesh.

The majority of Bangladeshis in London populate the Spitalfields area of the East End. Here many of them have held low-end jobs in the textile manufacturing industry. This area has a long history of waves of immigrants moving into the region and occupying factory jobs, and then becoming more successful and gradually moving to other areas of the city. This began with French Huguenots during the eighteenth century who migrated to England to escape persecution from the French government after it took on extreme policies against Protestantism. Next came Jewish immigrants at the end of the nineteenth century. There was an increase in the amount of Eastern European Jewish immigrants, particularly Russian Jews, in 1881 after the assassination of the Tsar of Russia, which resulted in

pogroms throughout northern Europe. This Jewish population resided in the Spitalfields area until the 1960's when most of the community moved to parts of northern London. At this time Bangladeshi immigration was on the rise, and they quickly took over the region.

Brick Lane Mosque



Overview: The first mosque I visited in London was the Brick Lane Mosque. Brick Lane is at the center of what has been dubbed 'Banglatown' in the Spitalfields area. This building has been occupied by each successive wave of immigrants mentioned above. It was originally built as a chapel named La Neuve Eglise in the eighteenth century by French Protestants. There is still a sundial and inscription from its original construction that reads 'umbra sumus', which is Latin for 'we are shadows'. In 1897 the building was sold to the developing Jewish community and converted into the Machzike Adass, or the Spitalfields Great Synagogue. After being closed for a short period, the space was sold to the Bangladeshi population in 1976 and

transformed into the Brick Lane Mosque. This building truly encompasses the diverse multi-ethnic history of the Spitalfields area.

Language: Bengali is the predominant language used at the Brick Lane Mosque.

Being located at the center of Banglatown, this is no surprise. In this area, store and street signs are all printed in English and Bengali. However, there is a significant minority of Pakistani, Somali, and Nigerian immigrants that attend prayers. In spite of the fact that many of the members of the mosque have lived and worked in London for more than twenty years, it was still difficult to find someone who spoke English. After some searching, I managed to talk with a member from Pakistan. He told me that Friday khutbahs are delivered in Bengali and Arabic occasionally.

While he stressed that the Brick Lane Mosque caters to the needs of a small community, he said that as younger generations increasingly attend the mosque, the community's needs are changing. The use of Bengali helps create a niche for the immigrant Bangladeshi community, but as new generations emerge this link to culture through language will be replaced by an affinity to British society.

Women's Presence: When I was in London, women could not attend the Brick Lane Mosque. The building was undergoing renovations, and had recently completed work on a new ablution washroom. I was told that included in the original renovations were plans for an expanded women's prayer space. Unfortunately the mosque, which relies solely on the donations of the community, ran out of funding to complete the addition and had to stop part way through construction. At the time

of my visit, the building was still being repaired, and there was no room available to hold women worshippers and still accommodate the 4,000 men that attend the Brick Lane Mosque every Friday. The man I spoke with said that women go to other mosques in the area if they want to pray (most likely the East London Mosque). The Brick Lane Mosque offers lessons on the Quran for children and the students are separated according to gender. The options for women are especially limited at the Brick Lane Mosque.

Exculturation: The retention of culture is most apparent in the neighborhood surrounding the Brick Lane Mosque, where most of its constituents live. The Bangladeshi community has truly taken the Brick Lane area and transformed it into their own niche. Although only a few blocks from the business district of London, Brick Lane feels nothing like the normal London neighborhood. Street and building signs have Bengali translations; there are over 50 curry houses along Brick Lane and several Islamic banks. This isolation is due mostly to economic and geographical factors. As the newest mass wave of immigrants to the Spitalfields area, many Bangladeshis have taken low-level occupations in the textile manufacturing industry. This has placed them within the working-class of London's economic hierarchy. This coupled with the fact that much of the Bangladeshi community is centered in the Spitalfields area leads to strong exculturation. In the next section, we will see that mosques in Amsterdam are excultured more because of cultural and political factors. Here we see a community that has reacted to economic

stratification and physical isolation by exculturating itself from the greater London society.

Summary: In terms of acculturation, the Brick Lane Mosque is the least acculturated mosque I saw in London. Most of its constituents are first generation immigrants, mostly from Bangladesh, the majority of which do not speak English fluently. Khutbahs are not delivered in English, and at the time there was no prayer space available for women. The overwhelming influence of Bangladeshi culture in the Brick Lane area points to the exculturating tendencies of the community. Even though some residents have lived in the U.K. for up to forty years, they still speak Bengali and wear traditional garb. This points to the correlation between the presence of first generation immigrants and exculturating tendencies.

East London Mosque



Overview: The East London Mosque, a Sunni mosque, was first founded in 1940, and moved to its present location in 1985 on Whitechapel Road in London's East End. There was an expansion to the building in 1999 to allow more prayer space, and in 2004 the London Muslim Centre was completed. This adjoining building adds over 8000 square meters of prayer space, giving the East London Mosque a prayer capacity of over 6000. This is often not enough room to fit the entire congregation on major holidays. I visited the East London Mosque towards the end of Ramadan, and the overflow from the Friday prayer was so large that traffic stopped due to the number of people praying in the street. Along with providing prayer space, the London Muslim Centre organizes mosque programs, youth

activities, and community organizations. According to an employee of the mosque, about two thirds of its members are Bangladeshi, the rest being comprised of mostly Somali and Pakistani immigrants.

The East London Mosque and the London Muslim Centre are part of a large complex and they rent out store space to several shops, including Islamic book and clothing stores and a halal restaurant. The East London Mosque uses the rent from these stores to employ 80 full and part time employees. This lets them have a dedicated team of personnel instead of relying solely on the work of volunteers. This type of entrepreneurship is uncommon at most mosques. The East London Mosque is also currently working on a construction project to add another adjoining building to the mosque. As I will discuss later, the primary aim of this project is to meet the needs of the growing female population within the congregation, and to also add additional prayer space and educational facilities. Another key feature of this new facility is the inclusion of a visitor's center with a viewing gallery and media room overlooking the main prayer hall. This is the first I have ever heard of a mosque allocating permanent space and resources towards providing a learning environment for the non-Muslim community. This is a very proactive approach to spreading awareness about Muslims and the practice of Islam.

Language: It is not clear if there is any one language that is most common at the East London Mosque. When walking around you hear bits of conversations in Bengali, Arabic, and English. The employee who showed me around the mosque was of Bangladeshi descent, but was born in London. He spoke with a British accent

but was also fluent in Bengali. He told me that the East London Mosque gives three khutbahs on Fridays, one in Bengali, Arabic, and English. Each of these is given by a different Imam, and is broadcasted on televisions throughout the mosque. With a majority of Bangladeshi members, one would guess that Bengali would be much more common than it is in the East London Mosque. This is because of the strong presence of younger generation immigrants at the mosque. Much like the Islamic Society of Milwaukee, it appeared that the congregation was split between first generation immigrants and younger members. This explains why there are khutbahs in English and Bengali. The Arabic khutbah can be explained by the presence of non-Bangladeshi Muslims along with this older generation of immigrants in attendance.

Women's Presence: Women have a presence at the East London Mosque, and the current construction project is aimed at providing females with more religious and recreational space. There are separate entrances for men and women at both the East London Mosque and the London Muslim Centre, and gender specific doorways are mentioned in the plans for the new addition. Of the women I saw at the Friday prayer, the majority of them were middle-aged and wore tradition garb. However the East London Mosque is making substantial efforts, namely their new building, to increase women's activity in the mosque. A key feature of this new building is the Women's Resource Centre, five floors dedicated to meeting the needs of Muslim women. This facility includes women and family prayer space, an ablution room, classrooms, a women's project office, and women only exercise and health facilities.

This expansion to accommodate the needs of the female population of the East London Mosque shows an earnest effort to include women in mosque and community functions, a clear sign of acculturation.

Exculturation: The East London Mosque and London Muslim Centre show a number of signs of acculturation into U.K. society in terms of their appearance and community resources. However, the actual practice of Islam here still reflects some cultural influences, which is due to two key causes. The first is having a congregation with one major ethnic majority. Because most members are Bangladeshi, and more specifically Syhlet Bangladeshi, cultural traditions are much more easily retained and passed on from one generation to the next. The loss of these culturally specific traditions only comes with the passing of generations, but when younger generations grow up surrounded by these markers it takes much longer for them to appropriate a new culture. An example of retaining traditions is the fact that the East London Mosque is the only mosque in the greater London area that broadcasts the call to prayer. While they did not take the same legal actions as the American Muslim Society, they do see the broadcasting of the call to prayer as an important part of their observance of Islam. This is one way in which the practices of the East London Mosque differ from those of mosques in the U.S. While this mosque is as Westernized in its appearance and community services as the Islamic Society of Milwaukee and the Islamic Center of America, its practice of Islam is not. This still reflects cultural influences resulting from the concentration of Bangladeshi immigrants in the mosque and surrounding area. The second cause is the

prominent presence of first generation immigrants at the East London Mosque. As I have stated, language is one of the largest indicators of acculturation due to its link to cultural understanding. With any large population of first generation immigrants there will be a retainment of regional language or dialect. This was obvious at the East London Mosque from the amount of Bengali and Arabic spoken amongst its members and during the Friday khutbah.

Summary: The East London Mosque has acculturated to London society in its exterior appearance, but its practice of Islam still reflects cultural influences. It is one of the most gender-neutral mosques in this study, and when its new building is complete it will offer more women services than any other mosque I saw in the U.S. or Europe. This is a testament to the level of acculturation the East London Mosque has made with respect to its social standards. The internal functioning of the mosque reflects Western standards, but at the same time the Islam practiced reflects cultural connections. This is due to the majority Bangladeshi population in the mosque and surrounding community, and the large number of first generation immigrants. While the East London Mosque has been able to adapt to U.K. society by appropriating social norms and providing Western services, it has also retained a form of Islam that has not taken the same steps of deculturation. This does not mean that the East London Mosque is necessarily less progressive than other mosques that do practice a more deculturated form of Islam. It provides many modern services that other mosques do not have the resources to afford, and emphasizes women's participation in the mosque. The entrepreneurial nature of the mosque also points to its acceptance of Western values. The East London

Mosque is progressive in its acculturation of Western social standards, but because of the retention of religious traditions and language due to the concentrated immigrant population it does not practice a fully deculturated form of Islam. It is obvious however that with the passing of the older generation the East London Mosque will develop a more Western style of Islam.

While physically located near to each other, the Brick Lane Mosque and East London Mosque are far apart in their social conduct. The Brick Lane Mosque is far more exculturated than the East London Mosque. This is seen in the use of Bengali in the Friday khutbah and the lack of women facilities. This is due to the location of the mosque, the ethnic concentration of its members and their economic status. These two mosques are located just blocks away, yet the street signs on Whitechapel Road do not have Bengali translations. Because the Brick Lane Mosque is located in the heart of 'Benglatown', it harbors exculturation. This is accentuated by the fact that the majority of its constituents are of the same ethnic background. Although this is true of the East London Mosque also, it has a much larger minority of non-Bangladeshi members than the Brick Lane Mosque. More ethnically diverse communities are more prone to acculturation. Finally, from its appearance and options of community services, it is obvious that the Brick Lane Mosque is financially unstable. This is evinced by the fact that they were unable to finish their addition that would allow for women's prayer space. Because of its larger congregation and entrepreneurship, the East London Mosque is far more financially stable and able to employ a full workforce while undergoing large construction

projects. Although the East London Mosque has not yet fully acculturated to London society, it is much farther along in the process than the Brick Lane Mosque.

Amsterdam, Netherlands

After my time in London I traveled on to Amsterdam and studied two mosques there. The Netherlands has had connections to Muslim countries through colonization, but also through immigrant worker agreements. In the 1960's and 70's, in order to support a growing economy, the Dutch made recruitment agreements with developing nations like Morocco and Turkey. Between 1961 and 1974 more than 25,000 Turks immigrated to the Netherlands, less than two hundred of them being women (Ogan, 2007). These immigrant populations grew as migrant workers brought their kin to the Netherlands under family reunification laws. Today these two ethnic groups constitute the majority of the Muslim population in Amsterdam, although in recent years the rate of immigration has decreased.

In the seven days that I spent in Amsterdam I visited four mosques, but only two had any members who spoke English. This reveals how exculturated the Muslim community in the Netherlands is. The members of the first two Turkish mosques I visited could barely speak Dutch let alone English. Although English is not the national language, it is used as a common language throughout Europe, especially in major cities. Having members who only speak Turkish displays the exculturated nature of these mosques.

El-Tawheed Mosque

Overview: The third mosque I contacted, the El-Tawheed Mosque, thankfully had members who spoke English. I was unable to provide a picture of this mosque because its exterior was under construction when I visited. The El-Tawheed Mosque has been at the center of the political debate over Muslims in the Netherlands since 2004. That November, Mohammed Bouyeri assassinated the filmmaker and columnist Theo Van Gogh. Bouyeri had attended the El-Tawheed Mosque on occasion, and was allegedly influenced by extremists from Syria and Algeria whom he may have met there. In 2004, the Dutch Ministry of the Interior released a report concerning the nature and threat of radical Islam in the Netherlands. The El Tawheed Mosque was mentioned several times for extremist tendencies. Along with its affiliation with Mohammed Bouyeri, the El Tawheed Mosque was mentioned for selling radical texts in its bookstore advocating female circumcision and the killing of homosexuals. The report also suggests that the mosque practices a strict form of Salafi Islam due to its connections with a Saudi charity, the Al Haramain Foundation. In 2004, the United Nations Security Council banned Al Haramain worldwide for having connections to Osama bin Laden and Al Qaida. The dust has settled somewhat on the situation, but when I talked to people at the El Tawheed Mosque it was obvious that the political climate was still tense.

Language: In the El Tawheed Mosque Arabic is predominantly spoken. I should mention here however that this mosque had the most English speakers of any that I

visited while in Amsterdam. There is no clear ethnic majority at the El Tawheed Mosque. A member told me that although most of the clergy are Egyptian, worshippers range from Turks and Iraqis to Moroccans and Algerians, the majority of which are first generation immigrants. Because of this mixed congregation, Arabic is used for the khutbah on Fridays. One of the members I spoke with was a Dutch citizen who converted to Islam several years ago. He did not speak Arabic and said that he would try to follow along with the khutbah as best he could, or would sometimes have it translated for him. In the bookstore located off of the front lobby of the mosque, the vast majority of the selection is in Arabic. When I looked around inside, the cashier had to show me to the English and Dutch sections, which were tucked away in a corner in the back of the store. Not many people in the mosque speak English fluently. However, I was asked several times if I knew any Dutch in hopes of easing the communication. This shows that members of the mosque do have interactions with the greater Dutch society, however limited. Not offering the khutbah in Dutch means that there are very few who attend the El Tawheed Mosque that are born in Holland or have appropriated Dutch as their primary language.

Women's Presence: I never encountered any women in my two visits to the El-Tawheed mosque. A member told me that outside of major holidays, women rarely attend the mosque for prayer. The front lobby leads into the main prayer hall, but I was never shown the room in the basement where the women pray. I was told that there is much less space allocated to females compared to the main prayer hall

because of their low attendance. On the mosque's website the only program for women it offers is Quran readings. The presence of women is seemingly absent at the mosque. Women do not pray there regularly and are not involved with the running of the mosque. This reflects the exculturated nature of the continually growing Muslim population within Amsterdam, and reaffirms the theory of a positive correlation between women involvement in a mosque and acculturation.

Exculturation: Because the El Tawheed Mosque is so ethnically diverse, there are no signs of the preservation of specific cultural traditions through the mosque, but there is evidence of efforts to stay isolated from Dutch society. As I mentioned before, the El Tawheed Mosque has been facing allegations of extremist involvement for the last few years, and this has personally affected many of its members. The Dutch man with whom I spoke told me that he is very hesitant to tell his peers at the IT company he works for that he is a Muslim. He explained that he notices differences in people's manners and interactions with him once they discover his religion. These feelings of exile exacerbate exculturating tendencies because they deter Muslims from interacting with the surrounding society. It also makes worshippers feel ashamed of their beliefs, a situation which will never lead to acculturation.

Muslims at the El Tawheed Mosque also isolate themselves because of their moral disputes with some aspects of Dutch culture. This is especially prevalent in Amsterdam, a city notorious for its lenient drug and prostitution laws. One of the mosque's members I spoke with went on for a great length about the importance of

instilling children with good, Islamic values at an early age. He finally said this is so vital because so much sin and temptation sits on any street corner in a city like Amsterdam. It felt like children are raised cautioned by parents and elders of Dutch culture. This slows down the process of acculturation. By imparting cautionary notions regarding Dutch culture in younger generations, parents discourage children from interacting in Dutch society. While kids may attend a Dutch school or youth program, this mentality encourages children to return to their niche in society, limiting their interactions with Dutch culture and deterring acculturation.

Summary: The El Tawheed Mosque represents a mosque exculturating itself in reaction to political and social circumstances. The Netherlands is one of the increasing number of European nations that have enacted laws targeting religious practices common in Islam. State enforced secularism encourages exculturation because it makes religious groups feel unwelcomed and disconnected from society. On the other hand, some of the stereotypes and assumptions concerning certain aspects of Dutch society held by Muslim immigrants also encourage exculturation. Children are growing up being told about the dangers of Dutch society, not its rich heritage and the opportunities it presents. The members of the El Tawheed Mosque find themselves in an unfortunate political and social atmosphere. The mosque's exculturating tendencies are mostly reactionary, and can be attributed more to the political environment than to the attitude held by its members. I believe that if circumstances were different, the El Tawheed Mosque would show the same aptitude to acculturate as mosques in the U.S.

Fatih Mosque



Overview: The final mosque I visited in Amsterdam was the Fatih Mosque. This Turkish Sunni mosque is located in what was a Catholic church. The building was originally built in 1929, and sold to a local business in 1971 when the church closed. The Turkish community purchased the building in 1981, and converted the space

into a mosque. From the street you could easily mistake the Fatih Mosque for a church, unless you noticed the small crescent moons that have been placed on spires from the roof. The inside architecture also resembles that of a church. In the prayer hall the tall ceiling is designed in a cloister pattern, a signature of Christian architecture. There are also large stained glass windows in the main hall, which display patterns of vibrant colors.

Language: Turkish is predominantly spoken at the Fatih Mosque. Because the vast majority of worshippers are Turks or have Turkish descent, the khutbah is only offered in Turkish. In fact, when I contacted the Fatih Mosque I spoke with the only man in the congregation that spoke English fluently. He told me that even Dutch is not known by many of the members of the mosque. However, he mentioned that more and more youths are growing up with Dutch as their first language. Because of this, the Fatih Mosque is making preemptive efforts to adapt to the needs of the changing community. They have begun planning programs sponsored by the mosque that allow imams to study Dutch, Arabic, and Turkish at universities in and outside of the Netherlands. This is in preparation for the community becoming more attuned to Dutch society with coming generations. The fact that the Fatih Mosque has begun planning for this program shows openness towards acculturation. It is ensuring that as its worshippers integrate with Dutch society, so does the Fatih Mosque.

Women's Presence: The Fatih Mosque has low female involvement. Women do not often attend prayers outside of major holidays. At the Friday khutbah that I observed, there was only a group of three or four women who were present. I did not see the prayer room reserved for women, but the women had to walk across the main hall and up a flight of stairs to reach it. The man I spoke with at the Fatih Mosque went into some detail concerning the mosque's thoughts on women attending prayers. He said that Friday prayers are only required for men because you cannot ask the same attendance of women. Citing the Quran, he explained that women couldn't enter a mosque while menstruating. If women were required to attend a mosque on Fridays, this would create a conflict of interest. While this explanation is scripturally founded, it still reflects connections to cultural gender norms. No other mosque mentioned this quote from the Quran when asked about female participation. By justifying this point with scripture, the Fatih Mosque implies that this gender norm is inflexible and that scripture cannot be reinterpreted. As we have seen in many of the other mosques in this study, Islam is more than capable of equal gender participation. Focusing on specific passages of scripture to support gender norms shows resistance to adopting the social standards of Western society.

Exculturation: The Fatih Mosque shows several signs of excultivating tendencies. The space in the front of the mosque is rented out to local businesses, all of which are managed by Turkish immigrants. This adds to the mosque's role as a community hub. The Fatih Mosque also retains cultural connections through its

actual practice of Islam. It is commonplace in Turkey to sing the five daily prayers instead of reciting them at a normal cadence. This was the first thing I noticed, as I had never seen a prayer held in this manner before. The man I interviewed also told me that the khutbah usually focuses on topics relevant to Turkey. Many of the members of the congregation have strong ties to their home country, and the imams like to center their sermons on topics relevant to the members and their families.

Each of these examples encourages exculturation. Renting out store space solely to Turks helps create a secluded environment where immigrants do not have to interact with Dutch society. Social and cultural interactions are vital to Muslim populations acculturating to Western societies. Singing prayers is an example of cultural traditions carrying over with immigrant populations. Because this population is composed of majority immigrants, it is understandable that a tradition like this would continue. However, in order for the Fatih Mosque to practice a Western form of Islam, they must lose this practice that is particular to Turkey. Focusing on issues specific to Turkey in the khutbah leads to further exculturation. Emphasizing the current events of Turkey over those of Holland reaffirms feelings of the Turkish community being secluded from the greater Dutch population. This makes members feel more connected with Turkey, at the price of becoming increasingly disconnected from Dutch culture.

Summary: The Fatih Mosque represents a community still closely connected to its cultural heritage, but preparing for the inevitable acculturation of its population.

The Friday khutbah is only offered in Turkish, not Dutch. Women rarely attend the

mosque for regular prayers and have no involvement in directing mosque functions. The Fatih Mosque further exculturates itself by renting out space to local Turkish businesses. It also preserves Turkish traditions, such as the singing of the five daily prayers, and asserts Turkish heritage over Dutch citizenship. The Fatih Mosque is also preparing for the unavoidable cultural shift of its members. Instructing imams in several languages will ensure that they will be able to accurately communicate the message of Islam in years to come. The Fatih Mosque is preparing to adapt as new generations of worshippers appear who identify with Dutch culture.

Unlike in London where we saw exculturation happen because of physical isolation, the El-Tawheed Mosque and Fatih Mosque are experiencing social exculturation. This is most evident at the El-Tawheed Mosque, which does not have an ethnic majority yet shows less evidence of acculturation than the Fatih Mosque. At the Fatih Mosque there is some female attendance at prayers, however limited. There are also plans to educate the mosque's clergy so that they can continue to communicate with the congregation as it acculturates. The El-Tawheed Mosque has not made these same steps towards acculturation because of the tense political climate surrounding the allegations of extremism made against it. This fact is important because it shows that these are not religious or theological issues that are putting Muslim communities at odds with European society, but social and political ones.

Conclusion

In comparing these eight mosques, we have used three indicators of deculturation: language, women's presence, and exculturaton. These signs of deculturation have allowed us to examine the process of acculturation. Now these indicators will be used to describe sociological and political patterns that affect acculturation. There are three reasons that explain the differences between mosques acculturating in the U.S. and Europe: ethnic diversity of congregations, economic motivations behind immigration, and the secular nature of society. Each of these factors affects the rate of acculturation among Muslims as measured by our three indicators of deculturation.

Muslim immigration to Europe began earlier and in greater numbers than to the U.S. From the histories of these mosques we can see that the majority of U.S. immigration did not begin until the late 1970's, and in some cases was not significant until the 1990's. This contrasts with European immigration, which can be traced back to the 1950's and increased in the 1960's and 70's. Immigration rates are also higher in Europe than in the U.S. The percentage of Muslims in the United Kingdom grew from 2 - 4.6% from 1990 to 2010, whereas in the United States there was only an increase from .6 - .8% (pewforum.org). These higher immigration rates are because Europe is more accessible for migrant workers, especially when considering international links created by colonization and Turkey's status as a European nation. Although Muslim communities in Europe are

longer established, they host a larger population of first generation immigrants, a significant factor in acculturation.

The role of ethnic concentrations has come up several times when discussing mosque language and exculturation. At mosques with significant ethnic majorities, such as the Brick Lane and Fatih mosques, we found that the Friday khutbah is commonly offered in a language other than the national dialect. This slows down acculturation because younger generations grow up hearing two languages, and are therefore linked to two cultures. This can lead to confusion about identity because children experience one culture at home and another in public, and this lengthens the transition period of acculturation.

If we compare this with the Islamic Society of Milwaukee, which has no ethnic majority with the result that English is used as a common language, we see how acculturation can be sped up by older generations adopting the regional language. When first generation immigrants take up the language of the Western nation they are in this shows that they are not exculturated from the surrounding society. They do not interact solely within a pocket of society that resembles their own, so they experience cultural immersion. Although there are a number of first generation immigrants who attend the Islamic Society of Milwaukee, they listen to the khutbah in English, which implies a basic level of understanding amongst all its members. When younger generations hear their parents speaking English regularly it becomes clearer as to what culture they belong to. Also, by hearing the khutbah in English children understand that they are experiencing Islam within the context of Western culture. This helps younger generations distinguish between cultural and

religious markers, and appropriate the positive elements of Western culture while remaining faithful to their practice of Islam.

Ethnic concentrations are also significant when discussing signs of exculturation. The best example of this is the Brick Lane Mosque. The impact of the Bangladeshi community on Brick Lane and the Spitalfields area of East London was the most noticeable of any Muslim population I studied. Street and store signs are written with Bengali translations, many people wear traditional East Asian dress, and there are several Islamic businesses such as banks and Halal restaurants. Here we see that because most of the Bangladeshi community is centered in the Spitalfields area, Brick Lane has become a niche for exculturation. This is apparent when we compare Brick Lane with the East London Mosque, which is located nearby but not directly in the heart of 'Benglatown'. About two thirds of the East London Mosque is Bangladeshi, and this drop in the majority from the Brick Lane Mosque (I would approximate that about 90% of the members here are Bangladeshi) is apparent in practiced social norms. The East London Mosque offers more services for women, more languages for khutbahs, and more community organizations than the Brick Lane Mosque. This example of London mosques shows the impact of ethnic concentrations on the appropriation of language and retention of cultural traditions.

It would be untrue to say that every time we see large concentrations of ethnic majorities acculturation is slow, and vice versa. Each of the mosques in Dearborn had ethnic majorities, either Yemeni or Lebanese. While the American Muslim Society and Islamic Institute of Knowledge are comparable to their

European counterparts in many ways, as far as being in transitional phases of acculturation, the Islamic Center of America has adopted a fully Westernized form of Islam while retaining its Lebanese heritage. It is important to note that most of the members of the Islamic Center of America are second or third generation immigrants. This shows that with time Muslims can acculturate in spite of concentrations of ethnic majorities. Although this congregation has always had the same ethnic makeup, it has been able to progress faster and farther than any other mosque in this study. Therefore ethnic concentrations cannot fully explain the differences in the rates of acculturation in the U.S. and Europe.

The reasons and motivations behind immigration play a large role in how immigrants perceive their new social environment and their place within it. In Europe, we see Muslims coming in large numbers as migrant workers seeking low-level jobs. This is why Muslim populations are often concentrated in certain areas of European nations and work in a particular field of labor. This can be seen in the Bangladeshi population in London, which is centered in the Spitalfields area of the East End and predominantly works in the textile manufacturing industry. This trend induces reactions from both the European community and Muslim immigrants. Similar to Hispanic immigrants in the U.S., European Muslims have become synonymous with immigration, even those belonging to third and fourth generations. The same way that the term Hispanic greatly oversimplifies the complex cultural differences between different groups from the Caribbean and Central America, categorizing several different nationalities under the title of Muslim reduces these groups into a single identity devoid of cultural significance.

Doing this presents Muslims to the European public as a culturally unified group, which will always be different from greater European society.

On the other end of the spectrum, poor economic situations that require uprooting and immigration often induce feelings of identity crisis and isolation amongst immigrants. As Ramadan explains, “No feeling of belonging to a social structure can develop if it does not acknowledge the value and the contribution of its members, of all its members” (Ramadan 69). Immigrants are not blind to the economic and political circumstances that require them to seek employment across borders. They are much less likely to acculturate to society when the choice to immigrate is inevitably out of their hands. Muslims move to European nations feeling like their only contribution to society is their manual labor. And as much as some Europeans would like to support this claim, the facts are that economic needs contradict cultural resistances (Ramadan 25). Europe cannot hope to keep up with the U.S. and Asia without the help of immigrant labor. As these economic incentives continue to drive immigrant populations into Europe, uprooted Muslims search for markers of identity.

The important point behind both of these perspectives is that they are formed through reaction and opposition. The creation of a quasi-ethnic group of European Muslims has pitted Islam against European society. Islam is seen as foreign and un-Western. Similarly, the poor economic conditions that are leading Muslim immigrants to find work in Europe induce feelings of social upheaval. In defining one’s identity in an unnatural environment, Muslims form this definition by distinguishing themselves from European society. The problem with both of these

stances is that they confuse cultural and political markers with religious. Labeling immigrants of various nationalities as 'Muslims' equates Islam to a race or ethnicity. Likewise, in defining themselves against European society, Muslims associate religious and cultural markers because both differ from European norms. These perspectives created from the economic incentives of immigration deter acculturation.

Muslim immigration to the U.S. has followed a different trend. While it is common for first generation immigrants to occupy blue color jobs in the U.S., such as Dearborn's connection to the Ford factor, they are often self-motivated in their decision to immigrate. Instead of economic distress and lack of employment opportunities determining their decision, Muslims willingly immigrate to the U.S. This immediately alters the context under which Muslims migrate, and does not produce feelings of social uprooting. Also, educational opportunities are much more accessible to immigrants in the U.S. Many of the first Muslim immigrants were drawn to American universities. This leads to more feelings of contributing value to society when one is able to pursue their educational goals. Furthermore, because large waves of immigration are not pouring into the U.S. from Muslim majority nations, we see less concentrated populations of Muslims in the U.S. This leads to more cultural immersion among American Muslims.

In order to see the effects of economic motivations behind immigration, it is best to look at the Islamic Society of Milwaukee. As I mentioned in the section that focused on Milwaukee, the initial draw for Muslims to this area was universities. This is true in general for many Muslim communities in the U.S. because the cost of

immigrating is much higher than in Europe. This is why many Muslim immigrants initially came for a short time on student visas, but when the U.S. immigration quota system was abolished in 1965 this changed. After this many of the Muslims, predominantly Arabs, who attended Wisconsin universities stayed in the U.S. The role of university students has already been mentioned in the history of Muslim immigration to Milwaukee, from holding the first holiday prayer in a dorm room to founding the first Muslim group. Although the Islamic Society of Milwaukee was only founded in 1982, this Muslim population has been able to acculturate. This is due greatly in part to the initial incentives that motivated Muslims to immigrate to the Milwaukee area.

If we compare the Islamic Society of Milwaukee with the Brick Lane Mosque we see the stark differences between Muslim populations and their incentives to immigrate. As I have said, Brick Lane and the Spitalfields area of London have been more affected by the Bangladeshi population than any other community in this study. Not surprisingly, the majority of the Bangladeshi community is employed in the textile industry, following the same pattern of immigration that has flowed into this area of London over the last century and a half. On top of this, a major wave of Bangladeshi immigration was ignited by the war for independence between East and West Pakistan. Both of these circumstances led to involuntary immigration by a number of Muslims. It is obvious that the economic factors behind immigration effect Muslim's inclinations to acculturate.

As I said before, the Islamic Center of America has always had a congregation of majority Lebanese immigrants. How is it then that this mosque has come to the

forefront of Westernized Islam? Undoubtedly the economic incentives and opportunities in the U.S. have aided in this process. When I was there I talked with several members who were college and graduate level students, all of which were pursuing careers in the medical or physical sciences. But this integration into higher education does not happen immediately. When I visited the American Muslim Society, I spoke with a mosque volunteer that worked night shifts on an assembly line. It seemed clear that with this larger community of first generation immigrants, the number of white-collar jobs was lower. While later generations will be able to capitalize on the U.S. system of higher education, like we saw at the Islamic Center of America, many first generation immigrants work in lower-level occupations.

The final factor that determines acculturation is the secular nature of Western societies. It is undisputed that the U.S. is a very religious first world nation. Unlike in Europe, religious symbols are found in public on almost every street corner. Public displays of religiosity are often expected of people, such as saying 'one nation, under god' in the pledge of allegiance and presidential candidates being required to end a speech with 'god bless America', less they risk political sabotage. In my experiences visiting institutions of different faiths and communicating with their members, it has always been easier for me to connect with people if I align myself with my loose Christian background, rather than admit to my own atheistic beliefs. It is apparent to me that religious discourse with members of faith groups will always be better received when the members of the group can see some common values with the people with whom they are talking. If we expand this reasoning to the social contexts of the U.S. and Europe, we can see that Muslim

immigrant populations are more prone to acculturate to American society, which is admittedly Christian, than to European secularism. Many of the values found in religions, especially in Abrahamic faiths, are universal. It is much easier for a religious minority to be uprooted to a society that displays strong religiosity to a different religion than to one that shows strong opposition to any religion at all.

Throughout Europe, there has been a growing trend in the twenty first century towards state encouraged secularism. With France leading the charge against public displays of religiosity, many European nations have passed legislature that seemingly targets Islamic practices. However, these attempts to equalize the public sphere are doing just the opposite, “Any control-oriented approach will... foster suspicion and confirm that Muslim citizens are not treated like the others” (Ramadan 55). This is certainly the case in France where the Muslim population feels persecuted for their religious expression.

This is not to say that the political climate in the U.S. is completely placid. Following the attacks of September 11, 2001 there was a slew of domestic violence and racial profiling against Muslims and Arabs. The Islamic Center of America has entertained several trips from Terry Jones, the Florida pastor who has called for the burning of the Quran on several occasions. On top of all of this is our continued military presence in the Middle East. The point here is that while the political atmospheres in the U.S. and Europe are similar with regards to Islam, the religiosity inherent in U.S. society makes it easier for Muslims to acculturate here.

This is most clear when we look at mosques in Amsterdam. As I said earlier, the El-Tawheed Mosque showed more evidence of exculturation than the Fatih

Mosque although the latter is ethnically Turkish. This means there must be deeper social issues that are deterring Muslims in the Netherlands from acculturating. This comes from social pressures, or from the assumption of social pressures.

Allegations of links to terrorism and fundamentalism have made Muslims, at least in the case of the El-Tawheed Mosque, exculturate themselves from Dutch society.

This feeling of religion being unwanted in society would be unthinkable in the U.S. where the signs of Christianity are so numerous. Therefore, the secular stance that many European states have taken is deterring acculturation and breeding exculturation.

These three factors (ethnic majorities, motivations behind immigration, secular nature of society) determine the rate at which Muslim populations acculturate to Western societies. Using these determinants to frame the differing social contexts between the U.S. and Europe, we can use the three indicators of deculturation (language, women's presence, exculturation) to compare acculturation in mosques. What we find is that the process of acculturation is made easier in the U.S. because there are more ethnically diverse congregations with less first generation immigrants, positive motivations for immigration, and public displays of religiosity. Although Europe has a longer history of Muslim immigration, the social and political climate in the U.S. is more conducive towards acculturation.

Now that we have gone through these mosque analysis's and developed a framework to compare mosques across Western cultures, we are left with the inevitable question: why does this matter? I began this essay with a quote from Pastor Terry Jones that embodies many of the fears and misconceptions that the

West has about Islam. Many people see the international spread of Islam as conflicting with Western culture. If there is one message this essay should convey it is this: Muslims are and will continue to live in the U.S. and Europe, and the process of acculturation they are undergoing cannot be stopped, only postponed. This essay has shown that Muslim populations are more than capable of acculturating to American and European societies. This process happens over generations and although differing social environments can extend its duration, it is an inevitable result of immigration. Opposing it is ineffective and unproductive. Highlighting the elements of society that induce Muslim's acculturation reveals the social and political factors that are really at work. By understanding this we can distinguish these issues that actually create cultural conflicts from the religious practices that get wrongfully blamed. The same way that Muslim populations must separate religious and cultural markers when they move across national borders, so must we differentiate between the social and political factors that create cultural conflicts and the practice of Islam. There is nothing inherent in Islam that makes it incompatible with Western societies, and in the coming decades Westernized Islam will continue to spread.

Sources

Dearborn, Michigan

- www.census.gov

American Muslim Society

- www.dearbornmasjid.org

Islamic Institute of Knowledge

- www.privateschoolreview.com
- www.iikonline.org

Islamic Center of America

- www.michigandaily.com
- www.icofa.com

Islamic Society of Milwaukee

- www.ismonline.org

London, England

- http://www.bbc.co.uk/london/content/articles/2005/05/27/bangladeshi_london_feature.shtml
- <http://www.icons.org.uk/theicons/collection/brick-lane/features/59-brick-lane>

Brick Lane Mosque

- www.bricklanejammemasjid.co.uk

East London Mosque

- www.eastlondonmosque.org

Amsterdam, Netherlands

El-Tawheed Mosque

- http://www.euro-islam.info/country-profiles/city-profiles/amsterdam/#identifier_10_473
- <http://www.jcpa.org/brief/brief004-14.htm>
- http://www.newyorker.com/archive/2005/01/03/050103fa_fact1
- <http://www.un.org/sc/committees/1267/NSQE10304E.shtml>

Fatih Mosque

- <http://www.fatihcamii.nl/nl/>

Conclusion

- <http://features.pewforum.org/muslim-population/>

Works Cited

- al-Farid, Umar Ibn. *Sufi Verse, Sainly Life*. Mahwah, NJ: Paulist Press, 2001.
- Krakauer, J. *Under the banner of heaven, a story of violent faith*. New York, NY: Doubleday Books, 2004.
- Light, Jonathan. "Pastor Terry Jones Protesting at Islamic Center Today." *Dearborn Free Press*. (2012). 9 May. 2012.
<<http://www.dearbornfreepress.com/2012/04/07/pastor-terry-jones-to-protest-at-islamic-center-today/>>.
- Ogan, Christine. "Methodological approaches to studying immigrant communities: Why flexibility is important.." *Communications* 32.2 (2007): 255-72. Web. 1 Aug 2010
- Ramadam, Tariq. *What I Believe*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010.
- Roy, Olivier. *Holy Ignorance: When Religion and Culture Part Ways*. New York: Columbia University Press, 2010.