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From the Mosque to the Municipality:
The Ethics of Muslim Space in a Midwestern City

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From the Mosque to the Municipality:
The Ethics of Muslim Space in a Midwestern City

by

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Dedication

For
Hillary and Steve Cherry
Bill and Twyla Meyer
and
Phil, Cathy, and Adam Tomaszewski

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Most anthropologists enter the field site alone. Yet I was fortunate enough to be accompanied by my husband and colleague Nathan Lee Marsh Tabor. His presence brought a sense of levity, curiosity, and adventure to the field. His charisma, sense of humor, and explorative nature connected us to people, places, and perspectives I would not have encountered otherwise. As a fellow anthropologist, Nathan's astute observations about the things we witnessed together profoundly shaped my understanding of Hamtramck. After we made it through our first bitterly cold mid-western winter, we planted a Bangladeshi-style garden together in Hamtramck, under the guidance of our expert neighbors. But between the two of us, it was mainly Nathan who tended the tomatoes and the five kinds of chili peppers, and trained the kadu vines around the structure he had built for them. The memory of him, shovel in hand, talking over the fence in a four-way conversation with all our backyard neighbors at once, remains a treasured image of our time together in Hamtramck.

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From the Mosque to the Municipality:
The Ethics of Muslim Space in a Midwestern City

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Supervisor: Kamran Asdar Ali

This dissertation analyzes the pluralist religious claims that ethnically and racially diverse Muslim American communities make on the public and political culture of Hamtramck, Michigan. These claims include appeals for recognition, such as in a campaign for municipal approval to issue the call to prayer. They involve bids for resources, such as the use of public funds to establish alternative Muslim majority public education institutions. They entail struggles for representation, such as political interventions into LGBTQ-rights debates to safeguard a "traditional" moral order in the city. The study also examines how transnational Islamic frameworks for organizing gender and public space influence the civic engagement strategies of South Asian and Arab American Muslim women respectively, in ways that sometimes challenge dominant gendered spatial norms. With this, the study explores women's leadership in mosques and religious study circles, examining how gender and generation shape female religious authority, and also present opportunities for women to cross racial, class, and ethnic lines within the city. Postulating a charged, dynamic and mutually constitutive connection between the development of religious, racial, and ethnic identities and the production urban space, the study analyzes how individual and collective forms of minority identity find expression in urban public and political projects, and how liberal secular frameworks in turn condition the production of minority religious sensibilities, affiliations, and practices in American cities. In analyzing how these dynamics shape civic life and local politics, the study approaches Hamtramck as a "post-secular city," or a zone of

interchange and heterogeneity in which religious, secular, and humanistic frames of reference converge to configure new possibilities for urban change. This work advances interdisciplinary scholarship on how religion impacts the civic engagement of immigrants and minorities; on how gender systems are preserved, challenged, or transformed in migration; and on how diverse communities living in close proximity negotiate conflicting ideas about the common good.

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Introduction

Muslim Space in a Post-secular City

The 1965 amendments to the Immigration and Nationality Act have brought increasing numbers of non-European immigrants to the US, including those from Muslim-majority countries of the Middle East, North Africa, South and Central Asia, and others. These Muslim newcomers have engaged in distinct processes of collective identity construction to establish and maintain viable religious communities in the United States. Now, more than forty years after the 1965 reforms, we find an increasing number of ethnographic works devoted to analyzing the processes through which Muslims as religious minority populations are interacting within and impacting urban publics in the United States (Smith and Bender 2004; Ewing 2008b; Karim 2009; Maira 2009; Naber 2012).

Recent scholarship on Muslim immigration has documented an upsurge in the public visibility of Islamic identity in the United States over the past few decades, manifest in rising levels of membership within local and national Islamic organizations and in the changing nature of public space within urban communities with significant Muslim populations (Metcalf 1996; Slymovics 1996; Abraham and Shryock 2000). Across various cities there has been a proliferation of mosques and Islamic schools. In some urban areas, it has become more common to see areas of commerce devoted to the needs of Muslim patrons, with halal butcher shops and Islamic clothing stores operating under the banner of Arabic, Urdu, Bangla, or other kinds of signage (Staub 1989; Walbridge 1997; Cainkar 2005). These developments have also manifested in changing

norms of dress and comportment, such as the increasing tendency for American Muslim women and men to adopt modest dress associated with Islamic modernity, and to practice forms of gender segregation in some aspects of public life (Ali 2005; Naber 2005).

Within some Muslim publics, notions about ethical public space constitute a "cultural code" or system of shared beliefs and practices shaped in dialogue with Islamic teachings and with reference to the "ummah," or international community of believers. Yet interpretations of this code vary widely among Muslims, allowing for a great deal of innovation in negotiating how public space is conceptualized. Besides interpretive practice, the parameters for the public expression of religious identity are also set by a range of complex interrelated elements such as immigration history, class, and cultural factors, as well as specific features of the receiving society.

Taking each of these elements into consideration, my dissertation project investigates how the ethnically diverse Muslim communities in Hamtramck, Michigan are negotiating assertions of religious identity in the city's public realms by examining the sense and meaning Muslims and non-Muslims of Hamtramck attribute to emerging Muslim spatial formations in the city. Postulating a charged and dynamic connection between the formation of religious minority identity and the production urban space, the study seeks to understand two primary, interlocking questions: How are individual and collective forms of religious minority identity finding expression in the production of urban space? And, conversely, how does the urban framework condition and influence the production of religious sensibilities, affiliations, coalitions and practices in American cities? Thus, I am interested not only in the city as the context (Rollwagen 1975; Hannerz 1980; Brettell 2003) in which to theorize the development of religious identity. Rather, I

am also interested in studying religious identity production as the context in which an equally dynamic unfolding of the city takes place, in terms of how the norms and forms of urban life become articulated, develop, and take on shared meanings. Thus, like other urban anthropological projects, the present study attends to the city both as the locus and as a focus of inquiry (Hannerz 1980; Brettell 2003:116).

Since the rise of the Chicago School scholars, most notably Louis Wirth in 1928, urban anthropologists have argued that cities provide a particularly productive context for studying immigrant integration and belonging (Hannerz 1980:40; Lamphere 1992; Brettell 2003:166; Maira 2009:165-70). Cities offer rich kinds of diversity within proximity, have relatively powerful local governments over which citizens have direct forms of control, and are the site for various forms of civic organizations and instruments of public life. Cities are also often marked by intensive levels of race and class stratification, and thus serve as promising sites for the potential development of movements for social cohesion to raise social awareness and introduce social change on local and national levels.

Urban theorist Engin Isin argues that, historically, the development of modern nationalism was intensively caught up with modes of belonging, loyalty, and identification with the city, which served as a fixed and tangible node for its residents within the diffusive "bourgeois public sphere" (Isin 2000:15). For Isin, identification with the city is an experience that intensifies one's sense of identification with the nation (Isin 2000:15). Further, for Isin, investment and engagement with the city is a primary means through which individuals develop a sense of civic virtue, or the sense of having fulfilled their own obligations to other citizens (Isin 2000:16). Thus, "the citizen makes himself in

the city by learning how to orient himself toward others through everyday experience" (Isin 2000:16). Drawing on Isin's argument, ethnographer Sunaina Maira characterizes cities as the places where "people engage most intimately with the idea of rights and belonging through forms of urban citizenship" (Maira 2008:30). She concludes that "belonging in the United States means belonging in the city, which provides a specific, local context for [immigrants] ideas about what being American means" (Maira 2008:31).

With a concern for further articulating the connections between minority religion, public space, and urban citizenship, the larger aim of this project is to understand the potential for religious minorities to become incorporated into and change the terms of everyday cultural civic and public life through negotiating public expressions of their religiosity in various urban spatial and political processes (Chatterjee 1998; Holston and Appadurai 1999; Caldeira 2000). For Holston and Appadurai, the intensified transnational flows accompanying globalization tend to "drive a … wedge between national space and its urban centers" so that "cities make manifest reconstitutions of citizenship most intensely" (Holston and Appadurai 1999:3,9). In order to explore these potential reconfigurations of citizenship for religious minorities, I use "cultural citizenship," as an analytic lens to explore citizenship as a mode of belonging to the nation, while focusing complex and sometimes indirect or unexpected ways that urban belonging relates to national belonging.

As developed by a group of anthropologists working in late 1980s and early 1990s, the concept of cultural citizenship provides a useful and generative conceptual framework for imagining the dynamics of immigrant civic incorporation. Cultural citizenship accounts for complex social and cultural processes that comprise national

belonging for immigrants and minorities, which develop in excess of the abstract, supposedly universal set of legal and judicial rights that traditionally have been assumed to make up the experience of citizenship (Rosaldo 1994; Flores and Benmayor 1996; Ong 1996; Miller 2001; Siu 2001; Maira 2009).

In her work on citizenship and diaspora, anthropologist Lok Siu emphasizes how the nature of dominant-minority relations in specific societies definitively affects experiences of cultural citizenship. She defines cultural citizenship as "the behaviors, discourses and practices that give meaning to citizenship as lived experience… in an uneven and complex field of structural inequalities and webs of power relations" (Siu 2001:9). I also use cultural citizenship in the related sense that Aihwa Ong brings to the term as a set of dialectical processes involving direct minority negotiations with governmental institutions in which immigrant forms of difference are preserved. Ong defines cultural citizenship as "the cultural practices and beliefs produced out of negotiating often ambivalent and contested relations with the state and its hegemonic forms that establish the criteria of belonging and difference" (Ong 1996:783). Ong points to the ways that through these interactions in public and official domains, immigrants "become subjects of norms, rules and systems, but they also modify practices and agendas while nimbly deflecting control and interjecting critique" (Ong 2003:xvii). Ong's account foregrounds another aspect of cultural citizenship emphasized by these scholarly works, the idea that successful experiences of civic incorporation for immigrants and minorities depends upon the perpetuation of difference that in turn affects the mainstream, rather than a unidirectional move toward assimilation. Thus for Toby Miller, "Cultural citizenship concerns the maintenance and development of cultural lineage

through education, custom, language, and religion and the positive acknowledgement of difference in and by the mainstream" (Miller 2001:2; see also Brettell 2003).

My focus on Islam as an urban form of minority religious cultural citizenship grows out of an interest in looking at how transnational modes of religious practice may go against the grain of and offer a challenge to the normative liberal secular modalities through which civic and political[1] life are articulated in North American and European cities. This study starts with the assumption that liberal secularism, and the particular version of social progressivism it espouses, serves as a hegemonic form of political ideology in western countries such as the US and parts of Europe (Asad 1993; Connolly 1999; Volpp 2000; Amir-Moazami and Salvatore 2003; Asad 2003; Amir-Moazami). Secondly, I assume that this liberal secular framework affects not only mainstream modes of organizing social life, but also has the effect of powerfully conditioning spatial repertoires (Beaumont and Baker 2011:2). Using this as my starting point, I seek to analyze the dynamics through which contemporary urban US Muslim social movements contest or otherwise grapple with liberal secular normative constructions of space, given the possibility that some aspects of Muslim cultural and political practices may prove irreducible to these normative spatial and social mappings (Asad 1993; Connolly 1999; Asad 2003). These seemingly anomalous aspects of Muslim practice may be found in the way gender is organized in public space, the ways in which "the public" and "the private"

[1] Here, I am using "politics" and "the political" as Steven Gregory defines these terms, to encompass the diverse range of social practices through which people negotiate power relations. In such as conception, the political includes both the production and exercise of social relationships and the cultural construction of social meanings that support or undermine those relationships. Here, politics does not delimit a pre-given set of institutions, relations, or actions, as much as describe a variable field of social practices that, imbued with power, "act upon the possibilities of action" of people (Foucault 1983:211; Gregory 1998:3-14).

are organized, and/or the ways in which social and societal obligations or a sense of moral imperative are expressed through public and political realms.

In Hamtramck, I studied how the public and political deployment of Muslim identity was influenced by a particular version of multiculturalism espoused by the liberal secularist political system. Although multiculturalism promises "tolerance" of religious, cultural and other types of "minority groups" and guarantees them representation and inclusion in civic and political life, scholars of Muslim immigrants in diverse western countries have shown that once those differences are politicized, or brought from "the private" into "the public" sphere, they are met with strict forms of regulation and disciplining in ways that threaten the viability of their expression (Jameson 1991:34; Connolly 1999; Asad 2003; van der Veer 2006; Volpp 2006; Fernando 2010). My study focuses on how dominant ideological systems were collectively reexamined, re-mapped, and sometimes co-opted or resisted by Muslims and non-Muslims together in the micropolitical processes of negotiation and contestation that take place within everyday public and political life. In doing so, my study approaches Hamtramck as a "post-secular city," or a zone of interchange and heterogeneity in which religious, secular and humanistic frames of reference converge to configure new possibilities for urban change (de Vries and Eugene 2006; Beaumont and Baker 2011:2-3).

My approach to the production of space in Hamtramck work engages the notion of "the post-secular city" not to indicate a sense that something has shifted in Hamtramck with the introduction of the Muslim populations that has set the city apart from the rest of the nation, or apart from its own past, in terms of how religiosity is experienced and expressed in the city. Rather, throughout the text that follows, and particularly in the last

three chapters, the current study recognizes the way that religious expression had been a fundamental and privileged mode of organizing public space in Hamtramck for many years. Hamtramck historians continually point to the importance of religious identity for the city's earliest residents that has lasted to the current time for some of the Polish Catholics who remain there. Scholars also emphasize how the church represented a central source of organizing community, civic, and political life for the Polish community in Hamtramck and surrounding Detroit area (Radzilowski 1974; Kowalski 2005:20).

Thus, rather than to indicate any kind of radical shift in consciousness on the part of city residents, I employ the term "post-secular" here to align my approach to Hamtramck with a shift in attention outlined by Beaumont and Baker on the part of scholars in recent years concerning the possibilities for analyzing contemporary urban formations of the secular and its alternatives (Beaumont and Baker 2011:2). According to these scholars, the dominant framework for studying religious institutions in North American and European cities has long been centered upon how religious institutions have participated in the "utopian liberal uplift of the city … in which the role of the church and theology is to act as a form of social progressive change and a cultural exorciser against all oppressive practices which reinforce hierarchies of power and dependency" (Beaumont and Baker 2011:2). In contrast, scholarship after the "post" allows for and seeks to imagine how urban religious institutions and the forms of religious civic and political life that give rise to them may function as open ended alternatives to liberal secular social imaginaries which present the possibility for new forms of "radical pluralism" and "the possibilities for emancipation they might entail" (Beaumont and Baker 2011:3). Therefore, while the study of religion in the secular city

privileges attention to the ways in which religion functions to uphold progressive projects, a focus on religion in the post-secular city is keen to also track the ways in which religious projects of a conservative or "illiberal" bent may also serve as forces of stewardship, protection, care, and coherence in the city. In approaching Hamtramck as a post-secular city, I aim to depart from a teleology in which the incorporation of ethnoreligious minorities tends towards any kind of known, expected, or hoped for social, political, or cultural ends.

With these ideas in mind, the project centers upon an ethnographic analysis of following question: How do Muslim and non-Muslim Hamtramck residents and others closely affiliated with the city make sense of increasing signs of Muslim visibility and Muslim ways of organizing social and political life? How do these new and emergent forms of spatial mapping and minority recognition constitute a counter-hegemonic practice or mode of resistance to liberal secular spatial norms? To answer these questions, I investigate the following lines of inquiry:

(1) How do individuals understand and represent the norms and forms of public space and public life in the city?
(2) What processes do Muslim newcomers use to assert new cultural presences within public spaces of the city, and how do established, non-Muslim residents respond to these changes?
(3) How are explicit and tacit agreements over the use of public space negotiated within everyday interactions; and how are they played out within the public rituals of civic life and local politics?
(4) How do race, class, and gender positionalities influence manifestations of Muslim public visibility?
(5) How does religious identity critically inflect other collective identity forms such as race, class, ethnicity, national origin and gender in spatial expressions, and by what processes do individuals come to foreground religion as a primary expression of collective identity?

0.1 Ethnicity and Religious Identity in Arab Detroit

For several decades, Hamtramck has been the site for a growing and ethnically diverse Muslim immigrant presence, beginning with Yemenis who came to work in the auto factories as early as the 1950s and who continue to arrive in the city in appreciable numbers today. The city's Muslim American populations also include others from many different Arab, South Asian, and Central European origins, with a notable concentration of Bangladeshi Americans whose numbers began to increase significantly in the mid-1990s. The city is also home to some African American Muslims and is the birthplace of Warith Deen Mohammad who was born in the city in 1933.[2] Out of this diverse ethnic and racial context, I have chosen to focus primarily on the city's Yemeni and Bangladeshi populations as the two most numerically and socially dominant Muslim American groups in the city, while attending to these groups' interactions with the city's African American Muslim and non-Muslim populations. This narrowing comparative perspective provides a framework through which to more precisely engage a further set of questions about the relationship between ethnic and religious identity in spatial processes of community formation.

Concerning the production of ethnoreligious identity formation among Muslims in North America and Europe, scholars continually vacillate between focusing on ethnic, pan-ethnic, religious sectarian, transnational, and global religious forms of identity construction. According to long-term Arab Detroit ethnographer Andrew Shryock, "Most people who work [on Muslims] in Detroit work with/on/in the Arab American

[2] Warith Deen Mohammad is the son of Elijah Mohammad and both are among the most central and foundational figures in the history of African American Islam.

community writ large. This context has become an unavoidable "site" or "location" for fieldwork, even if you want to work around it, simply because it is politically hegemonic for all the Arab subgroups: Yemeni, Iraqi, Palestinian and Lebanese." Shryock offered encouragement that a turn toward religious identity could offer an efficacious alternative perspective from which to understand associational politics for certain areas of Arab Detroit: "In a place like Hamtramck, this [Muslim] framing catches a lot, since the area's Yemenis are part of a larger array of interconnected Muslim groups: Bangladeshi, Bosnian, and several others."[3]

Indeed, While the majority of pre-1965 Arab immigrants to the Detroit-area were Christians from Syria and Lebanon, who had gained the social and political capital necessary to transform themselves into a "hyphenated identity" group more or less accepted as part of the American mainstream (Stratton and Ang 1994:138 135-6; Chow 2002:30; Shryock 2004), the majority of post-1965 Arab immigrants to Arab Detroit, including most of those living in the lower-middle class city of Hamtramck, may lack access to the forms of social mobility that would facilitate such a transformation. These include working-class Muslim newcomers, such as Yemenis from peasant backgrounds and Iraqi refugees divested of property and position. In addition to the higher proportion of Muslims among the newer Detroit area Arab immigrants, there has also been a large influx of working class Muslim immigrants from non-Arab regions, including South Asia (Bangladesh) and Eastern European (Albania and Bosnia). This attention to religious processes could also potentially catch other forms of alliance formation that may be taking place between established African-American Muslims and newcomer Muslims. Such a shift in focus from pan-Arab (ethnic) identity to religious identity in Arab Detroit

[3] Personal communication, June 30, 2006.

would follow a recent turn within the anthropology of immigration seeking to develop alternative models for studying immigration beyond the dominant ethnicity-based approach. Scholars such as Glick-Schiller and Caglar critique ethnicity-centered studies, which exhibit a bias towards "assimilation" through reifying nationality-based identity (Glick-Schiller and Caglar 2006:613). Instead, they suggest a focus on extra-ethnic modes of immigrant incorporation that are transnational[4] in the sense that they form bridges not only between the immigrant's host and origin society, but among different sending societies. Religion serves as one such mode of incorporation linking immigrants from diverse national backgrounds that is rising in importance on a global scale as a mode of identity through which new immigrants form ties to each other and to established immigrants in a host country.

Scholars working on this issue have noted that most research on migration and religion thus far has tended to conflate religion and ethnicity by continuing to work with the ethnic group as the central unit of analysis in studying immigrant religions (Brown 1991; Brown 1996; Kurien 1999). However, some recent scholarship has begun to de-center ethnicity by approaching religious identities and networks articulated across

[4] These scholars define transnationalism as "processes of building or maintaining networks of social relations through which an individual or an organized group of individuals become linked to an institution recognized by one or more nation-states" (Glick-Schiller and Caglar 2006:614). Other scholars define transnationalism differently, especially when using this term in relation to Islam. For example, Karen Leonard explaining that she uses a "narrow definition of transnationalism that emphasizes an ethnic or parochial form of religious belief and practice that is extended from and sustained with reference to the homeland. Transnationalism thus contrasts with cosmopolitanism, which features religious engagements and interactions that are more open to reconfigurations in new contexts" (Leonard 2009:177). As she points out in her study, Leonard's 2009 work is part of a recent trend in scholarship on Islam as a translocal religion for Muslims in Europe and North America invested in theorizing distinctions between "transnational," "diasporic" (Bowen 2004) "transnational" and "cosmopolitan" (Werbner 1999) and "transnational ethnic" vs. "transnational nonethnic or multiethnic" forms of practice and community development (Leonard 2009:177).

various ethnic groups (Orsi 1999; Corten and Marshall-Fratani 2001; Chafetz and Ebaugh 2002; Vasquez and Marquardt 2003; Robbins 2004; Glick-Schiller and Caglar 2006).

The comparative structure of this current project, in which I study Yemeni and Bangladeshi communities together allows for distinct lines of inquiry concerning connections between ethnic and religious identity in social practice to arise. With this in mind, I ask the following questions:

(1) What social conditions and processes are connected to the solidification and expression of ethnic over religious identities, and conversely, when does religious identity come to the fore?
(2) Under what circumstances are ethnic modes of identity construction perceived as complementary to religious identity formation, and when are these factors seen as competing forms?
(3) How do transnational and/or diasporic processes of community formation contribute to the production of ethic and/or religious continuities?
(4) How does the reception of public expressions of ethnic and religious identities influence the forms that they take?

While I am certainly invested the turn toward global processes of collective identity formation that cut across ethnic and national backgrounds, within my study I also aim to not lose sight of the continuing importance of transnational ethic identity in Karen Leonard's sense of the term to indicate connection to ones' own homeland, in the formation of religious identity among Muslim Americans. The maintenance of such ethnically particularistic forms of Islam in the US has implication that may be equally as interesting as those taking a global-Islamic bent when thinking about the production and of Muslim identities in America.

0.2 Race and Religious Identity

A recent group of scholars, mainly those who focus their work on Muslims in America on the question of "Islamophobia," have begun to look at the experiences of Arab and Muslims populations in the US from the perspective of "race" in addition to "ethnicity" (Jamal and Naber 2008; Cainkar 2009; Rana 2011). These scholars have argued that especially since 9/11, there has been a conflation and denigration of Arab and Muslim identities into a single, consummate and threatening other in the American national imagination (Stockton 1994; Joseph 1999; Naber 2000; Volpp 2002). In such a conflation, all Arabs are labeled as Muslims, and all Muslims are perceived to be Arabs. This process has come to be known as the "racialization" of Arab and Muslims and/or the "the racialization of religion." For example, Nadine Naber's work offers a cogent analysis of how the U.S. media uses representations of Islam as a "cruel, backward and uncivilized religion" as a racializing device to mark Arabs [and Muslims] as "distinct and inferior to white Americans" (Naber 2000:52)

"Racialization" describes the process in which fluid categories of difference become "fixed species of otherness" (Silverstein 2005:364). It is the process through which "any diacritic of social personhood—including class, ethnicity, generation, kinship/affinity, and positions within fields of power—comes to be essentialized, naturalized, and/or biologized" (Omi and Winant 1986; Miles 1989; Wodak and Reisigl 1999; Silverstein 2005; Goldberg 2006). Studies of the racialization of Arab and Muslim identities are undoubtedly important at this historical juncture, in response to the blatant forms of racial profiling that Muslim Americans are facing, both in terms of government policies and rhetoric, and in terms of the rise in hate crimes and hate speech in the era

following 9/11, which have been documented by many scholars (Volpp 2002; Bayoumi 2008a; Cainkar 2009).

This shift from ethnicity to race in the study of Arab and Muslim immigrants also reflects a larger interdisciplinary turn (or return) to "race" in the social sciences. Faye Harrison marks the resurgence of race as a central analytic category beginning at around 1985, initiated by scholars critical of the singular focus on ethnicity that had become dominant in the field since after WWII (Harrison 1995). These scholars argue that the ethnic focus has left unaddressed the persistence of racism and its invidious impact on local communities, nation-states, and the global system, pointing out that the structural consequences of race, such as forced exclusion and stigmatized labor, differ significantly from those generally associated with ethnicity and therefore should be analyzed separately (Williams 1989; Wolf 1992; Smedley 1993; Sanjek 1994).

Yet, a singular focus on racism is inadequate to the task of fully accounting for the unique and complex ways that Muslim identity is construed in the US. Adherence to racism as an explanatory device prematurely forecloses analytic possibilities for gaining a deeper, more nuanced understanding of how specific forms of ethnoreligious difference figure into local economies of meaning that exceed "the construction and projection of Otherness or the operations of an ideology that delineates strictly between whiteness and nonwhiteness" (Hartigan 2005:267). Following the cultural analysis approach advocated by Hartigan, my study seeks to analyze modes of belonging and difference as they are articulated in a multiplicity of overlapping registers, which may potentially encompass many shades of meanings other than racial, ethnic, class, gender and religious ones. My study contributes to an understanding of how certain identities, postures, projects, and

ways of being practiced by members of the Hamtramck communities studied here are marked as forms of alterity within modern secular societies, without assuming that race or even religious significations are necessarily the most important categorical marker through which these differences are perceived and experienced (Harding 1991).

0.3 Gender and Public Space in Immigrant Communities

As explicated throughout the course of the dissertation, the efforts of new Muslim populations to shape public space in accordance with their own religious identity are often met with local resistance or legal censure. Contestations over public space are frequently articulated through the idiom of gender (Nader ; Ahmed 1992; El Guindi 1999) as seen in local, national and international debates over issues of veiling in the workplace and gender segregation in schools and mosques (Benhabib 2002; Hirschkind and Mahmood 2002; Volpp 2006). This study investigates local negotiations over the assertion of religious identity in public space in order to analyze how, when and to what effect gender is invoked in these contestations. This work contributes to an analysis of how gender systems are preserved, challenged or transformed within migration (Mahler and Pessar 2006); to the theorization of how gender figures within cultural constructions of public space (Ardener 1993; Massey 1994); and to emerging scholarship on how gender is invoked within discourses about secular vs. religious identity when multiple and competing conceptions of public space overlap within the same sphere (Nader 1989; Gole 1996, 2002).

In her work on Muslim women in Diaspora, legal scholar Leti Volpp points to how debates about the rights of immigrants to express difference in the public sphere are

often articulated with reference to a mistaken opposition between a culturally-laden, “traditional” immigrant identity versus a rational, universal, secular, and “culture-free” citizen subject (Volpp 2006:5). Following this mistaken division, debates over the rights of immigrants to express religious difference are most often played out over the issue of gender, as the “culture” against which citizenship is counterposed is also presumed to be engaged in gender subordination (Volpp 2006:5). However, in contrast to the tendency of some of the earlier literature on migrant women, there is now an increasing effort among feminist scholars to capture the complexity of women’s experiences of migration that do not automatically equate assimilation to the secular "West" with female emancipation from a tyrannical culture of origin (Levitt and Glick Schiller 2004).

Research focusing on gender roles for Muslims in the US have found that Muslim women are increasingly likely to participate in the workforce and in public life, but that the organization of the social world for Muslims in the US still may be for some characterized by a scheme of gender complementarity, or the belief in distinct roles for women and men (Aswad 1994; Aswad and Bilgé 1996; Cainkar 1996; Walbridge 1997; Haddad and Smith 2002). A group of scholars have begun to address the meaning of gender complementarity for Muslim women in Diaspora (Gole 2002; Amir-Moazami and Salvatore 2003; Ali 2005; Naber 2005). The current project follows this recent work in aiming to consider more complex understandings of illiberal formations of gender and space that emphasize the polysemic nature of spatial symbols and the role of individual women in interpreting their meanings (Low and Lawrence-Zuniga 2003).

0.4 Theorizing Muslim Space: Three Approaches

This project takes three distinct but overlapping approaches to the spatialization of Muslim identity in Hamtramck: (1) A "territory based" approach in which "Muslim space" is understood to be a function of demographics or built forms. This perspective privileges the study of neighborhoods marked by high concentrations of Muslim residents; as well as the material and symbolic significance of schools, mosques, or community centers that are understood by study participants to be used primarily and/or exclusively by Muslims; (2) A "practice-based" approach in which "Muslim space" is seen as being produced by the rehearsal of expressive forms that Muslim and non-Muslim study participants associate with Muslim identity, such as gathering for qur'anic recitational practices; dressing in clothing associated with Islam; or speaking in Arabic, Bengali, Bosnian, etc. (3) A "phenomenological" approach in which Muslim space is understood from the perspective of Muslim practitioners in heterogeneous locales who experience a sense of Muslim identity by interpreting and "occupying space in a Muslim way" (Henkel 2007).

<u>Muslim Space as Territory</u> The territory based approach focuses on understanding dynamics of identity production within and around areas marked by a high concentration of Muslim residents, as well as a study of "felicitous Muslim spaces" in which "the confluence of physical structures and Muslim social practices reinforce the Muslim faith of its inhabitants" (Bachelard 1994:xxxv; Henkel 2007:59). This mode of analysis concentrates on spatial, social and symbolic boundaries between discrete groups as crucial sites of change (Barth 1969). Following Barth, urban anthropologists have analyzed the formation of "neighborhood" and "community" identities as processes of

inclusion and exclusion shot through with racial, ethnic and class meanings (Suttles 1972; Hannerz 1980; Gregory 1998). Recent anthropological approaches to immigrant populations draw upon this basis, while foregrounding relations between newcomers and established residents, pointing to barriers and conflicts, as well as ties and common interests that bridge boundaries (Goode and Anne 1994; Lamphere and Stepick 1994; Sanjek 1994). My study contributes to this scholarship by analyzing how the spatialization of religious identity features within conceptions of neighborhood and community boundaries. This mode of analysis allows me to contextualize the spatial production of religious identity within wider questions of how social relations are understood in the neighborhoods under study.

This approach has its strengths and weaknesses. A focus on "territorial boundaries" produces a potentially rich site for the study of identity negotiation between diverse groups living in proximity. Yet, this approach problematically rests upon some of the assumptions of the "enclave" or "mosaic" model for understanding new immigrant incorporation that has been central to the anthropological and sociological study of new immigrants since the work Chicago school scholars in the 1920s and 1930s (Park 1928; Park and Burgess 1967 [1925]; Hannerz 1980; Wirth 1998; Alba and Nee 2003). In this model, the immigrant enclave serves as the home as well as the site of production for the new immigrant as a "marginal man," a figure who is understood to be "wavering between the warm security of the ghetto. . . and the cold freedom of the outer world in which he is not yet quite at home" (Park 1928:892). Although studies of the immigrant enclave have advanced well beyond the marginal man, later studies focusing on the enclave still retain

the logic of this earlier work, and thus naturalize a sense of the immigrant as most properly belonging to a space set apart from the "outer world."

The focus on the immigrant in the enclave resonates strongly with a multiculturalist understanding of societal organization. In such a model, minority groups are recognized as different and each is accorded its own space within a schema of systematic organization directed from outside and "above" these spaces of difference. The multiculturalist ethic that informs the model has its appeal in so far as it recognizes and values difference by according "minority" groups legitimate spaces within society. Yet, following such a model, Muslims and others who are accorded their own spaces of difference outside the mainstream will always remain marginal, minority subjects, whose claims to space and a sense of belonging are contingent upon the grace and "liberal tolerance" of the dominant society (Jameson 1991:34; van der Veer 2006; Volpp 2006:78-79). Some Muslim immigrants in Hamtramck live within enclaves, defined mainly by national origin, and therefore the study of perceptions about and negotiations within and at the borders of these enclaves will necessarily constitute an important part of my study of the spatialization of Muslim identity. However, by expanding the frame of the study beyond territorially bounded spatial politics, I de-center the idea of "Muslim territory" by showing how new immigrant groups assert their own religious identity and experience a sense of centrality within the heterogeneous spaces of the city.

The Practice-based Approach. The spatialization of Muslim identity in diaspora has been described as the organization of space through the elaboration of "global sacred cartographies" with reference to the ummah, or international community of believers (Schiffauer 1988; Werbner 1996). Recent scholarship has de-emphasized architecturally

specified space within such religious cartographies, in favor of looking at "non-locative" (improvised and transitory) practices functioning as acts of place making (Bourdieu 1977) that are expressive of trans-border religious identities. These practices include forms of dress and comportment, Arabic language use, the broadcasting of the call to prayer in Arabic, and prayer and qur'anic recitation, among others (Metcalf 1996; Lee 1999; Hirschkind 2006). Within these studies, the "field site" for studying "the making of Muslim space" and spatial relations has moved away from bounded territories and "felicitous spaces" to ongoing processes in which a sense of Muslim identity is created through practice.

Such an approach can be found in works such as Regula Qureshi's "Transcending Space: Recitation and Community among South Asian Muslims in Canada" (Qureshi 1996). In this article, Qureshi argues for a shift in focus from the visual and territorial to an emphasis on "sounds, history and mode of life" for understanding how Muslims create space in the North American context (Grabar 1983; Qureshi 1996). Qureshi's ethnographic work on upper middle class South Asians families scattered throughout Edmonton, Alberta details the importance of recitational assemblies to the creation of a shared sense of place for this religious community. Importantly, the locus of these recitations is in private homes that may be located quite far apart from one another, rather than in community centers or mosques. Qureshi argues that a focus on territorially bounded Muslim space here would leave the observer on the outside and on the surface: it misses a strong community life that is deeply meaningful, private, invisible to outsiders, and articulated through diffuse and transitory webs of relation.

Similarly, Pnina Werbner's analysis of an annual procession of a Sufi order of British Muslims through British immigrant neighborhoods theorizes the importance of non local forms of place making, such as processions and chanting, to the production of "Muslim space" in Britain (Werbner 1996). From the point of view of the processioners, the marching and chanting sacralizes and "Islamizes" the earth, buildings, streets and neighborhoods through which they pass. For Werbner, the Muslim procession can be seen as reconstituting the terms in which Muslim immigrants occupy space in Britain. During the initial phase of migration, the only public religious signs of an Islamic presence in Britain were the stores and mosques that immigrants built or purchased. Outside the mosque, ritual and religious activities took place within the homes, which were sacraclized through repeated domestic Eid and communal Qur'an reading rituals (McCloud 1996; Qureshi 1996; Werbner 1996). Sacred Islamic space was thus confined within fortresses of privacy, whether in mosques or in homes, and these fortresses protected immigrants from external hostility. Werbner argues that by marching publicly in the streets, immigrant Muslims lay claims to the heterogeneous spaces of their adopted cities and assert equal cultural claims within a society (Werbner 1996:128).

The Phenomenological Approach. The "territorial" and "interpretive" approaches described above offer some promising directions to understanding the spatialization of Muslim identity from the point of view of Muslims and non-Muslims living in proximity. Although the idea of "Muslim space" that is articulated within these two approaches serves as a useful heuristic devise for analyzing negotiations and interactions between Muslim and non-Muslim populations, I argue that the concepts of "Muslim space" upon which these approaches are based can be considered inherently problematic. The term

"Muslim space" presupposes, or is suggestive of, an unequal binary relationship with hegemonic, normative, and unified "non-Muslim space." Such a model is problematic because it presupposes that Muslim space in heterogeneous societies is articulated within a matrix of domination organized within the hegemonic, normative society, rather than allowing for the possibility that the life of a religious community in diaspora can be organized in dialectic with an alternative hegemony or totality, such as Islam itself.

Drawing on Gramsci, Raymond Williams argues, "For any social project vying for hegemony, maintaining the concept of a particular social totality is of central importance. Only placed within such a totality, which orders history and the universe at large in such a way supporting the foundational claims of the project in question, can its hegemony be maintained" (Williams 1980; quoted in Henkel:58). For religious Muslims, the achievement of totality depends upon the ability to maintain a sense of coherency or seamlessness in the social and spatial practices of everyday life. This conceptualization contradicts the idea that religious Muslims experience space differentially, as "Muslim or non-Muslim" depending on external circumstances, or depending on the presence or absence of particular "Muslim" expressive or performative practices. Approaching the question of Muslim spatial practices through the lens of totality would attune the researcher to a specific set of questions concerning the everyday rather than marked or ritual identity-making performances. Such a study would focus on understanding the strategies and practices through which Muslims experience heterogeneous space "in a Muslim way" in their everyday journeys through variously articulated public spaces.

In his ethnographic work on Turkish Muslims living in the highly heterogeneous spaces of new housing developments in Istanbul, Henkel develops a "praxis-theoretical"

and “phenomenological” method for understanding how Muslims experience heterogeneous, or secular space (Henkel 2007). His approach proceeds along similar lines as a number of recent studies that have emphasized the role of Muslim regimes of practice and (self) discipline in shaping the dispositions and subjectivities of Muslim practitioners (Asad 1986 2003; Asad 1993 2003; Mahmood 2004; Hirschkind 2006). For Henkel, the notion of “practice” includes the Bourdieuian sense of the construction of a habitus through the enactment and repetition of the lifeworld’s structure (Bourdieu 1977). Henkel’s notion of “practice” also emphasizes the active aspects of experience and perception. Henkel finds that Muslims in these new developments experience heterogeneous space as Muslim through specific “strategies of inhabitation and perception” that allow them to both “recognize and transcend” heterogeneity. He explains that: “by foregrounding Muslim elements and backgrounding other elements, by designating certain elements as significant and others as unimportant, lifeworlds that otherwise appear as heterogeneous can be experienced as Muslim” (Henkel 2007:58).

The mode of agency that Henkel attributes to his Turkish Muslim informants can be compared to that of de Certeau’s pedestrians, who appropriate the city kinesthetically through practices that resist the normative intentions assumed by cartographers and city planners who designed the city (De Certeau 1984). De Certeau describes a form of “spatial tactics,” or an “ art of making do” effectuated by those positioned outside of the dominant class who inscribe meanings in spaces that do not cohere with the normative interpretations of the constructed and prefabricated spaces through which they move. Their actions remain heterogeneous to the systems they infiltrate, as they operate from a point of different interests and desires from those of the dominant order. For de Certeau,

such “tactics” must play on and within the space “imposed upon it by the law of a foreign power,” and constitutes a maneuver “within the enemy’s [i.e. dominant society's] field of vision” (De Certeau 1984:37). In contrast, Henkel seems to be proposing a form of spatial agency in which new meanings are inscribed upon spaces in such a way as to reduce a sense of heterogeneity and create a sense of unitary order and coherence in the world. In Henkel’s vision, these spatial practices somehow enable the practitioner to resist the internalization of his/her own marginality to the normative system.

Henkel’s formulation of totality within heterogeneity as experienced and negotiated by Muslims in Istanbul serves as a useful analytic framework to bring to the study of Muslims in Arab Detroit, a region equally marked by heterogeneity. A recent ethnographic work on pious Muslim Yemeni students in a public high school in Dearborn, Michigan captures a sense of how Muslim “totality” may be achieved in everyday life (Sarroub 2005). Sarroub details the processes through which Yemeni adolescents participate in school activities in a Muslim way, managing to fulfill the circular and social demands of the non-Muslim high school without altering their standards of behavior and propriety. For example, girls and boys manage to maintain and enforce their own schemas of sex-segregation in the gender integrated halls, cafeterias, and gym classes. These pious students also manage to avoid, or filter out, educational materials offensive to their moral sensibilities. In one case that Sarroub observes, a teacher begins presenting a unit on art history, inviting students to view drawings of nudes. In response, the Yemeni girls simply avert their eyes from this material, and some put their heads down on the desk throughout the duration of the lesson. By employing strategies such as sex-segregation and gaze aversion, the Yemeni students manage to

create and maintain an appropriate field of vision and social practice for themselves, even in an environment organized according to an opposing social logic.

The possibility of "Muslim totality" offers a cogent alternative for thinking about the spatialization of minority identity in a way that challenges the assumptions of the "territorial" or "expressive culture" models. In working with this idea, the dissertation explores the implications that totality would have for understanding perceptions of how public space is organized as well as the meanings attributed to political activism and political practice and collective life. Although Henkel carefully describes how individuals experience the transformation of space through their own strategies of habitation and usage, he does not suggest how multiple internal universes set out in dialectic with similar terms might constitute the basis for collectivity and shared political projects. For example, the limits of totality would differentially structure relations between diverse Muslim groups, who differ in terms of well as "cultural" styles of practice. If Muslims in Detroit are indeed organizing their spatial experiences with reference to an internal totalizing schema, does the existence of other Muslims who practice their religion differently interrupt or extend a sense of Muslim totality?

The possibility of totality also opens up questions about the implications of its absence. The absence of a totalizing discourse might be connected to a trend toward the "Americanization of Islam" as formulated by Haddad and Lummis, in which Muslims modify aspects of the beliefs and practices that they have brought over from countries of origin in order to adjust to "American culture" (Haddad and Lummis 1987; Haddad and Esposito 2000). Allowing "Muslim space" the possibility to signify a range of meanings, up to and including the idea of totality, which brings "Muslim space" to its limiting point,

brings a generative perspective to this study which challenges and contests the inherent marginalizing framework in which ethnographic studies of immigrants relationship to space historically tend to be articulated.

0.5 Research Site: "A Touch of the World in America"

The spatial contestations and negotiations in Hamtramck at focus in this dissertation take place within the context of demographic changes that have been ongoing in Hamtramck over the course of many decades, involving the growth of ethnically diverse Muslims populations in an historically Polish Catholic city. Small and densely populated, Hamtramck spans only about two square miles, and at the 2000 census, had a population of roughly 23,000. Hamtramck is surrounded by Detroit on all but a small part of its border. However, the two cities differ significantly in terms of demographics, infrastructure, and local culture.

When Hamtramck first became incorporated, in 1922, almost all the city's population was comprised of Poles, many of them foreign born, who had come to work in the auto industry (Kowalski 2005:35). In 1940, a full 81% of the city defined themselves as having Polish ancestry (Kowalski 2005:96) Over the decades since 1940, Hamtramck has experienced significant demographic shifts, with its proportion of Polish residents falling lower each year, most notably, from 50% in 1990 to 23% in 2000, due to the influx of immigrants from many different origin points and the passing away of the Polish populations along with the out-migration of their children.

Hamtramck is a working class city. As of 2000, about 24.1% of Hamtramck

families and 27.0% of the cities population were living below the poverty line.[5] At the time of the 2000 US Census, the median household income in Hamtramck was $26, 616, as compared to $41,994 nationally.[6] Hamtramck's economy has always been closely tied up with that of the auto industry, with its population trends corresponding to factory patterns, including population rises that mirrored booming productivity in 1910s and 20s, and losses during the Great Depression, from which Hamtramck's population levels never fully recovered, despite the industry gain following World War Two (Kowalski 2005). Hamtramck faced a steady rate of population decline from the 1930's peak productive years. It hit a particularly low point in 1980 with the closing of the major Dodge Main plant, which had put Hamtramck on the map. Over the years, Dodge Main had drawn many hundreds of immigrants to live and work there, and had been the city's largest taxpayer for decades (Kowalski 2005).

Like other de-industrialized cities, Hamtramck has high rates of unemployment, low property values, and rapid shifts in racial, ethnic and class composition, as many of those who can afford to move away (Darden 1987). However, in contrast to the classical de-industrialized city, Hamtramck's total population is on the rise as immigrants continue to arrive. Notably, at the census count of 1990s, the city's population was discovered to have climbed for the first time in many decades, as incoming immigration rates had finally superseded population loss. Between 1990 and 2000, the population of Hamtramck increased from 18,506 people to 22,976, making Hamtramck one of two

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[5] http://www.hamtramck.us/about/demographics.php

[6] "Hamtramck." *E-Podunk*. http://www.epodunk.com/cgi-bin/genInfo.php?locIndex=21842 (accessed November 21, 2012).

"growing places" in Detroit, the other being Dearborn.[7] Although the growth trend did not continue into the next decade, the fact that Hamtramck's population remained fairly level between 2000 and 2010 was in itself considered remarkable, compared to the general dramatic population losses in the area.[8]

The 1990-2000 reversal was due to the intensified arrival of diverse groups of immigrants, many of them Muslims, from Eastern European, Middle Eastern and South Asian countries. In the absence of the factory jobs that had drawn Hamtramck's earlier immigrants, these arrivals came to the city for a variety of reasons. This included serial migration on the part of Yemenis and Bangladeshis to reunite families. It also included internal migration within the US, especially a mass movement of Bangladeshis from Queens, NY who shifted to Hamtramck to take advantage of the area's low housing costs and also because they were attracted by the city's "Muslim character," (Kershaw 2001) or its infrastructure of Muslim-oriented goods, services, and public culture. Hamtramck also became the destination for a sizeable Bosnian Muslim refugee population in the 1990s. Due to shared religious affiliation of these diverse immigrants, in 2004, the website Islam Online estimated that the Muslim population represented one third of Hamtramck's population, and more recent estimates bring that number up to 40% (Rahman 2012). Over the years, Hamtramck's African American population has vacilliated between about 10% and 15%, and some African American Muslims are part of this 40% Muslim figure.

In the absence of the good and steady auto factory jobs which once brought them

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[7] "City council part II: Conant presentation." *Hamtramck Star*. http://hamtramckstar.com (accessed April 10, 2006).

[8] Between 2000 and 2010, the growth trend was discontinued, and Hamtramck lost 500 residents, or 2.4% of its population. Yet these losses can be considered negligible when compared with the serious population "hemorrhaging" of nearby towns and communities. For example, in the same ten-year period, Detroit experienced a 25 percent decrease in its population. Highland Park, the other city bordering Detroit, experienced a 29% population drop (Sercombe 2011b).

there, Hamtramck's immigrant populations now find only sporadic employment in the auto industry, or they work in light manufacturing and other unskilled labor. In the context of deindustrialization, urban blight and state disinvestiture, the new immigrants bring welcome economic and infrastructural benefits to the city by buying homes and businesses, paying taxes, repopulating the schools, and revitalizing the city in other ways. Since the 1990s, the phrase "immigrants have saved Hamtramck," has become an often-repeated slogan or formula in campaign speeches by different pubic figures, and is usually articulated in such a way as to index the Muslim, and most particularly, the Bangladeshi populations. The recent influx of immigrants from South Asia and the Middle East has also been officially acknowledged and celebrated when the city changed its long-held motto "A Touch of Europe in America" to "A Touch of THE WORLD in America" in 2008.[9] These changes are highly visible in the everyday public culture of the city, in forms of dress, the heterogeneity of languages spoken in stores and streets, in specialty stores, businesses and restaurants, and in the growth of institutions such as mosques and Muslim-majority schools.

On Hamtramck's main street, Yemeni women in black burqas, often with face veils, shop for their daily needs. Their Bangladeshi Muslim counterparts also dress modestly, but this modesty is expressed in an idiom of colorful and often sparkling material draped loosely over bodies, or, alternatively, just modest "Western" clothes with a headscarf option. On Fridays, a special day within the mosque week, many paths to the city's three mosques are thronged with Muslim men in long, loose one-piece thowbs, (Middle Eastern style, long garments) or kurta pajama (South Asian style long top and

[9] This motto was the result of a readers' poll in the local paper. In September 2008, *The Hamtramck Citizen* invited residents to "vote for a new tagline for the city of Hamtramck" (The Citizen 2008).

pants set); taqiyyat (closely fitting prayer caps, Arabic) or topis (slightly raised, round hats), and kefiyyah, red, black or green checkered and tasseled scarves arranged around the shoulders. Hamtramck's Muslims are also becoming more visible through the businesses they are establishing, many which have a wide appeal and are popular with both Muslim and non-Muslim patrons. These include Bangladeshi, Yemeni and Bosnian specialty stores and restaurants with halal products. Other signs of increasing Muslim visibility in the city include depictions of the star and crescent and Muslim holy sights on local business exteriors and interiors; Arabic or Bangla language signage; and Muslim names like "Al Haramain," "Medina Market" and "Baraka Market." The South end of the Hamtramck's main street has become lined with new stores visibly geared toward serving the Yemeni Muslim population, and the Bangladeshis established a seconday main street running the length of the city which was recently honorarily renamed as "Bangladesh Avenue." There are also many mosques and various kinds of Islamic school complex scattered throughout Hamtramck and at its borders with Detroit.

With the influx of these new immigrants, Hamtramck has witnessed a waning of some signs and markers of its Polish presence over the past couple of decades. This is especially observable in spatial trends concerning religious institutions, with the steady shrinking of the once expansive Polish Catholic parishes and the eager investiture into new institutions on the part of the city's rapidly expanding Yemeni and Bangladeshi populations. In the years around the 2004 call to prayer debate, the decline of the Polish population in the area brought on the complete absorption of a Detroit parish into a Hamtramck parish and forced the closing of three once-prominent Catholic schools in Hamtramck and its immediate vicinity (Kowalski 2005). Several Muslim institutions are

now housed in former church properties, including a large Yemeni mosque just over the city's southern border in Detroit, a Muslim run charter school serving a mainly Yemeni population, a Bangladeshi mosque to the north, and an Islamic private school.

Yet, despite the waning Polish population, the Poles are still over-represented in Hamtramck municipal offices, and wield a disproportionate level of influence in the economic and cultural life of the city. Most of the shops in the city's downtown center are still owned and operated by the Poles. Public space in Hamtramck is also still somewhat dominated by a Catholic presence. Besides the preponderance of cathedrals, a 10-foot high bronze statue of Pope John Paul II stands in the center of town atop an 26-foot base, commemorating his 1980 visit to the city, and a large, colorful mural of Poles dancing in Krakow is prominently situated on the main street.

Hamtramck municipal politics is still also somewhat dominated by Polish figures, but that had started to change. Hamtramck's line of Polish mayors had continued uninterrupted since it was first officially incorporated as a city in 1922 until today. However, by the mid to late 1990s, the Muslims in Hamtramck, and particularly the Bangladeshis, were also starting to gain visibility in the city's political arena through contending for municipal offices and participating in a range of local political movements. Notably, the call to prayer spatial contestations covered in Chapters 4 and 5 came to City Hall at precisely the same time as Hamtramck's first Bangladeshi and first Muslim city council member, sat for his first session. By 2008, three out of six of Hamtramck's city councilmembers were Bangladeshi Muslims.

0.6 Method

The current study is based on 18 months of ethnographic research in Hamtramck, Michigan. During 2007-2009, I lived in the city continuously and carried out participant observation in a wide range of settings in the city. In order to meet people and engage in various aspects of their public and personal lives, I volunteered as an ESL instructor in a class for adult women and as a classroom aide in Hamtramck schools, served on a subcommittee within Hamtramck's Human Relations Commission, attended bi-monthly City Council meetings, and participated in events hosted by various ethnic and religious groups, including many of the nine mosques within Hamtramck and at its borders. Additionally, I completed about ninety voice-recorded interviews with Muslim and non-Muslim Hamtramck social actors.

Based on my role as researcher and new resident of the area, I formed relationships with Hamtramck residents by attending social events and engagements and carrying out the activities of everyday life with them. On a day-to-day level, I shared shopping expeditions and meals with people in the community, attended religious services within the mosques and churches, and participated in community social events. In addition, I participated in meetings and public ritual events at neighborhood, community and city and levels. Attendance at meetings constitutes a fundamental component of participant observation for urban ethnographers, as "meetings represent the most striking manifestations of political structure, values, and activities of the society" (Richards and Kuper 1971:4). Following the participant observation approach developed by anthropologist Roger Sanjek in his study of increasing racial and ethnic diversity in Elmhurst-Corona, NY, I attend the twice-monthly city council meetings in Hamtramck as

well as community board meetings, public hearings, civic association meetings, town hall meetings, and meetings of religious, ethnic, or nationality-based (Sanjek 1998).

I also attended "public ritual events," such as award ceremonies, protest rallies, and block cleanups. Such events are described by Sanjek as those which mark special occasions or purposes, occur in central or symbolically transformed locations, and break the flow of ordinary events with formal behavior including invocations, speeches, music, processions, dance, and the sharing of food (Sanjek 1998:8). With Kertzer, I viewed these public ritual events as "important means of channeling emotion, guiding cognition, and organizing social groups" (Kertzer 1988:8). My participant observation also focused on connections between gender and public visibility. Therefore, I closely examined practices of dress, patterns of mobility, and social relations for women and men. In addition, I analyzed the gendering of participation in community, neighborhood and religious organizations, as well as in public ritual events as described above.

Semi-structured interviewing represented a second key method of data collection for this project. During my eighteen months in Hamtramck, I carried out over 90 interviews with residents of Hamtramck and those living at the Hamtramck Detroit border, as well as with residents of other cities who were closely engaged with Hamtramck in some intensive way, either through economic, social, or political investments in the city. The purposive sampling method that I employed (Glaser and Strauss 1967; Hesse-Biber and Leavy 2006:72) guided me to focus on interviewing dynamic social and political actors, including those involved in religious organizations and neighborhood associations, as well as those positioned at the center of conflicts over public space.

Interviews were carried out in English whenever possible, but also include interviews in Arabic and Bangla with the help of interpreters. My background knowledge of Arabic helped bridge linguistic boundaries to some extent and allowed me to form friendships and conduct everyday interactions with many Yemeni women who were not fluent in English. However, I did rely on interepreters for more formal interviews with some Yemenis who were not fluent in English. The great majority of Bangladeshis I interacted with were fully fluent in English, but I did rely on the help of intepreters to interview a few that weren't. The interpreters that I worked with were generally drawn from the friends and family of the respondent in question whom I had come to know in the course of my research.

0.7 Researching Muslim minorities during the "War on Terror"

Due to its working class status and its relative lack of social service infrastructure compared to a place like Dearborn, Hamtramck Michigan is an area that may be considered, in Shryock's terms, to be one of the "remotest"[10] outposts of "Arab Detroit," that collection of small cities and suburbs in the Detroit Metro area known for its concentration of immigrants from Arabic-speaking countries (Abraham and Shryock 2000; Shryock 2004). Arabs have been immigrating to Detroit since the late 19th century, and thousands continue to arrive each year, with the majority from Lebanon, Palestine, Yemen and Iraq (Abraham and Shryock 2000:19). Their presence is strongly linked to the auto industry, yet even with the large-scale deindustrialization of the 1970s, the Arab community has continued to grow (Rignall 2000:51). Most of the newly arrived

[10] See Shryock's essay "In the Double Remoteness of Arab Detroit" for an analysis of the "remoteness" concept (Shryock 2004).

immigrants are refugees of war (Lebanon and Iraq) or victims of political oppression, economic hardship, and population displacement (Iraq, Palestine, Yemen). Most find jobs in small, family run stores, or enter the service sector. With a population of roughly 200,000, Arab Detroit is equally divided between its Christians and Muslim residents (Shryock 2004). Besides Arab Muslims, there are also significant South Asian and Eastern European Muslim population. The US census does not report on religious identity, making the total population of Muslims in the area is difficult to calculate. Yet, a consensus of community studies indicate that that non-Arab Muslim immigration to the area has risen significantly since 1990 (Kershaw 2001; Crumm 2004). [11]

According to Howell and Shryock, the image of Arab Detroit has recently been transformed from an "immigrant success story as the capital of Arab America" to a "domestic front in the Bush administration's War on Terror" (Howell and Shryock 2003). Although 9/11 has brought about changes that have affected Arabs and Muslims living in all parts of the country, these changes have had an intensified impact upon residents of Arab Detroit, due to the fact that the area is home to the largest and longest enduring concentration of Arabs and Muslims in the US. Located ten miles from Hamtramck, Dearborn has become the first American city to have its own Department of Homeland Security. The Detroit FBI has doubled since 9/11, and it has conducted one of the largest federal investigations in US history, which centered on the surveillance of Arabs and Muslims in the area. Due to these factors, some scholars researching Arab Detroit lament the difficulty of producing new scholarship about the immigrant populations of this area that does not center on the events of 9/11 and its aftermath.

Ethnographers Shryock and describe the sea-change that has taken place in Arab

[11] "Hamtramck community profile." *E-Podunk*. http://www.epodunk.com. (accessed April 4, 2001)

Detroit since 9/11 and the Bush/Obama administration's "War on Terror," which has led to mass interrogations, background checks, and special surveillance of Arabs and Muslims in Arab Detroit and across America (Howell and Shryock 2003; Shryock 2004). According to legal scholar Leti Volpp, these government activities, along with a shift in civilian attitudes and behaviors toward those perceived to be Arab and Muslim, constitute a form of "racial profiling" in the following ways: (1) Since September 11th, over twelve hundred noncitizens have been swept up into detention, ostensibly to prevent terrorism. (2) The Department of Justice has sought to conduct over 5,000 interviews with noncitizens from Middle Eastern or Islamic countries. These are called voluntary, but are not without coercion. (3) Among those noncitizens who have received final orders for deportation, US officials have targeted for removal noncitizens who "come from countries in which there has been Al Qaeda terrorist presence or activity." (4) Airport officials, airlines and passengers have practiced racial profiling on those appearing Middle Eastern, Arab or Muslim; (5) The general public has engaged in extralegal profiling in the form of over one thousand acts of violence against those appearing Middle Eastern, Arab or Muslim (Volpp 2002:1577-1580). The effects of this racial profiling are particularly intensive in Arab Detroit, as the site of the greatest concentration of Muslims and Arabs in the country.

While Arabs and Muslims have become the targets of surveillance and hate crimes, they have also become the focus of an outpouring of sympathy and curiosity. At the same time as the massive surveillance programs were initiated, the government and private corporations have began to make huge increases in funding to social service agencies that perform "culture work" among these populations, meaning the creation of

educational materials intended to translate the "foreign cultures" of these populations into terms that are recognizable and familiar to mainstream Americans (Howell and Shryock 2003; Shryock 2004). This work of image making and the work of surveillance may be seen as two sides of the same project to discipline an "unruly" population. For Shryock, "It is ironic, and more than a bit depressing, to learn (from pollsters) that Muslim Americans enjoy a higher 'approval rating' today than they did before the 9/11 attacks" (Shryock 2004:280). As Arab and Muslims have been constituted as terrorists and as victims in America, Arab Detroit has become "as a scene of threat, divided loyalties and potential backlash" whose inhabitants "have a good reason to feel threatened by the mixed messages they receive from officialdom" consisting of increased hate crime and intimidation coupled with a simultaneous desire to "understand" and protect them (Howell and Shryock 2003; Shryock 2004:280, 2008).

These complex sets of public feelings (Berlant 2005; Cvetkovich 2007; Stewart 2007) must be linked to a renewed anthropological interest in this population, presenting a set of circumstances that must have profound effects upon the possibilities for ethnographic work in the area. These effects involve both the formulation of Arab and Muslim populations as a particular type of object to be studied, and the shifting the power relations between ethnographers and their intended Arab and Muslim "informants." Shryock reminds us that "The USA Patriot Act and subsequent policy decisions made by the Department of Justice, Homeland Security, and the Department of Treasury have created an atmosphere in which Arabs and Muslims can be treated as a special population to whom certain legal protections and rights no longer apply" (Cainkar 2002; Hassan 2002; Volpp 2002; Shryock 2004; Naber 2006). The rights in question include the right

to resist or deflect certain kinds of invasive activities, as in the case of interviewing described by Volpp above, which were "not coercive, but at the same time not without consequences" (Volpp 2002:1578). Given the mass scale in which interviews of the population have taken place, as ethnographer working in the area I was aware that my attempts to interview members of these populations were sometimes connected to or conflated with the government's mass interviewing efforts, resulting in a level of tension or mistrust that I experienced as a shadow over my interactions with members of the Muslim communities in question that was only partially ameliorated by my growing familiarity with them.

0.8 Chapter Overviews

The first three chapters of the dissertation focus mainly on questions concerning women and gender, centering on comparative analysis of how the city's Yemeni and Bangladeshi women manage and interpret the public space of the city with reference to ethnic and religious identities. While the first chapter examines this theme in the broadest possible terms by tracking patterns of gendered spatial practice in everyday life, the subsequent two chapters are narrower in scope, covering women's devotional spaces and the educational context respectively.

The first chapter of the dissertation, "Gendered Publics: Ethno-religious Identity for South Asian and Arab American Muslim Women," begins by surveying the historical background of the Yemeni and Bangladeshi immigrant populations of Hamtramck, with an emphasis on women's involvement in this history. It discusses the push and pull factors that bring each group to the city as well as covering economic, social and political

aspects of their incorporation. The chapter then introduces the some of the Yemeni and Bangladeshi women featured in the study in the context in which I made my first contacts with them: in the city's various public and privately funded ESL institutions. The rhythm and direction of the rest of the chapter reflects the movement of my experience as I followed women out of these educational institutions and into other spaces of the city as I developed friendships with them, charting shared urban journeys into everyday spaces of leisure, shopping, and different kinds of gatherings.

Within these journeys and exchanges, I focused my study most intently on understanding how beliefs about modesty and cross-gender interaction shaped the texture of women's mobility, sociability and community formation in the city. In the chapter, I provide a broad overview for exploring how these beliefs influence women's decisions about dress, education, career, and various forms of visibility. I studied how gendered spatial patterns and norms are established with reference to both the country of origin and expectations about what it meant to be a Muslim in America. Within the analysis, I also include a focus on human/non-human interaction by studying how the idiosyncrasies of the built environment played an agentive role in the formation of women's spatial practices. In doing so, I demonstrate how women's decisions about their modes of visibility in the city were made in dialogue with physical features in the landscape of the city such as the design of streets, homes, and overgrown allies, the scope of its public transportation system or lack thereof, the shape, form and location of various businesses and institutions.

Chapter Two, "From the Majlis to the Masjid: Gender and Generation in Hamtramck's Yemeni and Bangladeshi Muslim Women's Assemblies," continues

elaborating the theme of women and space by looking at the context of women's mosques and halaqa (religious study circle) participation in Hamtramck. In general, in their countries of origin, neither Yemeni nor Bangladeshi women frequented the mosque, and the tendency to do so in the United States can be thought of as part of the larger "Americanization of religion" process (Haddad and Esposito 2000; Hirschman 2004). Jeanette Jouili and Schirin Amir-Moazami note a similar process taking place n France and Germany as well (Amir-Moazami and Salvatore ; Amir-Moazami ; Jouili and Amir-Moazami 2006:617). Besides attending the various community mosques for Friday prayer, Yemeni and Bangladeshi women are also taking part in different women's groups that take place within mosque complexes or women's homes. Across the generations, these new spaces are providing opportunities for women to take on leadership roles within the community as well as for women to direct modes of community expansion and to create a public collective face for interacting with outside communities. Besides opening up to women, some religious spaces in Hamtramck are beginning to open out from serving members from a single ethnic group to becoming multi-ethnic spaces. Multi-ethnicity in religious practice surfaces as an area of great concern and excitement in the chapter, especially for the young women mosque leaders who embrace the potential for this shift as a reflection of the Islamic ummah ideal, which enjoins Muslims to create community and solidarity with all other Muslims regardless of race, class, or other distinctions. Yet other Muslims in the city emphasize the importance of the mosque and study group as space for the expression of ethnic ties and the maintenance of ethnic solidarity.

The chapter is divided into two parts, with the first half looking at the older generation of women religious leaders and devotional participants, and the second part looking at how young women youth leaders have carved out new structure of leadership and authority and have created their own groups and associations outside of the older women's groups. In the second part of the analysis, I feature the narrative accounts of two prominent youth leaders, from the Yemeni and Bangladeshi communities respectively. These leaders explain the role they are taking in the community and the way that they derive a sense of authority and leadership from a wide range of different religious educational experiences that take them simultaneously further inside and further outside of their own locally based ethnic communities.

Chapter Three, "Private, Public, Charter: School Adaptions for Hamtramck's Muslim Daughters," hones in on an exploration of the wide range of practices by which some Yemeni and Bangladeshi Muslim students and families negotiate secondary education for their daughters. The chapter discusses how some Yemeni and Bangladeshi Muslim students and families experience the traditional public school's permissive norms of cross-gender interaction as problematic and compromising. It also discusses how differential constructions of adolescence and young adulthood that place a great value on early marriage and procreation alternatively position some Hamtramck Muslim daughters in relations to the school context. The chapter presents a comparative analysis of how Yemeni and Bangladeshi students and families negotiate the secondary public school environment through strategies such as withdrawal, selective participation, and the creation or patronage of alternative institutions such as homeschooling, private schools, and charter schools. Some Muslim students and families value the private and charter

schools because they perceive them as offering a more moral atmosphere than the traditional public schools by virtue of their concentrated Muslim presence. Yet, some outsiders fear that this kind of educational choice represents a dangerous form of self-segregation to the detriment of the student and Hamtramck as a whole. The chapter discusses how debates about these Muslim majority schools serve as a point of departure for people's views about Hamtramck as an "immigrant city," how notions of community integration fit into ideologies about schooling, and the role of religious difference in education.

The second half of the dissertation moves away from the study of women and space to focus primarily on how Muslim city residents are interacting in the spaces of municipal governmentality. It does so by analyzing Bangladeshi and Yemeni leadership and participation in two large-scale campaigns over municipal ordinances concerning the status and visibility of religious and other minorities in the city that took place in 2004 and 2008 respectively. Chapters Four and Five discuss the first of these political campaigns, which centered on the request of mosque leaders to gain municipal approval to broadcast the adhan, or call to prayer, in the city. Chapter Six focuses on Muslim leadership in a conservative campaign to protest LGBTQ-inclusive Human Rights legislation in the city. Because I was not in the field during the events of 2004, the material presented in Chapters Four and Five was gathered using an ethnohistorical approach, in which I base my work upon interviews with people who were instrumental actors in the events that took place three or four years previously as well as newspaper and video and city hall archives that document the events in question.

Chapter Four, "Islam in the Urban Sensorium: Diasporic Sound and the Right to the City," studies the call to prayer issue with an emphasis on understanding what the peculiarities of sound might have to tell us about the way public space is contested and imagined in cities. In this chapter, I draw on the work of scholars such as Charles Hirschkind, Lauren Berlant, and R. Schafer Murray to theorize collective audition as a particular type of sensorily based community-building process. In doing so, I discuss how conflicts over sound such as those found in the contestation over the call to prayer in Hamtramck disrupt the way in which immigrant minorities are normally spatialized in cities, in terms of thinking about the "immigrant enclave" or the "ethnic mosaic" form of incorporation, as sound operated as an unbounded spatial marker. In this chapter, I use a Lefebrvian lens to interpret the struggle over the Muslim call to prayer in Hamtramck, as a demand for the "right to the city"[12] envisioned along minority religious lines, and interpret the proposed legislation of the adhan as a complicated contract of recognition between Muslim immigrants and the city government.

Chapter Five, "The Mosque and Pope Park: Interfaith Space and the Paradoxes of Muslim Visibility" continues to study the call to prayer campaign, yet moves the study from an analysis of the mosque leaders' relationship with the municipal governing structure to an analysis of how an interfaith movement affected the "social realm of belonging" (Maira 2009:617) by bringing diverse communities together into fellowship organized around a shared goal. The chapter emphasizes the determinative role that the city's Polish Catholic elder community and religious leaders played in authorizing the call

[12] In Lefebvre's conceptualization: "The right to the city, would affirm, on one hand, the right of users to make known their ideas on the space and time of their activities, in the urban area, it would also cover the right to use the center, a privileged place, instead of just being dispersed or stuck into ghettos" (Lefebvre 1996: 34).

to prayer from below by extending the mantle of Polish Catholic legitimacy over these novel Muslim sound markers. The chapter studies these processes of inclusion and belonging mainly by focusing on their spatial manifestations by centering on "urban ritual events" as their primary means of expression (Kertzer 1988; Sanjek 1998:8). In doing so, I analyze the powerful way that these kinds of festivities, ceremonies, and public special occasions or gatherings have to symbolically transform or recode urban space.

While presenting the interfaith embrace of Islam that was rehearsed in support of the call to prayer campaign as a more comfortable alternative to the kinds of othering and stigmatization that came out in nativist formulations of its denial, this chapter also takes a critical perspective on the interfaith stance as displaying the kinds of problematic "politics of sameness" tendencies of a the sort that Andrew Shryock describes in his work (Shryock 2004, 2010b). I trace these tendencies not only in the Hamtramck interfaith movement, but also in other kinds of national-level interchanges between Muslims and non-Muslims, particularly in the way that the controversy over the Cordoba House/Park51 Community Center played itself out. In my reading of the 2010 New York City event, I trace how the "threat" of the mosque was palliated by various compromises and guarantees in a way that is reminiscent of the Hamtramck dynamics, leading to the continued deferral of the acceptance of the mosque and other forms of Muslim difference on their own terms.

The final chapter of the dissertation continues to assay the limits of liberal secular multi-culturalist inclusion by studying a conservative, family values, Muslim-led campaign in the city that took place in 2008. Chapter Six, "Assimilation to a Queer

Nation: Intersecting Muslim and LGBTQ Visibilities," analyzes how the assertion of Muslim illiberal and conservative sexual ethics during this campaign disrupted the fantasy of seamless sameness or identification that had marked liberal and secular humanists articulations of interfaith incorporation in Hamtramck's recent past. The decision on the part of Muslim leaders to form an alliance with a well known nationally based conservative Christian "family values" organization to oppose this campaign further heightened the rift, leading to a kind of casting out of the conservative Muslims on the part of the city's progressive majority stakeholders, who hold the balance of power in the city. Within Chapter Six, I stress the interconnectedness of Muslim involvement in the call to prayer movement with the emergence of their position in the human right campaign that followed, arguing for a need to study these two movements together in order to properly understand their symbolic and material effects on the city. Throughout the chapter and in the conclusion, I demonstrate that while the call to prayer campaign represented the triumph of the secular city, the human rights campaign that followed could be understood as the emergence of Hamtramck in its aspect as a post-secular city in which neat and easy forms of reconciliation are continuously evaded.

0.9 Significance and Contribution

The upsurge in public visibility of Islamic identity in the US falls in line with global trends in the growing visibility and impact of religious institutions in public politics and culture. Scholars over the past several decades have documented the increasing influence of translocal world religions such as Christianity, Hinduism and Islam as an unanticipated corollary to increases in urbanization, industrialization and

mass migration defining the late-modern age (Antoun and Hegland 1987; Casanova 1994; van der Veer 1994; Hefner 1998). In response to the rise of world religions and transnationalism as global phenomena, social scientists studying religion and migration recently have begun to critical engaging the meanings and effects of participation in translocal religious networks and practices to immigrant status and identity within the public and political culture of receiving societies (Foner 2003; Levitt and Glick Schiller 2004).

My study investigates this theme by seeking to understand how Muslim identity is expressed, contested and interpreted within public space in the US. Although the forms of religious life that materialize within Muslim publics may reference a country of origin, their current emergence within the US represent creative innovations that offer insight into the struggles and contestations taking place within Muslim communities and at their borders (Tayob 2005). Following this perspective, my focus on new Muslim visibility critically diverges from dominant trends within the study of Muslim immigration, which tend to lay analytic focus on the "Americanization" or "Europeanization" of Islam (Haddad and Lummis 1987; Lewis and Schnapper 1994; Abedin and Sardar 1995; Noneman, et al. 1996; Haddad and Esposito 2000). This prevailing line of analysis evokes a problematic dichotomy between traditional and modern elements in Islam, associating the modern, liberatory and individualistic expressions of Muslim practice with processes of assimilation to "western" culture rather than as " culturally authentic" expressions of identity. Instead of focusing on unidirectional processes of change conceived as internal to Muslim communities, my study at the intersections among newcomer Muslims and between newcomers and established residents envisions cultural

change as a multi-directional process. From this perspective, the study will contribute to the project of understanding how liberal secular multiculturalist logic may be challenged and transformed by minority groups seeking to preserve their coherence and integrity in heterogeneous societies.

Chapter One

Gendered Publics: Ethno-Religious Identity for Arab and South Asian American Muslim Women

The first time I visited the office of Dr. Samir, it was to accompany my friend Shuruq and her mother Maysan, who were also going there for an initial visit. I had been hearing about Dr. Samir for a number of months, and knew he was very popular among the Yemenis of the city. This was due in part to the fact that the Jordanian doctor's office was located conveniently in the middle of the South End Yemeni enclave, and because of his ability to converse in Arabic. Shuruq and Maysan might have otherwise walked to the office from their house, but because it was a cold January day, and Maysan was under the weather, they had asked me for a ride. Following their directions, I entered the parking lot of the strip mall on Joseph Campau, and pulled my car up to the hard packed snow bank as close as possible to the building's entrance.

As we were getting out of the car, I noticed that office had two separate doors facing the street, which were clearly marked by signs saying "Exit Only" and "Entrance Only." I began making my way towards the entrance door, and I had my hand on the doorknob, when Shuruq called our to me: " Wait… Stop. Hada ad-dhakhul." "This is the entrance," she was telling me, pointing to the "Exit Only" sign. I reasoned that this mistake must be due to her lack of proficiency in English. I kept my hand on the door knob, and I gestured to the sign above with my other hand, saying slowly in English: "See, this one says: entrance, dhakhul, and that one says exit... kharaj….Right? Sharuq

shook her head and leaned her body against the door to make sure it would stay closed. "This is not where we go," she told me. I shrugged and pulled open the exit door.

It opened into the middle of a tightly packed group of seats all filled with women, who all appeared to me to be Arab or South Asian, in two rows facing one another. Over on the other side of the room, near the door that had been marked "Entrance" was another set of two inward-facing rows of seats, inhabited by men only. It turned out that Shuruq's friend who had given her instructions on how to get to the doctor's office had also included careful instructions about which door to use.

1.1 Introduction

This chapter offers an analysis of how some Yemeni and Bangladeshi Muslim women in Hamtramck are negotiating their presence and visibility in various public, semi-public and private spaces of the city. In some cases, these spatial strategies involve various forms of hijab (veiling) and purdah (gender segregation) relating to an ethic of gender complementarity and modest comportment. Islamic scriptures and other sources, including Qur'an, Hadith and Sunna, offer instructions for both women and men on appropriate forms of modest dress, and on specific guidelines limiting the mixing of unrelated men and women as means to instill discipline and to foster the cultivation of piety. However, there has been a great deal of variety and contestation among Muslims regarding the way this scriptural material is to be interpreted and applied to everyday life. Besides religion, the culture and traditions found in the countries of origin for Muslim immigrant women offer equally important referent points in determining appropriate standards of public visibility in the host country. Contestations over the meaning of

religious and cultural gender traditions are especially pertinent in the lives of Muslim women in Diaspora who, as newcomers to North American and European countries, are faced with the challenge of charting unfamiliar terrain and setting down new standards and traditions in the context of migration.

In the "western" historical imagination, women's entrances into various public places of the city and the transformation of these realms from exclusively male to mixed-gender spaces are strongly associated with freedom, liberation, and societal evolution (McDowell 1999). These transformations of public space echo the 19th century conversion of the ideal woman from an "angel of the hearth" to a mobile and self-directed modern economic agent whose power is imagined to come, in part, from the ability to earn and spend independently. Urban spaces served as the background to this revolution, and hence the city came to be imagined as the primary site in which the "active and independent woman came into her own" by learning to inhabit, navigate and master an "ever-increasing array" of mixed-gender public spaces (McDowell 1999:155). Another way in which women were imagined to realize themselves during this time was through the emulating the female flanuer figure who, in "sharing [with men] the possibility of lone travel, of voluntary uprooting, and anonymous arrival at a new place" (Wolf 1992:155; McDowell 1999), was considered to experience an ultimate sense of liberation and freedom that came from mastering and even transcending the city itself (McDowell 1999; Zizek 2009).

The ways that some Yemeni and Bangladeshi women of Hamtramck imagine their relationship to the city partly parallels certain elements of the "classic narrative of the city as a new beginning" where the city offers an open canvas for "female self-

invention." (McDowell 1999:155). This kind of heightened creativity may especially be at work for women in migration learning to navigate the urban spaces in a new country for the first time. Yet the ways in which women's ideal relationship to the city is imagined by some Yemeni and Bangladeshi women also partly conflict with the hegemonic "western" model for mapping women's freedom and agency in cities. Some Muslim women's gendered spatial practices contradict constructions of dominant libratory norms which tend to associate the expansion of freedoms, at least for women and other non-dominant sexual groups, with the ability to dissolve gender boundaries; or to treat gender as if it were an arbitrary and relative signifier rather than an externally and objectively defined aspect of selfhood with the power to constrain individual life-choices. Indeed, for some Muslim women in diaspora, religiously and culturally informed ideologies such as gender complementarity, in which women and men have distinct roles and responsibilities within the family and in public life, may play an important role in shaping the way various public and private spaces are managed, experienced, and mapped onto the larger geographies of the host city (Aswad 1991; Aswad and Gray 1996).

In the chapter, I discuss how the interrelated practices of dress (hijab) and gender segregation (purdah) and the ideologies that support them are shaping women's visibility and mobility in a wide variety of public places in the city, including streets, stores, adult education classrooms, and various public use facilities. I argue that these strategies produce the urban spatial correlates to what Nancy Fraser terms "subaltern counterpublics," which she defines as "parallel discursive arenas where members of subordinated social groups invent and circulate counterdiscourses, which in turn permit

them to formulate oppositional interpretations of their identities, interests, and needs" (Fraser 1992:67). I also offer a complementary analysis of how these strategies are also used to orchestrate interactions between unrelated men and women in semi-public and private spaces such as homes, halls, and festival space. The way that this chapter studies hijab and purdah together across these various contexts reflects the historical inter-relationship between these two practices or sets of concepts. Although in popular parlance, the word hijab has come to stand in for the scarf, or veil, that some Muslim women use to cover their hair, face, or other parts of their upper bodies (i.e. chest and neck), the original concept of hijab included a broader set of meanings, and indicated a wide range of practices for limiting visibility and interaction among unrelated women and men, including those accomplished by distancing as well as dress (Stowasser 1987:92; cited in Rouse:230). Therefore, the way I organized the chapter supports the reading of hijab and purdah as part and parcel of the same unified system of signification that would be most productively studied together.

The chapter begins with an exploration of how some Yemeni women are organizing public spaces of the city, and then offers a comparative analysis of the spatial strategies being practiced by some Bangladeshi women. In doing so, I pay particular attention to the role that various aspects of class, including education level, fluency in English, and access to jobs and resources, play in determining the context in which women are working out their decisions about space-making. I also show how differences in the social structure and normative gender system between the two countries of origin (i.e. Yemen vs. Bangladesh) carry over and differentially impact women's position in the host country. While the current chapter offers an overview of some of the overarching

patterns by which Yemeni and Bangladeshi women are gendering the urban space of streets, homes, stores, and public use facilities in the city, the next two chapters continue the same theme in the more specific contexts of the mosque (Chapter Two) and the secondary school (Chapter Three).

Though I look at spatial dynamics structuring a wide range of different kinds of places in these three chapters, the boundaries of the study remain centered around the city of Hamtramck and its immediate borders. I made this choice because I am interested in studying how the city itself is being constructed as a place of mastery and belonging for Yemeni and Bangladeshi women. In these chapters, I look at the ways in which Hamtramck functions as a place set apart due to the concentration of its Muslim residents and the cumulative effect that their space-making practices have had on carving inroads into and altering the spaces of the city in ways that are recognized by Muslims and non-Muslims alike.

1.2 Yemeni Background

Yemenis first started settling in Hamtramck and in the Hamtramck/Detroit border area in significant numbers around the mid 1960s (Abraham 1978, 1983; Abraham and Abraham 1983; Abraham, et al. 1983; Sarroub 2005). These newcomers were mainly men who had come to the US without their families to work in the auto factories. During the early decades, these men found good, steady work in the auto-factories, but, with deindustrialization, those kinds of jobs have become scarcer. Even so, Yemenis continue to make their way to Hamtramck, following links of serial migration, and are finding other kind of work there, for example in light manufacturing or in service sector jobs

such as in gas stations or restaurants. Community leaders estimate that there are now about five to six thousand Yemenis in the Hamtramck area and parts of Detroit immediately adjacent to it, but add the caveat that it is a rough estimate, suggesting that the actual numbers may be higher.[13]

Most Yemenis in Hamtramck come from small, mountainous agricultural villages scattered throughout the south central part of North Yemen known as al-montaqa al-wusta, or "the Central Region," mainly hailing from areas such as Liwa Ibb (Ibb province), or Liwa Baida (Abraham 1978:16). Most of the families I came to know in Hamtramck had been living in these agricultural villages for generations and still owned a house or houses there. Some also had secondary residences in Sana'a or the city of Ibb, which had been more recently established with the help of American earnings. In Yemen, besides the remittances sent home, families rely on dwindling returns from qat farming, as qat is the only viable cash crop in the region and there are not many other job opportunities available for most Yemenis outside of agriculture. In narrating why they came to the US, Yemenis describe the steep inflation in their country over the past few decades and how they couldn't afford the day-to-day needs of their families there with prices rising exponentially.

The first Yemenis in Hamtramck mainly considered themselves only temporary residents, and were eager to return home to their wives and families after enough money had been earned and set aside. (Bisharat 1975; Abraham 1978, 1983; Abraham, et al. 1983; Friedlander 1988; Alwujude 2000). While in the US, most sent whatever money they could to Yemen to support immediate and extended families back home. Many also

[13] If that number is accurate, it would mean that the Detroit area is home to a great proportion of Yemenis in the US. In the 2000 census, it was estimated that there were only 12,000 Yemenis in the US during the time of the study (Cruz and Brittingham 2003:3).

traveled back to Yemen frequently to attend to their wives and children there, or, for the young men, to marry and establish families. Yet no matter how frugally they lived, it was difficult to save up the large sums of money that would be needed to stop working in the US and permanently return back home. Many grew tired of trying to be in two places at once, and they grew frustrated and depressed from being separated from families for so long. Therefore, little by little, Yemeni men began bringing their wives and families over to the US. According to interviews I carried out in Hamtramck, Yemeni women have been immigrating to the Hamtramck/Detroit area at least since the late 1970s, and probably before that, but their numbers were few in these early years. Since then, Yemeni women have been coming over in increasingly greater numbers. Warm and vibrant modes of women's sociability, such as those described in this chapter and the next, have arisen to make the transition easier.

The Yemenis in Hamtramck mainly live in a tightly-knit enclave at the southernmost end of the city commonly referred to by Hamtramck residents as "south of Holbrook," and that some Yemenis refer to as "ʿaind alʿarab," (place of the Arabs). Although in the majority, they share the area with African American and white neighbors. The enclave consists of ten or eleven one-way streets running east to west in an area that is about three-quarters of a mile wide and half a mile in length. The county-maintained Holbrook Street defines the northern border of the enclave, and the county-maintained Jospeh Campau[14] fixes its eastern boundary. At the corner of Holbrook and Joseph Campau the residential blocks' northeast corner loses about two acres of land to the Hamtramck Town Center Shopping Center with its Glory Supermarket and smaller shops. A Conrail viaduct hems in Aind al-Arab's southern border beyond which sits the

[14] The local police often refer to this main traffic artery as "Jose Campau" for an unknown reason.

GM Detroit Hamtramck Assembly or simply the "Cadillac Plant." [15] To the west, the bright blue retaining wall of American Axel and Manufacturing Incorporated and Omaha Automation Incorporated's parking lot present a frank and non-negotiable boundary to the neighborhood.

The east-west running blocks that compose the Yemeni neighborhood are bifurcated by Joseph Campau, the city's main street. Yemenis have set up a number of small business and institutions there, including corner grocery stores, travel agencies, check-cashing businesses, restaurants, a men's barbershop, a small apparel shop for Muslim women, a billiards hall, and others. At the core of the Yemeni enclave is the "Al-Gazali Masjid," which was established around 2003, in a one-story building that had once held a bar. The fact that the building's entrances are situated at the back contributes to its plain, humble and modest outward appearance. Local chapters of nationally based Arab American social service agencies have set up shop on opposite sides of Joseph Campau near the mosque, offering employment services, ESL classes, legal help and advocacy and other resources to their primarily Yemeni client bases.

Another group of Yemenis live just over Conant in a second Yemeni enclave area spanning the Hamtramck/Detroit border. The second residential area is organized around a large and imposing two-story mosque called Mu'ath bin Jabel that had been converted from a church. Unlike the al-Gazali mosque, which could easily be mistaken for almost any other kind of building, the Mu'ath bin Jabel mosque is topped by a star and crescent atop a spire that is visible from a distance. A bunch of Yemeni-owned stores and business similar to those in Hamtramck have sprung up around the mosque. Both mosques regularly issue the Islamic call to prayer, or adhan. During the week it is common to see

[15] Prior to 1980, this was the site of the Dodge Main Assembly Plant and the now-leveled Poletown.

Yemeni men closing up their shops during noon or afternoon prayer times and making their way to the mosque singly or in larger groups. On Fridays, both women and men can be seen walking to the mosque for jum'a prayers, although mainly in separate groups, the women in black abayyas, headscarves and face veils, the men in long white thawbs and prayer cap, making highly visible pathways through the city.

1.3 Yemeni Women's ESL Class

I first came to know some Yemeni women in Hamtramck as a volunteer assistant ESL instructor in a crowed beginning-level classroom deep in the south end of the city. The class consisted of around fifty Yemeni women ranging in age from about eighteen to sixty-five. Most had come to the class without the ability to read or write in any language, and were thus classified as "pre-literate." However, some of the younger ones had attended school in Yemen and could read and write in standard Arabic. The class had been set up as the result of a joint effort on the part of an NGO for Arab Americans and the Hamtramck public school system in response to the desire expressed by some Yemeni community members for sex-segregated education. In addition to these sex-segregated classes, a minority of Yemeni women in Hamtramck also took advantage of co-ed ESL courses that were being offered for parents at their children's schools or in the adult education facilities in the northern part of the city.

Yemeni women students of all ages generally came to class dressed in long, loose, black abayyas. They all wore hijab and the majority also had the face-veil. As a newcomer to the classroom, I would watch curiously from the back of the room as they greeted each other with as-salaam alaikum, kefish inti. Some would kiss each other on

one side of the face, embrace, or shake hands in a drawn out, gentle style. As the room filled, it would become difficult for women to find a place to sit, as the classroom was too small to accommodate their numbers. Navigating around the cluttered classroom furniture, the students would settle into their seats, draping purses and bags over the backs of chairs. Then some would reach both arms up behind their heads in order to untie the strings holding their rectangular face veils in place, using the same familiar, gesture that is seen when women take their hair down out of pony-tails or hair clips.

The class took place for one and a half hours a day, five days a week. The students were arranged along a gradient according to skill level, with beginners sitting around the two long tables in the back, and the more advanced students closer to the front. After a couple of weeks had passed, the head teacher, an Albanian woman named Mirjeta,[16] took about fifteen students out of the beginner's group and assigned them to me as a middle-level group. These women were mainly in their late-40's or older, and they each had been in the beginners group for more than a year. Because I was not given any instructions or materials to work with, I found worksheets online and printed these up to distribute to the students. I used Arabic to smooth over communication difficulties in explaining assignments, to introduce myself to them on a personal level, and to explain my position as university student and researcher studying the way different immigrant groups were adjusting to life in Hamtramck. They generally regarded the description of my research project with confusion and/or polite curiosity. Nevertheless, some of the students were quick to notice and appreciate the extra efforts I was making as a teacher's assistant, and commented on the way I came to class prepared with my own materials.

[16] Names and other personal details associated with people I met in the field have been changed to protect their identities.

Some of them began to tease me about my eagerness, or perhaps over-eagerness, in the classroom, which became a source of joking, as they regarded each fresh stack of worksheets with laughing groans. As Ramadan was approaching, they started bringing me special foil-wrapped treats that they had made in their homes like samboosa (mutton or chicken stuffed pastries that are often prepared around Ramadan) and sabayya (thousand-layered homemade flat bread that is usually served with honey). Eventually an older student named Huma was the first to invite me to her house after school.

Yet, as my relationships with the students grew more friendly and familiar, my relationships with the teachers grew increasingly sour. After I had been in the classroom a couple of weeks, Mirjeta told me that she and the assistant teacher did not believe that a project on culture was my "real agenda" for being there, but rather that I was there to try and "steal away their jobs." I tried as hard as I could to clarify and prove my intentions, but it was to no avail. After experiencing dismay about the icy and challenging way the teachers were treating me, it eventually became clear to me that I shouldn't take it personally, but that rather I was caught up in some pre-existing kinds of friction between the public school and the NGO regarding the provisioning of services to ESL students.

In order to persuade me to leave the classroom, Mirjeta began trying to discourage me from conducting my fieldwork project. She pointed out that she had been teaching this class for several years and not once had the Yemeni students ever invited her into their homes. She told me that the community is "too closed" for that kind of thing, and that they would not want me "invading into it." She asked me why I thought they would ask me to be their friends when they had not sought out her friendship, complaining with some bitterness that over the years she had worked as their teacher, they had never

invited her to their weddings or to their homes. Then she started repeating more stereotypes about Yemeni women that were in circulation in the city. She said it would be impossible for me to be friends with them because their husbands and fathers wouldn't allow it. She explained: "If you go sit with them in their homes their fathers and brothers and husbands will get angry and chase you out." She continued, "And you want to go out with them? These women aren't allowed out of the house. They don't go shopping. They don't go anywhere. They sit at home." Moreover, "Why would they invite you into their homes to learn about them? I am from Albania, I am also an immigrant. Do you think I am going to invite you into my home so that you can ask questions about me? I don't think I see that happening. Its not likely."

After a couple of months these tensions with the teachers in the classroom finally came to a head and I left the classroom. Yet, I continued my relationships with the students by visiting their homes frequently. Sometimes during these visits, I would offer to help with English tutoring or to help more advanced English speakers get ready for the citizenship test. People's friends requested that I come visit them and help them as well. For some of these women, I was the only "American" (meaning "white") woman to have ever been in their home, and as such my visits were a novelty. The women began to refer to me as "al-Amreekiyyah" (the American) or "al-ustaadha," (the teacher). For example, if I was sitting with one of my friends and another called on the phone, she might simply say; "al-ustaadha hunaa" (the teacher is here). The visits and the gracious way the women helped me turn myself into a community resource allowed me to meet many other Yemeni women, and to take part to some degree in the circuits of visits and hospitality in which many Hamtramck Yemeni women were actively engaged.

1.4 Visiting Yemeni Homes

The first time that Huma invited me to come home with her after the ESL class for a visit, she followed up her introduction with a caveat: "But we have to leave the minute that class is over." She had probably noticed that I normally stayed on talking with the teachers after class, and didn't want to have to wait around for me. I nodded. "We can't wait even a few minutes," she reiterated, tapping on my arm for emphasis. So, as soon as class was over, I gathered my things and stood by Huma. We walked out together with the other women going in the same direction, joining a group of around ten or so others who stood together waiting to cross Joseph Campau.

As soon as the traffic cleared, one woman took the lead. Holding her hand up high and stiffly in the air like a crossing guard, she ushered us across the street to the entrance of Veteran's Memorial Park. Breaking into lines of two or three abreast, we cut a diagonal across the park from the entry point to its northern perimeter, and then walked along the chain link fence until we came into a small opening where two ends of the fence were held together with a chain across the middle. One by one we ducked down under the chain and crossed over into the residential part of the enclave. There, the women seemed more relaxed and began chatting with each other. We continued to walk along together, with the group growing progressively smaller as women split off to their own houses. This cutting through the park allowed women to stick together and to avoid walking up the south end of Hamtramck's main street, which was more heavily populated than the alleys.

After she had invited me into her home once or twice, other members from the class and the community began inviting me as well. Later, Huma told me that she is the daughter of the headman [‘adil al qariyya] of her village in Yemen. She had explained to me, that because of this, her family in Yemen had often hosted visitors to the village in their homes, including those who were traveling through the village en route to someplace else. I wondered if the prominence of her home and her status in the village were part of the reason that Huma felt comfortable being the first to invite me into her home here in the US, and was part of the reason why other women seemed to follow her lead. With this, I noticed that there was a tendency among many that I got to know to casually mention that their own family had some kind of near or distant kinship relationship to Huma’s family.

Although she had a high status in her village, like most of the women in her generation, Huma had never been to school, and she had never learned to read or write in any language. Yet by the time her daughters Maysan and Aisha came of age in the same village, a mixed gender elementary school/middle school facility had been established, and it had become common for girls to enroll in it up until their preteen years. Additionally, Maysan and Aisha had had the opportunity to continue their educations when the family had moved to Sana’a for a period of two years in order to process their visa documents for the US. Although it was not common in the villages, it was becoming increasingly common for there to be all-girls’ secondary level educational facilities in the big Yemeni cities such as Sana’a. The experience in Sana’a had greatly facilitated their ability to excel in Hamtramck as secondary school students and then in college. Thus by the time I met Huma’s daughters, Maysan was in her second year at the community

college, and Aisha was in her first. The girls also had quickly acquired driver's licenses so that they could transport themselves back and forth to college.

While in Hamtramck, I met a number of other young Yemeni women who were engaged in higher education in order to meet career aspirations such as becoming doctors, dentists, medical technicians, pharmacists, engineers, and teachers. For example, with their family's full support, Aisha had her heart set on an engineering career, and Maysan was planning on becoming a physical therapist. I also met several Yemeni women of Hamtramck who had attained university-level and more advanced degrees and were already working as teachers, physicians assistants, and in other jobs.

Although it was growing increasingly acceptable for Yemeni women to have careers and to drive, it was also the case for many women, such as Huma, who had arrived in Hamtramck as married adults, were not choosing to become economic agents. This was due to a constellation of socioeconomic and cultural factors involving lack of educational opportunity, the value placed on the domestic role by some women, and a fading, but still sharply felt, cultural stigma that was mainly attached to women's employment (Aswad 1994). Karima, a middle-aged mother of two who works in the cafeteria of one of the area charter schools, explained it this way:

> These days, with the young people, more of them are working. But the older Yemeni women, I think, many in Hamtramck are not working, there are not many in Hamtramck besides me. But oh my God, in Dearborn, you'll find everybody [i.e. many Yemeni women] working. If you come to Odyssey Academy,[17] you will see that many of the women who are working there are all Yemenis from Dearborn. Many of the teachers are from Dearborn, Yemeni girls, friends of mine. I have one friend, she's Yemeni, and she's doing something for immigration, she's working to become a lawyer. So I was like, wow, masha' allah, its really good for a Yemeni girl, that's really nice.

[17] Names of charter schools have been changed to protect identities of informants affiliated with them.

> But when it comes to Hamtramck, ladies are gossiping, and men too. That's the problem. the men, when they see, well perhaps they see me at the school, they know me and then they go home. Then they say to their families, oh, they have no life. She should stay home. They still have that thing in them that makes them say that. So when they see me, they start going like… I'm sure they do that, you know, that Haddadi girl, why is he letting her do that? She is now driving, and working.

According to Karima, who had wide networks of relations both in Dearborn and in Hamtramck, as well as to the social service workers I interviewed in Dearborn, it is more common for the Yemeni women in Dearborn who arrived as married adults to be wage-earners than it was for their counterparts in Hamtramck. In contrast to the Hamtramck situation, Yemenis in Dearborn tend to come from more affluent and urban areas in Yemen than those who end up in Hamtramck, and they may arrive in Hamtramck with higher educational backgrounds and skill levels, which put them in the mindset to continue their educations and find work, with their families' approval. In contrast, Karima describes a situation in which Yemeni women in Hamtramck like herself who work are sometimes judged harshly as "having no life," by other Yemenis, and they may be gossiped about. In these and other narratives, "having a life" for Yemeni women meant being centered in the home. I found this borne out by the way some of my older, married Yemeni informants would disapprove of the way I was always running around so much for my work. They also were saddened and concerned about my not having any children, which signified to them that I was missing out on the chief source of happiness and satisfaction in life.

There are not a lot of immediate pressures on Yemeni women who arrive in Hamtramck as married adults to learn English. In contrast, for Yemeni men, learning English is key for advancing in jobs. Additionally, Yemeni men who come to the US

alone are driven to learn English in order to pass the citizenship exam, because doing so will allow them to bring over the rest of the family. Becoming a citizen enables the man to bring over his wife on a spousal visa as well as his children, who if arriving in the US before they turn eighteen years old are automatically granted citizenship if their fathers are citizens.

In contrast, Yemeni women are not usually expected to work outside the home, and their citizenship is not seen as essential for the reunification of families. For Yemeni women who come over on green cards as spouses, the test can be put off indefinitely, as residency cards may be renewed. The plan to become efficient in English and then attain citizenship tends to be postponed for women, as the immediacy of running a home, and tending to a large family takes center stage. Due to this constellation of factors, older, married, Yemeni women are often the only members of their households without fluency in English and without citizenship.

The fact that many Yemeni adult women were not fully literate and were not striving to become economic agents also affected the likelihood that they would be able to attain a driver's license, because of the written component of the test. And, in some families, there was also a cultural stigma attached to driving. But according to Huma's daughter Aisha and others whom I interviewed, this was also changing:

> It's getting more common right now than it was three or four years ago here. Since we [i.e. she and her sister] learned how to drive, three or four people asked us to help them with their driving. And this is good. My dad was saying the other day, you have helped a lot of people. You know, Sajidah, and Hanane, we know those people, and they say, show me how to drive. And I know a lot of people from the high school, they drive now. But three years, four years ago, you didn't see that many Yemeni drivers, but people are starting to go to college, and they have to drive. Not just that, I know people who don't go to college, but they drive. They want to get around, do the family errands. What if they have to take their kids to the hospital? In Yemen, only the rich people drive, because no one has a car.

> Busses all around, you can go wherever you want by taxi or car. But I think that soon, a lot of us here will be driving, that's the way things are heading, and I don't see why not.

1.5 Yemeni Interiors

One afternoon I was watching a Mexican soap opera dubbed into Lebanese Arabic on the Syrian network with Huma's daughters, when there was a knock at the door. Aisha, the younger daughter, rose to pull back the edge of the curtain covering the front window and peered out. Seeing her teenage brothers on the front stoop, Aisha opened the front door a tiny crack and positioned her body against it to block out sight within, sticking her head out. "Al mara' hunaa!"she announced, meaning (unrelated) women are here. In response, the boys turned and made their way around the house to the back door. As they were doing so, Maysan, the older daughter, walked over to the doorway between the front sitting room and the middle room of the house, and drew the curtains (sitaara) across. We followed the sounds of the brothers as they entered though the back door, banged around in the kitchen, and settled into the second living room, turning on their TV to sports. Maysan nudged the volume of our soap opera up just a notch. The separation of the house into two living rooms worked pretty well, but was not ideal. For example, if I had to use the bathroom at times like that it was a bit awkward, because Aisha and Maysan would have to clear the boys out of the middle room so that I could cross through. When I asked her about this kind of division in the home at a later date, Aisha explained:

> It's like tradition: Women and men cannot see each other inside the house unless its like your brother, or your father, or your husband. It's different, inside the house and outside the house. If it's outside, and we are in our scarves, we are in

> our hijabs, we can talk to them regular, it's OK. But once we get at home, even if we know them from the street, even if we are wearing our scarves inside, nobody wants to talk to you inside the house.

Although I visited Huma's house many times over the course of a year and a half, I never interacted with her older sons within the home. However, I did interact frequently with Huma's husband, Salah, who would often pop into the front room and sit with us for a brief time while I was visiting. When I asked my friends to explain these differing standards, they explained that because I was "American" they knew I didn't mind sitting with men. Yet, some of my other Yemeni friends strictly and consistently preserved a separation between myself and the male members of their households. For some, it was not a matter of negotiation or accommodating their "American" friend, but rather a strictly defined religious obligation to keep proper forms of gender segregation in their own households.

As mentioned above, the maintenance of gender segregation for visitors in the homes was facilitated by the way the rooms were set up and arranged and other aspects of the home were explained to me by informants as being part of a Muslim way of living. (McCloud 1996; Henkel 2007). As in Huma's household, most of the Yemeni homes that I visited were equipped with two living rooms, which were usually separated by a curtain (sitara). The first living room was normally the front room of the house, and the second was normally the room next to the kitchen, a room that might have been originally intended by the architect as a dining room. When not being used by visitors, the space of the two salons was flexible and served multiple purposes, such as dining, praying, and sleeping. For larger families, one or both living rooms might also serve as sleeping quarters for those members of the family who didn't sleep in the bedrooms due to lack of

space. The Yemenis that I knew also tend to have their meals sitting on the floor of one of these two living rooms, gathered around a tablecloth (sifra) that may be laid out in either room. Once when we were spreading out the sifra before a meal, my friend Sajidah elaborated:

> In Yemen, you never know how many to expect for a meal, it can be many, many people. With sitting on the floor, there is always more room for another person. Also, with the sifra, there is never any one at the head of the table, we are all sitting in a circle, the same. Your people, you sit at tables that have a head, and a foot, right? Muslims like to sit like this, on the floor, so there is no head and foot, all the places are equal.

Besides sitting, eating, and sleeping, these two rooms often were used as the room for prayer. Almost all of the Yemeni women that I knew prayed the five times daily prayer within the home, while men of the households often went out to the mosque for some or all of the five prayers. If there were young children at home that needed their attention, women of a household sometimes prayed in shifts. Taking into account all this overlapping activity, this room actually functioned as a prayer room for a considerable portion of the day.

Earlier scholars of Yemenis in the US have commented on the sparseness of their interior decor as compared to American standards (Friedlander 1988). In Hamtramck, I noticed that the living areas of the Yemeni houses I visited are mainly decorated with objects that have religious significance. For example, it was very common to find large 3’5’ black velvet wall hangings depicting religious themes, such as the 99 names of Allah or the Kaaba in Mecca, or the Dome of the Rock Masjid in al-Quds (Jerusalem). I noticed that these same wall hangings also adorned the walls of the Hamtramck mosque. Finally, it is common to find a profusion of objects such as mirrors or little plaques engraved with verses from the Qur’an or words and phrases with religious significance. I found out that

these objects were mostly prizes that had been given out at the mosque, awarded for achievements such as Qur'an recitation.

On one occasion, my friend Nabeela had arranged for a visiting Yemeni religious scholar (sheikh) to address the women's halaqa (religious discussion group) that took place weekly in her home. The sheikh sat in the men's living room with the men, and his voice was broadcast through speakers into the woman's section. At the end of the lecture, the women were encouraged to write down any questions they had on the small papers that were distributed. In answer to one women's question about hanging photographs in the home, the sheikh said the inside of the home is a place for prayer and contemplation of Allah, it should be clean, with not to many distractions or any displays of ostentation, and without photographs or pictures cluttering up the walls. His answer seemed to capture the ethic of the Yemeni homes in Hamtramck: a clean sparseness, a sense that the living spaces could be turned at any moment into prayer space, and that the décor in the rooms should complement this purpose.

1.6 Yemeni Circuits of Sociability

Visiting is a highly valued part of the lives of the Yemeni women I came to know, and most of them were part of regular visiting and party circuits that networked together the houses of female neighbors, relatives and friends. The home was almost always the site for socialization, and I found there to be little interest among the Yemenis I got to know to stage their meetings in public venues, such as restaurants, parks, or cafes. As Paula Holmes-Eber noted among the Tunisian women she studied, the home was the privileged site for everything when it came to women's leisure and relaxation, but also in

establishing who was who within the community, in mapping social worlds, and in situating oneself in the place "where things happen" among one's peer group (Aswad 1994; Holmes-Eber 2003:15). Yet, as vibrant and involved as these Hamtramck Yemeni modes of sociability seemed to me, most Yemeni women described them as only an unsatisfyingly pale shadow of what it had been like in Yemen. Homes in general were much more spacious in Yemen than in Hamtramck, allowing for larger and more regular gatherings. Most Yemeni women felt frustrated about the small size of their homes as compared to the way they was in Yemen, particularly because it cramped their style for elaborate drawn out leisurely visiting. Aisha and her friend Ebtisam expanded on the ways in which the architecture of the home frustrated women's visiting:

> Ebtisam: First of all, one thing that we couldn't get over when we first got here is that houses here are made of wood. We were like, what are we [going to do], live in a barn? Houses in Yemen are made of stone, and are much bigger. In Yemen we had our own diwan with a separate restroom, separate from men. So, one for women one for men. We could have forty or fifty women in the diwan, maybe more. It's like in Arabic, majlis. The design of American houses, it's very hard to invite people in. If men are visiting, women have to stay in a different room like the kitchen. It's not easy for women to be moving around when there is a guest of [the] men. In Yemen we could be free: separate restrooms separate diwan.
>
> Aisha: In Yemen, sometime the women have a whole different house from the men. We had a different house for women, in back of the main house, we called it a shaqa (apartment).
>
> Ebtisam: Socially it was waaaay different, like way different. In Yemen we would visit a lot like every day. And so we would go out, until maghreb time, which would be around 5 o'clock. And over there, in Yemen, its like every day, you meet people. So everyday we would be at a house , we would have tea, or pop, and whoever you are sitting next to, you just start up a conversation, and then just talking, and then just talk talk talk talk just talking. And that would be it. And the next day would be another thing, at another house. They would know where to go the next day. They would say at the end of it, tomorrow we are going over [to] so and so's house.
>
> Oh it's different. Because here mostly people are into their jobs, are into their schools, we hardly get to meet. And as for Yemen, it's an every day thing. Here

> people have work and school, also not many people from each family. Here, visiting is mainly from three and six, between ‘asr and magreb. But there it was like all the time.

Some women connected the ethic of involvement and care cultivated among Yemenis through their visiting to a sense of obligation indicated by religion. One day, when I accompanied a middle-aged student named Fakheka home from school, we found her elderly mother engaged in the delicate work of assembling a sabayya, the many layered, flaky Yemeni bread. Fakheka washed her hands and joined her mother in stretching out the small spherical lumps of dough into paper thin layers, coating them with oil, and stacking them one above the other. Fahkeka told me that this sabayya was for their neighbor, another Yemeni woman, who had just given birth to a baby girl. My comment that it was nice of them to do this for her prompted Fakheka to explain: “It's not just that we are being nice. In our religion, we are responsible for our neighbors all around us, up to the seventh house in each direction.”[18] Here Fakheka carefully laid down the layer she was stretching and used her arm to gesture around her in different directions as she continued. “So when one has a baby, we are there; or if one is sick, we are there, or for a wedding, we are also there with them.”

These networks of women, involving neighbors, friends, and kin, gather for many kinds of occasions. A running joke within the community goes something like “We will take any excuse to have a party. Anything that happens, you name it, we will make a party. A birth, a graduation, an engagement, a trip to Yemen, a trip back from Yemen, a marriage, someone buys a new home, someone new moves in to the house, anything.”

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[18] I found that other Yemeni women I got to know referenced various Qu’ran and Hadith sources to explain their relationship to their neighbors.

Often one of these occasions will stretch out into a series of interconnected visits that take place over several days or a week.

My first invitation to a Yemeni party had come from an ESL student named Bilqis, who was having a gathering to celebrate the purchase of her new home deep in the south end enclave. Bilqis' family had been renting the house just next door to it when the new home had become available for about $20,000. The family moved quickly to gather the money and bought it with the help of loans or gifts from friends and extended family. Because of the security it offered and the freedom from rent payments, the ownership of a new home was the occasion for a particularly joyous celebration. Many Yemeni women packed the house, bringing a great abundance of food such as aseed,[19] chicken and rice, chopped salad, sabayya with egg. Three big sheets had been spread on the floors of the two interconnected living rooms, and we had all sat around the edges scooping the delicious food into our mouths with our fingers. I had stayed late to help clean up, picking grains of rice off the rug with the others after dinner was over and the sheets had come up off the floor. I hadn't recognized Bilqis as a student in the ESL class, but she remembered me, and later her teenage daughter Lubna called at the number I left to invite me again, and I became a frequent visitor to the house.

About a year later, when Bilqis's eldest married daughter Hafizah and her husband had been in a car accident back in Yemen, large groups of women came to sit with her throughout the day. They gathered as soon as the husband left for work at 1pm every day. On my first time going to one of these visits, I stopped at our mutual friend Dunya's house first, because I was passing it on the way, and we continued the walk together. In the short walk between Dunya and Bilqis's house, I noticed Yemeni women

[19] A flour and water, mashed-potato-like preparation that I encountered frequently in Yemeni homes.

coming from all directions. Two were crossing the street, holding small foil wrapped packages. Another of Dunya's near neighbors came up behind us with her young children, using the same well-worn back alley path that linked the houses. To the right and left women were approaching. As I watched these women approach, Fakheha's deliberate gesture of signaling in all four directions to define the reach of her neighborhood and moral obligations came back to me.

I asked Dunya if she knew all these women. She looked about, and tilted her head in one direction. These, I don't know, and inside there will be some more I don't know. But these are the neighbors, everyone will come to a house of death (bayt al-mawt). We entered through the back door and took off our snow-covered boots. The entire floor of the small back kitchen was covered with shoes and boots, with melted snow pooling in the center. Inside, every available space was packed with women. A few sat on couches and chairs within the two salons, but most were sitting on the floor. Some were collecting money to give to Bilqis to send to Yemen for her daughter's treatment. When all the spaces against all the walls had been occupied, a second row formed in front of that row. Within an hour the two rooms were completely full so that it had become difficult to move around or even shift position. Women took turns comforting Bilqis, and serving tea, sabayya and cookies to guests in her stead. By three o'clock, the women's religious leaders from the nearby Hamtramck Yemeni mosque had arrived with a contingent of girl students, and they took turns reading aloud from the Qur'an. This was the third day of a packed house of assembled women; it would go on for many more days.

1.7 Yemeni Public Space

As was the case in my first walk home from school with the ESL students, during other walks through the city with Yemeni women, I noticed that they tended to travel in groups as much as possible, and would team up if they could when headed to school, mosque, the doctor's office, the social service agency, or a party at the other end of the neighborhood. Some of the Yemeni women I got to know seem to get very business-like when it comes to traversing city spaces. They tend to walk quickly in a tight formation, and speak to one another in hushed tones (Aswad 1994; Abu-Lughod 2002; Ewing 2008a). Once, I was carrying on a conversation with a group of young women as we were walking back from a mosque study group. To my surprise, when I responded to a comment one of these young ladies had made just a second ago, no one answered me, but instead I received a harsh look from a couple of them. The girl next to me held my gaze for a moment, and then darted her eyes back and forth to a group of Yemeni men we were passing who were gathered in front of the corner store on the corner of Joseph Campau and Goodson, right next to the Yemen Café. I broke off my words in mid comment. We turned the corner on to Goodson, and a few yards later, the conversation resumed. Later, when I told Aisha about this, she explained:

> Yes, you are right, you are supposed to be a little quiet. And the reason is because of Yemeni tradition, it's mostly about tradition. You are not supposed to be seen all the time in the streets, and when you are out you don't want to be the center of attention. Especially when it's women alone.
>
> And this is the traditional belief. It's not an Islamic belief. But even in Islam, some people say, you should try to have a male relative, we call it mahram, walking with you. It's just for her protection. It's not strict. I do it sometimes, I bring my brother if I can. But if he's not there, I go alone. I don't know about Americans. They don't care. But for the Yemenis, if you go alone, they will look at you, they will start talking maybe… this is why we have this.

According to Aisha's explanation, there is something in "Yemeni culture" that discourages women from drawing the attention to themselves in public spaces. This tendency is undergirded by a belief that it is better for women to be accompanied by a related male when they go out in public. Aisha's friend Ebtisam pointed out that she felt there to be more pressure on her to bring a mahram in Hamtramck than there was in Sana'a:

> Sana is the place for shopping for everybody. Every street has a big market. The women would spend all of our time in the souq. In the morning we shopped for food for the day. In the evening we shopped for clothes. For occasions like parties we shopped morning and afternoon. Here we don't go around by ourselves as much. Here everything is by car. You can't get around here. The family trusts more in Yemen for you to go to souq yourself. Family is going to go with you here. It's like: what is this strange place? Who are these strange people?

However, according to Aisha's explanation [earlier], as well as according to the norms and standards of everyday life that I observed, the cultural/religious stigma against women going around by themselves was certainly not strict. For example, I often went along with my Yemeni friends as they shopped for groceries at the Glory Supermarket, browsed the beauty supply stores in the enclave's strip mall, explored the vast and varied holdings of the jumbled dollar stores, and shopped for shoes along Joseph Campau.

Within this pattern, I found it curious that even among my Yemeni friends who went out "alone" most frequently there was a tendency to avoid the Yemeni-owned businesses that were scattered among the others along the South End of Joseph Campau. Aisha explained:

> I don't want to go into those shops. They start looking at you. Oh—a Yemeni girl in our shop. And this is why, yeah, some of those stores near the Gazali mosque, I don't like those places, they are all gossipy and stuff. So if I go with my Dad, he will go into the market, and I will stay in the car, I don't go into there. In fact, I have never been inside those stores.

> Yeah, people start talking about you. In Sana'a, its fine, you could go anywhere you want. But here, its different. Here, it's because the people know each other. And it should be the opposite. It should be, well, its OK, you can go into their shops, because you know them. But its turned the other way around. In Sana'a, you could go wherever you want because nobody knows you. But here, you can't go because they know you. Yeah, it bothers me so much. Because it's good, if you know them, they are not going to do something bad to you. Because they know you. But here it's the opposite way of thinking. If you know them [i.e. Yemeni men], stay away from them.

The pattern of Yemeni women avoiding stores owned by Yemeni men seemed to hold true within the Hamtramck South end business district and within the knot of stores surrounding the Mu'ath bin Jabel mosque just over the border with Detroit, but loosened after that. Some Yemeni women reported feeling comfortable shopping at Yemeni-owned stores located on the other end of the city or in Dearborn. It seemed that thesestores were not considered "too close to home." They were far enough away from the Yemeni enclave zone to count as legitimate, traversable public space for Yemeni women.

1.8 Yemeni Dress

Yemeni women's dress typically consists of a long loose black, one piece garment hung over their clothes, called "baltow" in the Yemeni dialect, and "abayya" in the standard Arabic. It is accompanied by a hijab, or headcover, which can be any color, but is usually black or a muted color. Some Yemeni women also wear the face veil, "leetham" or "leethama" in Yemeni, and "niqab" in standard Arabic. Aisha explained Yemeni dress to me this way:

> Itis part of the religion, you can say that. You have to wear loose clothes. And you are not supposed to show your body to other people, other than to your husband

> and your family. And it's not like, OK, we call it Ihtiraam al-nafs, respect for yourself. You don't have to show everything to everybody. It's distracting, it's not good. That's what we traditionally believe.
>
> And this is true. I mean, if you think about it, you dress proudly. In Islam, we call it, scarf, you have to cover your hair. Some people say your face too, but not a lot of people agree on this. So like you see, most of the Muslim people, they don't cover their face. And some do. So, they didn't agree on one thing. But they agreed that you dress proudly. You dress with the scarf. You dress loose, your dress should be loose and not tight enough where you can see everything on your body.

For Aisha and other Yemeni women I interviewed, dressing in a Muslim way signals a pride in the self. Others talked about modest dress as a means of conveying a message to men about one's chastity in a way that would serve to deflect unwanted attention. For some Yemeni woman, the muted color of the dress was also an important feature of modesty. Ebtisam explained:

> In the village, and in Sana'a. the baltow is just black. Even in the Khaleeg [the gulf states] it's black there is no real reason for this. In Islam its just supposed to be a dark color that doesn't attract attention, but it doesn't have to be black. Its just a cultural thing. The Yemenis say that black is the most beautiful color for clothing. Black is the king of colors. Melak al-alwan.

The black baltows worn a majority of time by the majority of Yemeni women often come directly from Yemen, either shipped by friends or brought for them in heavy suitcases by those who had made a trip back and forth. Other times these garments were purchased in one of the Islamic clothing shops in Dearborn, or at the one small baltow shop in the Hamtramck enclave, although this was seen as an expensive way to obtain them compared to Yemen.

I was given a baltow from Yemen by my friend Dunya when I told her that I had started attending halaqa groups at the Yemeni mosque as part of my fieldwork. When I tried on Dunya's baltow in front of Huma, Maysan and Aisha, they appraised its fit with critical eyes, and then took me down the block to get it hemmed and adjusted by the Iraqi

woman who lived down the street. The Iraqi woman had it ready a couple of days later, and she accepted five dollars for the job.

Along with the baltow, the Yemeni women that I got to know in Hamtramck utilized a specific form of veiling in which every hair is covered, as well as the top of the ears and the neck. This type of veiling is associated with a "modern" Muslim form of veiling that some scholars refer to as "al-ziyy al-Islami" (Ahmed 1992; El Guindi 1999). Rather than a form of veiling associated with any one particular culture, the Islamic headscarf according to al-ziyy al-Islami references a global Islamic standard that is recognized by "modern" Muslims across the world. For Huma's daughter Aisha and others, this form of veiling is strictly defined, and excludes the veiling styles that she sees being practiced by some of her Bangladeshi friends:

> But, showing your hair, and other stuff, yeah, some of the Bengali people they don't cover their hair, and some of them, I don't know if they call it hijab. If you were asking an imam from Yemen, or from Arabic countries, I don't think that they are going to consider what some of those Bengalis are wearing as hijab. Because what we call hijab, your whole body has to be covered, and your hair.

Aisha and her older sister Maysan, another college girl, both like to experiment with different veiling styles in a wide range of colors. Aisha is known for her ingenuity with the scarf, sometimes elegantly sets off her hijab with a red plastic flower pinned into one of its side folds, or tying it up in elaborate styles inspired by televised or internet images of Arab fashion shows from Dubai or other countries:

> As long as its covers all the hair it can be done in any way you want. Some people say, why are you wearing your scarf different? It's going to attract people more, it's gonna bring more attention, and all people will look at you, and this is bad. Or, they are gonna know you, and they are gonna start talking about you. This is the whole point, you know people start gossip. But what's the difference if you wear your scarf this way or that, it's still a scarf.

> I am saying, Islam is not that strict. And I am saying with my scarf, don't be strict with Islam. Because if you are going to be strict, you are just going to get frustrated and say, Ok, forget about this. But if it's more open, then you can wear your scarf, as long as you don't take it off, you can wear it however you want, you could wear any different design, its OK.
>
> I'm trying to help Islam in this, if you are going to see me with the scarf every day, always the same one, people are going to say, what is this? She doesn't change? Or they are going to say, I'd rather not be Muslim, I wouldn't want to wear the same thing everyday! Of course I'm not going to wear that scarf. So if you bring different designs, different colors, different styles, and really enjoy it, and really enjoy your life, with being Muslim. It's not like, I don't care about myself or my life, as long as I go to heaven after I die. I am saying, live this and that, you don't know what's going to happen in this life.

For Aisha, "dressing proudly" one hand means dressing according to a kind of modesty related to Islam, but it also means dressing in a way that expresses one's personality, individuality, and zest for life. Both these kinds of self-expression, of sense of her piety as well as her fashion sense, are important for her as an American Muslim trying to negotiate an article of clothing that she knows to be stigmatized in the eyes of some of the people she may encounter.

While the headscarf, or hijab, was worn by virtually all of the Yemeni women I knew all the time that they were in public, the face-veil, leethaam (Yemeni dialect) or niqab (standard Arabic) was treated with more flexibility by Yemeni women. Some women wore the face veil on some occasions and not others, while others choose not to wear it at all. While some Yemeni women that I spoke to about the leetham emphasized its religious meanings, others emphasized the social or cultural significance of covering the face.

For some Yemeni women in Hamtramck, the use of the face veil was not as casual or context-dependent, but rather a permanent and highly meaningful component of

their public dress that related deeply to a sense of piety and ethical life. This was the case for Sajidah, a mother of two in her late twenties, who was part of the only Yemeni family in Hamtramck I knew who was from Aden. The subject of the niqab came up when we were discussing Sajidah's education and work history. Sajidah was the daughter of a prominent doctor in Aden, who owned several pharmacies and who was one of the founders of a hospital. Along with her other male and female siblings, Sajidah had pursued higher education in Yemen, earning her degree in pharmacy there, and she figured that if she had remained in Aden, she would have worked at one of her father's pharmacies. Her husband was also a pharmacist, having earned his degree in the US. Yet neither of them worked as pharmacists in the US, as they had dreamed they might. Instead, Sajidah's husband had a quick succession of jobs in factories, gas stations, and fast-food restaurants, unable to find work in his chosen field. Sajidah had not even tried to get a job related to pharmacy or to pursue education that would allow her to practice in a way that was consummate with her skills the US.

When I asked her why she didn't pursue pharmacy or some other job, she took her finger and slowly traced a line across the middle of her face, back and forth, from ear to ear. "Its because of this," she said. "No one would hire me at a pharmacy with this." When I asked her if she would be willing to go without the leetham just for working in back of a pharmacy, in case she could find a job in which she did not have to interface directly with customers, she shook her head, explaining that it would be impossible for her. She explained that she had been using the face veil since she was a young teen whenever she was in public, in the presence of unrelated men. She said that she was not

going to compromise what her religion taught her to do for a job, for money, or for anything.

Similarly to Sajidah, my friend Umat Rahman, who wore the face veil whenever she was in mixed company, explained the face veil as directly connected to Muslim forms of modesty:

> As I told you, because they think this where, your face, the beauty is mostly. And they say, OK, the face tells everything. And if they see already your face, that's it, it's like they have seen the whole body. This is what they say, and that's why the Muslims wear the face veil [leetham].

Other Yemeni women that I knew were more casual about the face veil and attributed both a cultural and a religious meaning to it. Aisha's mother Huma rarely wore the face veil in her Yemeni village, yet she did so with more frequency and regularity in Hamtramck. She explained that she began wearing the face veil more often when she noticed that most of the women her age in the ESL classes as well as programs at the mosque she attended were wearing it. She explained that customs regarding the leetham changed from village to village, but in Hamtramck the women liked to do things together, so some of them changed their usual way. She added that the leetham was a good thing. Although it was not required by religion, it helped fulfill ideals of modesty, and it allowed women to surpass what was expected from them by the religion. Although Huma habitually wore the face veil whenever she went out, she didn't put any pressure on her two daughters to do so, and they almost never did.

Some Yemeni women who regularly wore the face-veil in Hamtramck got into the habit of taking it off if they went past the borders of the city. I first noticed this tendency in my friend Dunya, a young mother of two who had lived in Hamtramck since she was a child. One afternoon, Dunya called me from the hospital in Detroit, about ten miles

outside of Hamtramck. That morning, she and her husband had taken their two children there for some tests, and they had already been waiting several hours for the results. Now the husband had to leave the hospital for work, and Dunya called to see if I could come meet her there and drive her and the children home.

By the time I got to the hospital, she was already finished with her appointments and was waiting for me outside with one child on each arm. I was surprised to see that she wasn't wearing her face veil. It was the first time I had seen her without it outside of the home. After she arranged herself in the back seat with the children, she laughed at my surprise and explained:

> No, I don't wear leetham outside of Hamtramck. No one will know what it is, and everyone will stare at me. Also, if I wear it in the hospital, the doctors and nurses won't treat me as well. A lot of us take off the leetham once we are outside of Hamtramck. When we are away from the city, no one knows us anyway, there is no point to hide our faces!

The idea that one covers one face "because of people you know" echoes with Abu Lughod's findings about the Beni Mellal for whom face-veiling was a subtle communication device within the in-group, not so much with strangers (Abu-Lughod 1986).

While we were on the topic, Dunya related another story about the leetham to me. In fact, I ended up hearing versions of that same story, or cautionary tale, several times, as it apparently was in circulation among different groups of Yemeni women in Hamtramck. The story was about a Yemeni lady from Hamtramck who went to a fruit and vegetable market called Randazzo's with her husband. Although Randazzo's is "past 14 mile," in a place "where there are no Arabs" and a bit far from the city, she had made the half-hour trip to shop there because she had heard about the superior quality of their

produce. According to the story, this Yemeni woman, who was wearing her leetham like she normally would, was waiting on the check out line behind her husband, when another woman, "an American" got in line in back of her. The American took one look at the Yemeni lady and started screaming and shoving her, saying: "I can't just stand here next to you! My son died in Iraq. You people killed him." Dunya told me how the Yemeni lady's husband tried, but couldn't calm the American woman down, even after he carefully explained that that they had never been in Iraq, so they just got out of line and left the store. "That's why a lot of us won't wear the face veil out of Hamtramck of Dearborn, its not safe for us there," Dunya explained. Somehow, it was the face-veil, and not the hijab, that was blamed in these stories as the item which provoked the incident of fear, hatred, and discrimination.

From a functionalist perspective, it makes sense for Yemeni women to tell cautionary tales about the niqab and not the hijab as a stigmatized article of clothing. This is because the niqab is seen by most in the community as an option, rather than as an item of covering required by the religion. The logic and message of the cautionary tale offers instructions for women about how to negotiate the leetham in a way that would be culturally appropriate, and offers them a viable option (i.e. take it off after 14 mile). Frightening tales about hatred and discrimination inspired by the hijab, on the other hand, would simply come off as discouraging and unhelpful, since Yemeni women don't consider going without it a viable option.

In line with Dunya's tale, I found it to be a common theme in narratives about about Hamtramck for Yemenis to emphasize a particular feeling of safety and belonging to the city, and the idea of the city as a place of respite from forms of discrimination and

Islamophobia that they might confront outside its borders. The description on Ahmed, a young male community leader, echoed the sentiments expressed by Dunya above in terms of the way she felt safe wearing the niqab in Hamtramck, but not beyond. Here, Ahmed describes invokes this feeling of belonging to explain why Yemenis tend to value and remain in Hamtramck:

> You would think that after coming here, people are gonna say, as soon as I'm financed, I'm gonna move out and go somewhere and live better. But they know that if they do take that high risk of living somewhere else outside of the community, that they are going to lose a lot. One: their kids are not going to be raised with Muslim and Yemeneen. And two: like most of them do, their wives usually stay at home, they are housewives. Who are their wives going to stay with? They are going to be by themselves, they are going to get bored off their minds, and they are going to end up coming back. And three: it's the high risk of coming into a new community, whatever it may be, and people giving you that look, like, you are Arab, or you are Muslim, or whatever. It's a real big risk, especially after 9/11, people will not do that. No way. They are very scared of that, so that's why they stay here. If anything, you would expand your house. I don't know how we are expanding these houses that were built like eighty years ago. And if anything, Hamtramck has a real high foreclosed season, and they are just picking houses left and right, and everybody's buying, because they are here for good. So that's it.

The tendency of Yemenis to stay on in Hamtramck, or to move between Hamtramck and Yemen, without expanding out to the suburbs is remarked and noted upon by many members of the community. It stands in contrast to the way some other immigrant groups, such as Albanians, Bosnians, and others, have treated Hamtramck, with its high crime rate, failing schools, and low property values as a kind of "gateway city" in which to live until they become more established. The Yemeni pattern of coming to Hamtramck and staying there contrasts most notably these days with that of the city's Bangladeshis, many of whom are moving on to the suburbs once they become established. In the next section of the chapter, I will describe how Bangladeshis are becoming incorporated into

the city in comparison with the Yemen settlement patterns, paying special attention to how women are fitting into the picture.

1.9 Meeting Bangladeshi Women in Hamtramck

As was the case for my work with Yemeni women, my first interactions with women from the Bangladeshi community of Hamtramck also took place in the context of my volunteer work within the city's adult education system. Over a couple of days in August 2007, soon after I arrived in Hamtramck, I volunteered to help process and file ESL enrollment for public school's adult education program which offered free afternoon and evening classes during the regular school year. During those three days, I processed the enrollments forms for scores of Hamtramck Bangladeshi women along with those of hundreds of other students from places like Pakistan, Poland, Bosnia, Albanian, the Ukraine, Iraq, Syria and other countries.

Over those days, I also processed the forms of many Yemeni men. Yet, to my surprise, there was an almost complete absence of Yemeni women coming in to complete their forms. I later found out that this was because the Yemeni women were taking care of their enrollment at the community service center where the sex-segregated classes would be held. Thus, it seemed to be the case that the co-ed adult education facility was serving as a mode of increased inter-ethnic contact for some Bangladeshi women in the city on a large scale in a way that it was not for their Yemeni counterparts.

I ended up volunteering only sporadically at the central location classes because I was busy at the south end location. Rather, I got to know Bangladeshi women in the city through other channels. The most primary of these was my through my relationship with

Kolsuma, an employee at a county-based social service agency serving mainly Bangladeshi women whom I met when I visited the agency in order to interview the director. When the director introduced me to her, Kolsuma took an interest in my project and ended up agreeing to work as my research assistant from time to time.

At the county service center, Kolsuma was in charge of the day care center for young mothers and also was responsible for making home visits to families that the center was serving. She introduced me to the agency's clientele and helped me set up interviews with some of them. She also took me along with her on her home-visits to the ESL students who were enrolled in the county program. We walked through the city's main commercial streets together to meet and interview Bangladeshi women business owners and clerks. Kolsuma also took me along with her to weddings and celebrations, where she introduced me to Bangladeshi women of Hamtramck as well as those who were part of the large movement of Bangladeshis re-locating from Hamtramck to the nearby, more affluent suburbs. We attended public events together that were sponsored by the Bangladeshi community like the Boikishaki Mela (New Year's) and Victory Day[20] celebrations that took place in large halls. Farzana, Kolsuma's bright college age daughter, also helped me meet and interview people in her age-group and also took me along to events with her. Farzana introduced me to her old friends from high school, as well as her newer friends from the Muslim Student Association and Bangladeshi Student Association at her university. In addition, Kolsuma and Farzana also introduced me to some women religious leaders who were active in the mosques' youth groups and adult women's groups, and through them I was able to attend mosque and halaqa programming.

[20] Commemorating the Pakistani surrender that ended the 1971 Bangladesh Liberation War.

Although there were definitely forms of gender segregation talking place within the Bangladeshi social context (described below), the overarching mixed-gender structure of these get-togethers provided a sharp contrast to the type of single-sex social interactions that I was used to engaging in with my Yemeni friends. As evident from the description in the earlier part of the chapter, the more time I spent with the Yemeni women, the more ensconced I was in the women's separate sphere and in the domestic and visiting circuits which took place in homes. Yet, in contrast to the Yemeni women, whose socialization tended to take place in the home, the Bangladeshi women that Kolsuma and Farzana introduced me to seemed to be always on the go. Their idea of showing me the community consisted of getting out there into the city for shopping on Bangladesh Avenue, attending mixed-gender events, or participating in the many festivals and ceremonies that always seemed to be taking place among the Bangladeshi community.

1.10 Bangladeshi Background

Commenting on intensity of Bangladeshi life in the city, Farzana's friend Tajlia remarked: "I really didn't know what it meant to be Bangladeshi until I came to Hamtramck." Although Tajlia was born in Bangladesh, her family immigrated to New York when she was still a young child, and several years later, they re-located to Georgia, where they lived for eight years before coming to Hamtramck. Although Tajlia' family knew other Bangladeshis in both places, it wasn't until they moved to Hamtramck that they became part of a tight-knit group of Bangladeshis who spoke their dialect (Sylheti),

ate their food, and recapitulated social ties in a way that made them feel they were part of the life of a distinct ethnic group.

Tajlia's family is part of the mid-1990s wave of Bangladeshi demographic growth in Hamtramck and the contiguous areas of Detroit. During this time, the number of Bangladeshis in the area rose up from a few thousand in the mid-1900s to about 15,000-20,000 by the year 2000 (Kershaw 2001). Many of the Bangladeshis who came during the mid-1990s had relocated from NY, especially Queens. They came to the Hamtramck/Detroit area to take advantage of lower housing cost and greater availability of jobs in the light manufacturing and service sector (Kershaw 2001).

Most community leaders describe continued waves of growth since the time of Kershaw's 2001 report, which, in absence of the 2010 census data, is evidenced by the climbing rates of Bangladeshi school admissions, home ownership, shops and investments in other institutions in the city. For example, whereas in 2001 Kershaw reported "at least six Bangladeshi grocery stores in the area," there has a significant proliferation of these Bangladeshi retail businesses since then, and they now number in the dozens. The businesses include grocery stores providing numerous varieties of imported frozen Bangladeshi river fish; clothing stores offering colorful sharis, shalwar khemis, and lehenga from India; and restaurants serving spicy curries and chai. The majority of these businesses have sprung up side by side on the stretch of Conant, which has recently become a destination-shopping district for South Asians in the area. In 2008 the city honorarily designated this stretch as "Bangladesh Avenue," at the behest of local Bangladeshis organized under the Bangladeshi Association of Michigan. "Bangladesh

Ave" is something of a status marker for the Bangladeshis in the city, and only the second street to be named after Bangladeshis in the US.[21]

Bangladeshis in the Hamtramck/Detroit area are mainly from Sylhet, a northeastern agricultural region of the country of about five thousand square miles that is known for its terraced tea gardens, its abundant rivers and streams, and its fertile green stretches of land. Sylhetis have a long history of migration to western countries which began when they served as seamen for the British colonists and ended up "jumping ship" to establish themselves in various counties across the globe (Siddiqui 2004; Kibria 2007). Although significant communities of Bangladeshis began establishing themselves in the UK as early as the twentieth-century, Sylhetis and other Bangladeshis did not begin to arrive in the US in appreciable numbers until after 1971 independence from Pakistan, when small numbers of mainly students and professionals were finally able to begin taking advantage of the 1965 immigration reforms which increased quotas from their country (Kibria 2007:250). The US Bangladeshi population began to climb in 1980, based on a number of mechanisms including employer sponsorship, family sponsor, and the Diversity Lottery (Kibria 2007:250). Most settled in NY which was seen as a place of opportunity, and also as a place where there were already-established small pockets of Bangladeshi immigrants from early years.[22]

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[21] Bangladesh Avenue was often compared favorably to Mujeeb ar-Rahman Way in Chicago, a smaller stretch of street that is overshadowed by other sections of the same corridor named after Indian and Pakistani leaders.

[22] According to 2000 US Census data, New York is still home to the largest population of Bangladeshis in the US, containing around half of the total US population. Notably, from 1990 to 2000, New York City's Bangladeshi population increased by 471%, from 4,995 to 28,269, and in these years the Bangladeshi population became the fastest growing Asian American subgroup in the United States (Center for the Study of Asian American Health N.d.).

Taking these factors in mind, Kibria notes an "emerging pattern of socioeconomic polarization" that was brought about in part by the advent of the Diversity lottery which "has offered entry opportunities to persons of less privileged socioeconomic backgrounds" than the employment-based provisions that preceded it. Within this polarizing trend "recent entrants tend to be disadvantaged in comparison to earlier settlers (Kibria 2007:250). Kibria notes the diversity of today's US Bangladeshi immigrant community, in which about fifty per cent of Bangladeshi men in the US are college educated, while about 20 per cent have less than a high school education (Kibria 2007:250). She also noted that while "30 per cent of Bangladeshi men are in the managerial and professional occupations, 40 per cent hold down jobs in the service of production/manufacturing sections" (Kibria 2007:250).

This polarization is reflected in the Hamtramck/Detroit community. The city is home to many Bangladeshis of the professional class, including civil servants working at county and state levels, engineers employed in software design or in upper-level factory positions, doctors, lawyers, teachers, and journalists. I also met Bangladeshis who make their living as the owners of small businesses, or as heads and managers of companies specializing in importing goods from Bangladesh. Yet others work in low-wage service professions, as taxi-drivers, security guards, clerks in stores and banks and restaurant workers, and others were engaged in light manufacturing.

The influx of Bangladeshis to the Hamtramck/Detroit area described by Kershaw in 2001 was still ongoing during the time of my research period in 2007-09 (Kershaw 2001). Yet, by the time I arrived in Hamtramck, there was also a marked egress of Bangladeshis from the city, which had begin sometime earlier, composed of Bangladeshi

families who had become successful enough while living in Hamtramck to move out into the surrounding suburbs that were considered to be safer, more peaceful, and to have better schools.

As some of these more successful families move out, their numbers are replenished by the Bangladeshis from New York, and those freshly arrived from Bangladesh who are seeking out the low rent houses the others are leaving behind, or still wishing to find their foothold in what is perceived by some to be the gateway city of Hamtramck. Although some of the more affluent members of the Hamtramck/Detroit Bangladeshi communities move away, there is a tendency for them not to lose touch with the city, since Hamtramck has become a hub for Bangladeshis in the region. Many continue to own and manage residential and business properties in the city. Others return to the city frequently to visit relatives, shop, take part in the annual Bangladeshi melas (festivals) and ceremonial events, such as Victory Day and Martyrs' Day (nationalist holiday celebrating Independence); the Bangladeshi Day Parade and multi-day mela, Bangladeshi music and dance expos, and many other events. In addition, they come to attend meetings of associations like the Bangladeshi Association of Michigan (BAM) and others, which are centered in Hamtramck. Finally, many come to visit the area's many Bangladeshi-majority mosques.

1.11 Bangladeshi Women and Work

Unlike the Hamtramck Yemeni community described above, it is very common for Bangladeshi women in Hamtramck from a range of socioeconomic classes who arrived in the US as adults to work outside the home in a variety of different positions.

The ability to work in the US was facilitated for both women and men by the fact that most had been educated in Bangladesh, where many had also learned some English. The adult education directors and ESL providers in the city describe a trend in which the Bangladeshi women in their programs are known to work hard and excel in their language training, strongly motivated to improve their skills based on the belief that their ability to master English will open up more opportunities for them in the workforce.

Kolsuma's friends and other Bangladeshi women that I met in Hamtramck worked in a wide range of jobs. Some Bangladeshi women in Kolsuma's generation pursue work in various parts of the service sector, like restaurants work, or retail work, or in light manufacturing stores. Many need ESL training mainly to brush up their spoken language skills, which lag behind their reading and writing skills, in a pattern that was common among South Asian immigrants. Some Bangladeshi women who arrive as adults describe the way they advanced their language skills in a kind of sink-or-swim on-the-job language training, as in the story of Kolsuma's friend Farzana:

> And back home, we learn English reading and writing, I was learning that as a high school student. But we didn't speak too much English. When I first came to New York, I tried to go to language school here for first time. And then I did like a month or two or three and then I moved to Georgia, I started going to school there too. Then when I moved to Hamtramck, I continued further.
>
> I got my driver's license in Georgia, and I got my citizenship when I started working. My husband used to go to work at T.G.I. Fridays, and I wanted to work too. But I was like, how am I going to be able to work, because I've never been in this kind of restaurant situation. He's been working for a long time there with the same manager, and he was like, OK, I'll take you. The manager used to work with him, like they were very friendly. So, they gave me a job, like they wanted me to work as a cashier. And he thought they were going to start me on something simple. And I had to pick up the order, and call people through the speaker when his order is ready. They said they were going to teach me, and they helped me a lot. And they helped me, and I learned in a week! Because counting money I know from back home. The only thing is speaking when customers are lined up like from here to my backyard, in lunch hour and two cashiers! And when I

> worked, there would also be students working, and sometimes they didn't show up, so I used to take care of all their customers. So that made me more able to speak and be outgoing with people. Cause I worked with customer service. And in that place, I also had different positions. I worked in their bakery and a little bit of cooking sometimes, and making salad, I helped them out.
>
> I remember that we used to go hang out there in the morning before the bar opened. And I remember that when they were doing their citizenship, the two managers, they recorded the question and answer on tape, and that way they could listen to it that way. The manager and her husband did that for us. I learned all of the hundred questions.

The dominant theme in Farzana's narrative concerns the way that the restaurant context helped facilitate her assimilation into the US, giving her a context in which she could practice and refine her English, as well as in which she could take advantage of the extra resources offered by her boss and his wife, who helped her with her citizenship exam in part due to the investment they had made in her as an employee. As a devout Muslim woman and an hijabi, Farzana does not report feeling any contradiction between her employment in a bar serving alcohol. She rather explained to me that Islam makes allowances for people to earn money in these ways when there is a need. She shrugged off my questions about whether or not she felt comfortable engaging in the intensive forms of mixed gender interaction required in the cashier role.

While in Hamtramck, I met other Bangladeshi women who were employed in the US in a wide variety of different contexts. Those who come to US with advanced degrees, or who attend post-secondary school in the U, pursue an unlimited range of professions such as psychologist, social worker, lawyer, doctor and engineer. On the other hand, there are also those Bangladeshi women who not to work outside the home or engage in vocational training due to personal preference or because they consider it more appropriate, for cultural or religious reasons, to remain within the home.

1.12 Broadminded/Conservative

Kolsuma and other Bangladeshi women I got to know in the Hamtramck/Detroit area often remarked on the diversity found among their peer group as concerns the way women organized their visibility and interaction in mixed-group milieu. Kolsuma explained:

> It's family to family, what the women will do. But actually Muslim women can go where they want. These ideas that they should not go here, or work there, are only cultural. And the ideas that we cannot be seen, and the ideas of we cannot be mixing with men, they vary from person to person. You have broadminded ones, you have the conservative, and, I swear God did not create everyone the same, he did not create us all to be broadminded.

Although originally from Sylhet, Kolsuma had lived alone as a divorced mother in Dhaka for years before coming to Hamtramck. She connects her liberal views about women's mobility, and her broadminded interpretation of her religion, to a Dhaka cosmopolitanism rather than as a form of assimilation that occurred after she had moved to the US. Part of what makes Kolsuma consider herself to be broadminded is the way that she doesn't mind interacting with unrelated men in the workplace or in social situations. Yet, she described the way she sometimes squelched these inclinations with respect for the more conservative expectations of others:

> And, like suppose my brother's friend, if he is a real good friend of my brother, if he comes and eats with us, that is fine, I can eat with him, I can talk with him. And if I see him in the store, or coming and going, I can go talk to him, I don't mind. But some women, they say this is wrong. They won't talk to him, and he won't talk to them, they don't say hi-hello. And for me, I can say hi-hello, I don't mind, but also, who knows, he might get offended if I try to get into some kind of conversation with him. So I don't linger. I might say quick hi-hello, how are you, come visit us, and then I walk away.

Kolsuma described a process of negotiation in which she balances her inclinations to converse and be friendly with male acquaintances in public with an awareness of how she

might appear in the eyes of others. Thus, if she happened to meet a male acquaintance, in the city streets, she would limit any conversation to a quick greeting, due to the fact that such behavior might make the man feel uncomfortable, or might be judged as inappropriate by other members of the community. Kolsuma found the social norms governing women's visibility and mobility on the whole to be more conservative than what she was used to in Dhaka. Along with the tough winters and burnt out, abandoned houses, for Kolsuma this kind of social conservatism was one of the disappointing and disagreeable factors about living in Hamtramck.

Even the Bangladeshi women that I met in Hamtramck, like Kolsuma, who considered themselves to be the most broadminded, described the way they participated in certain subtle and overt systems of gender segregation that were being practiced with the community, and, as part of this, there were certain public spaces that were definitively coded as male and avoided by women. These included, for the most part, council meetings at City Hall and the official meetings of various Bangladeshi American associations and Bangladeshi American political action Committees. They also included, to some extent, cafes and restaurants. Although Bangladeshi women could often be seen in restaurants with male family members, I rarely encountered Bangladeshi women hanging out in restaurants together in single-sex groups in the way that was practiced by men, who often sat around for hours drinking chai at the local Bangladeshi restaurants and cafes. With some exceptions, Bangladeshi women that I talked to coded restaurants as male spaces that could only be comfortably entered by women if they were accompanied by a male relation [mahram].

But sometimes exceptions were made. For example, Kolsuma told me about a few times that she allowed her daughter Farzana to spend time at Hamtramck's "Maine Street" restaurant, a popular hang-out for Hamtramck High School kids, with a bunch of her girl friends near the time they graduated. All the girls had to arrange permission from their parents, who discussed this at length with one another before allowing the girls to go, and the girls had to limit their visit to a short time.

Kolsuma and other career-advancing women that I spoke to in Hamtramck sometimes projected their own forward-thinking-ness against the backdrop of a backward female Bangladeshi Other. For example, there is a certain area in the north end of the city straddling the border from Hamtramck to Detroit that is known to some Bangladeshis in the area as "Benagli Para," which has come to be associated among some Bangladeshis with the newly arrived, "fresh-off-the-boat" Bangladeshis, whose women are more likely to stay at home rather then enter into the workforce as soon as they arrive. According to Kolsuma:

> The people of Bangali Para, they are like those from London, we call them Londoni.[23] The men are just working in restaurants, not changing, not adapting to the new country, never wanting things to be different. They work in stores and restaurants, or the best they do is to own stores, they aren't seeking better opportunities. The women just stay at home and gossip all day. They are not emphasizing education the way we do.

One day as we were driving around the city on a shopping expedition, Kolsuma took me on a guided tour of Bengali para. She instructed me look to the right, look to the left, to observe the people there. The first time she told me to look, she was calling my attention to a family getting out of a big van. Directly in front of us was a teenage

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[23] The term "Londoni" in Bangladesh itself signifies advancement and high social status; (Gardner 1992a, 1992b), in contrast "Londoni" in Hamtramck/Detroit signifies "backwardness" since London Bangladeshis, on the whole, are considered by Detroit-area Bangladeshis to be more working class compared to their more professionalized and educated US counterparts.

Bangladeshi girl wearing a black hijab and a long, loose garment, like the abayyas the Yemenis wear, only in a maroon shade. You see? She gestured toward the girl as if she were proof that Bangali Para people were just as backward as she said. She then pointed to a porch where a bunch of boys were playing. This is what is meant by Bangali Para, she kept saying as if we had crossed the border into a different country. A few houses down, she pointed to a man in a lungi. You see, she said, these people don't value education, she said, as if the lungi were a sign of illiteracy. She continued:

> These people don't allow their daughters to try new things, to go out and learn about where they are. To wear pants, or jeans. I have an older relative in London, whenever she talks to me, she tells me "My daughter is still wearing shalwar khemis" again and again as if she has something big to brag about.
>
> And because of this, their girls end up just copying the worst American habits. Speechwise, clotheswise, they are copying, picking up the worst habits. Because they are not letting them out of the house, not letting them change, letting them see the good things they can do in America, that is why these girls end up with the worst habits. They rebel, like punk? They take off hijab out of the house, they wear jeans, they have white boyfriends… That is what these girls are like, they take off their veils even in school, they are learning the worst American customs.

The tales about Bangali Para, which were echoed by others that I knew, reflected some of the class differences that were at work within the community and the ways that poverty and recent arrival were stigmatized by the more established members of the community [ie. Ong Buddha is Hiding, Naber, etc.]. In these formulations, signs of what some of the more established community members considered "backwardness" such as women staying at home too much were projected onto the poorest members of the community. This was the case even though it was well-known that many of the more established and affluent families themselves also practiced similarly "strict" forms of hijab and purdah.

For Kolsuma, the tendency for some Bangladeshi families to maintain what she saw as strict forms of gender segregation was a highly negative tendency coded as a failure of assimilation. In narratives about her experiences as a single mother raising a teenage daughter, Kolsuma describes how hard she has worked to try and strike the appropriate level of permissiveness vs. protectiveness that would allow her daughter to take part in important kinds of socialization with her peers, while also not going to far in the opposite direction and alienating herself from the ethnic community. Stories about the rebellious daughters of Bangali para serve as cautionary tales goading "broadminded" women such as Kolsuma and her peers into further kinds of "assimilation" by warning them of the perils that might take place if they try to keep their daughters too close to home.

1.13 Bangladeshi Public Gatherings

Patterns of gender mixing regularly occur within the Bangladeshi community in which extended families or friends visit one another's homes; in celebrations such as some weddings and other parties that take place in homes, backyards, and parks; and in the many well-attended cultural and patriotic events, gatherings, festivals (melas), picnics, and parades that take place within the Bangladeshi community periodically throughout the year in parks, halls, streets, and other venues. In these kinds of gatherings, a kind of "loose" form of gender segregation may be practiced, where some women and men concentrate in their various segregated groups, sometimes establishing a "male " and "female" sides or sections of the room, but the lines may be highly tenuous, fluid, and crossable.

Some events, on the other hand, are organized according to a more conservative model, in which women and men are directed into different spaces from the outset. This was the case in the wedding of Farzana's friend Tajlia. It was a huge wedding, taking place in a Detroit hall, to which more than five hundred families had been invited. I attended with Kolsuma, Farzana, and Kolsuma's mother, Majeda. As we approached the building from the parking lot, we were immediately directed by some male wedding guests who had been stationed at the door to separate women's entrance. We saw that two adjacent doors that were clearly marked "Men's Entrance" and "Women's Entrance." Yet after entering, we found that these separate entrances led into the same, mixed lobby space, and therefore seemed to serve a symbolic, rather than a practical function, because they did not block visibility or interaction between the sexes, the way such entrances would do in the Yemeni functions I attended.

Most women at the wedding were dressed in sharis,[24] but some younger women wore the lehanga, which was a kind of long dress with churidar (leggings) underneath. Some of the girls wore their sharis in such a way that huge swaths of the midriff was bared, and the blouses were cut in a way that dipped far down the back. It was also common for girls to wear heavy make-up and many of them, although Muslim, were not wearing any kind of head covering. Farzana told me that weddings are big events for families to scope girls out for possible marriage, and that was one of the reasons why so much care was taken with the marriageable girls' appearances.

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[24] "Shari" is the Bangla pronunciation of the more familiar Hindi term "sari." The shari was favored on an everyday basis by older married women and tended to be worn by younger women on special occasions. It is a continuous length of cloth that is wrapped around the body using a variety of different draping, folding, and tucking techniques, coupled with a matching blouse worn under it. The shari can be draped and arranged in a great variety of different ways to achieve different levels of cover or modesty. The shari can be draped in a way that is more modest to hide the lines of the body, may importantly includes a long blouse that covers the midriff area.

Periods of mixing and periods of gender-segregation alternated, and were scripted and orchestrated into the event by those who had organized it. The gender segregation among the guests was more or less preserved for the first couple of hours, during a period of time where women tended to stay inside the women's room, and men inside the men's room. Yet even during this time, I kept noticing handfuls of pre-teen and teenage boys, and clutches of adult men, come into the room for some purpose. This surprised me, since there was a "woman's only" sign posted on the door, but Kolsuma said it was normal. I asked Kolsuma if any of the women were going over into the men's side, and she said no, it would never happen.

Then, about two hours into the event, the men and women crowded into the entrance hall of the venue to watch the "negotiation ceremony" over the bride. This is a playful event involving a squaring off between the bride's female representatives and the and groom's male ones behind two sides ofa ribbon, that is stretched over an open doorway to signify a barrier or gate. The negotiation involves a fair amount of male-female physical jostling for position and even some shoving across this "gate" before the money is exchanged and the gate is crashed. After the negotiation ceremony, food was taken in single-gender rooms. Then men began coming into the woman's side again when it was time for the groom to take his place on the dais next to the bride. Men and women remained together to watch the ceremonial exchange of malas and milk, and for the extended period of photographing. During this time, the younger men and women congregated in back of the room in tight circles to exchange the lastest gossip with their old high school friends and to compare their college experiences, and, undoubtedly, to check one another out in their fancy party costumes.

At some point someone decided that there had been enough of this mixing. An elder male voice sounded from the loudspeaker, alternatively in Bangla and in English, asking the men to return to their separate room. No one reacted. A few minutes later, the voice sounded again, urging the men to leave the room and return to their separate facilities. These announcements, which grew increasingly aggrieved and irate, were regarded with an exchange of amused glances among some of the wedding guests, and the level of amusement seemed to rise in proportion to the level of distress conveyed by the amplified voice. After some time, a group of men came into the women's room to restore order, ushering out the male trespassers. After the wedding, I asked some of the guests to explain what had happened with the gender segregated rooms. One young man expressed his frustration:

> I don't like the way they did that, they didn't have to do that. I am used to mixed weddings, the way most of us are doing it now. The way they did it was definitely stricter than most. Some of these guys coming in were just friends of Tajlia, they just wanted to come in and say hi to her, to get a glimpse of her. But she had to go and get married into a family of those bearded ones, and that's how it goes.

1.14 Bangladeshi Dress

As evident from the description of Tajlia's wedding, Bangladeshi women adopt a range of dress and veiling styles to meet different standards of appropriate dress. Several different distinct styles of veiling were practiced, and some women didn't use any the head cover at all outside the context of attending the mosque. Yet concerning the headscarf, some women, like Tajlia, have a very strict definition of what counts as proper veiling:

> In our culture, people do wear a scarf. But, they are wearing it in ways that wouldn't be considered proper because its showing the neck, and some of the hair is showing. Because there are certain requirements….its not supposed to show the neck or the ears. And that kind of thing. Like the Arabics [i.e. Yemenis] are wearing it. And, my Mom started wearing her scarf properly a few years after I stared wearing mine. Before that she just wore it in that traditional way. So I think that a lot of the time the younger generation have been learning and teaching the older generation, and now there is starting to be that kind of understanding level.
>
> ….Even I went through that whole phase with everyone else, where I would wear loops [i.e. hoop earrings] with my scarf, and didn't wear it properly and all those things, and then when I got to college and started studying my religion seriously. I was like that's not right, I know that's not right, I know better.

Unlike the case of Yemenis in Hamtramck, in which the older generation is passing on the knowledge of "modern" Islamic dress to the younger. In Tajlia' narrative, it is the younger generation of Bangladeshi girls who are teaching the older generation how to "veil properly."[25] In the narratives of young women like Tajlia, reflecting on the variety of veiling styles practiced by the Bangladeshi community, the word "traditional" or "cultural" often carries a highly negative charge and is used in such a way as to indicate a deviation from Islam. Indeed, Tajlia attributes a great deal of importance on the ideal of all Muslim women veiling the same way, not just for their own good, but for the sake of the entire American Muslim ummah:

> But its not like everyone here who veils understands why wear the veil. They don't get it and they don't do it right. Like just putting the scarf over the head and taking it down when you feel like, that is not veiling. And when a stranger comes up to you and asks, and you don't have a good reason, or know how to explain it, or it's inconsistent, they are going to take your word for it and assume that everyone else is just as confused as you. And I think that everyone has to go through their own, personal journey and, understand, this is why, and make those spiritual connections to everything before they start wearing the veil.
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> For me, it's important because it makes people look at you for who you are inside, and really listen to what you are saying. And its kind of also like inviting people

[25] The trend of intensified religious identity among some Yemeni and Bangladeshi girls in Hamtramck and the ways in which they are taking on authority as religious leaders in the community is discussed in depth in Chapter Two.

> to your religion, without saying anything. And it identifies you as part of the modesty thing. It makes you put yourself spiritually— when you are wearing it, you are always spiritually kind of brought back to this one thing, your religion, it reminds you who you are.

For Tajlia, "veiling properly" is important for a number of different reasons concerning both the message a woman is sending to herself, and the message that she wishes to convey to the outside world. In terms that were similar to those used by Huma's daughter Aisha in her discussion of Yemeni women's veiling, for Tajlia, a woman who veils is in a key positions to serve as a kind of ambassador for Islam, to straighten out misunderstandings, and to help non-Muslims identify with and appreciate the religion. For this purpose, it is important that Muslim girls dress carefully and with attention to the image they are projecting. It is also very important to Tajlia that girls and women who veil do it in a conscientious and consistent way. Yet other Bangladeshi women have different ideas of what counts as proper modes of Muslim modesty. According to Farzana's friend Suraya:

> You know how we wear shalwar khemis[26] and dupatta? Like, in my culture, they make it like you should not show off your beauty. You should dress modestly. So people take it as you should cover, especially you should cover your breasts. The dupatta goes over the chest for this reason. Some also place it over the head depending on where they are.

In the forms of headcover described by Suraya, veiling achieved by arranging the dupatta arranged around the chest or head. A similar style of fluid veiling may be achieved by women in saris, who have the option of pulling the shari up around the head to achieve veiling. In these modes of veiling, which would be discounted as "traditional"

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[26] "Shalwar" is the Bangla pronunciation of the more familiar Hindi term "salwar." Shalwar Kameez is a three-piece outfit consisting of a long, tunic-like top (kameez or kurta), pants (shalwar), and a scarf (dupatta). The shalwar was a very popular form of dress for Bangladeshis in Hamtramck that was particularly among girls, young adults and working women, although some Bangladeshi women believed that the shari was more appropriate than the shalwar for married, adult women.

or "cultural" by Tajlia, the hair is still partially visible, and the scarf is mobile and fluid, responding to motion and periodically re-arranged according to circumstance.

For other women such as Kolsuma and her daughter Farzana, who do not engage in any form of veiling, the question of dressing modestly is a purely subjective and personal one that is not tied to any specific form of dress such as the hijab or the dupatta. Farzana and Kolsuma explained that according to their interpretation, Islam did not demand any particular article of dress or style of clothing for women, other than to suggest that they dress modestly as determined by their own common sense. Kolsuma added that according to her understanding of Islam, what counted the most in making decisions about dress was the "niyya" (Arabic for "intention") of the person in question. As long as one was not deliberately trying to use dress to inappropriately provoke the sexual desire of others in the public setting, then most forms of dress would probably not cause any harm:

> Islam says you have to cover. But Islam never says to cover everything. Because modesty and that, you can definitely do that without covering. Like in one of my jobs here in US, the dress code was, not to interrupt the attention of your colleagues, you should dress appropriately. It's the same thing I think they are trying to do in Islam. It is also man's duty to watch how he looks at a woman, it's not only the woman's responsibility.

Kolsuma followed up these comments by narrating a story from a hadith source where a woman comes in front of Prophet uncovered, but the Prophet, rather than telling her to cover, chastised one of the men standing with him for looking at her with lust. Kolsuma explained to me that, some people interpret this verse as giving evidence that women have freedom to cover or not to cover. [27]

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[27] "Narrated Abdullah bin Abbas: 'Al-Fadl bin Abbas rode behind the Prophet as his companion rider on the back portion of his she-camel on the Day of Nahr (on the Farewell Hajj), and Al-Fadl was a handsome man. The Prophet stopped to give people verdicts. In the meantime, a beautiful woman from the tribe of

Kolsuma explained that her whole life in Bangladesh, neither her mother nor any of her relatives had ever placed demands on her to veil in any particular way, in Sylhet nor in Dhaka. Yet in Hamtramck, suddenly some of her family members had began pestering her to cover her head in that particular way, which she refers to as the "extra scarf." She attributes this to a new, and highly concentrated strain of Sylheti conservatism:

> Like my mom, she wears shari, she will put the end of her shari over her head in order to cover, when she goes out. My aunties in Bangladesh are like this too. But here, when I came in, there is too much with all of this religion, covering, extra scarf, it is too much. Sylhetis in Bangladesh...Sylhetis are like, more pious. And actually, the people from Sylhet over here, they are even acting differently than those over there. I feel like if I were back in country, I would have never met them.
>
> We used to go in Sylhet to visit my paternal grandparents. They are more pious than my father's side. But they are like, but I never saw any of them wearing extra scarf. The same way that my mom did, they used to wear a longer blouse. Both my grandmas when they went out, they would always have a full sleeve, and long blouse, and white sari. But my mom and aunties all, when they went out, they would just cover with the end of the sari. And my uncle would be mad at us younger girls, my mom's older brother would say to me and my cousins, hey you don't cover your head. We are from Dhaka! Never my mom or my dad told us to cover our head. But here some of them are rejecting that and looking for the extra scarf.

Kolsuma herself, when she was a young married, working-woman in a factory in Bangladesh, had favored the shalwar. Yet, when she moved to the US, she began to favor wearing a specific type of "western" clothing, adopting a style of dress that is popular among Bangladeshi women and girls in Hamtramck that is often referred to simply as "pants." "Pants" designated a style of dress modified to meet Muslim ideals of modesty such as "loose," "legs covered," "chest covered," and others. Kolsuma managed the

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Khath'am came, asking the verdict of Allah's Apostle. Al-Fadl started looking at her as her beauty attracted him. The Prophet looked back while Al-Fadl was looking at her; so the Prophet held out his hand backwards and caught the chin of Al-Fadl and turned his face to the other side in order that he should not gaze at her.'" http://bba.facebook.com/topic.php?uid=43458451695&topic=7289

"pants" style of dress by wearing loose tops and generously cut trousers with a scarf arranged around her chest, much in the same way that she would drape a dupatta over a shalwar. It was the mode of dress that Kolsuma favored for work and her everyday life forms of public life outside the home and family context. However, Kolsuma reported that she faced some criticism from among her Bangladeshi peers for adopting the "western" style of dress. One of her friends told her that her form of dress was too provocative, and that she wear shalwar kameez since it was a more modest and appropriate form of dress that would attract less attention. Farzana narrated the confrontation as follows:

> One of these women from Bangali Para, she told me, why are you wearing pants? Why aren't you wearing shalwar? And I told her: In country, you wore shari only, you didn't wear shalwar, because your husband's family wouldn't allow it. Now you are in America, and you are wearing shalwar all the time, you wear shalwar to work, you no longer bother with shari. For me, look: I took a jump from shalwar kameez to pants. For you: you took a jump from shari to shalwar kameez. We both took a jump here. So, what is the problem?

In defending her form of dress to the critical woman, Kolsuma creates a parallel between the switch from shari to shalwar and the switch from shalwar to pants. In both cases, women relaxed their standards to accommodate a new form of dress that had once been considered inappropriate.[28] Kolsuma strengthens her argument by creating this parallel to the extent that it serves to demonstrate the arbitrariness of how people view appropriate dress, and arbitrariness to which even the critical woman in question had been subject.

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[28] Kolsuma liked to joke about the way that near the time of independence, the shalwar khemis in Bangladesh used to be associated with Pakistani identity. She said, "Its funny, the shalwar is new in Bangladesh. Everyone is wearing it, is more economic, easier, more comfortable. After liberation, people used to joke: Hey, we did so much to drive away the shalwar khemis people, why is it that now you are trying to dress like them?"

1.15 Conclusion

In this chapter, I analyze how Yemeni and Bangladeshi women across ethnic, generational, and class groups are using strategies of veiling, gender segregation, and modest comportment to negotiate their visibility and mobility in public and private spaces of the city. I found that while the Yemeni and Bangladeshi women in the study shared a tendency to identify Islam the major source in explaining or justifying their decisions about dress and public comportment, interpretation of what the religion indicated about gender and space, and how various injunctions were to be applied differed significantly across individuals, as well as across generations and ethnic groups.

By way of sketching out a broad comparison, I found that in general, Yemeni women in Hamtramck have adopted a stricter set of community standards and norms for controlling women's visibility and limiting their contact with unrelated men as compared to how this is handled among Bangladeshi women. In Hamtramck, this tendency to keep men and women apart in social life facilitated the development of all-women's visiting circuits and the creation of strong ties and mutual obligations that took place within a woman's community. Additionally, within the Yemeni community, I found there to be a certain stigma attached to women's public visibility that influenced some Yemeni women to carefully avoid contact with unrelated Yemeni men. This had the effect of keeping women out of certain Yemeni-male-dominated public spaces within the Hamtramck, such as restaurants, parks, and shops within the Yemeni enclave.

In contrast, I found that besides engaging in women's circuits, some Bangladeshi women also developed their social worlds in the context of mixed-gender family and community gatherings where flexible strategies of gender segregation are practiced and

various degree of interchange between unrelated men and women are accepted. Additionally, the acceptance of these modes of contact were compatible with the education and career goals of Bangladeshi women and also facilitated the development of a vibrant mixed-gender enclave shopping district along Bangladesh Avenue in Hamtramck and Detroit.

In addition to cultural and religious reference points, I found that socio-economic status had a large effect on determining some women's opportunities the social roles they are expected to play. For example, a significant proportion of Yemeni women who had arrived in Hamtramck as married adults had never received formal education, had never worked in Yemen, and were not expected to engage in the workforce in the United States. These experiences and expectations contributed to the ways that married Yemeni women were scripted into a domestic role and created some obstacles for them to advance in gaining fluency, citizenship, and learning how to drive. In contrast, it was common for Bangladeshi women immigrants to the US to have been formally educated in the country of origin, in many cases up until the secondary level or above. A significant portion had come to US expecting to take on the role of economic agents. This economic role entailed a high degree of gender mixing as well as increased mobility and independence, the further development of language skills, the facilitation of citizenship and the ability to gain a driver's license. Yet, many Bangladeshi women, especially the most recent arrivals, were not part of this career-advancing mentality, and tended to value remaining in the home rather than taking on the role of waged laborers. The situation was different for the younger generation. The way in which Muslim adolescent girls and young women

in Hamtramck are organizing places for themselves educational facilities and negotiating employment and careers is the topic of in chapter three.

For some women dress was a particularly important aspect of public life in so far as it was seen as a way to facilitate women's belonging in various places. Along with certain forms of gender segregation, dress was seen as part of a holistic system which helped women comport themselves with dignity and integrity. Some women believed that besides sending cues to those she encountered, dress also had the ability to actively attune the wearer to appropriate modes of behavior in which she is mindful of her religion and the effect that she is having on others. Thus women who adopted a variety of different styles of clothing similarly explain their Muslim dress represented as serving several interrelated purpose: helping them achieve a proper Muslim form of modesty, broadcasting a message to others about one's piety, conveying a sense of pride in oneself as a Muslim, and, for women who used the "modern hijab" or "extra scarf" making one into a recognizable representative of Islam. Thus, women used various forms of hijab, "cultural dress," and gender segregation patterns to broadcast an array of different messages about themselves as pious individuals who were responsible for upholding the standards of their communities, and about the way they related to their religion and ethnicity as a source of identity and pride.

Chapter Two

From the Majlis to the Masjid: Gender and Generation in Muslim Women's Assemblies

This chapter offers an analysis of how some Yemeni and Bangladeshi women in Hamtramck and at the borders of Detroit are establishing places for themselves within local mosques and in religious study circles (halaqaat, sing. halaqa) that take place within local mosques and in homes. I explore the evolution of these spaces, discuss the goals that women have for themselves as congregants and leaders in these assemblies, and explore the role played by ethnicity and generational lines in the structure and formation of these religious groups (Karim 2009). I also analyze the ways in which some women's involvement with larger, extra-local institutions, such as participation in national level da'wa organizations[29] and affiliation with the Islamic studies program at universities, connects to their participation in and perception of locally based assemblies.

In order to convey a sense of the novelty and importance of women's mosque based-activities in Hamtramck, I compare women's presence and participation in the local mosques to how they describe their relationship to mosques in the countries of origin. In doing so, I discuss how women's increased participation at the mosque in migration constitutes one part of a larger set of transformations via which the North American and European mosque has taken on an expanded set of functions as compared to mosques in Muslim countries. I also compare the importance of the mosque with the

[29] Da'wa can be translated to "calling," as in calling to God, to faith, or to Islam (Smith 1999:160). There are a number of da'wa organizations in North America and Euope whose aim is to bring Muslims into more "active engagement" with the faith (Smith-Hefner 1999). The da'wa organizations covered in this chapter are the pan-ethnic Muslim "Reviving the Islamic Spirit" association, and the Bangladeshi-majority MUNA (Muslim Ummah of North America) association.

continuation of the home-based halaqaat or religious education seminars an alternative locale for the development of women's communities of practice which for some women serves as supplement to the mosque gatherings (Karim 2009) and for others as the primary site for religious assembly (Qureshi 1996).

Besides being divided along ethnic lines, I found that women's religious study groups were often divided up according to age, and that perceptions about the needs and concerns of particular generations played an important role in structuring and defining the goal and purpose of the gatherings. To capture these dynamics, the latter half of the chapter lays a particular focus on youth halaqa and young women's leadership and authority in them. Here, I closely analyze the narratives of two young, charismatic and well-respected youth leaders from the Yemeni and Bangladeshi communities respectively. The analysis of these narratives center on understanding the ways in which these youth leaders portray the special challenges and needs of youth they serve, the particular importance of peer guidance for immigrant youth, and how they see the halaqa as offering a unique pathway to integration for young, first generation immigrant youth within the larger community. My analysis also focuses on the how these young women each account for how they developed a sense of self-legitimacy and external recognition as religious authority figures in their respective communities.

2.1 Friday Mosque

On a warm and sunny May afternoon, I attended Friday prayer services at the Mu'ath bin Jabel[30] mosque with my Yemeni friend Huma and her family. Mu'ath mosque

[30] This mosque is named after a sahaba (companion of the Prophet) who was sent by the Prophet to Yemen to teach Islam to the people. http://islamicemirate.com/resources/sahaba-directory/878-muath-ibn-jabal.html.

is a large Yemeni mosque just over the eastern border of the Hamtramck in Detroit. That particular Friday was the end of a cycle for women's and youth halaqa groups, which would be going on break and resuming in a few weeks. Therefore, after the usual prayer, khutbah, and halaqaat activities, there would also be a special celebration for the women and girls marking the cycle's end.

I arrived at Huma's house near noon, and joined Huma and her college-age daughters Aisha and Maysan in the living room. The male members of the family had already left for the mosque. As for many Yemeni families, it was their usual custom for men and women of the family to walk to the mosque separately during the warm months. In winters, it was more likely for them to all pack into the same car and drive there together. Huma, Aisha, Maysan and I were all dressed alike in black baltows and hijab. Once I arrived at the house, Huma fastened on her face veil and Aisha gathered up the frosted cake that the girls had prepared for the after-prayer celebration, which was nestled snugly in a round, flat Tupperware container of precisely the right size. We then set out on the walk to the mosque, which was less than a mile from the house. Stopping by Huma's friend Nuha's house on the way, we found her waiting for us by the window, peering out though the drapes. She was alone. Her daughter-in-law Sajidah had decided to attend Friday prayers at the smaller Yemeni mosque (al-Gazali Masjid) that was nearer to their home on that particular week, and her son was already at Mu'ath mosque.

As the five of us walked to the mosque, we encountered several groups of similarly attired women headed in the same direction, and exchanged greetings. We saw more and more of these women as we crossed Conant and approached the area near the mosque. We also encountered groups of men in thawbs (white, ankle length garment),

kufiyta (checkered scarves) and taqiyah (prayer caps). As we neared the mosque, they took a different route to the men's entrance at the front, whereas we walked directly to the women's side entrance. Entering the large and spacious brick building that had once housed a church, we deposited our shoes at the door among a massive pile of others. Since the women I was with had already performed their ablutions at home, Huma, Aisha, and I made our way directly up the stairs and into the woman's section of the mosque while Maysan went downstairs to drop off the cake in the mosque basement.

Aisha, Huma, Nuha, and I walked up the stairs into the large balcony area that was screened in with plexi-glass. The area overlooked the men's larger space downstairs, and had the capacity for several hundred women. We found about a hundred women already assembled. Some of the women were divided up into groups and were sitting in circles. I accompanied Huma and Nuha over to a group made up of older women who were listening to a muhaderat (lecture) being given by an older woman in Arabic about a topic having to do with preparations for Ramadan, while Aisha went off in another direction.

I noticed Maysan rejoining Aisha, and then the two girls prayed and found some of their friends to sit with until it was time for the khutbah (sermon) to start at 1pm. As the time for the khutbah approached, more women arrived, until there were about a hundred and fifty women. They were mainly Yemenis. Among them were also about five or six African American women, a few in their late teens, and some of the others were more mature. The older African American women wore the abayya (baltow, in Yemeni dialect) in muted colors just like the Yemeni women. The African American teens,

however, were dressed in clothing similar to what young Bangladeshis women in Hamtramck would wear, shalwar kameez in bright colors with matching scarves.

With the sounding of the adhan, women assembled into the lines, shoulder to shoulder, and offered prayers. When the khutbah was beginning, Aisha came to sit by me, and cautioned me not to talk during the khutbah, not even in a whisper. The imam gave the khutbah in Arabic, which consisted of recitation from the Qur'an and a sermon relating to the need to increase piety and pious acts this very hour, since no one knows what will happen tomorrow. After his address, the women prayed again.

Then there were some announcements. The NAYA (National Association of Yemeni Americans) award deadline was coming up, and it was time for the high school seniors to apply for their college-tuition scholarships. More announcements came about various other community and social service activities. A few young boys under ten years old came upstairs to distribute fliers in Arabic for Abu Sayed Mahfuz's state representative campaign. The literature showed a few pictures of him in the distinctive South Asian Muslim dress of topi (prayer cap) and a long jacket (sherwani). The Arabic text emphasized how well Mahfuz understood the problems of immigrants and promised that he would help Hamtramck's immigrant population while in office. It also stated his education in computer science (US), and in Islamic sciences (from Indonesia), and mentioned his vocational degree from Dhaka. The fliers advertised his fluency in Arabic, Urdu and Bangla. During the announcements, women milled around and some of them left.

After the announcements were over, the women split up into several different halaqa (study circles) to work on Arabic or study Qur'an according to age and skill level.

In addition to the women's groups, there were three groups for children presided over by young adults, and two groups for older ladies. I went along with Huma and Nuha as they joined their group, which was being led by a different elder leader than the one we sat with before the khutbah. She was giving a lecture about the importance of the mosque. She explained that it was the place for learning and for making a family (usrah) out of the community (mujtama'a). She recited from the Qur'an and hadith at different times to illustrate and emphasize her points. She went on to announce that it was time to register for the new cycle of Friday classes which would be starting in the next couple of weeks.

After I had sat with the older women's group some time, Aisha came to find me and led me away toward a different section of the room so that I could observe some of the girls' halaqa groups. We joined a group of pre-teen girls that was being led by a young woman named Manal, who was in her early twenties. Manal was conducting a group oral exam session to test what her student had learned during that cycle. She was making notes about individual student's performances on a small pad. Then, the girls broke into groups to prepare to put on the nasheed performances that they had been working on for the past few weeks, as their final activity before the end of the class cycle. Manal explained to me that nasheed were traditional or contemporary songs on the themes of faith, love, and patience. There were to be six different performances by girls who performed singly, in pairs, or in groups.

The first was as a solo performance of a well-known, traditional song called Ya Tayba, which was sung by youngest girl in the group. Tayba is another name for Medina, a city of the Prophet Muhammad, and the song expresses a kind of lament, or longing, to return to that sacred place:

O Tayba, O Tayba
O cure of the patient
we missed you, and passion has called us to you

As the ship departed, it forgot me
they sailed away and my tears never dried up
they took my heart and my soul with them
O Tayba, you're the distracted's love

After several more nasheed performances, there was a shift in tone, and the remainder of performances were in the hip-hop vein. The final two performances were by older girls performing the work of the contemporary DC based Muslim hip-hop group Native Deen ("deen" means "religion"). The first was a solo performance of a song called "Intentions," which the girl performed under her breath with some slight attempt toward hip-hop gestures.

Waking up in the morning, gotta make my prayer
Am I really gonna' make it, when there is no one there?
Taking trips to the masjid (mosque), even when it's tough
Am I going for the sake of Allah? Am I showing off?...

Are my Intentions alright?
Am I doing for Allah?
When I'm looking deep, deep down inside
Do I have the right niyyah?

The second song was another Native Deen number, "The Deen You Know" performed by a group of four girls. In contrast to the timidity of the first girl, these older girls rapped loudly, standing with their arms folded in front of their chests, heads cocked in a rapper's attitude:

Your life had just begun, I helped to raise you up
You thought it'd be easy but your life turned out to be rough
You thought I let you down, I never let you go
I'm worried 'cause you left me and you didn't even know….

I am the Deen you know
I am the Deen you need

I am the Deen you love
Please come back to me

After spirited applause and cheers, Manal handed out prizes for the best ten students during the year. They were small Qur'ans, pens, and decorative notebooks in white bags with red tissue paper that had been provided by the mosque. Aisha and I stayed upstairs chatting with Manal for a while, long after the upstairs area had cleared and most of the women had gathered below for the party.

At the end of our talk, Manal invited Aisha and me to attend the halaqa that she co-led in her home which would be taking place the next day. Explaining that the group met on every Saturday, she told us that since there would be both Bangladeshi and Yemeni girls there, it would all be in English. Tasir and I indeed attended, and the halaqa is described in a later section of this chapter. Downstairs, about fifty or more women had already congregated. They had spread out blankets and were sitting together eating off of paper plates. There was pizza, aseed, chicken stew, salads, and other dishes, along with soda and cake for dessert.

2.2 Women's Mosque

For some Yemeni and Bangladeshi women in the community, going to the mosque is a major part of their weekly activities, not only on Fridays, but throughout the week as well, when they attend the mosque for different learning and group activities. Some women attend mosque several times a week for prayer and specific study groups. I found women's pattern of mosque attendance to be different from that of men, especially regarding attendance at the five times daily prayers. It is common for Yemeni and

Bangladeshi men in the community to aspire to attend the mosque for as many of the daily prayers as possible, which take place at intervals throughout the day, from dawn until nighttime, as far as work schedules will allow them. In contrast, most of the women I knew who attended the mosque did not aim attend the mosque for the five times prayer, but rather normally prayed at home. They tended to pray at the mosque only on Fridays, or when there was some kind of class or activity going on that overlapped with prayer time. Collective prayer would punctuate these activities.

Sister Widaad, who was leading the elder woman's mosque group explained the importance of women's halaqa, or study groups at the mosque:

> We teach women to read the Qur'an. In some cases, we teach them how to read Arabic first and then Qur'an. We also teach how to be a good wife, a good mother, a good neighbor, how to be kind. How to be a good person. If we are living in a society, we should treat others the way we want to be treated.
>
> They must learn to memorize the Qur'an. This is because when you pray, you have to know they Qur'an the right way. The Qur'an is part of prayer. If she reads the right way, she will have a reward from Allah, if she reads the wrong way, it will be less. If she has the words right, she will feel Allah in her heart. You need to have the words right to feel this. For older women, who can't read Arabic, we teach them to memorize smaller surahs. There is also the method of teaching by tape and repetition. A lot of them learn from this oral method. The important thing is to memorize, no matter how, by reading, or by listening.

Although she is very busy with her household full of children, my friend Bilquis finds time to make it to the mosque whenever she can. When I asked her why it was important for her to pray at the mosque rather than at home, Bilquis answered emphatically:

> It is the house of God (beit allah). [A moment's pause] That is why we go there. Praying in our own houses is good. But prayer there, together, is better. And there are women there who teach us about the religion.

I had another friend, Nuha, whose weekly schedule was organized around a busy schedule of activities that take place within the two local Yemeni mosques. As a

widowed grandmother in her late fifties, Nuha came over from Yemen to join her eldest son's household, and shares the household and childcare tasks with her daughter in law Sajidah, caring for her three young grandchildren. Yet even with all her household responsibilities, she still found time to attend classes or halaqaat at the mosque three or four times per week, and sometimes more. This includes the Friday service, an Arabic literacy class, a Qur'an class, and a woman's discussion group. Tears came to Nuha's eyes when she discussed the significance of the mosque in her life:

> It is everything. It has given me my first chance to study Arabic. I never learned even the alphabet before. In Yemen, there was no chance for me. Without knowledge of Arabic, it is impossible to pray properly. It is beautiful (Yemeni: hala').

Like the great majority of Yemeni women that I got to know in Hamtramck, Nuha had never been to the mosque before coming to the US. In Yemen, she had engaged in collective prayer and some religious education at the home.

The other members of Nuha's household are also heavily involved at the mosque. Every member of her family attends services at the big mosque every Friday. Her daughter-in-law, Sajidah, who is highly educated, became employed at the smaller Yemeni mosque teaching Arabic and Qur'anic memorization to young children. Her granddaughter goes to her own age-appropriate study group every week and also goes every day during the summer as part of what she called "mosque camp."

Besides being a source for learning Arabic and deepening one's knowledge of Islam, the mosque also provides some women who are more advanced in their studies with a leadership role. In each of the three mosques I attended with women's programming, there was a cadre of older women who had taken on positions of authority and leadership among the women based on their advanced learning. They teach classes,

run halaqa groups, and organize programs and activities for women within the mosque. In each of the three cases, older women have handed over some of the teaching and leadership responsibilities to young adult women in their late teens and early twenties. Finally, the mosque also provided a space for women's socializing and community building, which took place on the walk over to the mosque, as well as within the mosque before and after classes and during celebrations and activities.

Although both of the Yemeni mosques in Hamtramck had ample space set aside for women, only one of the five area Bangladeshi mosques had a regularly used women's space and regular women's programming. This was al-Falah, the Bangladeshi mosque just over the northern border with Detroit. It had space set aside for women, both in its main building/prayer hall and within the other buildings in its large complex, which were used for halaqa and youth meetings.

When I attended Friday prayer at al-Falah, there were about forty or fifty women gathered. Most were Bangladeshi, but as in the case of Mu'ath, there was also a small number of African American women present. I also recognized an elder Yemeni mosque leader there whom I had come to be friends with from attending one of the Yemeni mosque. She laughingly explained to me that she liked to rotate her Friday attendance among the city's different mosques to make sure she didn't miss out on anything. Rather than being situated above the men's space as it was at Mu'ath, the women's space at al-Falah was located side by side with the men's, and was partitioned off. We all sat and listened to the imam's address which was piped over on loudspeakers from the other side of the room. There was also an A/V system set up for broadcasting images from the other side as well, but it wasn't in use that day.

Like the Yemeni women, many Bangladeshi women in the community were also involved in women's study groups, or halaqaat. For the Bangladeshi women, these were organized via an organization called MUNA, or the Muslim Ummah of North America. MUNA is a national organization with headquarters in New York with a primarily Bangladeshi membership base.

According to Tajlia, who leads a youth section of MUNA, and Tajlia's mother, Majeda, there are about 150 to 200 Bangladeshi women in the community of all ages who are involved in the MUNA group. Although there are some general meetings for this large group, most of the weekly meetings take place in smaller groups of about 15 to 20 women, which met in a range of different locales. Some were organized for women who preferred to meet at the mosque and some for women who preferred to meet in the homes. The home-meeting groups were set up in different locations to make them accessible as possible for women, some of who didn't drive. An additional and interesting feature of the MUNA group is the high degree of coordination among local, state, and national chapters, facilitated by a multi-leveled reporting system, in which leaders keep careful record of the attendance and progress of their members. Tajlia' Mother, who had also been a member of MUNA since moving to Hamtramck about eight years before the time of the interview, explains why membership in the group is meaningful and important to her.

> Basically, what it means, ummah, it means we are Muslims and we come together. You can go to any country and do it. Its like you follow a religion, and that's the way its is supposed to be. You get together, and you follow it. The people come by, and you get together, and you study, because that's the way we can better ourselves. Sometimes I make a mistake, and you fix me. And sometimes you make a mistake, and I can tell you, like friendly, that you are doing wrong.

> And also in the Qu'ran, it says, you come together, and help each other. You come together, and read Qur'an. If you are not together, you can't do anything. You can try, but it won't be complete. And if you make mistake, its OK, if you are all together, and everybody is sharing the knowledge of what is right and wrong, you can decide what to do. So that's why it's important.
>
> Also, we keep track of all the things we do during the month. If you help your neighbor. If you go to somebody's funeral, or go see somebody's baby to help them, with a ride, we think about all these things as community service, to be very helpful. That ladies can do it too. That we can be very helpful. Sometimes at the end of the month, we do the reporting of what we all did that month, like this: what you've done that was good, and this is what you should work on.
>
> And also, we are in a different country now. So we need to keep in communication with one another. Because when different Bengali families come, they feel like, we are lost in the world. You know, we don't know how to speak, or anything. That was the hardest thing in my life, when we moved down and I could not speak anything, we don't know the system here, or how to talk to people, or what is [correct] behavior. And I had to learn, just like baby again, I had to learn everything over.

In her description of her involvement with MUNA, Tajlia' mom stressed several aspects of why the group is important to her. First, she related the halaqa to the Muslim ideal of ummah, or the universal community of Muslims. The halaqa provides a forum for unrelated Muslims to come together as Muslim for their mutual benefit and aid. This reflects the principle that the elder women's mosque leader, Sister Widaad, described above, of the mosque and halaqa allowing women to make a family (usrah) out of the community.

Secondly, Tajlia' mother emphasizes the way that the halaqa group allows her to become a better Muslim in two different ways. The first thing she mentions is that meeting with a group of like-minded women helps her correct and perfect her practice of Islam and how it should be applied to her own life, via access to a peer group with whom she can compare and contrast her understanding. Another feature of the group which facilitates her spiritual growth is the reporting program, through which she has come to

see and account for the daily kindnesses and attentions that she pays to her relatives, neighbors and friends as part of a structured and spiritual framework (Huq 2008). Finally, Tajlia's mom emphasizes the way that the group helps her as a Bangladeshi by providing her with a forum with which to interact with other Bangladeshi women so that she feels less isolated in a relatively new place. According to Tajlia's mother's description, the halaqa group strengthens the community along religious as well as ethnic lines.

2.3 Youth Mosque

Besides offering a space and programming for adult women, the local mosques also offer many kinds of programming for children and young adults, including religious and language instruction in the form of groups and classes that meet weekly after school, on weekend, and during the summers as various kind of "summer camps."

It is extremely common for Bangladeshi and Yemeni Muslim families in Hamtramck to educate their children in the Arabic language and on the Qur'an, beginning at a young age. Many send their children to the various mosques in the community to accomplish this purpose, and others educate their children at home. The Iman (faith) weekend school at Mu'ath bin Jabel mosque is perhaps the largest such school in the immediate area. According to the mosque president, the Iman school has been there for at least two decades. At the time of the interview there were about 250 students enrolled at the school. At its peak, enrollment, however which took place several years before the interview, there had as many as 600 students, but they had to cut programming due to funding difficulties. At the time of the interview, classes at IMAN went up to 8th grade, although in the past it had gone to higher levels. The school employs eight teachers, who

are both male and female, of various descent, including Yemeni, Syrian, Lebanese, African American, and others. The mosque president pointed out that the teachers' salaries are very low- almost to the point that it is more like volunteering. This is because they wanted to keep down enrollment fees for the students to not more than $10 a month.

Other mosques in the area had similar programs, although on a smaller scale. In addition to sending children to the mosque to learn their Arabic and their primary lessons about religion, it was also quite common for some families to hire tutors to conduct these lessons privately in the home. In the following narrative, Kolsuma, a middle-aged Bangladeshi woman, gives an account of how she handled the religious education of her now-teenaged daughter, and also describes the importance she attributed to pursuing this kind of education:

> For us, as a Muslim parent, it's mandatory for us to teach them about religion. For us, the moment they start talking, it is obligatory for us to teach them….like you have to learn Arabic alphabet, the small words, then small suras. There is the beginning books, and prayers they learn, and then finally the Qur'an.
>
> There are schools in the mosques, and besides that, there are teachers who teach in the home, because parents all the time can't be picking up and dropping off, but they charge. But normally mosque always was free or at very low cost. Like my niece and my daughter used to go to al Falah. And also in addition we hired someone who used to come every evening just after sunset, and used to teach them one hour every day. He was really good. And we found out later that he belongs to our same village, so he taught them. And finally the finished the Qur'an. My daughter finished the Qur'an twice, and he also taught them how to say the five [daily] prayers, he taught everything. We have to memorize like sixteen suras, so we can mix and match when we say prayers.

Besides the Arabic language and Qur'an classes, there are also discussion groups, or halaqaat, for girls and young women at the mosque, such as the one led by Manal referred to earlier in this chapter. Young women's halaqa groups are led either by older women or

by peers. One older woman who led a young girls' halaqa described its importance this way:

> For girls, we also teach them how to read the Qur'an. How to worship God. And how to be a good person, a clean person. The fundamentals to living a good, clean life.
>
> Of course it's harder here in the US than it would have been in Yemen. We teach them to be careful. For example, in the public school environment, there are some good things, there are some bad things. They have to know the difference between the good and the bad.
>
> As Muslim girls or women, they have to learn to wear hijab and why they are wearing it. It will protect them from everything else. For example, we teach them, if there is a girl with a long skirt on, and next to her there is one with her skirt coming up over the knee, who is going to get bothered? The hijab is for her to protect herself so she can feel free no matter where she is, she won't be bothered. There is good and bad everywhere. It depends on the girl herself. We have to remind her she has to be a good Muslim, and on her own, she must be aware of herself, stay away from the bad things.

Besides the young women's groups that took place at Mu'ath bin Jabel on Fridays, there were several girls and young women's halaqa that took place at Al-Gazali Masjid on the weekends, In addition to this, there was Tajlia' MUNA youth group that took place at al-Falah mosque, and Manal's group that she co-led with her cousin in the home. These two youth-led groups will be described in depth later in the chapter.

There was one youth adult women's group at the smaller Yemeni mosques that was completely given over to achieving advanced levels of Qur'an memorization. When I first visited this group, the teenage and young adult girls in it were at the final stages of memorizing surat al bukara, the longest sura in the Qur'an. After they finished, the young women recited the passage before a thrilled and rejoicing assembly of older and younger woman, and there was a celebration.

There was also another, less advanced, youth group at Gazali mosque that took place simultaneously, attended by girls in a wide range of age groups, from elementary to high school age. This group was led by two ladies, Hawra, a grandmother, and Firdoos, her daughter-in-law. The halaqa is conducted in both Arabic and in English. Shorter quaranic passages are memorized in stages. Lectures are given on the Qur'an, on the history of Islam, and on morality in every day life. There are often long, drawn out question and answer periods or discussion sessions relating to the theme of how to bring one's faith and practice into everyday life.

2.4 Ethnic mosque

During the time of my fieldwork period there were three mosques within the borders of Hamtramck, including a Yemeni, a Bangladeshi, and a Bosnian mosque, with an additional Bangladeshi mosque under construction. However, there are at least six more mosques located in the areas just over Hamtramck's borders with Detroit that are attended by Hamtramck Muslims. These include a second Yemeni mosque, five more Bangladeshi mosques, and a second Bosnian mosque. Taken together, this comes to a total of nine mosques in the approximately three square miles of Hamtramck and areas almost immediately over the border with Detroit. In terms of women's spaces within these mosques, while the two Yemeni mosques and the two Bosnian mosques have spaces dedicated to women, only one of the five Bangladeshi mosques has spaces and programming for women.

Historically, the first mosques in Hamtramck were primarily male spaces. The first mosque in the area was probably the informal, all-male prayer space situated within

a Yemeni community center that had been established by local Yemeni autoworkers on the South end of Joseph Campau in the early 1970s. However, several years after that informal mosque was first set up, the Yemeni community established a mosque just over the border of Hamtramck with Detroit called Mua'th bin Jabel mosque. The mosque was housed in a space that was once a funeral home. When it first opened its doors in 1976, it could only accommodate about 150 people. Like the autoworker's mosque, this too was an all male space. By 1986, the mosque moved into a larger building across the street to accommodate its growing numbers. This was a large brick structure that been built as a Catholic church.

In an interview with Sister Widaad, the elder women's mosque leader, she told me women such as herself started attending the mosque after it had moved into the church, when a small space was set aside for women in the basement of the structure. However, during this time, women only attended on holidays such as Ramadan and Eid. She explained that in these days, some women in the community would attend Friday prayer at the Dix mosque in Dearborn, a Yemeni mosque located about ten miles away.

In 1995, the mosque leaders again decided to expand the mosque to meet the needs of it growing congregation, which, according to Sister Widaad, at that time numbered around 1,000 men. Additionally, at that point, and at the women's behest, the mosque leaders decided to build an upper level to the mosque dedicated exclusively to the use of women, which would be designed to accommodate several hundred women. Although relative to the male portion of the mosque, it was a smaller space, this was a highly significant gain for the city's Muslim women. According to Sister Widaad and other mosque leaders I interviewed, that represented an important moment in Hamtramck

history, because it was the first time that mosque space had been built or designed with the needs of women in mind. After the upper level was complete, a growing number of women started attending mosque on Fridays, as well as during holidays such as Ramadan and Eid.

Around the year 2003, a second, smaller Yemeni mosque was established within Hamtramck, on Jospeh Campau, by a local politician, community leader, and chiropractor named Abdul al-Gazali. The mosque was established on the South end of Jospeh Campau in a building that used to house a bar. The history of Al-Gazali Masjid stands in contrast with that of Mu'ath bin Jabel because it was conceived of and planned from the beginning to contain a section for women that was just as large as the men's section. This section was oriented side by side with the men's section.

According to the congregants and mosque leaders that I interviewed, the establishment of this mosque was considered somewhat controversial because some local Yemenis believed that this new mosque would "split the community." This sense of splitting seemed to be overdetermined and complicated by political as well as social factors since, as a city councilman and a sometime contender for other political office, al-Gazali was known to have political rivals affiliated with the Mu'ath bin Jabel mosque.

Defenders of the mosque are quick to point out the importance of the mosque for women. Although it is true that the Mu'ath bin Jabel mosque, which is just over the border with Detroit, is walkable for Yemenis living in the South end of Hamtramck, it is also true that it is a long walk for some Hamtramck Yemeni families, a walk that also includes crossing over a major thoroughfare. Even those Yemenis in the community who expressed irritation that the Hamtramck mosque "divided the community" tended to

concede that they were glad it existed for the sake of the Hamtramck women, who would not have to walk as far to attend the mosque. As described earlier, these women had established a great number of intensive and well-attended programs for themselves at the Gazali mosque.

The first Bangladeshi mosque in the area is called Masjid an-Noor, and it is located just over the border of Hamtramck in Detroit. It was originally established in a different location in Detroit or Highland Park, but it changed location in 1986, as more Bangladeshis started concentrating around Hamtramck. Beginning a couple years after that time other Bangladeshi mosques started becoming established in the area to meet the needs of the growing Bangladeshi population.

As mentioned earlier, at the time of my fieldwork period in 2007-09, there was a total of five Bangladeshi mosques within an approximately three square mile area. While I was in the field, the area's sixth Bangladeshi mosque was being built in Hamtramck. Yet, only one of these five Bangladeshi mosques, a mosque called al-Falah, has an appreciable space set aside for women. In a history echoing that of Mu'ath bin Jabel, al Falah was first established in a building that had previously housed a funeral home. This was in 1993. Then, in 2001, when the large church complex across the street went up for sale, the mosque purchased that building and moved into it. In both the earlier and later locations, the mosque space was apportioned with women's needs in mind. As described in a previous section, al-Falah has a flourishing woman's program and a sizeable portion of the prayer hall is apportioned for women. The other four Bangladeshi mosques in the area tend to de-emphazise women's participation and have only minimal, or temporary spaces set aside for them on holidays or for sporadic special programming. These

contrasting tendencies, and al-Falah's uniqueness regarding its inclusion of women, will be discussed further below.

Besides the two Yemeni and five Bangladeshi mosques in the area, there are also two Bosnian mosques in the area, the first established in Hamtramck in the mid-1990s to meet the needs of the refugee population, and the other established more recently just over the border with Detroit. Yet, despite Hamtramck's historical importance as the birthplace of W.D. Mohammad and the presence of African American Muslims in the city, there have never been any African American mosques in Hamtramck or at the borders between Hamtramck and Detroit. The African American Muslims I got to know while in Hamtramck were primarily affiliated with one of the African-American mosques located in Detroit. Nevertheless, they reported that they also sometimes attended events at the local Yemeni, Bangladeshi, and Bosnian mosques.

Most of the Yemeni, Bangladeshi, and Bosnian mosque leaders and members that I interviewed tended to describe the mosque as a place that had the ideal of being open and inviting to all Muslims regardless of language, race, or ethnicity. These leaders tended to describe whatever level of ethnic or racial diversity that was present in their mosque as a point of pride, and as something that they wished to cultivate more of in the future. These mosque leaders each reported having regular members who were outside of the main ethnic group. The president of Mu'ath bin Jabel estimated that about 70 per cent of the congregation are Yemeni, the rest being "Pakistani, White, Bangladeshi, Black, Lebanese, Syrian, and other Arabs." The other male mosque leaders described similar patterns of diversity. Yet among the women's programs that I attended, I observed significantly less diversity, as described above. For the mosque leaders I interviewed, the

ethnic and racial concentrations that were found at the mosque was figured as an obstacle to be overcome, caused by linguistic and what were described as "cultural" factors (Karim 2009). The shared ideal professed among these leaders was for a multiethnic and multiracial mosque reflecting the area's mixed demographic of Muslims.

Although the multi-ethnic ummah was the stated ideal, some of the Yemeni and Bangladeshi Muslims that I knew who wished to attend programs at other mosques besides those of their respective ethnic groups faced some criticism for stepping outside of their ethnic mosque. According to a young university graduate and mosque leader named Nabeela:

> The thing is, with my family, although they have a strong religious background, at the same time, they have a very strong cultural background. So, when I say, I want to go to al-Falah, [The Bangladeshi mosque] they would say: Why you gonna go there? There's no point. This is a masjid, that's a masjid, this is closer, just go to ours. [laughing]. Its really funny. That's just their perspective. So, it was really difficult for me to go out of my comfort zone and go to different places. But eventually, my family started seeing how I was becoming more interested in my religion, taking an interest in these kinds of things, then they didn't mind my going here or there.

Similarly, she started attending university, Tajlia started attending the mosque near her school with her friends from the MSA for Friday prayers some of the time, while attending the Bangladeshi mosque near her home the other times. Tajlia cited the dynamism of one of the women's program at one of these masjids s the main factor that drew her away from her neighborhood mosque:

> There is one on campus, the MSA mosque, and one on Cass, by Wayne state, so I go to those ones sometimes. And Cass Masjid has separate women's space and everything, and they are very interactive. They always have different people for the Friday khutbas; it's not the same person always. They are very involved, and they have events all the time during the year. That's why I was more interested in MSA and Cass Masjid when I got to college. But of course some people from back home gave me a lot of questions about why I even wanted to go there.

Like Tajlia' mom quoted in a previous section, the mosques in Hamtramck are a place for the development of both religious and ethnic identity. The complicated way in which these twin features of religious and ethnic identities intersect for Yemenis, is articulated in the following narrative of a young Yemeni man named Ahmed:

> Going to the mosque on Friday, its sparks our weekend, right there. And it shows, al humduliiah, this week went fine. We just prayed Friday prayer together, and the weekend is about to start, and it's a new page. And when you do come pray jumaah, you hear the imam, and you hear the lecture, and you feel a sense of cleansing, somewhat, if you are really listening, you feel like you are going to better yourself as a person from whatever he's teaching us, whatever story he's telling us. So you come out with a sense of trying to be a better person.
>
> It's mandatory for us, first of all, to shower on Friday, Islamically, to shower on Friday, so everybody comes in their showered and refreshed, regardless. And you come, you wear your thawb, you feel like you are still back home. Like your sense of, you're Yemeni, you know, you got your thawb on. If you got your kids with you, you put on their thawb. It gives you a quick sense of, you know, you feel, especially when you walk out of mosque, after the khutbah, and you fall into the parking lot, with all these Yemeneen you feel like you are in a bazaar back home. Seriously. And you see all these people, and they see you, and these people are from this part of Yemen, and those people are from that. You feel like you are in a [Yemeni] melting pot, like one of these cities back home, and we are all from certain different areas of Yemen. I think it's real beautiful. They all come out with a sense of pride. You know, being Yemeni, being Muslim and everything. And you know, its great.
>
> And people stay around for longer or shorter times, it depends on who you are. Then after the khutbah is over, and the prayer is over, and whatever speeches and announcements they might have are over, when we come out, everybody mingles with everybody. My little tradition when I finish, I don't rush to come out, but once I come out, I wait in a certain area, where I meet my peers. My peers are college grads, you know, people that I studied with, and you have other people, like the certain tribe, will be standing there. But its not like everybody is trying to claim their turf or spots, it just happens to be these little habits, and you don't notice them unless you really happen to be that type of person, like I notice stuff. Like, oh, the Qadasi communnity, like I watch, I don't know if you know Qadasi the chiropractor. He comes out. And the Qadasi family is huge, like there is probably 20, 30 families, and he is like their pride and joy. He is the only one that is that successful a person, with a college degree and everything, and they all sit there and when he comes out… they don't necessarily wait for him, but when he does, the younger kids will kiss him on his forehead and everything like that, out of respect, you know? And I just sit there, and I watch stuff, you know, I notice

> this guy, I notice that guy. The guy who sits there and sells the phone cards, the guy that sits there and sells miswaks (leather socks). And it's very interesting, I find it to be. Others just run out, for the parking problems whatever.

For Ahmed and others, the mosque is more than just a place to pray together and also to receive religious teachings from the imam or sheikh. It is also thought of as a place for people to connect with each other, experience solidarity through meeting at the mosque, and for men, meeting after the mosque. It is a place to create community, experience a sense of solidarity, and feel oneself as a Yemeni and as a Muslim. Especially during the period of time in which men congregate in the parking lot outside the mosque, it is a place to see and be seen, to assert one's importance and to take one's place as an active and concerned member of the community, to find out what is going on in the community, and to talk about shared interests and concerns. Ahmed continues:

> We find the mosque to be our religious symbol, our cultural symbol, our community symbol, everything. It's the place where we all gather, so you know, if we have to say something, if something happens in our community, one of our spokesmen, like I'm supposed to be a spokesman, or someone, someone else, someone will announce something there, to say something. If something happens in the community, like if any Arabic schools are opening. Registration for this. This and this happening. Guest speakers, or whatever. The guests will announce it. If anybody will come speak to the community, they would come to the mosque, because we gather there on a regular basis, mostly on Friday, and especially on the weekends, when people are off, you get a lot, you get a high attendance on Saturdays and Sundays. So you get a high attendance, you get a lot of people that come speak at the mosque on Saturdays and Sundays, you get local politicians, like you will get different associations, like the Islamic bank, certain fundraising, like Mercy, Life, Hope, whatever, they will just pick a date and come speak.
>
> You know, we had Kuchinich come and speak, when he was running for president, and his wife came too, and she sat upstairs with the women. And we have local politicians come, like if they are running for city council. So, we let people speak and say what they will say…. And they did have on Friday YPAC outside the door, actually having people register to vote and all that, so they announced it after prayer, that YPAC is outside and they need certain individuals who are not registered to vote to register to vote.

> The mosque in the US, it can work both ways. The mosque, you can just label it as for the community, and the services it does for the youths, and how it's also a place to come pray for men and for women. Becasue even nowadays, when they do build a new mosque, or have a project for a new mosque, they don't only build a mosque for prayer, they also build certain areas for lecturing, and there has to be a women's section, and just recently they are focusing on the youth, so they always build a basketball gym, or a swimming pool, because they want to bring the youth to the mosque. Because the mosque is our community.

Ahmed's comments about "having it both ways" at the mosque, both community-centered and religion-centered, fall in line with the observation of scholars studying American mosques, who are pointing out the growing way mosques have taken on an extended set of functions in migration. As quoted and glossed by Gabi Schmidt, religious scholar Larry Poston, in somewhat critical terms, describes "the new, extended, and exhausting role that mosques were "forced to take in this the US in which they "combine prayer room, educational center, political forum, social hall, informal law court, and counseling clinic all under one roof" (Schmidt 2004:133). As quoted by Schmidt, according to Poston, the mosques transformation into an "Islamic center" weakened the institution's "traditional religious character" (Schmidt 2004:133). However, most mosque leaders and attendees that I interviewed in Hamtramck/Detroit, like Ahmed (above) described these expansions in highly positive terms. For them, the extra-prayer functions of the mosque were complementary to, and supportive of the mosque's main function as prayer space, having the effect of drawing more community members into the space, strengthening community unification, and allowing for religiously appropriate forms of leisure and civic participation inflected by the wholesome ambience of the mosque.

2.5 Gendered Mosque

In interviews with Yemeni men such as Ahmed above, and also with Bangladeshi men in the city, attending mosque was sometimes tied to memories of similar gatherings in the country of origin, evoking sensory-based forms of nostalgia. Yet the mosque attendance seldom, if ever, had that effect on women in the city. Women described the existence of some mosques in Yemen that had space for women for Friday prayer, or others that had space for women's inclusion in Ramadan programs or other programs on special occasions. Yet most women I interviewed reported that they had had never attended even these special programs. Bangladeshi women reviewing their experiences with mosques in the home county also talked about the mosque as male space in similar terms. They described it as a mainly male space with some exceptions. Some said that had been curious about investigating the mosque previously to coming to the US, but somehow had never gotten around to do so when they lived in the country of origin.

Tajlia, a Bangladeshi university student and youth leader at the mosque, expressed some resentment when she described her feeling of exclusion from male mosques and holy spaces when she visited Bangladesh as a teen. She also expresses her irritation with the Bangladeshis in Hamtramck who still held that same point of view:

> I think in Bangladesh, the mosque is more of a place for men. Because in Bangladeshi, where I grew up, I wasn't allowed to go to the mosque, and I didn't know of any women going to the mosque. Then, when I was a teenager visiting Bangladesh, and I wanted to go see my grandfather's grave, which is right next to the mosque, it's like at a cemetery right next it, and they have this rule, that you can't go. And a lot of times they have the cemeteries right next to the mosques. But then there was this other place, in main Sylhet, like in another big city, where women were allowed to go, but it was a very small, like a durgah,[31] and women were allowed into a part of it. But in general, you are not supposed to go to the mosque in Bangladesh.

[31] A durgah is a tomb or mausoleum built in honor of a saint.

> And a lot of Bangladeshi women, even here in the US, think you are not allowed to, in our religion. And when I tell them, like yeah you can, they don't believe it, because they are so used to believing they are not supposed to. But I don't like that. Because the way I grew up after I moved to the US from Bangladesh, I always went to the mosque. So like if someone told me I can't that would shatter my world, and everything. For me, as you know, I go to the mosque for the halaqa group every week. And also on Fridays, I go whenever I have a chance I go.

Some Muslims interpret the mosque as male space as part of religious doctrine, based on particular hadiths or examples from the Qur'an. When I spoke to women who chose not to attend the mosque, or to men who disapproved of it, I was sometimes told, "We have a hadith which says, for women, to pray at home is better." These women link the gendered pattern of mosque participation to the Islamic teaching that it is obligatory for men to pray at the mosque, particularly, for Friday prayer; but that women might pray either at the mosque, or at home, and would receive no extra merit for praying at the mosque, and in fact might be better off praying as home so as to not attract additional attention to themselves. Yet, these religious sources are open to conflicting interpretation. In fact it is a point of contestation among some women as to whether or not women belong at the mosque.

Many women who did not attend the mosque, either in US or in the country of origin, still had rich and intensive schedules of religious practice. Most of the women that I knew both in the Yemeni and Bangladeshi communities engaged in the five times daily prayer in the home, and fasted for Ramadan. Many also fasted additional days as an expression of piety. Those that could read in Arabic studied the Qur'an, and many of those who could not read Arabic systematically and intensively used tape-recorded readings or television programs in which qur'anic verses were recited as the source of their religious study. Most women had been educated in the religion as girls, either in

Hamtramck or in the country of origin. This education could have been from parents, or it was also common for girls to receive religious instruction from an Islam or sheikh within the home. Muslim girls learned how to pray and other aspects of their religious practice at a young age and had completed either basic or advanced formal or informal modes of Islamic education that enabled them to exercise autonomy and control over their religious lives as Muslims and to complete their religious practices in a way that they felt to be adequate and correct on their own, without extra classes or training at the mosque. Some of my very devout Muslim friends did not attend the mosque for different reasons. Some saw no specific purpose for it, believing that it was important for men, but not for women to go. Others were too busy with childcare or household responsibilities to go. Others went on special occasions, such as for the Ramadan nightly prayers, or only sporadically, such as for a special lecture they had heard about.

Even women like Tajlia who believed that praying at the mosque was important and beneficial for women as well as men conceded that there was a different emphasis, value and weight on the participation of men vs. women. According to Sister Widaad, the elder Yemeni woman's mosque leader:

> It not obligatory for women to go to the mosque. Friday prayer is obligatory only for men. It is a time to gather and get to know one another, to learn how to get along with one another, to form a community. This is the responsibility of men, it is only for men. For women, they may go. They can hear the khutbah, a lecture which helps them understand religion, and understand life. Women are so busy with other things that they are allowed to stay at home. If she has her period, she doesn't have to come. Women don't pray during this time.

In Tajlia's account:

> For men it's mandatory to meet together and pray at the mosque because they are the ones building the community. And they have to stay together and keep in touch. But for women, it's not mandatory, because it's mainly our job to take care

> of the household, and take care of the kids. So you can't be expected to do both things at once. But when you can, then you are fine, but you don't have to go.

Tajlia's mother, Majeda, described the rift this way:

> Some people don't understand why ladies don't go and what's the difference between women and men at the mosque. Because a lot of people, and even our Bengali people say I can't go to masjid. But they don't ask why. They cut it off. I'm like, it never said, in the Qur'an, or Sunna, it never said, don't go at all. Its never like putting a restriction on me and saying I am not allowed to go. But its not saying you must go. It's between allowed to go, and mandatory, two different things. We are in the middle. If I have time, I can go, it's no problem, nobody can stop me. But if I don't want to go, there's nothing to force me. Lot of people make it like, you can't go, or if you go, it's not good, it's bad, they make this whole story. So the point is, that we need to find out what is culture, and what is religion, and then I have to find what is right for me and what is wrong for me, and I can follow the right.

However, women like Tajlia and others whom I interviewed point out that since women are also heavily involved with a lot of activities related to the community, and some of them have become leaders within the community in the role of teachers and in more informal roles, that they should attend the mosque as well. They should have benefit of hearing the imam, and other lectures, and understanding issues that are going on in the life of the community.

Some Bangladeshi women who are involved in al-Falah masjid attribute its openness to having women at the mosque to the fact that some of its founders and board members follow the ideas of Abdul Ala Mawdudi, founder of the Islamic revivalist party Jamaat-e-Islami.[32] The Bangladeshis that I knew who identified with Jamaat-e-Islami

[32] Maulana Sayyid Abdu'l-A'la Mawdudi of Aurangabad, India was a religious and political thinker concerned with the status and political prominence of Muslims in India after colonialism and about the role of Islam in the formation of Pakistan. He founded the Jamaat-e-Islami, (Urdu, Islamic Party) an Islamic revivalist party in 1941 and headed it for thirty-one years. The party currently has branches in Pakistan, Bangladesh, and India (Nasr 1996). Some Bangladeshi Muslims in Hamtramck who identified with Jamaat-e-Islami reported that were invested in the social implications of Mawdudi's teaching, and not necessarily with the political ideologies of any of the contemporary Jamaat-e-Islami's political goals.

tended to see themselves as progressive.[33] They were often critical and dismissive of Tablighi[34] influenced Bangladeshis in the city, who they represented as more socially conservative. In such narratives, Tablighi-influenced Bangladeshis were often conjured up to act as a foil against an ideal type of Muslim, associated with Mawdudi's teachings.

These labels tended to come up frequently when I interviewed Bangladeshis in Hamtramck. For example, they played a prominent role in my interview with four Bangladeshi women about their perceptions of the local Bangladeshi mosques. The group interview included Kolsuma and her daughter Farzana, as well as Tajlia and her younger sister Fatima about women's role in al-Falah.

> Tajlia: Al Falah is more like Jamaat-e-Islami. And the other Bangladeshi mosques in Hamtramck are mostly like that Tablighi.
>
> Kolsuma: Tablighi and Jamaati[35] are different…
>
> Tajlia: Yes. Jamaat-e-Islam I guess is more open minded. And they try to follow the rules the more Islamic way. And they let women participate in a lot of the things. And Tablighi is more like, guys, they will go for like three days or forty days..
>
> Kolsuma: Its called chillah.
>
> Tajlia: And like, when I used to go to their lectures, I didn't like them. Because they are always talking about women. They are always talking about what are the rules for women…
>
> Kolsuma: What you should not do! [joking tone][36]

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[33] It is interesting that some Bangladeshis in Hamtramck associate Mawdudi with progressivism regarding women. In his still widely-read work, *Purdah and the Status of Women in Islam* (1990), draws on hadiths and other religious sources to firmly advocate a patriarchal family and social structure, and a list of conservative guidelines scripting proper and improper kinds behavior of women in almost all imaginable aspects of life.

[34] Other Bangladeshi Muslims expressed an affiliation with the Tablighi Jamaat, a spiritual reform movement founded in 1926 in India to normalize the heterogeneous practices of village Muslims. The Tablighi Jamaat has since broadened its approach to encompass all Muslims and currently has a vast global following.

[35] Some Bangladeshis I talked to in Hamtramck used the term "Jamaati" as an adjective to refer to ideas, people or mosques associated with Jamaat-e-Islami, or associated with the teaching and philosophy of Mawdudi.

Tajlia: Yeah, what you should not do. But they wouldn't tell you how to apply anything to your life, and they don't give women a chance to do anything. And its really like the kind that they are very conservative and covered up all the way, they are more like that.

Kolsuma (to Tajlia): So what about Tablighi, do you think their leaders are not educated in a modern way like Jamaati?

Tajlia: I think that they just are restrictive, because they are more like that Bengali culture thing, they're the ones who kind of grind more of that into the religion, because the Jamaat-e-Islami, they are the ones who have the women's groups in Bangladeshi who are active and those are the ones I heard about.

Sharmin (Tajlia' sister): Jamaat is more liberal, and the others are conservative.

Alisa: Do you feel identified with one group or another?

Tajlia: I don't really identify with one group or another, but I would say Jamaati, if it were a choice. I know with my family they, there was one proposal, and it was like from a Tablighi, hardcore, and they were like, my parents were like, no way. Because its just a whole different mentality. They are more… And I think they are more Tablighi here. Because there is only one mosque here with a woman's section, that officially allows women, al-Falah, and that's the only one that allows women. And before, when Noor Masjid used to be the only masjid here, I don't know how long ago, like maybe twenty years or something, and it used to be Tablighi. But then the Jamaati people, they wanted a little more space, and they were like, we can have our mosque too.

Tajlia's Mother: Tabligh was all the time there in Bangladesh. When we go to a big mosque at certain times of the year, you see guys living like 24 hours in mosque. And they will eat, sleep and everything in there.

Tajlia: Like my family back home, they are not Tablighi, they are not Jamaati, they are kind of just more open-minded, they apply the same thing to everyone. My dad, I guess you could consider him Jamaati, but he's really not one or the other, because he goes to all the mosques and he's OK with everyone. And once a year, he will go for three days to be with them too, just to have a mix of everything. But with us, we don't really have an opportunity to go with the

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[36] It must be pointed out that, as mentioned above, Mawdudi himself, who here is being figured as a liberator of women against the foil of conservative Tablighi leaders, also spent a great deal of time caught up with the question of what women should or should not do. While the section of the book that deals with women at the mosque does not exactly advocate forbidding women from the mosque, it certainly does not encourage them to do so. Instead, based on religious sources, Mawdudi strongly recommends that women to pray at home. He advocates restricting their presence at the mosque to nighttime only, when they can travel back and forth from the mosque under the cover of night and more closely maintain their purdah (Mawdudi 1990). In contrast, some interpret the Tablighi ideology to be quite gender-neutral.

> Tablighi. Because if they don't really have a space at the mosque for women, then what are we supposed to do? And once in a blue, [i.e. blue moon] they will have programs, like once in a while during Ramadan, they will have guest speakers, and they will arrange space in the basement for women. And I find that very offensive, because you know, all of a sudden, you give us space in the basement, but not any other time when we need that.

Given that women in Yemen and Bangladesh did not tend to frequent the mosque, as an alternative source of religious gathering, some Bangladeshi and Yemeni women in Hamtramck describe being active in women's religious study groups that took place within women's homes when they were in the country of origin. In the Yemeni case, one elder woman mosque leader explained how the different domestic architectures between Yemen and the US was a prime factor to explain women's move from the home to the mosque in the US.

> Yes, women come to the mosque in the US more often than they do in Yemen. Actually, there are the same kind of religious study groups for women in Yemen as they have here. They gather to study Qur'an, have muhaderat [lectures] by women for women. They don't do that as much here because the houses here are different. I don't know if you know this, in Yemen, houses are very big. There we have the diwan, a big room in which 100 or more women can gather. They also have parties there. It is a room used for all occasions. Women can meet for religious study once a week, on Fridays or Saturdays, because that is the weekend in Yemen. Some meet twice a week.

Some Yemeni and Bangladeshi women in the US are unsatisfied with the idea of limiting their religious practice to the home. Due to her high level of involvement of the mosque that she has grown used to, Tajlia reported she somehow was prevented from going to the mosque, it would "shatter her world." Even though they didn't always express it in such strong terms, for some Yemeni and Bangladeshi women, moving women's religious spaces from the diwan, or majlis (Arabic: living room) to the masjid was a highly significant and symbolic transposition that added weight and importance to women's activities by making them more public and situating them within the prestigious and high

status space of the mosque alongside men (Karim 2005). For some women in Hamtramck, women's spaces in the mosque represented a space for the development of a community of women, a space in which women's relationship to religion was articulated, also a space where single-sex association, socializing, and the building of social capital is established (Karim 2005). Although not all of the Muslim women in Hamtramck that I knew felt it was important for them to go to the mosque, others in the community saw the mosque as an important institution that added something significant to their religious practice, whether it was increased knowledge and familiarity with Arabic and the Qur'an, access to local leaders, or a space of fellowship where one engaged in mutually supportive, horizontal links to the other worshippers.

Although Yemeni and Bangladeshi women are growing more active and vocal within the mosque as concerns setting aside space for women within the mosque and establishing women's programming, among my informants, the potential for the development of women's leadership at the mosque was consistently articulated and imagined as a purely female phenomenon and never as something that could also involve branching out into mixed gender space. Also, the question of a women serving as a religious leader for a mixed congregation, or of launching any challenge to the all-male leadership as officers and board members of the mosque never came up. Although the question of women serving as leaders for mixed gender congregations, and the question of women praying in mixed groups alongside men are points of debate in the larger Muslim community, it was not a debate that I encountered among my Muslim informants in Hamtramck.

2.6 Youth Leadership in and out of the Mosque

During my fieldwork period in Hamtramck, I got to know two particularly charismatic youth leaders, Nabeela and Tajlia, each of whom instituted innovative kinds of religious educational forums, or halaqaat, for girls and young women in community. These halaqa were planned and envisioned specifically to encourage the critical thinking and questioning of girls and young women as part of their religious education as well as an expanded sense of community involvement and investment. The two youth leaders in question had each formulated their style of teaching, in part, to reform and challenge what they perceived to be an overly authoritarian or top-down style of instruction that was common in the existing halaqa programs that took place in mosques and in women's homes. Both Nabeela and Tajlia emphasized how their self-concepts as religious leaders and the types of teaching philosophies they had developed were influenced by religious education experiences that they had pursued outside the local community and outside the mosque. The teaching philosophy of these two leaders was also geared toward addressing what they believed to be the specific and unique set of needs of the immigrant youth or the children of immigrant youth that they felt were being ignored or not fully understood by older teachers who had come of age in the country of origin.

Nabeela, a Yememi women in her early twenties, working in collaboration with her cousin Manal, instituted an independent weekly halaqa that took place on a rotating basis either in her house or her cousin's house. Tajlia, a Bangladeshi women of about the same age, worked within the channels already established by her mosque, by taking some control over and changing the direction of the girls' weekend halaqaat that took place at the Bangladeshi mosque, al Falah, that she had been attending since she was a child. The

two leaders were in consultation with one another, and the membership of the two groups overlapped. While I was living in Hamtramck, I had a chance to regularly attend meetings of both groups, one which took place on Saturdays at the mosque, the other of which met on Sundays at the home of Nabeela or Manal. In interviews and conversations, both leaders describe their own experiences with religious education; the way that they understand the importance, meaning and impact of their work: and the types of experiences that have led them to authorize themselves as religious leaders in the community.

The first youth halaqa that I will describe in this chapter is Nabeela and Manal's group, which meets once a week on the weekend in one of the two women's houses. It was usually attended by a dozen or two dozen girls ages about 10 to 21, of mixed ethnicity. Tajlia' group was attended by a dozen or two dozen girls of about the same age range as Nabeela and Manal's group, and it took place in an upstairs meeting room within the al-Falah mosque complex. In contrast to Nabeela and Manal's group, Tajlia' group was ethnically uniform, with all the girls attending it being Bangladeshi.

The two different groups followed a somewhat similar format. The meetings usually began with a lecture or presentation the leaders had prepared, which normally concerned a theme related to intensifying one's experience of Islam in every day life. After this, the leaders guided the girls through a discussion of the topic. Girls freely took part in the discussion and often raised their own topics. There was also often a question and answer component. In addition, the girls in both groups were sometimes assigned homework to research and present on certain topics, or to combine their presentations with creative aspects, such as the performance of skits, plays, or songs.

Another focus of the halaqa was on getting girls in the community involved in the community in a volunteer or charitable capacity as a way of living out the tenets of Islam in an engaged way. In both halaqaat, leaders regularly called the girls' attention to charity or volunteer opportunities that were available, and sometimes lead groups to participate in these activities. For example, as described at the end of the chapter, I joined Nabeela and Manal's group as they traveled to community arts center in low-income area in Detroit to participate in a project to improve housing and beautify the surrounding neighborhood. The girls were also involved in other activities such as clothing and food drives, working in local soup kitchens, disaster relief, and other charitable projects.

2.7 A Yemeni Youth Leader

Nabeela is a twenty-five year old Yemeni woman who came to Hamtramck with her family when she was about three or four years of age. In my interview with her, Nabeela describes how she was engaged in religious education in a variety of different registers and contexts as a child and young adult in Hamtramck. For example, she describes being educated religiously in the context of her home life with a devout family; at the Qur'an weekend school at the mosque; in women's halaqa groups she was a part of with her relatives; and at the private Islamic school in which she was enrolled during some of her middle school and high school years. Yet, among all these experiences, Nabeela emphasizes her time as an Islamic studies major at Wayne State University as the most instrumental and meaningful to her in the development of her religious education, and in terms of her development as a religious leader.

> And I know it sounds funny, but that's how it was. When I was studying at the university level, I was learning more about the history, and the hardcore facts, about truly what Islam is, and what it actually provides. And it just made me grow so much more attached to my religion…. I just took all the good from that, and I just thought if you just applied this, because God said, just apply this and you will be happy. And live in a peaceful and harmonious society. So I was like, you know what, that sounds really good. So I took that, and I said, why don't I just apply this to my house? Why don't I just apply this to my work? Why don't I apply this wherever I go? So, I saw that by using the ideas that were provided for us, like divinely, I… that's what inspired me to seek change in the community….But ummm, I think to me that kind of university education in Islam, that's what kind of shifted my view. Because before that, I would see certain things, and I wouldn't really care. But then I learned how to care and why to care. Now, every time I see like a teenager who is in trouble, or is lost, I want to talk to them, I want to kind of do my best to help them or what not.

Although Nabeela thinks it "sounds funny" to begin the narrative about her development into a religious leader with her experiences at university, rather than at home or at the mosque, she nevertheless continues in this vein:

> But every class I took, each one was more eye opening than the last. There was just so much information; it was just so much that it changed me. If you talk to Manal, my cousin, or anyone else in my family, they would tell you. I changed so much, so much. I used to swear all the time, I was very inconsiderate. I would still do everything I had to, it was just that I had this ugly attitude, and I wasn't who I am. After I started this program, I'm not kidding, it was like a 360 transformation of who I am. Everything, my tone of voice, how I speak, who I am, people were like: is that the same girl who we used to know? You just see a huge difference.
>
> That one time I took that one class and the professor I met. Because I really liked him and I really liked the way he spoke and the kind of information he gave us. And then I was just so excited take the next one and the next one. Like this comparative religious class that I took. And then I took one about Muslim personal law, shariah, and the life of the Prophet Mohammad. And Islam and Modernity, Part One and Part Two. Because you want to understand, how since that time period, what has been changing. Once I was in there, I was motivated by the people around me, and by the professor.

In the narrative above, Nabeela emphasizes how learning about Islam in an academic setting led her to make changes in her personal life, in her view of the world, and in her understanding of the impact that she was having on the people around her, and in terms

of how she sees her duties and obligations as part of the community in which she grew up. For Nabeela, along with the content that she was learning, the contact that she had with professors and students who were seriously engaged in the academic study of Islam also contributed to the intensification of her identification with her religion. Nabeela elaborated on what she saw as the critical differences between the kind of education about Islam that she was receiving at Wayne State and the forms of instruction she had received at al-Ikhlas (the Islamic private school she had attended) and in her weekend schools at the mosque:

> When I went over there, [i.e. to Wayne State] the first thing my professor said was, I want you to throw everything away that you learned in your weekend school and in your other classes before college. And I was like: what's wrong with this guy? Because a lot of things that we learned, in those other places, al-Ikhlas and the mosque school, was just to memorize the Qur'an, and memorize certain hadiths, and to get a basic translation of what they mean. But its not what we got at Wayne State. Instead we got: "This is Islam in a nutshell. This is what it is broken down. This is how you can apply it. This is how previous people have applied it. This is where they failed. You know. This is where they succeeded." So, it was more of that kind of perspective, where it was more practical. This was, in a sense, more spiritual that what I got before.

Nabeela describes how the university-style education encouraged her to develop a practical, critical understanding of how Islam had "succeeded and failed" in various situations throughout history. This form of educational engagement led to a process of re-examining and re-evaluating the way that she looked at herself in the world. In contrast, she describes her earlier experiences learning about religion as based on route memorization and a top-down style where facts were presented to her in a way that did not encourage analysis or a similar form of dynamic engagement. For this reason, although she knows it "sounds funny," she describes the supposedly secular environment of the university as "more spiritual" than those institutions, such as the private Islamic

school, and the mosque, that were specifically geared toward the spiritual. Nabeela described the way these spiritual university educational experiences led her to be more critical about the kinds of teaching that was going on within the woman's halaqaat with which she had long been affiliated, and how she developed a desire to make the "spiritual" university-style educational experience available to members of her community back home. Speaking for herself and her cousin Manal (who has been introduced in a previous section of this chapter) Nabeela explained:

> Well, originally, there had always been a group halaqa for the women. And we would have to go to it because our mothers did, because they would host it. So we would always be a part of it, anyway. So as we grew up, that was always with us. We all came from this religious type background where our families were always involved in these types of things. And then we'd go and we'd go, and it was nice and dandy.
>
> Well, it really changed for me this one day when I was at this halaqa, where all these ladies were, and one lady was speaking about religion, and she said something that sounded contradictory to me, and that just turned me completely off to the whole halaqa. She was talking about other Muslim people who are not Arabic. And whatever she was saying, it was like Arabic people are **it**, they have the tradition, those other people might speak a little Arabic or whatever but they are not the true Muslims. I don't know why it was, but for me, it really bothered me, the way that she was thinking, and how it was accepted among the group. There was non-Arab people there too, and I just really didn't like that at all….And ever since that day, it really affected me, I never went back.
>
> And then one day, Manal and I were sitting down, I was working at Odyssey Academy, and I started seeing all these different things with the young people. And I started thinking, oh my God, it felt like, we're the older generation, and there's a bunch of younger girls, I mean we're still young, I think we're still young, right? But then there's a whole group of us, who are like the way we were, when we were that age. And I see them, and I remember the types of things that used to go on then, and I see this now, and its like, to a different level. Things are worse now. And when I was going to school, certain things that would take place, a lot of situations that I saw, and I was like, there is no awareness of right and wrong, of morals, of values. It was all like down the drain. And I was like, where did all that go?
>
> And she said, you know what? We need to have our own group, for young girls. And I was like, yeah, but there's already that one…. OK, fine. Let the old ladies

> go to their old lady's thing. Some people are much older and it's very hard to change the way they think because it's engrained in them. But we need to shape our new generation. So that's really where it started. We planned it, we got a group of four girls, then we just started kind of promoting it, and that's what it is.

Nabeela elaborated more on the contrast between the older ladies' halaqaat and the kind of group that she and Manal had built:

> Before, it didn't even used to be us, on our own, holding our own in the house. It used to be the jamaat (religious scholars) coming from different parts of the world to the masjid, and then we'd invite them over for dinner, and then they'd have speakers coming over and lecture for the men and women. That's all it was actually. It was never a woman sitting their speaking. It's a guy. They put a speaker through the kitchen door, and the guys would be upstairs, or if it were one or two guys, they'd be right here in the kitchen, with the curtain, and we'd be sitting, and they would lecture for us. But the only thing is for about twenty minutes, the ladies would open a book and they would talk about the six qualities of the Sahaba and the Prophet, like say la illahu illa allah, and be kind, and just like six different qualities that they all possessed to make them good people, and they would discuss that. That's the only thing they would discuss themselves. Everything else they would just hear the lecture from the guy. That's how it always was.
>
> They would invite the jamaat, which means a group of scholars, or the people who do da'wa, calling on people, they would get groups from Chicago, from different parts of the country, or even people who might even come to India or different corners of the world, to give da'wa, to talk about Islam, an to promote. Those people would come to the masjid. We would get a lot of good deeds by making them food, and giving it to them, because they are actually doing something good, and we're helping them. And that's what we would always do; we would always make food and give it to them. Although there would be lectures at the masjid, not a lot of women went to the masjid [at that point] so they came to the house, and gave a lecture for us there. So that's how. This would be for those jamaats going to Miller Street mosque.
>
> We switched houses, sometimes it would be in Manal's mother's house, they used to live next to the Miller masjid, and this lady, I told you, her name is Ayannah, she's Somali, and then there is Nadifa, she lives on Georgia street somewhere, so a lot of them, that's where the dinners were. Because their husbands were heavily involved in these things, like my uncle was, Manal's father, both of those ladies' husbands were heavily involved in these types of things, so they would invite all of them to come, for food and then for lecture. So that's how it went. And it wouldn't only be the Yemeni people. There were African American people, and Pakistani people. These Pakistani people, they call them Tabligh or whatever, that used to come from Brownstown, and other places, they always used to come.

> It would always be after salat ad-Dhuhr, which is around 1ish, 2ish, and a lot of people would come. A lot. Because it wasn't a weekly event, like us [current girls' halaqa]. It eventually became that way. But it would be a full two living rooms of ladies. They would really pack it in. And then afterward, when it became more of a weekly thing, it wouldn't only be those special people like I described who came, but it would be women's husbands that would volunteer to give the lecture. Because a lot of them were studying to be sheikhs and imams and whatever. So it would be them.
>
> But, how we do it, its completely different. Because we are the ones preparing the lecture, Manal and I. We are reading the lecture. And it's all of us girls. I do notice that, and a lot of people think that I have a different approach. I am trying to help them think critically about what they are doing. I am trying to dialogue with them, as opposed to just reading out of the same book every week. As opposed to listening to what they are struggling with and then saying "don't do it." I ask them to talk about what they are doing and to try to figure it out for themselves with a lighter approach. So I think that some people, they feel like this would be betraying the religion, or the Qur'an by saying, its OK to entertain these different ideas. But its an approach, and I feel that the approach I have to take would be to attract them to what Islam actually does provide, and eventually, on their own, they will start building their own spirituality up to know what their own limits are. Because I can't say you're wrong, and you're wrong, and you're right. Eventually, when they grow up enough, they are going to learn enough, they are going to think, OK, now I know why that's wrong, and now I know why that's right.

Nabeela dismisses the women-hosted but male-led halaqa as an "old lady group," that did things in an "old lady" way. For Nabeela, this old-fashioned approach encompasses many aspects of religious education that she is unhappy with, including the patriarchal kinds of gender and age hierarchies she discerns in the group's structure and arrangement, the reliance on rote memorization and repetition as opposed to critical analysis, and the "cultural" interpretations of religion that diverge so far from appropriate forms of Islamic science that they result in forms of ethnic chauvinism on the part of one women's leader.

In her narrative, Nabeela describes the key differences between the halaqa group she started and the one that was going on in the generation before her. First, in her group, it was women leading the halaqa, rather than visiting scholars or the husbands of the

women who attended. Importantly, it was herself and her cousin Manal, as young women, who were preparing lectures that were tailored to the interests and concerns of the young people that they knew, based on their shared experiences and identifications with the problems that adolescent girls in the community were facing rather than based on some kind of abstracted view from above. And rather than a top-down approach, Manal talked about the value she placed on dialogue and the development of critical thinking skills, in a way that brought some of the university-style modalities of learning she had described into the space of the neighborhood halaqa, which although located quite near Wayne State, for some community members was in effect worlds away.

Nabeela described how the group that she started with Manal originally consisted of about four or five Yemeni girls and grew little by little to several dozen. During these early stages, Nabeela, who was known and respected in the community for her university degree in Islam, was invited by Tajlia speak at a young women's Eid gathering and celebration at al-Falah mosque When Tajlia introduced Nabeela, she mentioned that Nabeela had her own halaqa group for young women, and some of the young women from that group, including Tajlia herself, started attending Nabeela's group as well. Nabeela described how after this, the word of the halaqa group spread so that a Bosnian girl, an African American revert (i.e. convert), and a Somalian girl began to attend as well. Nabeela described the multi-ethnic nature of her halaqa as something that she greatly valued, and also as indicative of how "things are changing" in Hamtramck to allow for more types of gender integration among Muslims:

> I love our group, because it just felt like nobody is different, we are all just gathered to sit and listen and enjoy each other and something beneficial. Because it's not that different, the experiences we all have. I think the different communities in Hamtramck used to be more separated. I think its changing now,

> and more different communities are coming together, and you see it in the halaqa and other places, and that's a great thing, because it's a step forward. Because when everyone is only thinking about themselves, you are really not going to benefit everybody as a whole. So, I think the dynamics are changing, where different groups are coming together, maybe through religious events, or maybe through community events, so I think slowly they will come together.
>
> There are certain events, like when you used to go to a Yemeni wedding, you would have only Yemeni people, but now you have like Bengali people, and African American people, and American people, and there's just this sense of coming together, and I see it as a good thing for us all. And, it used to be if there was a lecture held in Masjid al-Falah [the Bangladeshi mosque], not that many people from Mu'ath bin Jabel [the Yemeni mosque] would go. Or vice-versa. Now, if we have something good that's going on, they are all coming, or if they have something, we are all coming. Like for me, sometimes, during Ramadan, I didn't like to pray in Masjid Mu'ath all the time. I would go there one day, and then I'd go one day to Masjid al-Falah, and then I would go one day to the Islamic Center of Detroit, and the fourth day I would go even to the Ford Masjid, the Shi'a masjid? And there was an amazing speaker, even though they didn't pray tarawih [extra night time prayers during Ramadan] or whatever, but the speaker was amazing, and I went. Because you go wherever you feel the most, you know, humbleness. Ummmm, I think slowly, that this coming together among the different Muslim communities is talking place.
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> And the way the schools are set up as well, and these new charter schools. Because they are almost interconnected. Its bringing people together as well. I see it in every sense. In a religious sense, in the society itself, in group interactions, and with friends, its completely changing. I could have many different friends from many different backgrounds, it's not odd anymore.

Along with the mixed halaqa, Nabeela also mentions weddings, mosques, and charter schools (see next chapter) as three contexts in which Muslims in the community were breaking down barriers and doing things together. In Nabeela's words, these forms of "coming together among the different Muslim communities" leads to an advancement in the faith practice of the different communities because it allows each group access into "what is best in the other group," and because the tendencies are countering forms of ethnic prejudice among the different groups of Muslims that go against the ummah

principle so central within Islam. As well as providing a forum for youth, Nabeela values her halaqa for the way it sets this kind of inter-ethnic example for the community.

2.8 A Bangladeshi Youth Leader

Tajlia is a university student in her early twenties who was born in Bangladesh and raised in NY, Florida, and Hamtramck. Tajlia was involved in a youth and young adult halaqa that was led by older Bangladeshi women in the community from the time she arrived in Hamtramck as a teen, until her and her friends decided to "just take it over." Tajlia's account of how she became a youth leader in the community parallels Nabeela's narrative in a number of ways:

> Well what happened was that I came here in 7th grade from Atlanta, Georgia, I didn't know too much about the whole Bengali community at that point. For me, it was new too. And we were heavily involved in the religious community over there. Not as far as taking a leadership role, but our family was very active with the mosques and different groups. And here, it was like a whole different kind of thing. The ladies would meet, and one person would talk, or lecture. And it wasn't so much like discussion the way it was there in Florida. And over the years I kept seeing that, and seeing that it wasn't the way that I felt comfortable. And it wasn't the way that I wanted it. And a lot of the times, I would say something to the adults, but they wouldn't understand. Like, how we wanted to learn our religion. Talk about things, make it fun. And how we wanted to do community service. Or get together. Or go camping or something like that. But they weren't ok about that, because of the cultural thing, about girls going out to different places.

At the beginning of her narrative, Tajlia points out that she felt uncomfortable and critical about the Bangladeshi women's youth halaqa group ever since she joined it as a pre-teen in 7th grade. In her narrative, the basic feature that she was opposed to was the lecture-format that did not give the other members in the group a chance to express themselves. As a young teen, her primary point of critical comparison was with other women's and youth halaqa that she had been involved in when she had lived in Florida. Earlier in the

interview, Tajlia had described these Florida groups that she were involved as multi-ethnic, and here she approvingly describes them as discussion-based, rather than lecture-based.

Tajlia described the way her suggestions for change and improvement within these groups were ignored or dismissed by the leaders. Nevertheless, she remained an active part of the youth and women's halaqa groups throughout her junior high school and high school years, and into her college years before she decided to take an active role in changing the group. Tajlia attributes the impetus she had to finally take action directly to the experience she had attending a specific RIS (Reviving the Islamic Sprit) conference in Canada, along with some of her university friends:

> So what I did was last year, there was this convention in Canada. It was called "Reviving the Islamic Spirit." It was huge, there was like 10,000 people there. Well, it was the first time that my parents actually let me go, like out of the country, just to learn something. My friend, Suad, she kept begging me to go. She heard about it through friends at Wayne State MSA. But, we didn't go as part of that. It was more of a, "if you go, I can go too thing" with our parents. But what happened is that my parents, its not that they don't trust us, but they are afraid to let us go, because we are girls. But this time, we convinced a couple of the other girls to go. So there was like four of us, and our parents let us go.
>
> So, we booked the tickets, and we went on Greyhound, and we went there was like the whole intention was just to go there and learn as much as we could…. And, I learned a lot of stuff that I didn't know before, and things that I wouldn't even have thought of asking questions about before. Like sometimes if your teacher tells you, like circle the number one, you are like, ok, but you are like OK, but you don't know why you are circling it, you don't know the reason behind it, and you don' t think to ask those questions to follow up on it.
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> Like in Hamtramck, because when we used to go to the mosque, to these women's groups, it was a drag. We would just sit there and read out of books. Or listen to some lecture. But we didn't understand what we were learning. And I realized that this is a huge reason we don't understand our religion that well. Because we don't know what questions to ask. And we aren't being taught to find out what questions we want to ask.

> And the way they talked! The speakers were very diverse, and a lot of them were converts, [37]and I think that converts usually know more about a religion than regular people do, because they are just kind of born with it, they are like ok, whatever, we know how to pray, we know how to read Arabic, and that's about it. But these people talked about their whole journey, how they converted and why they converted. And they travelled to the Middle East and they've seen it all, and they are educated people. Some of them are Ph.Ds, they teach at universities. There is this one guy, Dr. Jackson,[38] he teaches at U of M, and there was this one lady, who teaches at Spellman,[39] and she was an assistant professor, and she's also doing a dissertation, she was there, and she was talking about Malcolm X, and the whole journey of that. And after going there, I just saw how organized it was, and how motivated those people were over there. And they did a lot about youth programming.
>
> And during the convention, I kept thinking back to Hamtramck. Because, you know it was eventually, what happened, was that when I got to college, I got involved with MSA and different mosques in Detroit because they had what I wanted, they were more interactive. I was saying, that's OK, if those older ladies don't do anything in Hamtramck that's interactive; I'm going to go do it for myself, here at school. But by the time this conference was finished, I was realizing that I am still a part of Hamtramck, and I shouldn't just kick them to the curb. I was saying, OK, if they don't do anything there for the girls in Hamtramck that's interactive, I'm going to go do it for them. Even if we can't go camping, or meet in restaurants, or go out into the community, or whatever. At least we can do things where we have discussion groups. We can still raise different topics, give a chance for people to talk about what they want to talk about. Its especially important for teenage girls. Because we have so many issues.

The RIS convention put Tajlia into a different mindset vis-à-vis her own local Bangladeshi community due to the impact of a dynamic set of speakers who got her thinking critically about a range of different issues concerning the way she was living out her religion, and due to the stress they placed on the importance of youth programming. At RIS, Tajlia was particularly inspired by African American converts (or reverts) who she believed had a particularly introspective and engaged relationship with their religion

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[37] Sometime after the interview, Tajlia sent me an email about the RIS conference in which she noted that the convention was put together by Sheikh Hamza Yusuf and others: Zaid Shakir (Zaytuna Institute is the first American Islamic College in the US)

[38] Dr. Sherman Jackson, author of *Islam and the Black American: Looking Toward the Third Resurrection* (2005) and other widely-read academic works.

[39] Dr. Jamillah Karim, author of *American Muslim Women: Negotiating Race, Class, and Gender within the Ummah* (2009), and other notable scholarship.

because they had to critically examine it and themselves when going through the conversion process. Tajlia describes how before RIS, she was satisfied with herself for having found alternative, interactive venues for learning about Islam at the college, through MSA, and through a particular mosque near the campus. But, during the conference, as she listened intently to various speakers and engaged in a process of critical self-reflection, she became less satisfied with the solution that she had found. It began to appear to her that by getting her needs met in these different groups she was "kicking Hamtramck to the curb," or turning her back on where she was from. She grew uncomfortable about the fact that she was finding ways to grow and develop as a Muslim without offering others like herself a way to gain access to these resources and new perspectives. At this moment, she experienced a shift in how she saw herself vis-à-vis the community. She was no longer a junior member who, feeling powerless against the elders who did not listening to her suggestions, was resentfully walking away. Instead, emboldened by the way the RIS speakers reflected her own point of view, she saw herself as an integral member of the Hamtramck ummah who could overcome any obstacles that stood in the way in order to make the changes that she knew to be right for the community. Tajlia continues:

> It wasn't just me. And all of us who were there from Hamtramck kept talking about Hamtramck and how the youth are set back. So when we came back, at first the spirit continued back home with all of them and we got lots of people were involved. We started from scratch --- gathering ideas and topics girls wanted to know about and branched out.
>
> We came back and instead of asking people, you know, the older women, can we do this, can we do that, we kind of took it over and did it. You know. So technically, I am not the official titled youth group leader. But then at the same time, I just go there and kind of talk. And like any time one of the older women want to say something, the ones who are the official leaders, I let them have their way too, but then I kind of mix it up. And then after I bring up a topic when I am

speaking, I ask the girls, how do you apply this to your own life, and what do you think, and what do you have to add. Instead of just, ok, what did you learn today, and then having repeat everything that they heard. And that's the main difference, that's the main thing we do differently. And I honestly don't think I am a professional or anything like that. I always have to research whatever I talk about.

And the way it used to be in the older ladies' program, it used to be really boring. Like Islam is everything, religion is helpful, like those kind of really general statements that don't really make sense to your own life. So that's my main goal is to make it relevant for their own lives. And I tried to make them think, like outside of the box, to ask questions**,** like the way I learned in college, I try to do it with them. Also making them all be friends, making them talk to one another, and have a good friendly environment to be in, like think of us as their sisters, and they can come to us and talk to us about their problems, rather than getting messed up in the wrong crowds and not have anyone to go look to for help.

Instead of having it once a week, we made it more connected, like we have an email group. We have a Facebook group. I try to keep in touch with them as often as possible. And a lot of them are my friends too. And that makes it a little bit easier, but it helps them too, with learning about religion. I tell them, you know, if you are going through something now, we can relate to you, we know how it feels. Because sometimes when I was growing up, even when I was among my own friends, sometimes I would feel like I had no one else to talk to, like I was the only one with these problems, and I don't want these girls to have to feel that same way.

[….]. And I am sure that they wouldn't be able to go to an older woman and talk about this, and say this is what happened and stuff when it comes to struggles that they have about things like dating… .So like, this one girl came in for one of the youth groups, and she came in for just one day, so it wasn't like we could work with her long term. And she was struggling with dating. And she said, do you think I am bad? And I said, well, what do you understand about it from the religion, from what you have been taught? And how does or relate to everything you see going on around you? Because we can't ignore the reality that everyone is doing it, its gotten to be common with us. But I was telling her, its sometimes easier to notice what we can't do rather than what we can do. And I tried to work around with it, and she was like I understand you are giving me advice. I try not to be like, you can't do this or that, and that's that. I try to say that this is what is expected of you.

And I am sure that they wouldn't be able to go to an older woman and talk about this, and say this is what happened and stuff. They can't just go up to their moms or even their aunts, or any older woman. Its like this barrier thing. I don't think some of the older ladies are as… they don't know how people are here. Some of the mothers just stay in their house all the time. And that's what's expected of them. So, they will have problems with English, or they won't know how to drive.

> They don't talk to the neighbors. And they will encourage their daughters only to stay with the Bengalis, and not to make friends with the white kids. So what do you learn from that? So we encourage the girls to go out more, to be more interactive, to talk to more people that you don't know. Even with my mom, I think she learned a lot through us, what we learned. Its not the other way around, where you would originally think your parents are teaching you everything, or giving you guidance. But then if they didn't know the issues you are going through, then how can they help you? I mean if you have older sisters, that are willing to talk to us, and take time to explain to us, then that's one way or learning. But, then, some kids don't have that. So I have seen girls open up and talk about things. And they can talk to me about the different things that are going on, One of the girls, last time, she said, "well, I feel like I belong here, and I don't feel like I'm different from all of you." And that really touched my heart. Because that's not what I expected to hear from this particular girl, but I am glad that she can come to someplace, I am glad she can come to a place where she feels that she belongs.

Like Nabeela, Tajlia's motivation to be a youth leader stemmed, in part, from her sense of frustration with how the older generation was running things. Both leaders were critical of the emphasis that was placed on rote learning and memorization in these groups, when they instead were interested in teaching about religion through dialogues, exchanges, and interactions. They also were unhappy with the kinds of hierarchies that existed in women's mosque groups and halaqa.

In both narratives, there was an emphasized the importance of having a young adult, or peer leader for pre-teens and adolescence in the community. Both Nabeela and Tajlia explained that the young girls in the Yemeni and Bangladeshi communities were dealing with complicated social and sexual issues that the older generation could not begin to appreciate, identify with or understand beyond just saying, "don't do it." The leaders explained how the girls would just not feel comfortable talking about issues relating to their struggles over dating and sexuality with parents or older leaders because there might be social consequences or judgment involved. Having gone through these

experiences themselves, both Nabeela and Tajlia felt that they were in a good position to guide other teens.

What gave both Nabeela and Tajlia a sense that they were qualified or able to take on a position of religious authority in the community was not anything that was handed down to them by the elders in the community that they had learned from all their lives. Instead, both narratives center on what they found in a journey away from the community as the source of what led them to return to the community with different eyes, and somehow self-authorized to take on a leadership position. For Nabeela, it was the cumulative experiences that she had as an Islamic studies major at Wayne State University that gave her a sense of her own ability to be a leader authority. For Tajlia, it was a combination of attending university, being involved with campus groups like the MSA, and then, perhaps most powerfully, it was her experience attending a conference where she engaged with some compelling Islamic scholars that she cited as really connecting her to a sense of calling as a religious leader in the community. Both girls used the kinds of experiences they had in the academic and conference setting as a guide for their own leadership and teaching styles. They wanted girls to "think outside of the box" about their religion, and to develop critical thinking skills by "learning to find out what questions they wanted to ask." Interestingly, although these experiences brought Nabeela and Tajlia into an expanded circuit of Islamic scholarship and into contact with people from far away from home, they also in each case directed the two women back to Hamtramck, and back to their communities of origin, but with "a different mindset."

2.9 Flag Mural

One mid-summer morning, I met Nabeela at her house 10 am. Working in along with a larger project organized by local chapters of the Muslim Student Association, she had organized a group of girls from the halaqa to meet and do some volunteer work in Detroit with two organizations. One of these was Blightbusters, which helps dismantle abandoned housing in Detroit, and the other was Artists' Village, which was working in conjunction with them and also finding other ways to physically improve the impoverished neighborhood. She and Saleema, a Pakistani university student, were waiting for me on the stoop. Nabeela pointed out that they were dressed in old clothes that they didn't mind getting dirty, in an apologetic fashion as to excuse them for how they looked. Nabeela was wearing a light blue abayyah with a dark blue scarf. She stretched a span of the material, and showed me that it was made of thick, heavy cloth that wouldn't rip during work. Saleema was wearing a black abayya with red and gold sparking beaded designs on it, which she said was very old, but which looked too special to work in, to my eyes.

Nabeela was driving, and I navigated us from Hamtramck, through Highland Park, and across Seven Mile to Artist's Village, using her palm pilot. We picked up some other members of the halaqa group on the way there. These were Zahra, Rahiq, and Lamiah, three sophomore high school students from River Valley Academy, so we had a pretty full car. Other members of the halaqa had found their own means of transportation and were going to meet us there. On the way there, Nabeela was playing a mixed-CD of Muslim bands, including Native Deen, Outlandish and Sami Yusef. As soon as the two high school girls got in the car, she skipped to a hip-hop song called "Small Deeds" by

Native Deen and pumped it loud. The high school girls cheered and chanted along to the lyrics. We must have made quite a sight driving down East Davidson toward Seven Mile, with the windows rolled down, booming hip hop and pounding on the seats and dashboard to keep the time, the girls with the ends of their hijabs flapping in the breeze. As Nabeela knew when she hit play, the lyrics and sentiments of the song would provide the perfect background for a group of young Muslims on their way to carry out volunteer cleanup work in the community:

> Picking up trash on the path in a flash
> Taking glass from the grass, as you pass to your class
> A smile goes a mile and is sure worthwhile
> When a brother's hostile, and has been for awhile
> Put a dollar every day in the sadaqah (charity)
> It may be small but you do it for the baraka (blessing)
> I know you're saving for the Polo and the Nautica
> A poor student but you do it just to please Allah
>
> …. That might be the deed that you need to succeed
> That might be the deed that will so please Allah
> That you’re forgiven the sinning you did when you were living
> It's a small little thing that can cling and just ring
> And will bring the blessing from Allah Who's the King
> We pass on the deeds cause they seem all small
> But it might be the deed that's the best of them all
> Mad when see all the passes I took
> On these small little deeds I just overlook

We gathered together at Artist’s Village where we found about twenty-five other young people had assembled. This included about fifteen young women, some from the Hamtramck group, others from a Dearborn halaqa, and others from MSA. There were also about ten young men, some from MSA, and some from a boy’s youth halaqa run by an MSA leader. I recognized Salma, a young teacher who was the leader of a Dearborn youth halaqa, and who had been a guest lecturer one time at Nabeela’s group, who was there with her girls. Altogether, the MSA and halaqa members had come to Artist’s

village from Detroit, Dearborn, Sterling Heights, Warren, Canton, Hamtramck. They were Yemeni, Lebanese, Italian (a convert to Islam) Pakistani, and other ethnicities.

The group of us began to settle in. We opened folding chairs in the front room, which was an art classroom with student drawings on the walls and long worktables that had been pushed aside. There was also some second hand furniture thrown about the room, such as overstuffed chairs and a display counter with just a few found objects in it, giving the room a funky, hip look. We arranged folding chairs in an oval to accommodate the rectangular room, boys on one half of the circle and girls on the other. Most of the girls were wearing abayyas, but some, like Salma were wearing pants, long T-shirts, and headscarves. The boys were just wearing shorts or pants, and T-shirts.

Salma called the group to order. She let us know that MSA meetings always start with da'wa, then reflections, then activities. We would then end with more reflections about how the work had gone. She asked for one of the brothers to lead the da'wa. No one immediately responded. Then Nabeela said, "it doesn't have to be a brother, it can be a sister." So one of the girls raised her hand, and she led the da'wa. We all put our heads down and opened our hands in front of our chests as she asked for blessings on behalf of us all.

We were sitting in the main room within Artist Village, a large, sprawling complex in four buildings connected together with courtyards that contain sitting areas and a vegetable garden. It is a collective that had been formed to provide the community with art education and to help beautify the community. Artist's Village often teamed up on projects with Blightbusters, an organization that had started twenty years ago to rehabilitate or demolish abandoned houses in Detroit and rejuvenate neighborhoods.

Salma reminded us that some of those assembled here today had worked with Blightbusters/Artist's Village the previous February, when MSA had gathered volunteers to clear out a house that was going to be renovated. A young Artist Village leader named Rick explained that the houses that are renovated are then sold at a discount to low-income families as a way of bringing life to Detroit. And, Artist Village was started only two years before our visit, to work on the artistic side of things. They give classes and paint murals in the neighborhood as part of an effort to beautify the city. They also have other creative programs and projects going on, such as poetry slams and music. The leaders then explained that the tasks that they would have us working on that day would be to paint a mural on the back of the four Artist Village buildings, on the street just behind Lahser Street. The second task was to help clear the rubble from a house that Blightbusters had recently demolished.

At some point during this orientation, a young white man came in, looking for a poetry slam rehearsal activity that was going on in the back room. He glanced around the room and his face registered confusion and something that looked like alarm. Then, he quickly took a few steps back, almost out the door. One of the leaders who recognized him, called him back: "Wait! You are in the right place! Don't worry, I think they are just over there in the back!" As he crossed through the room, the Muslim volunteers kept their gaze down and there were a few moments of lip-twitching silence. Finally, when the poetry-slam attendee was out of earshot, Salma offered some comments in an attempt to turn the feeling of rejection that the startled look had made them feel into something positive.

> Hey….OK, well, he must have been freaking out seeing all these strange brown Muslims when he was expecting to see his friends. See Muslims here in Detroit,

> we are ghareeeb here, strange to them. But the mural will be a way for us to leave our mark on the city. Come on—this is going to be a real Muslim image in Detroit!

After the orientation meeting was over, the volunteers were directed to work on picking up trash and glass in the neighborhood about two or three blocks around the building, just like the Native Deen song had suggested.

When the van arrived to take volunteers to the demolition site, I went along with Nabeela and some of the other Hamtramck girls and boys to work there. By the time we arrived, there were already about fifty people at the site. They were African Americans from Christian groups. Many people wore T-shirts identifying their group. Those from MSA were given aprons with the group's insignia to protect our clothes. This led the other workers to nickname us "the cookout group" jokingly. "Why are you wearing aprons? This ain't no cookout!" The volunteers at the site were smashing big concrete blocks into smaller pieces with sledgehammers. One of the young women from the Christian group advised that we all close our eyes very tight when we do this, because there were no safety goggles. Some of the Muslim girls went at the concrete blocks with a great deal of energy and motivation, lifting the heavy sledgehammers over their shoulders and slamming them down as if they did it every day. The rest of us stood in a chain and carried the large pieces of debris hand to hand up to the dump truck. After a while, the truck was full (they had been at it long before we got there) and they had to drive the truck off to be emptied. Most of the volunteers went on break then.

After a couple of hours at the demolition site, Nabeela and I went back to the Artist's Village to see how the mural group was doing and see if they needed help finishing up. By that time, the mural had already evolved into a ribbon of connected flags

representing the homelands of the mural-painters. There were Yemeni, Pakistani, Lebanese and Italian flags and some others. When the painting and cleanup was over, we had pizza and reflections from all group members on what the volunteer experiences had meant to them. One girl in her early twenties narrated:

> I am a hijabi. And as a hijabi, I am not seen as an individual in this country. I am seen as "a Muslim," "one of them." So, if I do something stupid, its not just me who looks stupid. Instead, they will point at me and say, "See that, I told you those Muslims are stupid, look at that one. [Everyone laughs]. So, when I walked into the worksite today, with all those people already there hard at work, I felt very self-conscious. It was like I could hear people thinking: What are all those girls doing here, in their headscarves and abayyas? What good could they possibly do? But then we went to work, we moved all that concrete. Then, we tied our abayyas back, tucked in our scarves, and started breaking up the blocks with sledgehammers as soon as the others put them down. I felt proud of us as Muslim girls. It was like we showed them something about Muslims, now they will think differently.

A teenage boy recounted:

> I felt self-conscious too. They saw all of us Muslims coming, they didn't know what to make of us. But then they started asking us who we were and how we got into this, and it felt good to be able to talk about what we were doing as Muslims. They saw our MAS aprons, and started calling us: "the cookout crew." It was funny.

One pre-teen boy commented:

> What did I learn from this experience? Well, I saw all those sisters with those sledgehammers, and I have to tell you—watch out for those sisters. I wasn't expecting it but they just got right into it [he makes a gesture lifting the hammer over his shoulder and bringing it down] and I tell you, we have to watch out for them [Loud laughter].

And one of the young women mural worker said:

> For the mural, at first Rick was just painting design ideas and the rest of us got together to talk about what we wanted. Then we came up with this idea, for the flags, and we started painting them. We painted flags because we wanted people to know something about who it was who had painted the mural. We each had our flag up there, Yemeni, Lebanese, Pakistani, what have you, so that we know that we are not just "those oil people."

> Some people drove by in their cars, and stopped to watch us. One lady got out her camera and started taking pictures. A girl went over to ask why she had stopped. The lady said, it was so incredible to see all of us out there, painting the flags. And our symbol is up there too, for MAS, we painted that in there too. Its nice to put something of our culture, of ourselves, out there in Detroit, someplace else outside of Dearborn.

And the final comment came from one of the male MAS leaders:

> But how does this all relate to Islam? Why is it important for Muslims to do this kind of service? Its because of what Islam says about caring for our neighbors. If we don't look out for others, and set a standard for how people should be treated and cared for, who is going to look out for us? If we see and injustice being done to any group of people, and we sweep it under the rug, that same injustice will happen to us someday and no one will be there to defend us. There is that saying by that Jewish guy from the holocaust "They came for the blacks, and we didn't defend the blacks, they came for the poor and we didn't defend the poor. . . . they came for us, and no one was there to defend us.

2.10 Conclusion

I found that for some Bangladeshi and Yemeni women in the Hamtramck/Detroit area, participation at the mosque and home-based halaqa groups was a deeply fulfilling and important part of their sense of their religious identity and sense of themselves as responsible members of the community. Many attended the mosque frequently, using as a space for worship, religious education, and community networking activities with a social component such as celebrations and discussion groups, and some also engaged in home-based halaqa groups that served many of the same functions.

Women's participation in the Hamtramck/Detroit mosques was experienced as a novel and actively expanding phenomenon that was also a source of contestation among some Muslim communities. While women played a central role as congregants, leaders, and teachers at some mosques, the founders and boards of other mosques tended to discourage or de-emphasize women's involvement based on various reasons and

philosophies, some connected to interpretation of religion, and some to cultural practice. Some women resented these exclusions, connecting it to backward restrictive attitudes from the country of origin.

Indeed, the great majority of women mosque participants that I spoke to had rarely, or never, visited the mosque in the country of origin, considering it to be a male space. These women described practicing alone of with family in the home country, or being part of home-based halaqa groups. For Yemeni and Bangladeshi women, the move of women's halaqa from the majlis [living room] to the masjid [mosque] was deeply valued on a number of levels. First, in practical terms, the mosque afforded a larger and more centralized space for women's meetings than did the homes of halaqaat members. On a more symbolic level, the move from the majlis to the mosque for prayer and halaqa also centered women's worship, educational and community building activities in a space of status and esteem in the community.

I found that most mosque and halaqa congregations in the Hamtramck/Detroit area were composed of a heavy concentration of one ethnicity or another. I found that some mosque and halaqa members valued this ethnic concentration as a comforting feature of the mosque affording an experience a sense of collectivity along familiar linguistic and cultural lines. Others considered the ethnic concentration incidental and temporary, and looked forward, instead, to an ideal of multi-ethnic mosques, which would facilitate interchange and education among various communities.

Besides being divided along ethnic lines, some women's congregations were divided according to age, because the different generations were seen as needing to focus on different topic and activities. The leaders and teachers of youth coming from both

older and younger generations emphasized the special needs that the daughters of the community have for religious education based on their status as immigrants or as the children of immigrants. Religious leaders describe the confusing and difficult landscape faced by young girls who are challenged to maintain the Muslim ethical standards of modesty, chastity and piety in the difficult terrain of the schools and the streets, where opposite values are sometimes encouraged.

Youth leaders such as Nabeela and Tajlia feel that young adult or peer leaders have a special role to play in the education of the younger generation, because they believe that the older generation of religious leaders and parents lack the knowledge and experience to guide daughters because they did not grow up in the US themselves. However, these charismatic young leaders were not necessarily elected, recognized and authorizes by he older generation to do this work within the community. Rather, they each describe a somewhat frustrating and discouraging relationship with the older generation of Muslim leaders, which caused them to break away and fid their own paths. Each leader described their sense of calling, legitimacy, and authority to take on positions of leadership in the community as having developed away from the local community, through university-level education or through participation in national-level collective activity such as RIS and MSA.

I found that that the ummah ideal, in terms of a feeling of shared responsibility among Muslims for each other's well being across ethnicity and race, to be especially embraced by the two young halaqa leaders, Nabeela and Tajlia, who were featured in this chapter. In fact, they each actively extended the ideal of faith-based fellowship past religious lines in fostering and encouraging in their youth an active sense of

responsibility for anyone around them who was in need. Both mosque leaders encouraged their youth to get involved in charitable and volunteer work in Hamtramck and the surrounding communities, and created opportunities for them to do so, as when Nabeela linked her local halaqa group to an MSA community revitalization project. These young adult religious leaders also emphasize the importance of helping youth deal with a stigmatized minority status and maintain their pride as Muslims. The youth who participated in the revitalization project described their volunteer work alongside of other, non-Muslim workers as a powerful experience of belonging and integration, experienced through having their contribution and community stewardship recognized and valued as coming from Muslims.

Chapter Three

Private, Public, Charter:
School Adaptations for Hamtramck's Muslim Daughters

This chapter examines how Yemeni and Bangladeshi Muslim students, families, and community leaders in Hamtramck are negotiating issues relating to secondary schooling in the city, focusing in particular on the education of adolescent daughters. Schools are a place of intensified integration or assimilation for new immigrant families (Gibson 1988; Olneck 2003; Bhatia and Ram 2004). Entry into the public school system represents a mode of disciplining for students as well as the family as a whole (Ong 2003) in that families experience the secondary effects of the kinds of experiences, pressures, influences, and schedules that students confront in the school context. Participation in the public school context may represent a particular challenge for some Muslim students and families who may experience various kinds of tension as they encounter aspects of the school culture which are at odds with the values and behaviors practiced in the home, and within the extended family or ethnic and religious community (Haddad and Lummis 1987; Haw 1998; Berns McGown 1999; Haddad and Esposito 2000; Sarroub 2001; Zine 2001; Haddad and Smith 2002; Sarroub 2002; Gilbert 2004; Haddad 2004; Schmidt ; Bartels 2005; Sarroub 2005; Basford 2007; El-Haj 2007; Bayoumi 2008a; Haddad and Balz 2008; Joseph and Riedel 2008; Lindkvist 2008; Howell 2010).

Tensions experienced in particular by Muslim students and families may include the way that the daily, weekly and yearly schedule of the public school contradicts the rhythms of the Muslim calendar, as concerns prayer, fasting, and other modes of religious

observation (Laguerre 2004; Lindkvist 2008; Howell 2010). They may include the way that schools do not always cater to the dietary needs of students who wish to keep halal And, as is most central to this chapter, these kinds of tensions may include deep-seated concerns about types of cross-gender mixing, visibility, and student inter-relationships that are considered normative in American schools, but which are perceived by some Muslims as going against their standards for morality and ethical comportment.

In most mainstream American schools, there is a high degree of gender mixing through all the years of education. Indeed, it can be argued that interacting with opposite sex peers, teachers, and staff, and following the accords of official school policies in a setting that is officially supposed to be as gender-blind as possible, can be considered a form of socialization to American liberal secular norms. Furthermore, American schools are also understood within the mainstream as a primary site for pre-teens and adolescents to begin to work out and express their sexual identities in public and where it is common to find forms of dating and sexual activity even among junior high schools students.

Some Muslim students and families reject the development of friendships and intimacies between unmarried youth because of the strong value placed on limiting sexuality and romance to the martial relationship only. For these Muslim families, it is not only high school dating that is considered inappropriate, but also the various unregulated forms of mixing and close interaction between girls and boys that take place as everyday occurrences in the school settings. In the world-view of some Muslim students and families, rather than representing a time for experimenting with early cross-gender intimacies, adolescence signals a time for the careful regulation of interaction between young women and men. Strategies, practices, and conventions of cross-gender

avoidance are developed to protect individual and collective forms of morality and to help guarantee the achievement of a good marriage and a good life in the future. For some Muslim youth, these modes of cross-gender avoidance and segregation are embraced as a meaningful part of the cultivation of a pious self. For some Muslim youth, they are strategies that enhance their self-esteem as Muslims and are seen as allowing them to advance in the faith. These strategies and practices are also valued as a way to achieve status, dignity, and a good reputation within one's extended family and community.

In this chapter, I discuss a range of different perspectives held by Yemeni and Bangladeshi Muslim young women and their families about cross-gender interaction and friendship as these relate to ideal forms of dating and marriage. I also discuss how marriage and gender ideologies impact attitudes about proper modes of presence and behavioral boundaries in the co-educational secondary school environment. The chapter also details different practices that Yemeni and Bangladeshi Muslim students, families, and community leaders have developed to foster what are seen as moral and appropriate educational milieu for adolescents in the city. The first strategy that I discuss is how some Yemeni and Bangladeshi youth creatively navigate the public school setting by selectively participating in some aspects of school life but not others in a way that allows them to maintain acceptable standards of Muslim ethics in an environment that is perceived to be somewhat at odds with their values (Sarroub 2005; Lindkvist 2008). A second strategy that is discussed in this chapter is participation in the Muslim-run and Muslim-majority private and charter schools[40] that have opened up in the area over the

[40] A note about usage of "public" vs. "charter:" Charter schools are public schools in that they are supported by public funds. However, for the purposes of this chapter I am using "public schools" to refer

past few years, which some Muslim families believe to offer a safer and more culturally appropriate environment for the education of adolescents due in part to the relatively high concentration of Muslim students, families, teachers and administrators who participate in them (Basford 2007; Howell 2010). A third strategy involves how some pre-adolescent and adolescent daughters are engaging in homeschooling programs that are seen as freeing them from the negative aspect of mixed-gender education during a key time while also meeting their educational aims. I also discuss how some married Yemeni young women choose the homeschooling option for secondary education as a way to facilitate beginning their own families and pursuing their educations.

The chapter analyzes the meaning that the various educational adaptive strategies chosen by Hamtramck Muslims hold both for the students and families who practice them and for the larger, non-Muslim community with whom they share these spaces. Thus, the material upon which this chapter is based includes formal and informal interviews with Muslim as well as non-Muslim students, families, administrators, board members, other school personnel, and concerned community members who are in some way involved with the school system. The variety of perspectives includes here allows for a discussion of the contestations or debates surrounding Muslim schooling practices, and for different perspectives on the way that these innovations are impacting the landscape of the Hamtramck school system as a whole.

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exclusively to the traditional public schools only, and "charter schools" to refer to those public schools that are managed independently of the wider school system via a charter company. This is for the sake of convenience only, and is not meant to imply that charter schools are any less public than the traditional public schools.

3.1 Yemeni Withdrawal

Some Yemeni families in Hamtramck withdraw their daughters from school once they reach adolescence. Withdrawing girls from school is a controversial practice that is heavily criticized both within and outside of the Yemeni community in Hamtramck. The logic of withdrawing girls from school is based on a complex set of factors. As discussed in Chapter One, mixed-gender secondary education facilities are not a common feature of the rural villages communities from which many Hamtramck Yemeni families originate. Sending adolescent girls into the mixed-gender setting goes against some of the logics of everyday gender division that are practiced as a sign of morality and status in Yemen (Aswad 1994; Alwujude 2000; Sarroub 2005). Furthermore, some families consider there to be a risk to reputation associated with Yemeni girls attending mixed-gender schools in their pre-teen and teenage years, which might interfere with their ability to make a good marriage (Sarroub 2005). This is compounded by general perceptions within the Yemeni as well as the non-Yemeni community, as discussed below, of Hamtramck's public high school and middle school as representing chaotic environments where students regularly evade the control of teachers and staff. Additionally, some Yemeni families withdraw their daughters from school at a young age so that the daughters may be married (Aswad 1994; Sarroub 2005). These marriages take place either during an extended trip back to Yemen or, may be carried out in the United States if the spouse is another Yemeni American.

Yemeni community members and leaders, as well as public school personnel, generally represent the absence or early withdrawal of Yemeni girls from school as a practice that is on the wane, as the community grows more accustomed to American

educational norms and learns to navigate their way around the public school system. Yet Hamtramck Pubic School teachers, administrators, staff, and students still describe witnessing a pattern of attrition in which the number of Yemeni girls in a cohort begins to shrink starting in the middle school years and then grows smaller every year. The Yemeni students and families that I talked to had a range of feelings about the early withdrawal of Yemeni girls. Some who defended the practice argued that the co-ed school was just not an appropriate place for Muslim girls. Others represented it as only a temporary measure, an appropriate part of a cultural adjustment process that would subside over time. However, many Yemenis community members who shared their opinions with me positioned themselves as being quite critical of the practice, unless alternative education options such as homeschooling were being pursued seriously as an alternative.

Bilqis' daughter Lubna was the first school age Yemeni teenager I came to know in Hamtramck who was not attending school. Lubna was sixteen years old when I first got to know her, and the oldest among Bilqis' five children who had come to the US. She was fourteen when the family first arrived. At that time, the family had sent all of the other male and female children of school age to the public elementary school that was just a few doors down from their house. Yet Lubna was past elementary school age at the time of her arrival and thus was not eligible to attend this neighborhood school with her siblings. Instead, she stayed at home with her mother and youngest siblings while the others went to school. After her younger sister Kawthar graduated from the public elementary school at age thirteen, Kawthar was allowed to move on to the middle school level. After I got to know the family, I began asking Bilqis and Lubna why Lubna had never been enrolled at school, while Kawthar was allowed to go as a pre-teen. But I

found that they did not want to talk about it with me, perhaps because they thought I was going to be judgmental about it.

I brought up the issue of Lubna's schooling with Dunya, a close friend and neighbor of Bilqis' family. Dunya explained that since the family was trying to get Lubna married in the next few years, they were particularly concerned about her reputation. For example, she explained, it would have bad consequences for Lubna's reputation, and by extension, for the family's reputation, if Lubna was seen walking home with male students, or if she was involved with horseplay or any kind of disciplinary incident involving students misbehaving. According to Dunya, it didn't matter that some of the potential spouses for Lubna were situated far away in another country, as "there is a gossip chain extending from Hamtramck all the way back to Yemen." Dunya told me that the kind of gossip that might injure a girls' reputation travels particularly fast, and news about a girl's misbehavior potentially could travel "from Hamtramck High School, to Ibb, and back to Hamtramck" so quickly that the girls' family might find out about it from extended family in Yemen before they even heard from the school. Dunya further explained that another reason that Kawthar was allowed to go on to middle school while Kawthar had not been was because she had been accepted into an "Arab" charter school which had recently opened in a neighborhood near their own, which, as discussed later in the chapter, had a significantly better reputation among Yemeni families than the public middle school. The charter school had not yet been opened when the family had first moved arrived in Hamtramck. If it had been open, Dunya speculated, things could have turned out differently for Lubna.

As in Dunya's narrative, the issues of marriage and reputation, and specifically the challenges of navigating the arranged marriage system, almost always surfaced as key points in my discussions with Yemeni students and families about their decision-making processes involving the education of daughters. "Arranged marriage" is a broad term encompassing a wide range of different ways in which young people work together with their families in order to make marriage decisions. At the core of these various kinds of arranged marriage practices is the Islamic ideal holding marriage to be a contract between two families rather than an affair between two individuals (Abu-Laban 1991; Ba-Yunus 1991:234; Qureshi 1991a; Qureshi 1991b; Waugh, et al. 1991; Kibria 2009). In line with this, the typical or idealized form of takes place among a known group of families in a specific network. However, different kinds of non-familial networks of associations may also be involved. Additionally, the best marriage matches for Yemeni girls were also sometimes considered to be with young men who were members of extended kin groups who were still in the home country. In their potential to serve as a female marital agent in this respect, the Yemeni American young woman gains a certain amount of status, because her decision to marry could greatly enhance the life chances of a potential spouse as well as collectively build the resources for the extended family unit (Sarroub 2005). As reflected in Dunya's account, the teenage years, in which young women begin to be seen as eligible for marriage, yet are not yet married, are construed as sensitive and liminal, but powerful, time for some young Yemeni and Bangladeshi Muslim women.

While explaining her perception of Lubna's situation, Dunya, who was then in her early twenties and a mother of two, recounted that she herself had been in a position similar to Lubna regarding the negotiation of her education when she was a teenager.

Having arrived in Hamtramck when Dunya was a child around the age of five, Dunya's family had enrolled her in a public elementary school in close proximity to their home. After graduating, Dunya had gone on to the public middle school. Yet, just as she was finishing her first year at the middle school, her father passed away after a long illness. At that point, her brother, a young man just out of his teens, took over some of the decision-making capacities that had been held by the father as the head of the family. Dunya explained that while her father had always been encouraging and enthusiastic about the idea of Dunya pursuing her education, for her older brother, the idea of Dunya remaining in school was causing too much stress. After the father's death, the family felt itself to be on rocky ground socially and financially. Now that Dunya's father was gone, if something happened at the school to compromise Dunya's reputation, the family would have less of a chance to recover. Therefore, the brother decided that Dunya should be withdrawn from the school. Dunya recounted the story with regret. "No girls ever want to be taken out of school early, they all want to go to school" she explained. "But this is how it goes sometimes."

In her late teens, Dunya went to Yemen, accompanied by her family, and secured what she believed to have been a particularly good marriage. It was to a Yemeni man who had completed a university education in Sana'a and who was fluent in English. Although Dunya had been in school until 7th grade, her reading level was quite low, to the extent that she had sometimes had trouble reading package directions on food items or the driver's instruction manual, which impeded her ability to get a license. Therefore, even though she was an American citizen and had been educated in the US, when Dunya's Yemeni husband arrived, he was more literate in English than she was. Dunya

was highly motivated to keep working on increasing her literacy, especially through working on her children's homework with them when they reached school age. She and her husband planned to keep both their male and female children in school for as long as possible, and Dunya particularly emphasized their shared hopes and expectations that both her son and daughter would graduate from high school and attend college.

Karima, a middle-aged mother of three who worked as a cafeteria aide in one of the Hamtramck charter schools shared a similar story. Arriving in the US from Yemen as a child in 1987:

> I only went to school for three years, that's it. Sixth, seventh, and eighth. In the first year I was in the bilingual, and then by the second year, for seventh grade, they moved me to the regular, they thought I didn't need it anymore, because my English was real good and stuff.
>
> Then I stopped. First of all, I told you, we weren't too much into education in those days. My dad was the type that wanted us to be educated. But there were hardly any at those times that wanted us to be educated like that. He was, but at those times, we were getting married when we were young. So, I got married, and he wanted me, my father still wanted me to go to school, but you know, when you are married, in a different house, you don't live with your parents no more, you are under your husband's decision, that's how it is in for Arabs, and in Islam, too, you gotta listen to what the guy says. And he didn't want me to, during those times, and things like that. And then I guess, having the kids, and the years pass by and you know.
>
> In those days I was ok with it. Now it makes you feel like, oh, why did I do that? You think back later on, and that's what I always tell my kids, is that you go to school, you learn, because our parents never went to school, and they have suffered and worked. The women don't work, the men work. And my dad was supporting my family, which is me, my mom, and my brothers and sisters back home, besides his family. You know what I mean. And they work day and night to do this for the family. But here, al humdilillah, everything is good, the women can work, the men work, we tell the kids, don't worry about it, we get you guys everything. Just pay attention to school, its gonna get you somewhere, and later on you will see, my mom and dad were right, you know, you are doing it for yourself, not for anybody else. So, things like marriage could wait.
>
> So, now, its not happening as much as it used to happen. I don't know. Its gotten a lot better. Because they, would used to think, don't think about education that

> much, and marry them off when they are young. And that was you know part of the culture. But now that they are letting them go to school, and not getting married too early, you know, they are choosing their own thing and its more freedom than it was before.

Like Dunya, Karima also discontinued her education at the middle-school level based on the decision of the male head of household. Like Dunya, she regrets that she was not able to pursue her education to a higher level. In their narratives, both women connected their own stories with that of their daughters, whom they hoped and expected would complete secondary school and perhaps college as well. Based on conversations and plans made with their husbands, both women felt certain that a future of education and career would be open to their daughters as a normative part of growing up Yemeni in Hamtramck. The attitudes of these women and other Yemeni community members I interviewed in Hamtramck reflect a kind of shift in which the norm of withdrawal from school was being replaced by a norm of school completion and career for daughters. The young Yemeni women who were attending high school and college during the time of my fieldwork in Hamtramck represented the pioneers of this change, as reflected in the stories that follow.

3.2 Race and Religion at Hamtramck High School

As noted in the first chapter of the dissertation, Aisha, the youngest of Humah's daughters was twenty years old and a student at a local community college when I got to know her in Hamtramck. Aisha was born in the same small village in Ibb that her mother and grandmother had been born in, with a population consisting of about 100 families. While living in the village, Aisha attended a mixed elementary and middle school for

boys and girls in her village where she completed the 6th grade level. This was the highest level available for girls and the point at which they normally stopped attending schools, while the boys would travel to a nearby village to continue their educations. Aisha's family moved to Sana'a soon after that, to facilitate the process of applying for a US visa. In Sana'a, Aisha and her sister Maysan had the opportunity to attend an all-female middle school for the two years the family remained there waiting for their papers to get processed. This gave her a chance to participate in English language education, which she could not have done in the village.

The Sana'a educational experience gave Aisha some background preparation in English that most Yemeni from rural areas do not have when arriving in Hamtramck. Soon after arrival in the country as young teens, Aisha and Maysan enrolled in an alternative educational program called Horizons that was for high-school age ESL students. She was in a class of about fifteen other students who were from places such as Yemen, Bangladesh, Albania, and Poland. The program was housed in a facility that was separate from the High School. It had a high faculty to student ratio and good reputation within the community. Aisha quickly advanced through the program and was deemed ready to attend the regular High School within one year. But she had mixed feelings about the High School based on its reputation, and delayed her transition:

> They were saying that Hamtramck High school is bad, that its all fighting. They said its hard, its bad, and its not for everybody. Especially not for the Yemeni girls. My dad had heard it from his friends, and that's what he would tell us. And classmates from Horizons would say that too. Some of them came back from Hamtramck High School. They didn't like it. Jihan that girl, you remember, she was there for two years? And I told you, she failed at the high school on purpose, in order to be allowed to come back to Horizons. But then, when she got back to Horizons, they closed it right away, and that was bad for her. So she went to

> another school, you know, Odyssey? [an area charter school with a Muslim-majority population].

These perceptions of Hamtramck High School as "bad," and as "all fighting," were not limited to the Yemeni community alone. Situated in a large brick building located in near the center of the city, as the city's only public (i.e. non-charter) High School, Ham High serves nearly one thousand students. As a "school of choice" for several years, enrollment in the High School is also open to a limited number of students from Detroit and the surrounding areas. In the context of economic decline and disinvestiture, Hamtramck High School is considered by some students and families to be a failing school. Like other Detroit-area schools, levels of graduation trail significantly behind national averages and student achievement on state-wide tests such as the MEAP are also considered to be quite low (Balfanz and Legters 2004).

Hamtramck High School is known primarily for its extremely high level of racial and ethic diversity and is among the top two or three most heterogeneous school in the state.[41] This ethnic and racial diversity is represented by students and staff as a two-sided coin. On one side, the school's diversity is valued for offering an unusually broad social and cultural educational experience for students. One the other side, the school has come to be known for its elevated levels of student fighting between students that is usually represented as being divided along ethnic or racial lines. There is a tendency for low-level conflicts between individual students to break out cyclically into episodes of aggravated violence encompassing entire groups, or ethnically divided "gangs" of students.

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[41] A 2008 study, found that at least twenty different languages were spoken in Hamtramck public schools. About 40% of students listed English as the language they spoke at home, with large portions of students reporting Bangla, Arabic, Bosnian and Polish as their home languages (Wasacz 2008).

During the time I was in Hamtramck, descriptions of intensive levels of high school student fighting within and just outside of school grounds and police involvement in these incidents would periodically appear on the front page of the Hamtramck Citizen, the city's local weekly paper, and other venues like the Detroit News. These papers consistently attribute the fighting to ethnic or racial tensions among specific groups of students. For example, the article "Simmering Tensions Boil Over in the Melting Pot of Hamtramck" (Kurth 2005) describes how, "what some people call ethic ethnic gangs… punch, beat, and knife each other," and attributes the violence to resentments between specific ethnic/racial groups that are "passed down like old generational family feuds."

The students, alumni, teachers, and staff that I interviewed about the social scene at the school and student fighting also consistently represented student fighting with reference to racial and ethnic categories. In the following account, Moustafa, a recent Hamtramck High School alumnus, used this lens to describe the membership of his football team and to describe some incidents of fighting of which he was a part:

> We had me and another Bengali guy,[42] it was five Arabics, and one black, and three whites. And the black and whites were the biggest we had. And the brown kids, we were small. So, I'm tall, but compared to them, they were huge. So we had a really wacked out team. I mean apparently, white people and brown people don't know how to play together. It sucked! I was so angry. Because you have the brown folks, they try to be Isiah Thomas too much, and they try to be fancy, and then the white kids, they are the ones who are actually trying hard. I told the coach, but then he gets mad at me.
>
> But, socially, we were always there for each other, no matter if I was mad at somebody or whatever. Some kid wanted to jump me because of a girlfriend I had, you know, some kind of stupid high school drama, and I got sent into the gym to practice. Get surrounded by kids with two by fours, and they chase me down the block. I run into the locker room, and I'm all sweaty, and the coach is like, did you already work out? And I was like no, I just got chased in here by a group of kids with baseball bats and two by fours. The team runs out, and its like

[42] Bangladeshis in the city often use the term "Bengali" as a shortened version of Bangladeshi. To my knowledge, there was no population from the region of Bengal in the city.

> 20 on 15 like that, but they didn't do anything, and those other kids left. So we were always there for each other like that.
>
> Those kids who were after me, they were all Bengali, unfortunately. But the bigger fights are usually different races against each other. Its all about racial tension…. Its always Blacks vs. Albanians. Blacks vs. Bengali. Black vs. Arabics. ….And its just over girls or other things. Stupid stuff. Like you are walking down the hallway and bump shoulders. Boom. It just starts right there. I mean the dumb assed things you can think of, they just start.

When I first learned about the ethnic and racial tensions at the high school, I assumed that the tensions would relate, at least in part, to ideologies related to anti-Muslim sentiment. This expectation was due in part with my familiarity with some recent studies of Muslims in the public schools conducted since 9/11 reporting that some Muslim students feel a sense of alienation or scapegoating in the school context based on prejudices and associations that were based on perceptions of their religious differences (Schmidt 2004; Basford 2007; Bayoumi 2008b; Joseph and Riedel 2008) [43].[44]) Yet, Muslim high school students, alumni and staff that I spoke to rarely attributed the tensions or violence they encountered at the public school to any kind of anti-Muslim sentiment. Rather, these tensions were almost always attributed to ethnic and racial differences as set apart from religious. Muslim high school students and alumni that I interviewed individually and in group settings consistently asserted a sense of Muslim centrality in the school. According to a Farzana, a recent Bangladeshi-American almuna:

> Basically, religion was never an issue in the high school. It just never was a hot issue. Because most of us over there are Muslim, I am telling you, most of us are Muslim. If you point out every ten people in a row, like nine out of ten of them are going to be Muslim, or it seems that way sometimes anyway. And so if you picked on us Muslims, then you are going to be in trouble, because we are the

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[43] Bayoumi's literary-ethnographic accounts "Akram," "Omar," and "Rasha," in "How does it Feel to be a Problem offer rich descriptions of this feeling state.

[44] Basford et al.'s study shows how a US East African charter school serves as an "oasis" for its Muslim students, who feel they would otherwise be subjected to "hostility and Islamaphobia" within the area's public schools (2007:3, 20).

> majority and you guys are not. Like we had Bengalis, we had Pakistani Muslims, we had Arab Muslims, we has Bosnian Muslims, we had Albanian Muslims, so we were kind of like overcrowded with Muslims, so you are not going to you know.

Although the nine out of ten ratio of Muslims to non-Muslims that Farzana asserts is certainly too high of an estimate, the assertion of Muslim centrality at the school and the denial of any sense of feeling scapegoated or minoritized as a Muslim was echoed consistently in other interviews that I carried out with Muslims and non-Muslims in the school context.

Other Hamtramck High School alumni explain the position of Muslims at the school as connected to the status of Muslims within the city as a whole. According to Farzana's friend Tajlia, another recent Bangladeshi American Ham High alumna:

> Even when 9/11 happened, it wasn't really like an earthquake here in Hamtramck, because Islam is already into the culture here, and everyone is already accepting of it.
>
> Before I used to think, and there are those common questions: Are you going to have a harder time getting a job? Are you going to have a harder time getting into a school? But obviously, we are in a metropolitan area. And in places like Hamtramck and Detroit, its not always a problem, because people are more open to different things, and they are not as narrow-minded. So it hasn't been a huge problem here.

3.3 Yemeni Girls at Hamtramck High School

Despite the strong Muslim presence, Aisha, like many other Yemeni young women in Hamtramck, had been confronted by deeply negative portrayal of Hamtramck High School. Aisha, however, had developed a curiosity about Hamtramck High School:

> As for me, I didn't want to go to the charter, wanted to go to the High School. I was excited about the big school and I wanted to finish there. I don't know, I used to hear these bad things about Hamtramck High School, but I still wanted to go,

> and I was hoping to go. But I stayed on at Horizons with Maysan [her older sister] so that we could be together until Maysan graduated. And then in my senior year, I got to go to Hamtramck High School.
>
> I liked it; I mean some teachers I didn't like, some students. But when I got there, I mean everything was new for me, and my experience was good. Everything was new. I started talking to people. I had a lot of Bengali friends, more than the Yemeni girls. I don't know, I used to talk with a lot of Bengali girls, and Pakistanis, and all that. When I graduated from Hamtramck High School in 2007, I was happy just to have this experience at the high school, it was good for me. I went to Horizons, I went to Hamtramck High School, I had experience with both schools.

For some students like Aisha, Hamtramck High School represents an exciting and worthwhile place to attend despite-- or perhaps in part because of-- its notoriety. For some, with its centrality in the city, its bustling halls, and its legends, there is a sense that Hamtramck High School is a place where things happen, a place that brings one into contact with the core of the city. Some Yemeni and Bangladeshi Muslim girls greatly value the high school experience as a mode of inclusion into the mainstream young adult life of the city.

However, rather than entering into the High School's culture of cross-gender interaction and dating, some of these young women self-consciously and strategically engage in individual and collective practices of dress and behavior to mark themselves as set apart from the forms of cross gender interaction that they considered inappropriate at the school. Aisha explains the way she handled this first in the high school, and now in the college context:

> In Islam, they say, and we believe, men and women can't really go together alone for too long. Because if they do, something bad could happen. So, we don't really sit with guys or walk with them, or anything like that. So, you could still talk to the guys at the school, but certain types of talking you would try to avoid, the way I do. If I have to talk to some guy, I will talk to him, about work, about school assignments, and that's about it. That's the point where I stop. I have these red lines, and once I feel that these lines are being crossed, I have to get out of it.

> First of all, if you want to talk to them about work, and there is a point where if the conversation starts to go on to something else, you just have to go change the subject. Or if this happens, then next time you see him, you're just not going to talk to him, just hi, bye, from far away. So you can't really… some times, if he wants to talk to you about something else, maybe it means he likes you, maybe you can't talk to him at all. I don't know, it didn't really happen to me that much.
>
> Because at the high school, it was really diverse, and people know what Yemeni girls are doing. I didn't experience a lot of problems. I usually sat far away from people, just with the girls, you know. When you are at the high school, or at the college, and you are a Muslim lady, you will say: here is a chair next to a girl, and here is a chair next to a boy. So which one are you going to choose? Next to a girl. So this is the way we do it, and we don't have to deal with bad stuff.
>
> But I can talk to the male students. And you know, in Islam, you can talk to a man, but with your scarf on, with your hijab on, when other people are there. And so, I do that. And some people, they take it as a very strict religion, but its not, its really not. If you understand it the way it should be done, it can allow you to do whatever you want, you know. Some people believe, you cannot do this, you cannot do that, this is haram, that is haram. But you can do what you need to do in Islam.

In accordance with her beliefs about appropriate modes of cross-gender interaction, Aisha deliberately avoided close proximity with male students and developing close friendships with them, first in high school, and later in the college context. An important part of this involved a strategy of minimizing conversation and close contact with young men at the school to some degree and especially of avoiding situations of being alone in conversation or in a room with a male student. Yet she did not wish to be so strict with herself as to appear unfriendly and to disallow appropriate forms of cross-gender relationships. In order to negotiate this, Aisha maintained an ongoing and consistent type of vigilance to make sure that she was not getting herself into a cross-gender situation that might go too far. What resulted for Aisha was a constant process of negotiation, experimentation, and self-correcting, where she learned how to navigate contacts with her unrelated young males peers, in a way that she was able to maintain her own comfort

levels while also not unnecessarily cutting herself off from positive and appropriate kinds of interaction.

Besides being vigilant in conversation, another area that was of concern to Aisha and other Muslim students had to do with the kinds of casual kinds of physical contact that tend to occur on a day-to-day level among male and female students and among students and staff at the school.

> A guy comes to you, or a teacher, and wants to shake hands with you. Well we don't shake hands with men; we just talk to them without shaking hands! We have to explain, OK, and this is the point, we don't shake hands! But its more than that, there is other stuff too. Its like sometimes someone is standing next to you, and you are talking and they touch you over here, on the arm [she demonstrates a friendly, jostling touch on the arm]. We don't do that. So at this point, you just have to tell him, you have to explain to him, we don't do that.
>
> You know Jihan, the one I was talking about, she got into an argument with a teacher over this at the high school. She was sitting at the computer and you know how sometimes, the computer teacher is going to come around from the back, and he's gonna touch you here [demonstrates tapping on the back] or here [demonstrates guiding my hand with her hand over the keys]. And she had to tell him, stop! You are not supposed to do that, it's not allowed. Most of the time, we are just going to have to tell them to stop when they do things like that.
>
> Either, you just tell him, the way I do, I just I don't shake hand. Or like Jihan said, I don't want you to touch me like that. Well, but sometimes I do shake hands. At the graduation, I had to because…. Well at the graduation, you know, Principal Jones was handing us certificates. And I just did this from far away [gestures to put hand over heart] so by the time I came to him, he knew that he didn't have to shake my hand. But, in the park, afterward, everyone was crowded around, and shaking hands, and I didn't know what to do, so I shook hands. Yeah… [Voice trails off in a way that expresses both frustration and humor]. Although… I told myself, [laughing], I'm not gonna shake hands, I'm gonna tell them I can't, or I'm gonna move a little and stand behind them, or whatever. But when the time came I just couldn't. I just forgot to do those things, and I was already there, and I had to hake their hands. But it was all right.

Forms of touching including handshakes, collegial pats on the shoulder or back, or a teacher's guiding hand as he positions a students hand correctly over the keyboard occur so regularly and frequently among males and female students and teachers in the

American school context that they often are carried out unconsciously and are often taken for granted. Yet for some Muslims like Aisha and Jihan these forms of physical contact are considered unwelcome, disturbing, inappropriate, compromising and unacceptable. At this point, the young women have to take it upon themselves to educate the teacher or the other students about how to behave with them.

As Aisha describes above, when interacting with those non-Muslims who are unfamiliar with their ways of understanding the limits of proximity and contact, some Muslim men and women have adopted the convention of putting their hands over their hearts and smiling warmly instead of accepting a handshake, in an effort to express friendliness without engaging in behavior that is against their comfort levels. In her narrative about "walking" to receive her diploma upon graduation from Hamtramck High School, Aisha described how Principal Jones had already had been aware from his previous experience that some Muslim girls would not shake his hand, so he was prepared for this. Her gesture of abstention from across the stage was interpreted clearly, and everything went smoothly. But when she had joined her fellow-graduates and teachers in the park after the graduation ceremony was over and everyone was enthusiastically and spontaneously shaking hands with each other she did not have time to compose herself or communicate her intentions clearly. Everything was happening too fast, and that there were too many people involved, for her to gracefully refuse the extended hands of her peers. Throughout her narrative, Aisha had described the way had made it through Hamtramck High School more or less on her own terms. On this last day, a few handshakes in the park were a concession she was willing to make.

Within this generally positive narrative, one thing about her high school experience that Aisha described with regret was the way that she "never joined anything" at the high school and "never stayed after school." With some exceptions, there was a general tendency for Yemeni women at the high school to avoid after school activities and clubs as part of a system of regulating their activities, minimizing their visibility and contact with males, and sticking together so that they could walk home with groups of female friends after schools. Yet, Aisha sometimes describes these kinds of imposed self-limitations with a sense of frustration and regret. This was especially true in he case of the All-Girl's Prom that was organized by the Bangladeshi Student Association at Wayne State for the local high school graduating class (see next section), which Aisha did not attend due to fears that the single-gender context would not be maintained. In retrospect, she wished that she had attended the prom and gotten involved in some extra-curricular activities, even though it would have been outside the norm among her Yemeni peers.

Like the young women in question, some Yemeni young men at the high school whom I got to know also limited their interactions with girls as part of the cultivation of piety and self-discipline. Yet other Yemeni boys that I got to know in Hamtramck dated freely and openly, striking up romantic attachments with girls across the racial and ethnic spectrum. The exception to this was that there was a strong proscription against Yemeni boys dating or even forming friendships with Yemeni girls. Additionally, Yemeni boys, especially those who were the brothers, cousins, or members of the extended kin-networks of the Yemeni girls at the high school, were known for keeping tabs on their female Yemeni relations. Both male and female Yemeni high school students and alumni noted the way that Yemeni boys were quick to intervene or report home if they felt that

the girls were engaging in inappropriate behaviors (Sarroub 2005). Although some Yemeni girls recognized these external pressures and sense of surveillance as factors influencing the high school scene, Aisha and others whom I got to know placed a far greater emphasis on their own internally generated sense of self-discipline as the primary motivators shaping the repertoire of activities and behaviors that they practiced in the school context.

3.4 Homeschooling and Marriage

Although Aisha's path from High School to college (and later to university) was a direct one, other Yemeni young women sometimes temporarily interrupted their educations in order to marry and start families. For several young women that I met, homeschooling was an attractive option that allowed them to balance the demands of education and family after marriage. According to Yemeni community members and leaders, a significant and growing percentage of girls who leave the middle school or high school are now continuing their lessons through homeschooling or online classes, attain their diplomas, and then sometimes going on to higher education.

Born and raised in Hamtramck, Latifah was a married woman with one small child in her early twenties at the time I got to know her. She had attended Hamtramck Public Schools from kindergarten on through middle school, and had attended a local private Islamic school called al-Hadi Academy through her sophomore year. During the summer of her sixteenth year, her family received a marriage proposal for her from a young man in Yemen. Latifah reported that she had not been thinking of marriage at the time, and almost dismissed it, as she had done with similar proposals, based on the idea that she

wanted to complete high school before marriage. But she opened her mind up to the possibility and she grew more interested based on her prior contact with the potential spouse and his family.

> Well, I knew him. I had gone many times, back and forth, back and forth [to Yemen] so I knew him growing up. I mean I was best friends with his sister. If I never knew anything about him, or had never seen him, I don't think I would have really said yeah. I would have said no, I don't know him. But I was like just into it, because I knew him, I had these memories of the family in the village.

Besides talking about the importance of this early contact, Latifah also described how impressed she was that the prospective groom was part of a prominent family known for its philanthropic work establishing a coed school in one Yemeni village, and a mosque in another. She described a process in which she had prayed about the issue daily, using a special istagfir prayer for guidance as part of the process to help her decide how to answer the proposal. Latifah described how after several months of thinking it over and praying about it, she woke up one day just knowing she wanted to accept the proposal.

> I did say ultimately yes to it. I mean I wasn't forced or anything, the decision was up to me. So basically, it was a big decision for me to make, the weight of it was on me. So I did make it, and it worked very well, and I have never been happier. It worked very well. Its like a gamble, at first. Its like making a big gamble. But it turned out great.
>
> In fact, though, my friends were kind of shocked that I had made the decision. Because I was not the typical type that you would hear about getting leaving school to get married. But I felt like it was a good decision for me to make. Because I think you can feel it, if it's the right person, so I just automatically knew it was the right person for me. So I felt like I could always do school, I could always come back, but this is a once in a lifetime thing for me, to meet the right person. My mom was telling me, you know you could go and get married, you could come back and do school, you could do whatever you want, you know, he's a very nice guy, you've seen him. And I was like, yeah, she's right.

In the arranged marriage system as practiced by some Yemenis and Bangladeshis in Hamtramck, a representative from the male's side would normally make a proposal to the

women's side. As reflected in Latifah's narrative, and as practiced by most families, the young women are usually thought of as having the exclusive right to ultimately accept or reject the proposal. For example, I had met some young women in the Yemeni and Bangladeshi communities who described to me a process in which they had rejected twenty or more proposals that had come over the course of years, either because they did not like the man in question, or because they felt themselves to be not yet ready for marriage. However, this freedom to choose is limited by the fact that it is the young woman's family intercepts and controls the set of proposals that are available. After the proposal is made, prospective spouses would have the chance to get know about one another by different means, depending on the family. These means include learning about the prospective spouse's reputation through a circuit of friends and family, and through various forms of limited and supervised contact.

Although the idea of arranged marriage goes against liberal-secular ideals about freedom and unconstrained choice, most of the young Muslim women I met in Hamtramck described feeling comfortable with some version of an arranged marriage system as the most ideal form of marriage, and as the one they, themselves would advocate for their children should they become parents in the future. As discussed in more detail further into the chapter, some young Muslim women explained to me that the arranged marriage system allowed them an appropriate way to get to know potential spouses in a safe, moral, and regulated context that, if carried out in an ideal fashion, would enhance their ability to select the best spouse. However some young women were also highly critical of what they perceived as abuses to the proper arranged marriage system in stories they told about particular families in which they felt that in some cases

girls were not being given enough leverage to make a fully informed choice. Some unmarried women voiced concerns and anxieties that their own families might not handle the arrangement of their marriage with an acceptable level of sensitivity and finesse.

After making her decision, Latifah left school and traveled back to Yemen with her family for a period of a year and a half in order to marry the young man, to spend time with him in Yemen, and to visit relatives. During this time, she gave birth to a baby boy. Latifah retuned to the US several months after the birth with the baby, but without the new husband, since he had to stay in Yemen until his visa was processed. She moved back into her parent's home. Even with the responsibility of her first child, she almost immediately resumed her education by setting up homeschooling for herself so she could work toward the completion of her high school diploma without going back to the school. She explained that her decision not to go back to the high school was due to her status change as a newly married woman expecting the arrival of her husband from Yemen at any day. According to Latifah, it was now more appropriate for her to finish high school from home. She obtained her high school diploma with no difficulty and began thinking about a career in some aspect of the medical field. After this, she got a job working at a medical supply company in Detroit since she felt that this kind of work would complement her future career plans. At the time of my interview with her, she was working part time at this job while preparing to apply to Wayne State or another local university as soon as she figured out the best program.

Malak, a young woman of Yemeni background who had been born in the US, also chose to temporarily interrupt her secondary education at age sixteen to facilitate her marriage plans. When I asked Malak to explain the relationship between her decision to

suspend her schooling and her decision to marry, she explained pointedly: "I left school by my own choice, it was my decision." Like Latifah above, Malak described a situation in which her family had received a proposal that she considered too good to pass up. An offer came for her from a Yemeni-American young man who was an engineering student a local university. He and his family made it clear that were interested in Malak specifically because of her religious acumen and the fact that she was a leader among young Yemeni women. The idea that this young man was interested in her for what she considered to be "the right reasons" was compelling to her. She decided to marry him, in part, based on her belief that that to do so would, in the long run, facilitate her abilities to continue her education and activities as a religious leader.

As in the cases of Malak and Latifah, I found that marriage played a central and privileged role in the life plans of many of the young Muslim women and men I interviewed. Some, like Malak and Latifah, were eager to marry at ages that were relatively young by "western" standards. The eagerness with which marriage was embraced by these young people was explained to me by some of my Yemeni and Bangladeshi informants via reference to the Qu'ranic passage that "among Muslims, marriage is half the religion" (see Dannin 2002:207). My informants stressed the idea that within Islam, marriage is seen as a form of training and discipline that makes one into a moral person and a full adult. Marrying young is also seen as logical according to an Islamic ideology that recognizes the sexual urgencies of young people's constitutions and seeks to find a resolution for these within the marital relationship rather than outside of it. According to scholars such as Ba-Yunus, the maintenance of standards and norms such as arranged marriages, avoidance of sexuality outside of marriage, and early marriage

"constitute a fundamental aspect of Islamic community education in North America" (Ba-Yunus:234) and also a basic value upon which Muslim communities in Diaspora are expanding themselves, maintaining their integrity, and building solidarity. I found that among the Yemeni and Bangladeshi young people I interviewed, even those who had the most ambitious plans for continuing education and developing careers carefully balanced these values against the value of making a good marriage, and of making a relatively early marriage.

Malak described a process of deciding to temporarily suspend her education after her sophomore year in order to spend some time adjusting to married life and setting up the household. About a year later she was back on track with her education, working toward completing her high school diploma from home. After that, Malak enrolled in a private Islamic university in a suburb outside of Detroit where she attained a two-year degree, majoring in Islamic law. She then accepted a position working as an administrator for that institute and is now planning to pursue a degree in Islamic studies from Wayne State or another university as the next step in her plan, with the full support and encouragement of her husband. "You see," she explained, "marrying didn't force me to leave school. Actually, my husband is 'forcing' me to continue my education, meaning that when I said I was too busy with the kid, he kept persisting and finding ways of getting help for us to make sure I had enough time to follow my dream, enroll at the school, and continue studying." Now at age twenty-four and with several small children, Malak is getting ready to enroll at Wayne State to work on a BA, a path that several of her female relatives had already taken with success.

Thus, rather than proceeding with their educations in lockstep with the national timeline and dictates of the national educational system, some young Yemeni women are using homeschooling as a way to approach education creatively and flexibly in a way that works for them. Nevertheless, I found that the early withdrawal of Yemeni girls from school for whatever reason was portrayed in deeply negative terms by the non-Yemeni school staff and administrators I got to know, as well as by concerned citizens who were aware of it. In these narratives no distinction was made between the cases of girls who decided on their own to withdraw in favor of homeschooling, and girls who were taken out by their families, as all were described in the same deeply negative terms. One middle school teacher named Wendy explained how distressed she was about the withdrawal rates of Yemeni girls, which she attributed to deplorable forms of early marriage (Maira 2009).[45] She described to me the way she would talk to her students about this issue:

> Every year, I tell them: "I expect to be invited to your high school graduation, your college graduation, and your wedding celebration….in… that… order! And, I don't expect to be invited to any more than two baby showers!" And the girls in the class say that they don't want to have a lot of children like their mothers did. So, I tell them that they have to start making up their minds now about what they want to be in the future, because if they don't, then the future will happen to them. And its OK for me to say this to them, because by now I'm like their auntie. And I believe in the maintenance of Yemeni traditions, in the form of a healthy Yemeni-American identity. Why can't they just take the good parts of American culture: choice, freedom, education, and leave the bad parts: the junk food, the pop-tarts, no socks in their shoes in the winter, and these kinds of marriages too where the girl just loses everything.

In line with the above sentiments, some other public school personnel and concerned community members that I talked to represented Yemeni girls and young women who left school were the unfortunate victims of an inferior and "closed" cultural system. The

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[45] Gloss Maira and Soep: "Young people symbolize the unknown future or possible direction of the nature and become the cite of projection of adult hopes and fears about their own society (Maira and Soep 2005; Maira 2009:14).

idea of getting married and starting a family before completing high school was pathologized as a depressing form of un-freedom. For Wendy, it was as much of a deprivation as going without socks in the winter, or being offered pop tarts and junk food instead of a nourishing meal.

3.5 Bangladeshi Girls at Hamtramck High School

While narratives about Yemeni daughters in the school system often involved stories of disruption and self marginalization from certain aspects of school life, in contrast, the Bangladeshi young women that I got to know in Hamtramck have the self-perception and the reputation for being centrally emplaced as among the most dynamic and engaged students at Hamtramck High School. Bangladeshi daughters known to achieve the highest marks and to take on leadership roles in various aspects of school life. This dynamism, as well as the rapid increase in numbers of Bangladeshi students over the years has contributed to a phenomenon that is jokingly referred to as part of BTO, or Bangladeshi Take Over, of the high school. People began to depend on the fact that Bengalis girl would take positions as the class valedictorian, salutorian, or at least dominate the top-ten GPA list, as this started occurring with regularity almost every year. Families, students and school staff attributed this success to the kind of value that Bangladeshi and South Asian families tend to place on education, and on the type of competitive and intensive culture of schooling that is found in Bangladesh. My friend Kolsuma and others described how in Bangladesh, it was customary for students to attend school the entire day, and then be engaged in several hours of "tuitions" or tutoring, throughout the afternoon and into the evening, as well as during the weekend. Parents are

intensely invested, both financially and emotionally, into the academic success of their children.

Some believe that the legacy of this form of educational intensity that was brought over from Bangladesh can be seen most directly in the achievement patterns of Bangladeshi daughters rather than sons. Although both daughters and sons are considered high achievers, it is perceived that Bangladeshi daughters on the whole receive more structure and discipline at home, as opposed to sons who may evade parental control and have a lot more freedom and a wider ambit of activities that might take them away from their desks. Additionally, although some young Bangladeshi students of both genders work part time in after school jobs, it is far more likely that Bengali young men will assume a position of financial responsibility within their families during the high school years, a factor which is also seen as detracting from their ability to focus on schoolwork. Students of both genders have the ambition to continue on to college and to pursue a wide range of different careers.

While the Yemeni students, alumni, and school personnel that I interviewed stressed the great and unambiguous cultural proscription against Yemeni girls dating or to be involvement in any kind of romantic connections at the High School, in contrast, Bangladeshi students and alumni that I interviewed about the school context tended to emphasize the complexity of cross-gender relations among Bangladeshis. Tajlia, a recent graduate from Hamtramck High School, describes the dating among Bangladeshi young women there as follows:

> Its very common, especially in high school, you will see it all the time. And when I used to be in HS, you knew everyone did it, so you wouldn't say anything. But now that I am older, and I understand that it is so wrong, and why its wrong.

Girls like Tajlia and her sister Fatima consider themselves to be a minority among their peers due to the fact the ways that they self-consciously limit cross-gender interaction at the high school. Fatima describes this mode of discipline as one of the manifestations of "taking her religion seriously" which also includes "veiling seriously," praying five times a day, and engaging in community service work. Tajlia explains:

> Well, it all depends on your religious background and it's kind of delicate. Because with my sister and I, we went to Sunday school when we were growing up down in Georgia. So we kind of knew the basic stuff that you are not supposed to do. So our parents were like OK with us having male friends, but not hanging out with them too much. We could talk to them in school, but as long as it is school related, and it isn't anything like touching, or hitting them, or laughing, or that kind of things, then its ok. Touching is a very important thing, not even handshake. And I think for us its OK as long as you are hanging out in a groups, and as long as its in school. It has to be in the context of school, you can't be hanging out outside of school, that's what the context is.

The system of cross gender vigilance described by Tajlia comes across as similar to the way Aisha described the "red lines" constraining her own interactions with males. Yet, other Bangladeshi young women that I interviewed describe a more relaxed set of standards in which they do not consider the formation of close friendships or, in some cases, with boys to be in conflict with their ethical sensibilities. According to Farzana:
I didn't hang out with Bangladeshi guys at the high school a lot. I just think it's a cultural thing. I didn't have that many Bangladeshi guy friends. The two that I had, who were close to me, they both worked, so they were not around all the time anyway. I've known one of them since first grade, his mom is very strict, wants him home after school to do his homework. And the other one, I heard his dad is very strict too. But sometimes get to hang out, besides school and all that.

Other Bangladeshi girls and boys describe hanging out within mixed gender groups outside the school context. Additionally, even though there is still a social stigma

attached to dating and premarital sexuality within the Bangladeshi community, it is growing increasingly common for male and female Bangladeshi high school students to date one another. Farzana explained the unwritten ethnic and racial rules of the high school dating scene to me this way:

> Bengali girls will usually date Bengali guys. The Bosnian girls and Yemeni boys kind of go together, and Yemeni girls don't date, and even if they do, no one would know about it, it would be very very hush hush. And with Bengalis, they are a little more open about it. But if you do date as a Bangladeshi girl, you have to date Bengalis only. And if you don't, then everyone will kind of talk about you. So in a way, its almost as if its OK, but as long as you are dating a Bengali. But then obviously, there is levels of, well, you know you are not going to end up with him type of thing.

In contrast to Yemeni boys, who are described as never dating Yemeni girls, it was described to me by a number of different informants that for Bangladeshi young men and women consider it more ethical and appropriate for them to date one another than to date outside of the community. Several informants attributed this pattern of intra-group dating to the fact that this type of dating allowed Bangladeshis to sustain the fantasy that these relationships had the potential to turn into marriage. However, with some exceptions, this outcome was thought to be highly unlikely due to the fact that the evidence of a prior, pre-marital relationship would lower, rather than raise, the estimation of a potential spouse in the eyes of the families involved. Nevertheless, there were enough cases in which these "love marriages" did occur to spur on the hopes of Bangladeshi couples. One of my informants described Bangladeshi girls dating as "the biggest open secret within the community." It was pointed out to me repeatedly that Bangaladeshi girls who engage in these forms of mixing at the high school usually do so without the knowledge of their families. According to Tajlia:

> In terms of Bangladeshi kids who date, I would say like five percent of their parents would know. The other times, it's behind their parents back. And even if the parents know, it's more like, I'm going to do it, I don't care what you say type of thing. It's not that they are so OK about it. And a lot of time these kids feel like, look: we are not allowed to date, but we are allowed to choose who we marry. So there is a problem here. And a lot of times kids you know, they take it the wrong way. They say, oh, we can choose who we are going to marry, so it only makes sense, we're gonna date them and see if they are right for me, and then tell their parents. But they don't realize that is not the right way to do it.

None of the Bangladeshi girls I interviewed admitted to having ever been involved in dating, but all of them described close friends who had dated, sometimes naming those whom I had interviewed. In contrast, Bangladeshi male students were open about their histories of dating. For example, on Bengali college student named Moustafa that I interviewed cheerfully ran down his dating history for me during an interview, describing all the different girls he had formed relationships during and after high school.

3.6 BSA Prom and Other After-School Activities

Some of the Bangladeshi young women who are "taking their religion seriously" and rejecting these forms of romantic involvement that were becoming normative among their peers work hard to create all-female activities for themselves and their friends to foster a sense of community, to celebrate their alternative choices, and to offset any feelings of alienation at the High School. For example, Fatima and a group of her girlfriends, with the help and active engagement of their mothers, aunts, and older sisters, organized a movie night on the night of the prom at Fatima's house in order to create an alternative way to celebrate their passage out of high school. According to Fatima:

> I didn't go to Prom. I actually stayed home with my friends. We had a get-together, we watched a movie. We ate. We were going to bake cookies, but we didn't know how, so my mom and my sister's friend did that for us. So we just

> did something on our own, so we weren't going to be like, "I wish we went to prom," when we really shouldn't be going there.
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> At first, I thought I was going to go. My parents would have let me go. And then my sister, she told me… I kind of think you shouldn't go. But she didn't tell me what to do, she kind of let me think about it. So then I did think about it. And I kind of started seeing the reasons not to go. And at the same time, whenever we went to halaqas, like Islamic meetings, and stuff, and I would be thinking about the prom. And I wanted to become a stronger Muslim and stuff. And I actually would try to think of it in an Islamic way. If I am not doing it for God, then there is no real point to going. Its not anything good. And you know, in a sense, if I went, I would have kind of have to hide from certain people we know. And if its something you are doubting, you just stay away from it.
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> And then some of my friends were like: well, you can just go only for the dinner part, and leave, like they were doing. And I was like, that sounds kind of OK, and stuff like that. But then I kept thinking about it, and I realized I didn't really want to go anyway. It was this thing where you sort of want to go, just to see, like you are curious. But I didn't really want to be a part of it. And that was my decision. And after the prom, I saw some pictures that some girls posted on Facebook. And I am really not used to all that skin showing, and cleavage, so it made me feel pretty uncomfortable. So I was like, OK, I'm glad I didn't go.

After Fatima gained her parents' permission to go to the prom, the decision became one was entirely up to herself to make. However, her decision-making process was greatly influenced by her older sister Tajlia, who asked her to carefully think about the implications. Over the weeks during which she was making the decision, she carefully measured her reasons for wanting to go against the value system she was learning within her halaqa and other Islamic study groups, and found some conflicts there that she was not able to reconcile. At first she thought she could "just go for the dinner part" and thereby avoid the dancing and less-structured activities of prom night in a way that would feel comfortable. Upon further reflection, however, she decided to just avoid the whole thing because even going for just the dinner alone would make her "part of it," or part of

something larger that she didn't fully support [46]. After she decided against going to the prom, she gathered together a group of like-minded others who agreed to meet during prom night for their own celebration to mediate their feelings of loneliness or being left out. With their aunts and cousins baking them cookies, it seemed as though the girls were celebrating their religious identity, friendship, and solidarity, as much as they were celebrating their passage out of high school.

Besides the movie night, Fatima and some of her friends also celebrated their high school graduation by taking part in an All-Girls' Prom that was organized by the Bangladeshi Student Association (BSA) at Wayne state (Brown 2012).[47] Fatima recounts:

> That was pretty fun. And that kind of takes your mind off of the high school prom, it kind of fills in for it. And its fun for us, because we can say we went to a prom, and there were just girls. And in a way, it is more fun for us than the high school prom would have been. Because if there were guys there, I can't do my hair. You know, I would wear my scarf. And I can't wear jewelry. I'm not going to dance with guys. Its just like it would have been nothing. So when it was the girl's prom, I actually got to do my hair. I got to wear earrings and stuff. I got to wear a dress that I liked. And I could just have fun with my friends and stuff. So it would just be more fun than if I went to prom anyway.
>
> It was like ninety or one hundred girls. There was like a handful of girls from my school. Some of my friends went, but mostly from other schools. It was more of a mix this year. Last year it was more Bengali girls. This year especially, there was a lot of Pakistani, Indian, white girls, black girls. So there was a huge mix of people. There was people from Canton, from Dearborn, people that I've never met before too. It was kind of cool.

Like the involvement in the BSA Prom, some Bangladeshi girls described the way they chose the kinds of activities they participated as influenced, in part, by a religious sensibility that guided them away from the kinds of activities that would promote loose

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[46] Bayoumi's ethnographic short story "Yasmin," in *How Does it Feel to be a Problem* offers a comparable account (2008:81-114)

[47] Several years after this interview took place, a *New York Times* article reported on the development of long awaited girls-only prom within Hamtramck High School itself (Brown 2012).

forms of cross-gender interaction and towards more sober and purposeful activities with female-majority membership. According to Tajlia:

> And with friends in stuff, all my friends were Bengali. But didn't want to hang out with the guys, I didn't really want to talk to them much, because I knew it wasn't right. So I used to find that kind of a barrier to handing out with the Bengalis a lot of the time, because they hung out in mixed groups. So then I found myself sticking to myself. And then I found that a good way of keeping myself busy was to get very involved in after school activities, like student council. NHS [National Honor Society], key club. And that was probably like the best part of high school. So, Student Council, Key Club, NHS. Key club was all Bengalis, mostly girls. NHS, was mostly Bengalis girls. But the girls were more like into doing good stuff, more than the other groups. The Bengalis would actually do stuff, more than anyone else. And Student Council also was a lot of Bengali girls.

Kolsuma's daughter Farzana, who graduated from Hamtramck High School a few years after her friend Tajlia, later went on to become a political science major at a local university. Like Tajlia, she described her involvement in Student Council, as member and officer, over all four years of her attendance as the most meaningful and exciting part of her high school experience. She explained to me that there limitations on the range of activities that some Bangladeshi girls could pursue at the high school Activities like sports, which required special kinds of possibly immodest dress and away games, and drama club, which required making a public spectacle of oneself, were seen by some as culturally inappropriate and as dissonant with ideals of modesty. But activities like Student Council and Key Club were considered above reproach by students and families.

> But the reason Bangladeshi girls join Student Council and things like that is because they can join it. They can't join random other groups like drama or sports whatever, they can't join them because their parents are going to be like, what is this for, and should you really be doing that? So, I think student council is something like they can tell their parents its something like, yeah, I am actually doing something for the school, I have to go to this meeting, you can't say that I can't go. So, all their other friends are doing it, so they might as well do it as well.

Tajlia's sister Fatima found that her activity in the high school student council offered a route directly into the political life of the city. Through her work as a student councilor officer student council, she became very involved in the Student Youth Council [check name], a project organized and funded via Hamtramck City Council to try and get high school students more involved in the city. According to Fatima:

> Youth Council, we are kind of with the city council. The mayor even gave a letter out, like you are in youth council now. It is where the youth of Hamtramck can talk about what we want to see happen, give our perspective of how we want to see the city. And usually youth are the ones who are most involved in some ways. They really want to do something, they have all this time on their hands, and they have pretty good ideas too. Sometimes you open up with adults and you can work with the other adults in the community. And we were supposed to do stuff, like learn how to talk to people in the community, learn how to go to conferences, there was even an idea for a radio station. There was a community service thing. And there was this conference in March, and it was a state conference in Lansing, and you get a day off from school, and you get to meet other youth council members from diff cities, Rochester and stuff. And also city councilors went too, and they met together. And then there was this one room, with city things, like to make connections.

The group was involved in several different initiatives and plans to improve student life and to curtail student violence. Through her involvement in this group, Fatima and other youth representatives traveled to Lansing along with some Hamtramck City Council members for a conference. She periodically attended City Council meetings with a Youth Advisor named Maxine, volunteer mentor and community activist with whom she developed an intense bond of friendship and attachment. Standing up next to Maxine, Fatima spoke out at City Hall meetings on issues pertaining to youth on several occasions. Additionally, as a Youth Council member, Fatima was able to negotiate an opportunity to serve as an intern within Hamtramck City Hall itself. When I was photocopying archives on a weekly basis at City Hall one summer, I would sometimes

see Fatima walking through the building deep in consultation with the city clerk or other municipal staff, as she learned about the workings of the city.

This "Bangladeshi Take Over" of the Student Council and other aspects of student life at Hamtramck High School echoes a larger trend within Hamtramck, that of the strong Bangladeshi presence in city politics. As reviewed in Chapter One, this dominance is reflected in the high concentration of Bangladeshi men who serve as councilmen and run for election in local races and in the active and vocal role some Bangladeshi men take in affairs concerning the city. As described in chapter one, Bangladeshi men of Hamtramck are also heavily involved in associational politics, and thousands of area Bangladeshi men belong to organizations such as the Bangladeshi Association of Michigan, and smaller groups devoted to regions such as the Jalalabad Society.[48] Yet leadership and men in these organizations and associations, as well as participation in the city meetings and leadership, are mostly limited to men. There are a few Bangladeshi women who are active in the political life of the city, such as the businesswoman who is involved in the city's Downtown Developmental Authority, female members of particular action groups that were organized by a Bangladeshi city councilman, and a Bangladeshi women who wwas heavily involved in the Obama campaign. It remains to be seen whether or not the gender dynamics of this political participation will change when the younger generation of Bangladeshi girls who have become accustomed to taking leadership roles at the high school attain majority age. Perhaps Tajlia's younger sister Fatima taking on a summer internship at City Hall indicates a harbinger of a more active role for Bangladeshi American women in the political life of the city.

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[48] Sylhet city's old name was Jalalabad. It was named after the fourteenth-century mystic and scholar Jalaluddin bin Muhmmad, popularly known as Shah Jalal.

3.7 Private and Charter Schools

Although Yemeni and Bangladeshi young women are creating distinct places for themselves at Hamtramck High School, some students and families prefer to join alternative schools such as Islamic private parochial schools in the area. Muslims have been establishing and participating in private, parochial schools in cities across the US and Europe for the past several decades, and this trend is on the rise (Sachs 1998). As is the case for other immigrant groups, some Muslim students and families in Hamtramck value alternative schools for offering a more culturally appropriate environment which echoes the standards and norms of behavior, dress, and male-female interaction cultivated in the home (Haw 1994, 1996, 1998; Merry 2005; Basford 2007:3). Furthermore, the daily, weekly and yearly schedule of the Islamic parochial schools coincide with the rhythm of the Muslim calendar, as concerns prayer, fasting, and other modes of religious observation. Additionally, these schools cater to the dietary needs of Muslim students by keeping cafeterias halal.

Some Hamtramck families sent their children to an Islamic private school on the border with Detroit called al-Hadi Academy[49] that had been established by local African American Muslims more than a decade ago. The founders of al-Hadi had established the school in a space rented from Mu'ath bin Jabel mosque, situated deep within the Yemeni enclave at the southeastern Hamtramck/Detroit border. However, by the time I began my fieldwork, the school had already moved to a new location within al-Falah, a Bangladeshi mosque at the north end of town. The school served an ethnically and racially diverse population of local Muslim families, including African Americans, Bangladeshis,

[49] Names of all private and charter schools mentioned in this chapter have been changed.

Yemenis, and others. Noor, A 25 year old Yemeni woman who attended al Hadi for part of her middle school and high school education, describes her experience with the school this way:

> I started al-Hadi at seventh grade. And honestly speaking, a lot of school choices that were made, it wasn't me choosing anything. It was more my uncle who just felt like, you know what, I don't want to put them in the public schools. A lot of people, especially at that time, were saying, no! No public schools for our girls! Or whatever. He was thinking this Islamic school at least will teach them Arabic and Islamic studies, one course for each year. And that's where his daughters were going, and that's where he sent me.
>
> The main advantage of going to al-Hadi for me was that there was an environment created at al-Hadi for me that was not too far from the one we had at home. You know, boys and girls sat on opposite sides of the class room. And, like there was our time to pray. Like there was a school assembly and when it was time for prayer, everyone goes to make wudu' and we all went to pray together jamaat. And I loved that.
>
> You know, and we all had to wear our uniform, it was normally how I dressed, so I didn't have to feel uncomfortable wearing what I am wearing in a public school, where some of the girls are half-dressed or whatever. At al-Hadi, the uniform was like plaid, blue skirt, with sweaters. But it didn't matter, we were able to wear our jilbabs, blue or black, so that's what we wore, it wasn't a big deal.
>
> The founder, brother Said Amir, he's African American, he was like a second father to me. And it was pretty diverse. We had a large number of African American Muslims, a large number of Bangladeshi Muslims, and a large number of Yemeni Muslims. But we were basically all Muslims. Being, I think it's a disadvantage and an advantage at the same time, the fact that I was around Muslim people, because there is always that common ground of being around people like you. But that was also a disadvantage. Because you want to get to know other people as well. So one disadvantage that I didn't like was that we were in our comfort zone. And if you are always in the same environment, you are going to miss out on some chances to grow.

In her narrative, Noor gave a measured account of the positive and negative aspects of her experiences attending the Islamic parochial school. In many ways, she enjoyed the fact that the school reflected the values and rhythms that she was used to in her own home. She notes especially how she valued the communal prayer time, the modest dress

for girls, and the way that girls and boys were separated for some activities. She also was happy with he school's diversity, which placed her in contact with an African-American principal and founder who became "like a second father" to her. At the same time, however, Noor was also critical about the ways that this kind of ethnic or racial diversity might not be enough in the context of religious concentration. She commented on the ways that being around "all Muslims" might not have gotten her out of her "comfort zone" enough, and she was worried that she was missing out on some aspect of the high school experience as a result. Nevertheless, in Noor's telling, she represents community elders like her uncle as greatly valuing this form of Muslim concentration as providing a zone of safety that would shelter his daughter and niece from unwelcome kinds of cross-gender interaction that they may have experienced at the traditional high school.

By a couple years before my fieldwork began, Al-Hadi academy had moved to a new location at the other end of town, and the space it had occupied in the South end was taken over by a K-12 charter school called Middletown Academy. By 2008, Middletown had an enrollment of about 500 students, mainly drawn from the Yemeni community. According to the principal of Middletown Academy, when they were approached by Middletown academy, the "community leadership" in the form of the mosque board, had voted in favor of renting out the space to the charter school instead of the private school to better meet the needs of the community. According to the principal of Middletown Academy:

> Due to the financial situation here, the community leadership decided to change it to a charter so kids can get free education. The only resistance was that some people said that they wanted to have the Islamic environment, because of religious reason, like any other private parochial school. But our school teaches Arabic language, and we teach culture, and its mainly Yemenis in our school, so in some respects, that is available. But of course we cannot teach religion, because

> of separation between state and church. So, the families take care of that in the weekend. They do it Saturday, and they do it Sunday, they send them to school at the mosque. And of course, it's not affiliated with this school, we cannot endorse any religion, we know that.

In Dr. Malik's narrative, although many parents in the community would have preferred that their children attend an Islamic parochial school, not all of them could afford it. According to Dr. Malik, even though the charter school that took the place of the private school does not teach religion, the school nevertheless maintains an "Islamic environment." In Dr. Malik's narrative, this "Islamic environment" is achieved through the demographic concentration of Muslims at the school, which occurs entirely through a pattern of self-selection, in which most of the families who are attracted to the school are Arab and Muslim. A second way that the school fosters an "Islamic environment" is through the teaching of Arabic language and Arab culture, which, in the passage above, Dr. Malik uses interchangeably with "Islamic culture." According to Dr. Malik:

> They need their kids to learn their language, the culture of their parents. They need to maintain their language. The big public schools are going down, and charter is going up, because the charter is giving the parents the freedom to choose which school they go for. Some charters, they have like a major ethnicity, to keep and maintain their ethnicity and their culture in that school. And the second one is that the classrooms are small. Behavior and discipline issues in the public school is very clear and visible to everyone. Performancewise, the public is going down, and the charter is going up.

According to Dr. Malik, religion is not overtly part of the curriculum in either the Arabic language or Arab cultural offerings that the school provides. Rather, his school manages to maintain "Islamic environment" in an indirect way. The Arabic language and cultural component attracts Arabs and Muslim families, students, teachers, and staff to the school, and because of these high concentrations of Muslims, the school are considered to offer a

more appropriate environment for the education of Muslim students. According to Dr. Malik:

> It's just that girls, especially in this community, feel comfortable to go to a school where all Arabs and Muslims, then going to the public schools, where they are not able to communicate as much, and there is not as much respect to their morals and values. That's why people send daughters to some of these charter schools. There is respect for their special conditions. They sit where they would like to sit, they don't communicate with boys. Mainly the girls. A lot of the girls in this community, they stayed home before the charters opened. Mainly the high schoolers. I have the parents today, they came to me, he said, oh, my girl is not going to school since three years, can you take her? I can send her to this one. So that's basically it. There are certain specialties being given to the parents. So they can choose to go. So the environment is a safe and secure environment. For example, we don't teach, for example, sex education in this school, because there are parents who don't want their kids to be exposed. This is our kind of wave we have. There are some kind of unique things that you can find in the charter that you don't find in the public.

Dr. Nasr, the Bangladeshi principal of Odyssey academy, a second "Muslim majority" charter school in the area, explained the situation in similar terms:

> It is true that some of the Yemeni parents, they don't want their girls to go to school because they boys are going to the same school….And sometimes I beg those parents, keep your daughter here. We will make sure that your culture, your civilization, your everything is respected. And that's why every hour you see me standing there in the hallway during transition time. Making sure that there is no complaint about boys and girls not respecting each other, or not respecting their culture, or their religion, and things like that. So we try to make sure, all of our staff members, during transition times, they are at the door, they are in the hallway making sure that the students are respectful. That genders are respected. So, that's why the community feels comfortable brining their kids here. I talk with those Yemeni parents everyday, with those Bangladeshi parents everyday. And that's what they want. They feel like it's a safe place where their students really can get good education with strong moral background.

As mentioned earlier, at the time of my fieldwork Middletown Academy's was serving about 500 students. According Dr. Malik, in 2008, about 95% of them were of Yemeni descent, and significant proportion of the students came from the immediate neighborhood around the mosque. The remainder of students was African Americans

from both Muslim and Christian backgrounds, as well as "a few Palestinians, a few Iraqis and some Bengalis." In comparison Odyssey Academy had a more mixed demographic, composed of about 40% Yemeni, 30-35% Bangladeshi, and about 10% African American. The schools boards for each school are appointed, rather than elected as in the public school, and the board membership in each case reflects the student demographic. Many of these board members are prominent community leaders who also serve on mosque boards, city commissions, or as members and heads of important local associations. Teachers and staff are diverse, yet with a much higher representation of Yemeni, Bangladeshi, and other Muslims as compared with the public school. In addition, as of 2008, the principals of the two schools were Arab and South Asian Muslims, respectively, who each held doctoral degrees in education. Additionally, the board of each school is comprised by almost entirely Muslim members.

3.8 Charter Controversies

As described by Basford et al., "Charter schools are public schools that have a great deal of curricular and structural independence but at the same time receive some government funding, so they are free for students" (Basford 2007:4). Since the first charter law passed in 1991, over 3,500 charter schools have been established in forty states, currently enrolling 1.15 million students nationwide (Toma, et al. 2006; Imberman 2007). Some education scholars laud charter schools and other "school choice" options as "the new civil rights issue of our time" since they provide access to more and presumably better educational options, particularly for disadvantaged communities (Bennett, et al. 1998; Holt 1999; Lubienski 2007:3). School choice is intended to generate competition

between schools (Lubienski 2007:2), most typically in low-income districts with failing schools (Dunk and Dickman 2002; Schneider and Buckley 2002; Bettinger 2005 ; Gray 2009; Howell). As described by Basford et al., charter schools typically are small; created around a particular educational purpose (i.e. technology, medical careers, classroom curriculum); and often cater to the specific interests of a community (Basford 2007:4).

Charter schools play an especially important role in financially strapped city's such as Hamtramck and Detroit, in which population shifts and declines, poor funding, state disinvestiture and other municipal patterns have led to the failing of public schools systems (Democracy Now 2010). Beginning in the early 2000s, the first charter schools began appearing in Hamtramck and at its borders with Detroit, and since then have been expanding in size and number, taking over a significant percentage of the public school enrollment (Wasacz 2007a). Assistant Superintendent Thomas Niczay describes a "mass exodus from the public schools" as a direct result of the charter school expansion (Wasacz 2007b). This "exodus" has resulted in the withdrawal of millions of dollars in funding from the public schools, as well as a significant job loss for public school teachers and school personnel. The advent of the charter schools are also blamed for the closing of an entire elementary school in 2010 (Sercombe 2011a). The loss of numbers eventuated by the charter schools is also one of the prime factors cited for Hamtramck Public schools to choose to become schools of choice, meaning that they opened enrollment up to students from surrounding cities, which in 2008 had resulted in an influx of about 130 mainly African American students from Detroit into the schools, which is not welcome by some Hamtramck families. The loss of funding for the public schools has made the charter school issue a sore point of contention for Hamtramck residents.

Nation-wide, and particularly in low-income areas such as the Hamtramck/Detroit area, students and families are choosing charter schools for a range of different reasons. Some consider particular charter schools, which are usually smaller than public schools to offer more security, more individual attention for students, and higher educational standards, and in certain high crime areas such as Hamtramck, greater student safety (Lubienski 2007).

Additionally, a further factor that attracts some families to charter schools is that they are often organized around a theme or a particular type of training or specialization they offer to the students. For example, this was the case for Middletown Academy, described above, which offered courses in Arabic language and culture. Middletown Academy is only one of three charter schools within Hamtramck and at its borders offer Arabic language classes in the context of larger "cultural" or "international" training programs.

Despite the freedom for charter schools specialize, strict limits are drawn for the charter schools with regard to religion, due to the separation between "church" and state stipulated by the US constitution (Baxter 2005). State guidelines for schools make it clear that any school receiving public funding must remain free from government-sponsored religion. Therefore, the Muslim-majority charter schools in Hamtramck do not offer students any kind of religious instruction or training. Nor do they officially recruit or advertise on the basis of religious affiliation. However, the constitution does not restrict students from expressing their religious identities within the school setting (Baxter 2005).

These three "Arabic" or "Muslim" schools have sprung up since the early 2000s, along with a handful of other non-Arabic themed charter schools in the immediate area

which serve more mixed demographics of Hamtramck's population. In the context of increasing competition over students in the area these schools offer Arabic classes and other features as a way of making themselves more attractive to the city's growing Muslim populations (Howell 2010). This Arabic language offering, which is valued by Arab and Muslim families, is a unique feature of these schools not found in the area's public schools or the other charter schools. Secondly, the charter schools offer halal food in the cafeteria, an option that is only available in some of the traditional Hamtramck schools.

Another a unique way these schools make themselves attractive to Muslim students is by offering half-day Fridays, which conforms to the needs of some Muslim families to attend mosque or to spend time together on what is a special day of the week for them. Nevertheless, the principals of the two schools laid a different emphasis on the rationale for the half day Friday. The Middletown Academy principal represented the half-day Friday as a way for the school to recognize and accommodate the importance of the day for Muslim families. In contrast, the Odyssey principal flatly denied that there was any deliberate connection between the school calendar and Muslim prayer, explaining that the Friday afternoon off had been planned according to purely practical reasons having to do with the need for teachers to do their professional development at the end of the week during a time-slot that was most convenient for them. In terms of accommodating Muslim prayer within the school itself, both charter schools and traditional public schools had to comply with the same federal regulations that allowed students freedom of religious expression on school grounds while also refraining from directly encouraging or organizing particular religious activities.

The emergence of charter schools are often resented by proponents of the public schools because of their intensive effects on the public school system, including the closure of traditional public schools and the loss of jobs this entails, as well as the opening of enrollment to Detroit students. Some charter school opponents represent the charter schools as exclusionary institutions that seek to improve themselves at the expense of the general community by unfairly using up public funds that are meant to benefit students in the city as a whole, and using them to benefit select group of students only. Worse, the argument goes, they are doing so means of generating profit. Within narratives against the charter schools, those schools that offered Arabic and had Muslim-majority populations are usually held up as displaying the worst examples of these negative tendencies, and end up bearing the brunt of the city's larger frustrations about the state of the public school.

The widespread criticism of Muslim-majority charter schools in Hamtramck is no doubt linked to the detrimental financial consequences that charter schools are having on the public schools. But the particular terms in which uneasiness about these schools finds its expression may be reflective of larger processes between Muslims and non-Muslims taking place on a national scale, as seen in media-reported expressions of suspicion against and surveillance of Muslim schools (Bosman 2007) mosques, (Lambert 2007) community associations and charitable foundations. (MacFarquhar 2007).

Some charter school opponents in the community criticized the Muslim-majority charter schools for having policies that they believed to be crossing the lines between church and state. For example, the fact that one of the charter schools rented space from a mosque, and allowed students passes to the mosque to pray, subject to critique. Tim

Haverford, one public school faculty member who was also involved in an advocacy campaign to promote the public schools, explained:

> For example, if you drive by Middletown Academy, you'll see that it shares space with the mosque, the center of the Muslim community in that area. If you drive by during prayer time, you'll see people using the school parking lot to park at the mosque. And you will even see some of the students from the school praying there on their break. There is very little division between the school and the mosque. This is illegal. This is against Michigan charter school law. This is against the Michigan State constitution—the religious part.

For Haverford and others, there was something disturbing and about that proximity between the charter school and the mosque from which it rented space. However, those that raised these kinds of critics tended to ignore the way that the Catholic churches in the city rented out space to other educational facilities. Due to the decline of the Polish Catholic population in the area as well as the state of the economy, all four of the Catholic schools that had been located within church complexes within Hamtramck and its borders had closed down between the late 1990s and mid-2000's. Two of the Catholic school buildings were now being rented to charter schools, one of them housed al-Hadi, the Islamic parochial school, and one housed a public school. Yet this tendency for the public schools and charter schools to rent out space from the church was never remarked upon in any of my interviews with Hamtramck citizens.

The teaching of Arabic in the charter schools was another point of critique and concern. Within an interview, another concerned citizens, Gary Smith, explained that he believed teaching Arabic at the schools was tantamount to religious education. For Smith, there was something wrong about the idea of students using school time to study Arabic because he believed that many of them did so for the same of religion. Smith and others speaking out against the charter schools spread rumors based on hearsay and speculation

that the charter schools teachers actually used the Qur'an to teach Arabic, although this went completely against charter school policy and was completely unheard of among any of the faculty, staff, or students that I interviewed who were part of the public schools.

> Why do they think that the government should pay for them to learn Arabic? Its Islamic education. They are using the Qur'an in there to teach Arabic. I saw a former student of mine walking down Alice street. I asked him, why did you leave Holbrook and start going to a charter school. He told me that it was in order to learn Arabic. I understand that it is important for them to learn Arabic. It does say in Islam that it is enjoined on every Muslim to try and learn to read the Qu'ran in Arabic. So I understand why they want to send their kids to a school that teaches Arabic. But not with our public funds. These are just ways to twist the American justice system to accommodate their way of life.

Besides lambasting the Muslim-majority schools for allegedly crossing lines between church and state, other charter school opponents critiqued them for their demographic composition and concentration of Muslims. According Wendy Warner, the middle-school teacher in the public schools who had been cited earlier for her opinions on girls' withdrawal, explained:

> Charter schools are not what the founding fathers had in mind when they worked out the idea of the public school. Their idea was that each public school was supposed to serve the neighborhoods around the school. The kids in the neighborhood were supposed to walk together from your house, to school, and back again. That's how neighborhoods get tight. Now, instead of the kids next door getting to know each other at school, walking home together, and playing after school, they are getting sent off into all different directions. In the same neighborhood, kids of the same age, one gets sent off to Middletown, one to Odyssey. Its creating these little homogenous subgroups according to race and according to religion. And that is the opposite of what the public school is supposed to do.

In the narratives of Wendy and other public school proponents, attendance at the multi-ethnic public schools was a healthy and extremely valuable experience for students, especially those coming from minority backgrounds, because it would offer them a way to learn about difference and diversity. Wendy figures the public schools as serving as a

kind of natural, organic, and quintessentially American means of assimilating the city's sizable population of new immigrant students into the city. According to Wendy and some likeminded others that I interviewed, this natural and democratic process was being disrupted by the advent of the charter schools which were instituting regimes of ethnic and racial segregation onto the city. According to one public school administrator:

> Take Odyssey Academy for example. It has a 97% to 98% Muslim enrollment, Arabs and Bangladeshis. That is very uncommon for a community that is as highly diverse as Hamtramck. We have a highly complex, diverse community. It is strange that one particular school has so few black students. This is a form of segregation. The charter management companies are catering to specific interest groups and making a profit off of it. And the reason is that the Islamic parents are afraid of having their kids go to school with Black kids. These kids are bigger than their kids. They are using the charter schools to shelter their girls and young women from black students.

Contrary to these allegations, the city's charter schools are mandated to enroll students on a first-come, first serve basis, and used a public lottery system for selecting students in the case of too many applicants. According to charter school administration and staff, any kind of racial and ethnic concentration that was found in them was due entirely to self-selection on the part of individual community members.

As a Polish-Catholic majority city, Hamtramck was once the site for a burgeoning Catholic school scene that also had the effect of instituting certain kinds of ethnic, racial, and religious segregation within the city's school system. Like many in the area, Wendy had herself had attended a Catholic school. Yet, in Wendy's opinion, the Catholic schools' enrollment pattern was exempt from her critique because they were private institutions. According to Wendy, it was acceptable for private institutions to shape society any way that they liked, but once public funds were in question, any kind of de-facto ethnic, racial, or religious segregation was anathema. Moreover, according to

Wendy, the Catholic schools knew how to "handle their differences;" they actively sought out non-Catholic students and engaged in the community in a variety of ways, through team sports competitions with the public schools and by other means, in a way that she felt the "Muslim schools" were not doing.

Some charter school opponents pejoratively linked the tendency for Yemenis to self-segregate in the charter schools to racialaized, stigmatized, and pathologized representations of Yemeni culture and the failure of Yemeni-Americans to properly assimilate (Aswad and Bilgé 1996). Wendy explained:

> I am very worried about the Yemeni people. They are taking a wrong turn with the charter schools an its going to catch up with them in the end and it won't be good for them. What they are trying to do is to create their own separate society, their own little Yemen, here in Hamtramck, so that they never have to interact with anyone else and they can keep doing things the way they've always done them. But Yemen is at the bottom of the barrel in terms of all the Arab countries. In terms of education, and nutrition, and development, everything. So they emigrate here and they are just setting themselves up to repeat that in America.

In an interesting reversal, however, when talking about Bangladeshis, others associated those same patterns of self-segregation in the charter schools to that ethnic groups' tendency toward accomplishment. One Hamtramck Public School Board Member explained:

> The Bangladeshi parents have very high expectations for their kids. The Bangladeshis have accomplished tremendous things in one generation. They stand out even in a community such as Hamtramck. A lot of Bangladeshis send their kids to the charter school. They don't want their kids going to school with the blacks. For them, they just want a particular environment where its all the same kinds of students and its all about achievement at whatever cost to the community.

The Yemeni and Bangladeshi families I got to know in Hamtramck who sent their children to charter schools explained their decision to do so based on a variety of different reasons. As in the analyses made by the two charter school principals cited

earlier, some Yemeni and Bangladeshi students and families I talked described their decision to attend a particular charter schools as based simply on the fact that they "knew people there," or because it was "an Arab school," or "a Muslim school." Other students and families I got to know stressed other factors, such as the school's proximity to the home, or their belief that the school had higher educational standards. One young Bangladeshi father and businessman explained his decision-making process this way:

> Well, I've heard that with some families the reason they are sending their kids is for the Muslim environment and all that. Most of the girls are wearing hijab, so you don't have to feel out of place. If you are not wearing one, then you probably feel out of place. And if you wanted your kids to go to that type of environment, yeah, its something for real to consider.
>
> But, if I was going to send my daughter, that would not be my initial motivation for sending her. I am leaning toward one of the charter schools based on looking at what teachers do they have. The type of curriculum. How close is it to my house. How convenient would it be for me and my daughter to go back and forth. And what are the outcomes of the kids that have attended that school. How long has it been in existence. These are the questions the parents need to ask. They won't but I will. Even if one has been around for ten years, I'm going to ask, have you been following up on your kids? What are the rates at which kids from your school are graduating from school, going on to HS, college? What universities are they going to? Is it U of M, or is it Wayne County, or did anyone get into Columbia? I would look at that, that track record, where these kids are going. That speaks more about it then anything. What kind of direction are you sending your kids into? And I have gone around to some of these places, and asked some of these questions.
>
> The Arabic language curriculum is a factor too. Well, in order to read and recite the Qur'an, you have to know the language Arabic. And if you can read it and recite it in Arabic, you feel more purified. You know, more original. Other than the fact that learning another language is always a positive thing. So,it's something that, if the opportunity is there, I would not keep it away from my daughter. But at the same time, I would not put it in the top five considerations, the top five requirements for me.

3.9 Charter Teachers and Staff

While opponents of the charter schools bitterly criticized them for unfairly and artificially skewing the demographics in favor of particular religious and ethnic groups, charter school proponents in the community answered them back with somewhat parallel protests of public school demographics, in terms of the notable dearth of Muslim teachers, administrators, faculty and staff in the public school system, and in the high school in particular. Despite the fact that the public high school had a Muslim majority, or near majority, student population, there were few Muslim adults in the High School. At the time I conducted my fieldwork, there were only two Muslim teachers at the school serving 1,000 students. Also, there were no Muslim members of the school board.

In Hamtramck public schools, teacher demographics are relatively frozen in place due to the tenure system. This was seen as highly problematic for some Hamtramck students, families, and community leaders, who believed that demographic composition of a school's teachers and administrators should reflect the student demographic. In contrast, each of the "Arabic" charter schools in the Hamtramck/Detroit area has a significant number of Muslim teachers, staff and para-professionals from the local areas. Murshidah, a young Yemeni teacher at Odyssey Academy explained the importance of having Muslim teachers and faculty on staff this way:

> Charter schools have helped so much. Why? Because it's true, the way the tenure system is set up in this city, you really can't get many new people in to the regular public schools. Unless people retire, that's it. But, like, when I am working at Bridge, seeing that there are some actual Yemeni teachers, and some actual Bengali teachers. Actual people that are just like you, teaching you, the discipline that these children respond to, is unbelievable. As opposed to High School, where the teachers there are the complete opposite of who you are and how you are raised, that it's difficult for you to accept certain forms of authority from these people. It's like you are basically just getting an education from them, and that's

> it. And basically, you adapt more to the things that they do, you know, you kind of lose yourself in it, you meet them more than halfway, and then there is an identity crises where you are trying to figure yourself out.
>
> So I feel like the fact that there is, in our school for example, we are trying to recruit Arabic teachers, I mean Muslims. Not because we don't want American teachers, that's not it. It's because our kids need that. It's really like, we are trying to cater to our students and our community to make sure that they have everything they need.
>
> Let's say an Arabic woman, she goes to the suburbs. Do you think she's going to care about the way she's dressed, or the way she has to carry herself, or the way… Its like she's completely going to do whatever she wants, because no one cares. But, if three or four neighbors move in, that are the same as her, damn, now she has to dress more modestly, she has to watch what she does.
>
> So that's the environment in our schools. Because there is no one who is really looking out for them who understands how they are supposed to live, and that's how they are, the kids stop caring too. So, its different to them, its like, yes, I can do what I want. That's why it is in Hamtramck High School for example. They could get away with anything they want as far as teachers are concerned. But when they come to my school [i.e. Odyssey Academy], and they get to my office, and they see me sitting there, well, that's a different story. And if I saw a guy and a girl, for example, holding hands, they will completely hide from me, they will be really careful about the things they do in front of me. They know I am coming from an Islamic background. It's like, if you like her, marry her. You know what I am saying. But it's just the fooling around time for everybody. There is different types of ways we go about it, trying to control it in the schools.

According to Murshidah, it is difficult for some Yemeni or Muslim kids to "accept certain forms of authority" from non-Muslim teachers due to the perception of differences between them. Murshidah suggests that the constant exposure to exclusively non-Muslim teachers and non-Muslim students in which the Muslim students don't feel themselves as being seen or recognized as Muslims has a complicated, subtle, long term effects negative effects.

As detailed earlier in the chapter, young Muslim women in the high school, and especially Yemeni girls, are confronted with the huge task of unilaterally upholding alternative ethical system by maintaining constant vigilance and by continually teaching

students and peers to avoid behaviors that are offensive. In descriptions like the one given by Aisha these girls are often feel themselves to be confronting a double level set of challenges—one, to control interactions with her peers, and two to control the hand-shaking, shoulder-patting, and hand-guiding teachers. Muslim girls don't have the luxury of letting down their guard with male teachers, who are prone to initiate forms of contact, which, although completely acceptable by liberal-secular standards of comportment, are compromising and troubling to the Muslim girls. Although some students and families value the process of learning how to make these negotiations as positive and productive forms of assimilation, others prefer to find a milieu which offers them a greater measure of recognition and support in the form of a greater concentration of like minded students, and especially in the presence of at least some teachers and authority figure who recognize and appreciate the struggles and challenged confronting local Muslim girls and young women.

In addition to cultivating a diverse staff in which Muslims are represented, Middletown Academy also makes a special effort to train the non-Muslim staff to be more culturally sensitive to issues regarding Muslim students:

> We do orientation for the teachers, to train them in awareness about our culture, our faith, and our religion. And last year, this year we did it through a program called "I Learn" where they speak about what is acceptable to Muslims. So our teachers are aware, like the food, the culture, the seating, the talk, and those kinds of things. Last year we did it through something called CAIR [Council for American Islamic Relations]. So we had them come in and talk to the teachers about what it is like for the Muslims. And if teachers get exposed to things they are not used to from the Muslim students, always, then we go and visit with the teacher and tell them what is acceptable and what is unacceptable for Muslims. Like if a teacher comes and says, Oh, I have an incident with a girl, who decided not to come sit with the boys, what is wrong with her? Or why does this girl need to have her veil?

> I have an example, we had an assembly, and the teacher, who was originally from Russia, she was an ESL teacher, I asked her to take pictures for the assembly. And some of them, they don't want to be taken pictures of, I mean this is a big issue for the girls, if they are middle school and above. They are not accepting to take pictures. So it was like this, that the girls were accepting their certificates, and they were all lining up, but the girls was holding it like that [holding it to block her face]. And the teacher was like, put it down, we need to take a picture. And I went to her, Ms. P, she is not accepting, they don't want this, let it be. This is the kind of culture shock we have. But we explain it to them.

3.10 Stakeholders

Muslims from the community who were active in the Muslim-majority charter schools as teachers, board members and staff appreciated the way that the institutions of these charter schools served as a platform, or a vehicle, through which they could have an impact on the local community, especially those who had felt frustrated in their previous attempts to do so. Murshidah, the young Yemeni teacher, explained:

> But now, I'm involved with the students, and I am involved with the stakeholders, where you could actually do something. Where I could actually say something, and it could go a long way, because I am talking to the leaders of the school, or of the community, where we could actually implement certain ideas.

To illustrate her point, Murshidah went on to describe the gender segregated PTA for the female parents at her school:

> A lot of these schools, they are trying to cater to the community. We are starting our Parent-Teacher Association and the Assistant Principle wants me to be in charge of the ladies while he can be in charge of the men. And I'm like, we are trying to break these cultural barriers, man. Why can't we just have it one group? And he's like, the way I understand it is that we are not trying to break anything right now. Um, we are trying to cater to the community. Once they are used to these things, then eventually, maybe that kind of thing will come together. But I am just like, I want to break these cultural barriers, because that's what I feel really held me back for a long period of time. So now I'm like, throw that away, you don't a whole new generation to grow up with the same thing. We want different things for the kids to come. But I understood his point with regard to the community.

> And I see his point. With the mixed PTA, maybe initially it would be a little uneasy, and a little different. And I don't think it would have been as productive, because everyone would have to hold back as opposed to the women yelling out, "Hey this is what I think we should do!" and the guys yelling back what they think, and then bringing together, like bam. But eventually, working together, with different ideas, that's going to help. And I can see that taking place.
>
> But he's like, OK, for now, its gonna be better this way, and its gonna work. Let's you take care of the women, I will take care of the men, we are going to bridge our ideas together, and we are going to make it work. He was like trust me, the women are going to be a lot more comfortable talking to you, and the men are going to be a lot more comfortable talking to me, and trust me, that will work. I think that's really right, right for now.

Fareed, Yemeni radiology student who was a board member at a charter school described his decision to take that job as connected to his frustrations about the perennial lack of representation of Yemenis and other Muslims as teachers and on the board of Hamtramck's public schools.

> I chose to be a school board member because I know that they have a lot of students who are Yemeni, Bangladeshi, Bosnian, a couple of Polish kids, people in that area. And there are no Muslims elected onto those boards, and I don't know if there ever have been. And that's why when I got that phone call from Yusef [President of Odyssey School Board] asking me if I wanted to join on, I just went with it. I mean some of us have tired, but its hard for Yemenis to get onto that public school board, and this is our chance now.And I wanted to be a board member because I didn't want anybody going through what I went through with the school system. And if there was a problem, knowing what kind of situation it is, I wanted to be there to help. So that's why I chose to be a school board member.
>
> Its not like I think Odyssey will be perfect. They will still have fighting and violence, and they will still skip, just being a high school students. But, it will minimalized. Because you are putting the same people, the Bangladeshis, the Yemenis and the Bosnians together. And we are sending our kids there because they know that those schools are run by Arabs and Bangladesh. And there is a lot of Bangladesh, Yemeni, new teachers. You know the faculty is new. Its something new to the community. Even these teachers, they are very young, and they can adapt to the kids, and the kids love them. They serve the community well. Even some of the teachers who are not Arab and Bangladeshi, they are the same, they just get into the spirit of the school. As for the Hamtramck Public Schools, because of the tenure system. Some of the teachers have been there for

> twenty, thirty years, and they are done with us, they don't have that same interest, they are going through the motions. That's how I saw it, and it still bothers me.
>
> And that's why, now the Hamtramck public schools are crying. They are advertising them everywhere, they have all those signs around Caniff, now enrolling, registering, and those signs have been up there since you know January and December, and they have been hit real bad. But you know what? I say they deserve it. Because the Hamtramck public schools could have made a great effort in bringing in Arab teachers, and they had a couple here and there, but they chose to let them go, I don't know for what reasons, and they chose to let them go. Some of the young Arabs teachers from here actually get hired into the Dearborn public schools. Because the Dearborn Public Schools knew they needed Arab teachers as role models. And they took advantage of that. While the HPS could care less, you know.

A Yemeni charter school board member, and a recent college graduate who is about to enter into a graduate school to become a medical technician, Fareed's family came to Hamtramck when he was about five years old, and he was a student of Hamtramck Public Schools from then until High School graduation. Earlier in the interview, Fareed had recounted some of his dissatisfactions with Hamtramck Public Schools, including a sense of alienation from his white teachers when he was a young, recently arrived student and insufficient ESL services he received there. Later, he developed the sense that his teachers were using outdated materials and not really preparing him for the challenges that lay ahead, and he also experienced recurrent, problems that he had with the high school in helping more recently arrived family members transfer high school credits from Yemen. These experiences and others have led him to be a staunch proponent of the charter school option.

3.11 Dream of a Gender Segregated Charter School

Some families that were involved with the charter schools were hopeful that the schools would grow in such a way as to even further reflect and meet their needs. For example, staff and faculty at two of the "Arabic" charter schools confirmed that the establishment of separate, gender segregated campuses or classrooms something that parents were asking about and that the charter school company was seriously considering. According to Dr. Malik:

> Honestly, if we had the facilities, this is something we would look into. I know in Dearborn they did it. Its like in the same building, one floor up, one floor down. By the law, its very hard to do it. You have to provide certain documentation and meet certain conditions to convince people. Because I know there is a charter school in Dearborn that did it. I think its called Universal Something. But it's in the same facility. They provide the same kids of instruction. But in this floor boys, and in this floor girls. And that depends on how many students are in the population, and it depends on the type of facility. Our facility it doesn't serve us to do that. But there was a case, by the way, and a lot of criticism was given to the city, when this case came. It went to the courts and everything, there was a lot of human rights, and feminist groups were against it, they thought it was like segregation. And I don't know how she won the case. But it was like, as one of my friends said, if they are in the same building, but separate classrooms. Yeah, that's how they do it. You need a good attorney. One year or two years ago, I was reading the newspaper and I saw a lot of objections, of opposition to it. But, I don't know, it passed, and she's doing it.

As Dr. Malik notes, in recent years, the advent of gender-segregated charter schools has become a highly controversial issue. Nevertheless, the principal at Odyssey Academy, the other "Arabic" secondary school in the area, confirmed that he was actively pursuing the idea. Dr. Nasr cited a nearby Dearborn High School called Riverside West that had gender segregated facilities in the form of separate classrooms, and explained:

> In Hamtramck, there is that request too. So we are thinking about doing that here as well, to make sure that the girls don't drop out. It's the Yemeni families who are making these request, at least to me, other communities didn't come. But the

> Yemeni community they did come, and they say, we are gonna keep our daughters in school if you have that split gender. And sure enough, we did loose some students, due to that. They say, oh, she's getting older, now she's in 8th grade, and I got to get her married, and therefore, she's not going to be attending school. This is what happens.
>
> As a matter of fact, I went to a board meeting with the authorizer of our school, and there we presented this information. We said that the community is asking us for this, and we are thinking about this, if we have more space, then we are going to do that, to meet the needs of the parents. And the authorizers, as a matter of fact, they welcomed this decision. They said, if the community is happy, if the community wants it, its nothing illegal. So, yeah, we are going to try and move ahead.

Some Yemeni and Bangladeshi students and families that I interviewed enthusiastically embrace this idea of gender segregated facilities, or better yet, separate campuses, as the best possible educational facility for Muslim families. For example, the topic came up during a women's halaqa at the Yemeni mosque, when one mother who sent her daughter to Odyssey and was on the PTA there had asked the halaqa leader, who was seen as an influential community elder, to arrange a special meeting with the principal in order to make an appeal on the Muslim parents' behalf. The other Odyssey parents who were present chimed in, expressing their frustration with the school administration who had promised to try and meet their requests, but had so far not taken any practical steps to do so. The remainder of the halaqa meeting was given over to a group discussion of the possibility of arranging the women mosque leader's meeting with the principal of Odyssey, and how she could best present the case. In fact, about a year after I left the field, the Odyssey Academy started issuing weekly advertisements in the local paper that included mention of a gender segregated facility. When I asked, Murshidah, who was on staff at this particular school about the possibility of the split campus, she explained:

> That is still in the works. That is something that is going to be… the greatest thing to happen to Hamtramck. Because, that is what every mother and father wish.

> That they could send their girls to an all-girls school. With female staff, or even male staff, but the fact that its an all-girls school, or an all-boys school, that's what they need. And, Alisa, I know it sounds crazy, but I don't know, but even you, as someone who's not Muslim, or not Arabic, or whatever, do you notice these days that its more of a sexually driven society so much in everything? Moreso than in the past, now it's just crazy. And that is not always the best thing, because even other religions, not just Muslims, other religions, Christians and others, also do not accept pre-marital sex, or any activity like that, or even dating sometimes. So, its not something that is universal to just one. And I think that's something a lot of people feel strongly about, especially in this day and age. Sometimes, the way society goes, you have to start doing these things, to make it work.
>
> If we had these schools, the Yemeni parents, oh, absolutely, they would not take the girls out then. I think every girl would go to college then. I mean that is my honest opinion. Just because, they would go to school with their girlfriends, and I could just imagine this happening, and I could just imagine the amount of comfort every mother and father would feel, sending their daughter to school separately, and their son to school separately. What are they going to do, they are going to strictly go to school, learn, and come home. And that's going to work for anyone who is serious about going to school. And I think that these days a lot of parents are serious about sending their kids to school, even if the student themselves don't want to be there, they have no choice but to be there. So, the education is rising. Everybody wants to be educated, and the fact that they are going to be educated in an environment that is more comfortable to them, it's gonna work perfectly.

3.12 Conclusion

I found that for some Muslim students and families, the middle schooland high school, as a place where dating and pre-marital sexuality constitute a central aspect of the institutional culture, represents a place that young women must learn to carefully navigate in order to maintain community standards of modesty and chastity within an environment that partially contradicts these values. Yet, I found that despite these challenges, some Yemeni and Bangladeshi young women in Hamtramck represent themselves as flourishing in the traditional public high school setting, which they value for offering them a diverse environment in which they can learn to handle and negotiate

significant cultural and religious differences in a way that enhances their self-esteem and status in the community.

Although some Muslim families encourage their daughter's efforts to establish central and dynamic places for themselves within the traditional public high school, I found that other Muslim families in the Hamtramck/Detroit area, particularly those from the Yemeni community, chose not to enroll daughters in the middle or secondary school for various reasons having to do with perceptions of a conflict between the daughter's life goals and the school environment. Some Yemeni families and community leaders represented the early withdrawal of Yemeni daughters from school as a phenomena that was becoming increasingly more rare as students and families became acculturated to the school environment and learned that it was possible to navigate it successfully. Other Yemeni young women represented early withdrawal from high school for the sake of marriage to be their own well-considered choice, and moreover, one that opened up, rather than closed future opportunities to them regarding further education and career. Several Yemeni young women that I interviewed explained how they had taken the scheduling and pace of their education into their own hands because the rhythm imposed by the school system interfered with their goals, conveying the sense that they felt themselves to be capable of negotiating and balancing their desire for relatively early marriage and motherhood with their desire to continue education and pursue careers by establishing their own unique trajectories through the education system.

I also found that some Muslim students and families in Hamtramck are choosing institutions such as Islamic parochial school and the Muslim-majority charter schools as places that are preferable to the public school for a variety of reasons. The Islamic

parochial school was uniquely valued for offering religious education to students as part of the scholastic curriculum. In contrast, the Muslim majority charter schools did not, and could not by law, offer any religious instruction. Nevertheless, I found that the Muslim-majority charter schools in Hamtramck were also valued by some Muslim students, faculty, administration, and staff, as institutions that would also have the effect of fostering higher moral standards in its students based simply on a greater concentration of Muslims at the charter school. Another reason that the private school and charter schools were valued in the city was because they afforded Muslim community members with opportunities for leadership and authority as teachers, administrators, board members, and stakeholders in a way that was felt to be lacking in the public schools. They were valued also for offering Arabic language education, which was seen as supporting cultural and religious values and aims. However, it is important to note that in contrast to the private school's policies regarding this, within the charter school Arabic language instruction was never offered in connection with any kind of religious instruction, and materials that contained religious references were carefully excluded from the curriculum.

I found that the advent of the Muslim-majority charter schools was a point of considerable consternation and distress for some non-Muslims in the community, who considered various aspects of the schools' composition, policies, and practices to cross lines between religion and the state and to contradict certain of the liberal-secular values upon which they believed the nation's school system to have been founded. Some detractors of the Muslim-majority charter schools were particularly critical of the charter school communities' self-selected enrollment patterns that resulted in high proportions of

Muslim students. In this case, the demographic concentration of religious minorities, even in the absence of any formal religious instruction, was deemed as indicative of a destructive non-secular or anti-secular orientation. Secondly, in these anti-charter school narratives, Arabic language instruction was deemed also to cross the line between church and state insofar as Arabic itself was constructed as a religious language, and the teaching of Arabic by Muslims to Muslims was considered as a religious practice regardless of the content of the Arabic material. Thirdly, the fact that one Muslim charter schools rented space from a mosque was construed as indicative of the mosque's unhealthy level of influence on that charter school, when the fact that several other charter and public schools in the community rented space from Catholic churches went unremarked. These narratives reveal a code of liberal secular exclusion in which the right for Muslims to create and control secular, public institutions and to forge associations with non-public Muslims institutions as public secular actors is being called into question through bigoted exclusionary logics and double standards. Certain features associated with being Muslim in these circumstances are attributed with polluting and destructive qualities and represented as necessitating forms of surveillance and containment in order to protect national self-interest, and as compromising the ability of institutions to function in the public sphere.

In evaluating different sets of narratives that comprise the basis for this chapter, I found that the issue of Muslim children's education in Hamtramck is a source of concern and contestation not only among Muslim communities in the city, but also for the non-Muslims surrounding them, who feel themselves to be affected, impacted, and/or implicated in Muslims' non-standard practices in a variety of different ways. I also show

how non-Muslims in the city sometimes use their perceptions of Muslim differences regarding educational choices as a screen upon which to project fears and fantasies about the Muslim "other" in Islamophobic terms. Through studying these various narratives about religion and schooling, the chapter examines how the education of Muslim students in the city has come to be an issue upon which both Muslim and non-Muslims in the city are articulating forms of collective identity formation concerning municipal and national levels of belonging. Further, the chapter demonstrates how Muslim educational choices and innovations in Hamtramck represent a form of religious minority incorporation that is a two-way process, one that is changing the landscape of the city and the shape of its institutions as much as it is affecting the integration and assimilation of Muslims into the municipal and national terrain.

Chapter Four

Islam in the Urban Sensorium: Prayer Calls and the Right to the City

In a public hearing at City Hall in Hamtramck, the room is filled to capacity with city residents from a wide variety of racial and ethnic backgrounds, including Polish, Black, Bangladeshi, Yemeni, Bosnian, and others. The Bangladeshi-American secretary of a small Hamtramck mosque approaches the podium to speak:

> Salaam Aleikum, councilmen and distinguished public, my name is Khatib Hasan, and I live on 4423 Whalen Street, Hamtramck.[50] We are all here as immigrants, everybody comes from other countries. We all bring our own culture, our own religion. … Hamtramck is a mixed city, we must live together, we must look after each other's problems and try to solve them. That's how a city becomes great. With respect to that, I am a Muslim and I practice my prayer five times a day, its part of our religion. … My request is simply to allow the call to prayer. (City Council 2004a)

In the historically Polish-Catholic city of Hamtramck, Michigan, the mosque's request for the city to regulate its call to prayer, or adhan, from loudspeakers was met with expressions of fear, anger and resistance on the part of some local residents, but was embraced as a civil rights issue by others. Over the spring and summer of 2004, public debate about the adhan rose steadily in pitch as the city council and citizens deliberated the introduction of noise ordinance legislation that would "permit" and "control" the sound. Local, national and international media channels reported on the issue in a way that foregrounded social discord, prejudice and confusion, casting the city into an uncomfortable national and international spotlight. Yet, the debate over the adhan and the extended legislative process that accompanied it also brought about a productive caesura

[50] References to personal street addresses have been changed to protect identity of speakers.

or "impasse" which afforded room for a creative sounding out of the city's relationship to its expanding Muslim populations.[51]

This current chapter details the evolution of the noise ordinance amendment and the debate surrounding it, and the subsequent chapter continues this same theme by examining the work of a grassroots interfaith movement that rose up in the city to quell the friction and discord that arose around the call to prayer. In doing so, I analyze arguments about what kinds of sounds belong in the city and who has the right to make them, as well as explore the kinds of alliances that were built within the movements for and against the amendment. I will also examine why sound in particular causes anxiety about bodily and municipal integrity, and introduce the concept of the "urban sensorium" as an analytic framework from which to approach the relationship between sound, space and belonging in the municipal context.

I was not present in the city during the events that took place during the spring and summer months of 2004 that are at focus in these two chapter. Therefore, I mainly relied upon an ethnohistorical methodology in researching the material for these two chapters. This method is based on interviewing individuals who were involved in the events three and four years afterward in order to reconstruct the events and their importance. The method also relied on the use of an extensive archive of video footage including people's personal videos as well as municipal videos from city hall events, and taped excerpts of news coverage of the events. It also relied on print media and city hall archival material.

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[51] Here, I use "impasse" in Lauren Berlant's expanded sense of the term to capture the heightened and intensified feeling state of Hamtramck residents who, within these debates, were seeking to work out "what seems to be possible and blocked in personal/collective life" while participating in an unfolding uncertain political present (Berlant 2010:3).

In a city without minarets, the adhan in Hamtramck sounds from loudspeakers affixed to the roof of a modest two-story mosque:

> Allahu akbar
> God is the greatest (four times)
>
> Ashhadu alla ilaha illal-lah
> I witness that there is no god but God (two times)
>
> Ashadu anna Muhammad ar-Rasool-lal-lah
> I witness that Muhammad is the messenger of God (two times)
>
> Hayya 'alas-salah
> Come to prayer (two times)
>
> Hayya 'alal-falah
> Come to prosperity (two times)
>
> Allahu Akbar
> God is the greatest (two times)
>
> La ilaha illal-lah
> There is no god but God[52]

Five times a day, seven days a week, the adhan calls Muslims to prayer. It also divides the day according to a logic based on the Islamic calendar. The first call comes in the early morning hours of dawn, as soon as a black and white thread can be distinguished by the eye. The second follows at around noon; the third during mid afternoon; and the fourth comes at dusk when the threads can no longer be distinguished. The final call issues in the evening. The timing and length between prayers varies over seasons, following the stages of the day rather than fixed intervals of time. In North American and European cities, the schedule of the adhan is often adjusted to conform to what is understood to be waking hours, and mosques may be required to leave off sounding the first and last prayer calls of the day during months when daylight hours are short.

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[52] The adhan transliteration is from *Fiqh us-Sunnah at-Tahara and as-Salah* (1989:97-98); the translation is from *Oxford Dictionary of Islam* (Esposito 2003:7).

In low-pitched tones, punctuated by sustained silences between its phrases, the adhan's elongated vowels flow evenly in all directions. Its sounds blur preconceived boundary lines between dominant and marginal space, between ritual and common grounds, between public and private realms, overtaking the unmarked spaces of the city. In Hamtramck, the sound reaches into the adjacent African-American-owned "Envy Me" hair salon, and over the Polish Krot funeral home beside it, across the street to a public school and on to the city's main street, stretching south and east to City Hall when the wind is blowing in the right direction. During the time of its broadcast, it overlays other city sounds, filtering car horns and conversations, the hard rock music pumping out of package stores, church bells, school bells, car alarms, the crack and crunch of shovels as people dig out their cars from the Michigan snow. In summers it can be heard through the jangling ditties of the ice-cream trucks, and the perennial polka sounds of Polish street festivals. Especially on Fridays, but on a daily basis as well, the call to prayer is accompanied by the sight of men, singly and in groups, locking up stores and houses and making their way to one of the city's mosques, carefully dressed in keffiya, topi or tarqiyya, thowb or collared shirt, kurta pajama, trousers or pressed jeans, and women making their way to the mosques as well, usually in their own separate groupings.

Through the amplification of sound, minority communities lay claim to city space in a frank and unapologetic manner. The sounds of newcomer groups uniquely test and challenge a city's ethic of "tolerance" for immigrant difference. Less containable than visible manifestations of difference, sound flows out indiscriminately without regard to the existing racial and social hierarchies of a place, leveling distinctions between people it penetrates by subjecting all to the same thing. The liquid and uncontainable nature of

sound echoes fears about immigrants themselves, who are also sometimes perceived as advancing in a "flood" threatening to drown out the recognizable nation in its wake (Conquergood 1992:138; Santa Ana 1998). The issue of amplified public sound modulates conversations about immigrant presence and territorialization into a different register. Familiar ways of compartmentalizing immigrants in the city such as "the city as mosaic," (Krase 2006:67) the "immigrant enclave," (Portes and Manning 2005) and the "public verses private expression of difference" (i.e. Young 1990) lose their explanatory function when immigrant sounds are amplified in the center of the city.

Compared to other modes of immigrant visibility, the marking of public space with sound raises a particularly acute host of anxieties relating to the vulnerabilities of the ear as well as the susceptibility of public space to loose its moorings under the influence of differential rhythm. Individuals can turn their gaze away from or shut their eyes to visible manifestations of urban difference, yet sound infiltrates the sensorium in a way that cannot easily be evaded (see also Tuan 1977:15; Schafer 1994:11). Moreover, in a cultural reading of the senses, sound or "heeding" to sound is associated with a subterranean, irrational and in some ways uncontrollable dynamic signaling a loss of independence and integrity on the part of the listener (Hirschkind 2006:13-14). While "sound phobias" (Schafer 1994:146) may develop around fears about the potential for sound to penetrate the individual, people also may harbor anxieties about the disruptive effects of sound on the social body of an urban locale, and on the rhythm of the city.

Within discourses about the call to prayer in Hamtramck, the adhan's power to inculcate the city with its foreign logics were sometimes articulated within an anti-Muslim lexicon, joining fears of the unfamiliar with a powerful set of Orientalist national

and international fantasies about the incompatibility of Islam and the West. The local and national press and televised media had a determinative effect in shaping the tenor of the debate, presenting Hamtramck with an array of alternative reflections of itself while also making the city into a site of national and international fascination and a symbol of a national destiny.[53] On a national level, the issue was important because it represented the first time in our nation's history that a municipality would create legislation to specifically regulate the call to prayer. Although the adhan has been sounded in US cities at least as far back as the1980s[54] and probably before that, the adhan itself had never before been specifically named and described within a US city's legislation.[55] Typically, the adhan attracts municipal attention only when residents living near a mosque bring complaints to City Hall and it is then dealt with under various general noise restrictions applying to all sounds. In Hamtramck itself, the adhan debates also represented the first time in the city's history that Hamtramck's sizable and ethnically diverse Muslim population would come out on Hamtramck's political stage to define themselves as a unified, rights-seeking community.

In Hamtramck, it was not merely the tangibility of sound that was at stake, but the forging of legislation to officially regulate this form of Muslim "right to the city" (Lefebvre 1996) that raised anxieties. The proposed regulations over sound, which would

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[53] Ravi Sundaram notes: "That modern urban living can no longer be defined apart from the media experience is a truism of contemporary research. … The changed phenomenology of nearness and distance brought about by the media has a productive and equally dark, visceral quality, tearing apart stable modes of contemplation (Sunderam 2010:5).

[54] A description of the controversy surrounding the call to prayer being issued from the Dearborn, Michican Dix Avenue mosque in the early 1980s is the first documentation of the call to prayer in the United States that I have been able to locate (Abraham et al. 1983:172).

[55] In contrast, according to Allievi, the Netherlands is the only European country that has granted the adhan official recognition on a national level; this was the result of vote in 1987 for a law that allowed it, although municipal restrictions still apply (Rath et al. 1999 in Allievi 2009:49-50). It is also regulated via municipal legislation in countries such as Germany, the UK (Eade 1996), Austria and Norway (Allievi 2009:49-50).

have afforded the city a great deal of control over the adhan, represented a contract of recognition between Muslims and the city government that raised intensive anxieties about the incorporation of Muslims into the municipal body. Here, the right to produce sound was linked to communitarian-based senses belonging to the public spaces of the city, articulated in an exclusionary way by some members of the city's Polish Catholic community, and in an inclusive way by many of the city's Muslims. [56]

The mosque's request for the city council to legislate their call to prayer was a demand for the right to the city, calculated to move the mosque from the periphery to the center (Cesari 2005b:1020). Not only would the call to prayer be marking the urban soundscape from a central site of commerce, but the legitimacy to do so would be scripted into the center of municipal power at City Hall. In "The Right to the City," Lefebvre emphasizes the historical importance of the urban center as the site "between the church and the market" from which "gatherings which are part of this double feature of the religious and the rational take place" (Lefebvre 1996:169). In the modern city, the center continues to stand as a site of power and privilege, and therefore any move to make the city more democratic must involve a re-coding of this central space. For Lefebvre, "The right to the city … would affirm on one hand, the right of users to make known their ideas on the space and time of their activities in the urban area; it would also

[56] In concentrating on the Polish Catholic opposition to noise ordinance amendment in this chapter, I do not wish to repeat the same bias as made by the press of overemphasizing the voices of this group or making them stand for Hamtramck's highly diverse Polish Catholic community as a whole. It is possible that the Polish Catholic opponents of the ordinance amendment who were highly vocal at City Hall meetings and in the press may in fact represent only
a small minority of the Hamtramck Polish Catholic community, as was suggested within several interviews that I conducted four and five years after the debates. Furthermore, a spirited, Polish-Catholic and Muslim led movement emerged to support the mosque during a later stage in the debate. This movement also included a range of ethnically diverse non-Muslims groups, providing evidence that the issue was not neatly divided along racial, ethnic or religious lines.

cover the right to the use of the center, a privileged place, instead of being dispersed and stuck into ghettos" (Lefebvre 1996:34; in Amin and Thrift 2002:142).

Arguments about rights to the city center were articulated within a larger mode of imaging a shared "urban sensorium." My concept of "urban sensorium" maps Hirschkind's "human sensorium"[57] onto bounded municipal space. Thus by "urban sensorium" I mean the production of shared and collective sensual life and the interpretive repertoires put into place that invest these sensory experiences with meaning that are based on reference to shared history and intensive interactions with the municipality. The boundedness of the experience within Hamtramck itself was notable in 2004 in terms of how activists on both sides of the debate took exception to "outsiders," or non-Hamtramckans coming to the city to try and weigh in on the question. The call to prayer sound was rehearsed, invoked, described and repeated many times during the debate as a way to engage the community in a shared listening practice in order to somehow define itself collectively in relation to the sound, whether for or against its public broadcast. For theorists such as Lauren Berlant and Charles Hirsckind, there is something about the act of collective audition that binds listeners together both politically and suprapolitically.[58] In Hamtramck, besides the outward divisiveness that was brought about in these impassioned arguments about sound, there was also the creation of a

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[57] Hirschkind defines the "human sensorium" as "the affects, sensibilities and perceptual habits" of a listening public (2006: 2). For Hirschkind, a focus on the sensorium thus construed "follows upon a growing recognition by scholars that the forms of thinking and reasoning that constitute our political discourses are profoundly indebted to evaluative dispositions outside the purview of consciousness, to what political theorist William Connolly refers too as 'visceral modes of appraisal' " (Connolly 1999 in Hirschkind 2006:9).

[58] Elaborating on Hirschkind's work, Berlant notes: "[T]he feeling tones of the affective soundscape produce attachments to and investments in a sense of political and social mutuality that is performed in moments of collective audition. This process involves taking on *listening together* as itself an object/scene of desire. The attainment of that scene produces a sense of shared worldness, apart from whatever aim or claim the listening public might later bring to a particular political world because of what they have heard (Berlant 2010:341, citing Hirschkind 2006:22).

transformative intimacy based around a period of sustained reflection and listening together, which in itself already achieved a kind of sensuous incorporation of Muslim difference within the center of the city, regardless of the debate's outcome.

4.1 Whose City is It?[59]

The call to prayer is a two-minute long melodic summons in Arabic that is commonly broadcast from mosques into the streets of Muslim countries and some North American and European cities. The adhan sounds five times a day before prayer times, in a mobile schedule that is calibrated around sunrise and sunset. The Qur'an instructs Muslims as follows, in Surah 62:9: "Oh ye who believe, when the call to prayer is sounded for prayer on Friday, leave off traffic and hasten to the remembrance of Allah. That is better for you, if you know" (Ali 1991:1093). The call to prayer is customarily sounded both inside and outside of the mosque simultaneously, yet in Europe and America, the right for Muslims to externally broadcast the adhan is often contested on national and/or local levels (Cesari 2005b; Allievi 2009:50). Many mosques that are located in North American and European cities take it upon themselves to restrict the adhan broadcast in anticipation of the fact that an external broadcast might anger the surrounding community (Allievi 2009:50). Sounding the call to prayer into the streets is not considered an obligatory part of the religion for Muslims (see also Cesari 2005b:1020; Allievi 2009:50). Therefore, some Muslims do not feel that it is worth the trouble to fight for the right do so, especially when they are confronting many other

[59] This subheading borrows from the title of Sasia Sassen's "Whose City Is It? Globalization and the Formation of New Claims" (Sassen 1999).

struggles over the building and establishment of mosques (see also Cesari 2005b; Allievi 2009:50).[60]

While there is a diversity of opinion about the importance of the adhan among Muslims in the North American and Europe, for some Muslims, including many in Hamtramck, the adhan represents a highly significant mode of marking space. It may be construed as diasporic sound that connects Muslims to countries of personal or ancestral origin. The adhan may also index the creation of a strong, connected, and self-consciously constructed Muslim community (i.e. Lee 1999:86). Much as the church bells are thought to define a parish (Corbin 1998), the adhan touching on the ears of Muslims in the area for some serves as a reminder of the relationality between the mosque and its members. As mosque secretary Khatib Hasan explained: "We are calling our Muslim people, reminding them they are obligated to come to pray" (Islam Online 2004).

Additionally, for many Muslims in Hamtramck, the sounding of the call to prayer is an important and necessary way to appropriately reflect overarching demographic changes in the city. The idea that Muslims should be allowed the call to prayer based on their numbers and contribution to the city is based on an ideology of "the democratic city" (i.e. Amin and Thrift 2002), or a city in which important landmarks and "soundmarks"[61] represent and reflect the people who make up the city (Young 1990; Lefebvre 1996). As one African American Muslim man expressed at City Hall:

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[60] According to one Boston-area mosque activist who had been involved in a years-long struggle against municipal red tape to establish a mosque within his area: "The mosque would still be a mosque without the adhan. But there would be a big problem if we couldn't open our doors before 6am for the morning prayer because of some zoning issue. Then, we couldn't function as a mosque. Its things like that we had to fight for." (Phone interview 6 April 2010).

[61] "The term 'soundmark' is dervived from "landmark" and refers to a community sound which is unique or possesses qualities which make it specially regarded or noticed by people in that community (Schafer 1994:10).

> Bismillah ar-rahman ar-rahim.[62] … My name is Aadil, I recently moved to Hamtramck about six month ago and I have enjoyed being here in Hamtramck. … The adhan has been going on for many years, long before any of us were even here. It has been practiced for maybe 1500 years. So, for them to try and pass some kind of law[63] that would hinder us from being able to practice that would cause a feeling of oppression in our hearts, that we weren't able to do this, and I think that if that kind of law were passed, that we couldn't do this in a country that claims freedom for everybody, I think that at that point we would all have to accept the hypocrisy of that statement. … This is something that has been going on for many, many years, and the intention, like the brothers before me have said, is … to remind the Muslims in the community, of which there are an overwhelming number of Muslims here, to come and pray. They may be involved in some business, and maybe the time has slipped their mind. The call to prayer is there to remind them. I would ask our non-Muslim brothers and sisters to be tolerant of that please, and to understand that it is not a call for you to cease worshipping what you worship, but a call for Muslims to come and pray together. (City Council 2004a)

Here and in other narratives, the call to prayer is an expression of a democratic spatial politics, in which different groups are allowed to stake their own claims to city spaces. Yet, other Muslims proponents of the noise ordinance amendment emphasize the primary importance of a different effect of the call to pray, namely its significance as a soundmark intended to impress a message of diversity, acceptance and unification on the city for the benefit and edification of the community as whole. Nabeel Akhtar, then- president of al-Islah mosque, stresses this theme in his letter to City Hall:

> As a very culturally diverse community, by permitting this action it will build our city to become more unified and familiar with each other's religion. (Al-Islah Islamic Center 2003a, 2003b)

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[62] Translates as: "In the name of God, the Beneficent, the Merciful." A standard Islamic invocation of God at the start of a significant action, such as a speech.

[63] The debate was not over an ordiance to "terminate" the call to prayer, it was over an ordinance to "reglate" the call to prayer. The speaker's mistake reflects the kind of confusion about the terms of the ordinance in question that was common during the debates.

An elderly Yemeni Hamtramck resident, and muezzin (mu'adhin in Arabic; muyazzin in Bangla for one who calls the prayer), at a the nearby Yemeni mosque across Detroit, echoed similar sentiments in his speech at City Hall:

> Bismillah ar-rahman ar-rahim. … Twenty-seven different ethnic groups live in Hamtramck. That is the beauty of Hamtramck. Only what we need is to learn to tolerate and respect each other. Its not a matter of noise, of sound: it's a matter of respect. I call the prayers. It is less that one minute and a half. You can't give your fellow citizens, and your neighbors, for one minute and a half to call each other and to meet? … It is a freedom of religion in this country. And we love the Christian brothers, and we love our Hindu brothers … and we have to respect each other, and trust the council. … You know how many times the church bell rings? No one is complaining about that. (City Council 2004c)

In these and other narratives, besides the meanings that the call to prayer transmits within the circuit of its Muslim populations, it is also a way for Muslims to define themselves to non-Muslims; and a way of asking the non-Muslim populations to express their respect and acceptance of their Muslim neighbors. For Allievi, in European countries, "the adhan's symbolic value remains unchanged and is perhaps even stronger – as a declaration of existence in the public space, and a recognition thereof, so to speak. (Allievi 2009:49). For adhan proponents in Hamtramck, the act of scripting the call to prayer within a noise ordinance in a way that recognizes its equivalence with the church bells will bring the community into greater awareness of differences among them and promote the production of a more harmonious whole.

4.2 "It's Our Right Anyway"

In the US, the call to prayer, like other religious sounds, is afforded the highest level of protection under the first amendment as protected free speech. "Except where serious issues of individual safety or public order" are in question, it is generally assumed

that religious symbols will be "granted free reign in the public sphere both by legislation and by the courts" (Barnett 2008:8). In contrast to the situation of some European countries like France, which actively enforce secularism by attempting to rid the public sphere of all religious signs, US secularism is supposed to work by accommodating and regulating religious expression in a neutral manner to the greatest extent possible (Barnett 2008:8) Following this ethic, ruling authorities are charged with the task of striking a delicate balance between the rights of individuals and communities to express themselves, and the rights of others in the vicinity who may be disturbed by these expressions (Barnett 2008:8).

Due to sound's peculiar qualities, its regulation is constantly in flux and subject to debate. Since sound levels are only meaningful relative to the level of background noise, sound technicians wishing to regulate one particular sound are confronted with the difficulties of teasing that sound out as well as infinitely recalibrating it against the highly particular and complex ambient soundscapes (Schafer 1994). Because sound cannot be properly lifted from its locality, issues pertaining to technical aspects of sound regulation are most often left to municipal agencies rather than national or state one, to arbitrate. When it comes to questions concerning the details and technicalities of sounds, municipalities have the right to set limits on the type, duration and volume (quantitatively or qualitatively interpreted) of public expressions through local noise ordinances as long as they do so "with neutrality" and "within reason" (Barnett 2008:8). Yet what counts as "reasonable" is inevitably tied up with the particularities of historical circumstances, cultural value systems and public feelings (Schafer 1994:146,183).

Within the debate over the call to prayer in Hamtramck, references to the first amendment "neutrality clause" played a key role. Al-Islah mosque is located directly across the street from an old, large Catholic church that rings the hours. Hamtramck is a city of many such churches, and their bells ring out from the towers sometimes during very late or early hours. Additionally, mass or music is also sometimes amplified from the churches and through the streets on holidays, yet as far as public record can tell us, no attempt was ever made to regulate this. Because of the neutrality argument, the church bells of Hamtramck became a major point of focus. Many who took part in the debate either for or against the call to prayer hinged their arguments around making a case for the fundamental similarities or irreconcilable differences between the adhan and the church bell in terms of the function, meaning and sound qualities of these two forms of religious expression and their compatibility with a "secular" ideal.

Taking this principle of neutrality into question, the Bangladeshi mosque leaders who asked for the adhan regulation believed in their constitutional rights to broadcast the call to prayer as least as loudly and for as long as the church bells which had been filling Hamtramck's airwaves regularly for decades. Furthermore, in terms of representing the "reasonableness" of the request, the mosque leaders took al-Islah's location into question. Al- Islah mosque is located in a commercial, not a residential district, one that has a high degree of ambient street noise. Based on knowledge about call to prayer conflicts and restrictions in other nearby mosques, especially the confiscation of the loudspeaker of one mosque that was just over the border with Detroit, the mosque leaders were aware that a sudden broadcast of the adhan's foreign sounds would probably lead to resistance and challenges from their non-Muslim neighbors, at least until these neighbors grew

habituated to the sound and learned to understand its sense and meaning.[64] Here, the mosque leaders were recognizing the cultural rather than universal aspects of determining that which counts as "reasonable," and the visceral response that exposure to "foreign sounds" might evoke in their neighbors (Connolly 1999; Asad 2003; Hirschkind 2006).

Furthermore, in making this request, the mosque leaders were also cognizant of a second factor that might work against their ability to issue the call to prayer without further city intervention: the existence of Ordinance No. 434 (See Appendix A), which imposed a blanket restriction on the amplification of any and all sounds in the streets of Hamtramck along with a wide range of other "noises" (Hamtramck 1989).[65] According to many critics, legal experts, and the general consensus of Hamtramck's city council, Ordinance No. 434 was highly flawed, and probably unconstitutional due to its void-for-vagueness qualities.[66] The fact that this noise ordinance had been selectively enforced within Hamtramck's history presented another problem. Despite its existence, the city was regularly filled with amplified sounds, sometimes funded by the municipality, including cherished, iconic city sounds such as the annual Veteran's Memorial Service, Hamtramck High School Friday football games, and the music of Polka bands subsidized by the city for its Polish Day Parade and Pączki Day (Polish Mardi Gras) festivals. Council members reasoned that if they used this ordinance to restrict the call to prayer, there could be very negative legal repercussions, as evidence of selective enforcement

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[64] Based on recorded fieldwork interviews with Hamtramck mosque leaders on 22 December 2007 and 18 April 2008, among others.

[65] Ordinance No. 434 states "It shall be unlawful for any person to create or assist in creating … any noise which either annoys, disturbs, injures, or endangers the comfort, repose, health, peace or safety within the City." It then names "amplified sound" within a long list of unlawful noises in the city.

[66] According to Maquera: "Ordinance No. 434 is constitutionally 'void for vagueness' since it does not define by what objective standard noisemaking will be considered 'excessive, unnecessary or unusually loud.' Thus, any person or organization that wanted to make public announcements of any kind could not possibly know when such announcements might run afoul of Ordinance No. 434" (2004). See also ACLU statement prepared by Kary L. Moss (2004).

would be readily observable to anyone in Hamtramck.[67] Notably, as pointed out by city officials, under this noise ordinance, the cherished and iconic sound of church bells themselves were technically also highly vulnerable,[68] although no one had ever thought to test this. City leaders pointed out the city's Muslims could claim that the church bells were objectionable to them and technically have them silenced under this noise ordinance, in an effort to draw attention to the mutual vulnerability and interdependence of the two communities. However, the mosque leaders maintained that they would never lodge such a complaint because of their respect for the church and the city's religious traditions, asking instead that the city's non-Muslims to show them the same respect by agreeing to support an ordinance amendment that would protect them all.

Taking these factors into consideration, the city responded to the mosque's request by drafting Ordinance No. 503 (see Appendix B), an ordinance to amend the original noise ordinance, in a way that would empower the municipality significantly.[69] As then-city council president Anna Stokowski explained:

> What this ordinance does is give the city a mechanism to regulate [religious sounds]. … Before this, there wasn't even an opportunity to regulate. Now we can say, "These are the hours." Before, they could have

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[67] According to then-city councilman Mike Edwards " When [Al-Islah] mosque came to this council, and a previous administration turned down their request based on it being amplified, it was obvious to anybody that if we continued on the current course it would be selective enforcement, and that is not allowed under the law (City Council 2004a).

[68] "The city's law … does not allow someone to mount a speaker outside and broadcast for all to hear. That applies to churches that no longer use bells to ring but instead rely on a taped recording and then amplify that outside. That, technically speaking, would make St. Ladislaus Church in violation of the law … or for that matter, any other church in town using that method" (Sercombe 2004).

[69] Ordinance No. 503 states: "The City shall permit "call to prayer" "church bells" and other reasonable means of announcing religious meeting to be amplified between the hours of 6:00 a.m. and 10:00 p.m. for a duration not to exceed five minutes. … The City Council shall have the sole authority to set the level of amplification. … The Common Council shall take all appropriate action they deem necessary to alleviate the complaints, with such action to include, but not be limited to, an order to reduce the volume or an order to change the direction of the amplification or an order to terminate the use of amplification. If the Common Council deems that the means of announcing religious meetings must be reduced, the Council shall amend this Ordinance. The Council may also determine that a complaint is without justification and choose to take no action of the complaint (Hamtramck 2004).

> done it any time they wanted, at any level. Now, we can say only between these hours. And we have the right to tell you: you have to turn it down, you have to change the direction, you have to stop amplifying. We have a way now legally for us to regulate. (City Council 2004b)

The amendment freed religious sounds like the call to prayer from the unconstitutional blanket restriction imposed by the earlier ordinance, while at the same time subjecting the call to prayer and other religious sounds to specific and strict municipal regulation and discretion. The amendment regulated the hours of the adhan, church bells, and other religious sounds, and the duration of the broadcast, as well as giving the city full powers to arbitrate any complaints and issue decisions about the resolution.[70] This included the power to altogether prohibit the adhan in the city, which was a highly significant and until now unheard of power in the Hamtramck municipality, and quite likely in the nation as a whole. Therefore, at the same time as this amendment puts Hamtramck on the map as the first city in the nation to have legislation that specifically allows the adhan, it is also at the same time the first and only city that gives the municipality specific powers to regulate, and even to terminate, the adhan. In initiating the ordinance amendment, the mosque leaders moved to trade in the right of self-regulation for municipal arbitration, protection and authority. In this transaction, the city's official recognition of the adhan as acceptable municipal sound is granted at the very moment of the city's penetration into that group's autonomy as it expands its reach into the mechanisms of its sound device.

[70] In his letter requesting the amendment, Nabeel Akhtar explained: "The five times prayer change by about one minute per day, depending on sunrise and sunset. If this request is approved, a time schedule will be issued for each calendar year, accordingly" (Al-Islah 2003a, 2003b). From the outset, City Hall created a stipulation that would limit the prayer call times between 6am and 10pm, which would mean that during some months the mosque would only be allowed to issue the call three times per day rather than the customary five.

However, legal experts and critics argued that this new ordinance is fundamentally flawed.[71] In allowing for some specific kinds of amplified sounds (call to prayer, church bells) but not others, this new ordinance introduces an undeniable bias into the city legislation by differentiating religious from non-religious sounds and giving preferential treatment to the sounds of organized religious groups over and above those of secular organizations and individuals, which, as some critics pointed out, would be a violation of the equal protection clause stating that all people are treated equally by the law, disregarding factors such as race, creed, color or religion. Other critics point out that the ordinance would the city far too much power, allowing the council members sole authority to legislate as well as judge noise offense and execute decisions pertaining to their infraction. Critics suggested that a new ordinance be created in which the regulation of all sounds are codified equally, whether religious or secular, and in which executive and judiciary power is shared among other municipal offices. These concerns were highly important to legal experts and a small number of local community activists who were deeply vexed by the carelessness with which the legislation was being prepared and by the possible long-term effects of such legislation on freedom of expression in Hamtramck, as discussed in the next chapter. However, these critiques either never came to the attention of, or were brushed aside by, most people who were engaged in the realpolitik of the debates.

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[71] In a statement prepared on behalf of the ACLU, Moss explains: "In an effort to accommodate members of the Muslim faith, Hamtramck has allowed a practice that would not have been possible under the original noise ordinance. … Hamtramck must first make the original ordinance constitutional. Then, to accommodate the needs of Muslims, Christians and members of other faiths, the city can create what are called 'reasonable time, place, and manner restrictions.' These restrictions need to equally apply to other nonreligious but protected speech" (Moss 2004).

The mosque leaders repeatedly asserted that it was within their constitutional rights to sound the call to prayer without any mediation, and that they had only sought city mediation as an effort to be good neighbors. As the mosque secretary explained:

> We could have done this without permission as some of the other mosques are doing. But as good citizens of Hamtramck we tried our best to work with the community, to be legible and do the right thing for the city of Hamtramck. … Muslims, Christians, Jews, we are all together in Hamtramck, we are trying to get this thing passed for every religion. So everybody can be benefited by this law. Please be calm. (City Council 2004b)

One Detroit Free Press reporter compared the "recent immigrants from Bangladesh" who made the request at City Hall to "a naive Jimmy Stewart in 'Mr. Smith Goes to Washington" (Crumm 2004). Rather than attempting to unilaterally impose their own desires and standards for sound on the city, by asking for the ordinance amendment the mosque leaders saw themselves as providing the city with the means to mediate and limit it in accordance with its own standards, which were thought to reflect that of the populace though the body of the elected city council. This interpretation was also reflected by the unanimously supportive City Council.[72] Yet, many people who engaged in the debate, and many press reports, consistently represented it as a debate over the "right for the mosque to issue the call to prayer" rather than as a debate over the city's move to regulate the call to prayer. Some opponents protested that the Call to Prayer represented a form of proselytizing, and they believed that the constitution had some kind of first amendment

[72] As noted by then city councilman Carl Thomas: "While currently, the call to prayer is heard in many cities across the US, such as Newark, New York City, Dearborn, Los Angeles and Detroit that none of those cities regulate the call to prayer, that the call to prayer in those cases happened organically, that people started doing the Call to Prayer and governments around the country chose to look the other way. … Now, our friends from the mosque could have started broadcasting it … and there would have been very little that we could have done about it. Instead, they came and said that they wanted to be good neighbors and get approval from the council to regulate this so they would not be offensive to other members of the community. I applaud them for coming to ask for regulation. There are very few people who come to the government on any level and say 'regulate me,' but the mosques in this town did and I think they deserve commending for that fact" (City Council 2004a).

right that protected them against proselytizing. Opponents of the call to prayer also represented the city's noise ordinance amendment as giving preferential treatment to Muslims over Christians. These interpretations took on a life of their own, resonating with people's expectations and intuitive understandings of the law and its relationship to religious minorities.

4.3 Request and Referendum

The inception of the public debate over the adhan issue in Hamtramck might best be located on August 16, 2003, when then-mosque president Nabeel Akhtar sent a letter to City Hall asking the city council to consider amending Hamtramck's noise ordinance in such a way as to allow the Muslim call to prayer (Al-Islah Islamic Center 2003a). The first request was summarily dismissed in 2003, as the city attorney found that the adhan would conflict with the existing municipal noise ordinance. About five months later, on December 28th, the mosque president issued the letter again in order to make a second, and more felicitously timed request (Al-Islah Islamic Center 2003b; see Appendix C). The receipt of this letter coincided perfectly with the first meeting of the re-composed council that included newcomer Saeed Zaman, the first Bangladeshi and first Muslim member of Hamtramck's city council. The first mention of the December 28th letter appears in the council meeting minutes on January 6, 2004, which also happened to be the first session of Zaman's term. It was passed around to council members at the same time as invitations to a party to celebrate Zaman's election. It was read within the council chambers the following week, on January 13, 2004.

This time around, the letter got more attention. It prompted council members and the city attorney to closely examine the noise ordinance in question. This time, it was not the adhan request but rather the noise ordinance itself that was found to be unacceptable. Led by Saeed Zaman, the council began discussing and drafting an amendment that would allow for the broadcasting of the adhan and other religious sounds and provide the city with the power to regulate these sounds. This process took place from February to April 2004, during which time the city council circulated, discussed, edited and finalized draft copies of the amendment prepared by the city attorney. On April 13, the city hosted public hearing about the amendment so that Hamtramck residents would be given a chance to express their opinions about the issue before the council voted on the ordinance the following week. The first, second and third reading of the ordinance took place on April 20th and April 27th, and many people took advantage of the time allowed for public comments during these meetings as well to express their opinions on this ordinance. These meetings were telecast and videotaped (City Council 2004a, 2004b, 2004c). Dozens, if not hundreds of people crowded into the council chambers during these days, and public comments lasted from two to three hours on each occasion. On April 27, 2004 the ordinance passed through council, having been carried unanimously by all council members. On May 6, 2004, the city officially published an amendment to the noise ordinance. The ordinance was due to go into effect on May 25, 2004.

Al-Islah began to make its plans to issue Hamtramck's first municipally regulated call to prayer on the following Friday, the 28th of May at noon, the time of the week in which the greatest number of Muslims congregate to hear the khutbah (Friday sermon) and engage in collective prayer. However, the issue was far from resolved. During the

city council meetings of April 13, 20, and 27th, former city council clerk and long term Hamtramck resident Mike Seymour, a Polish Catholic, reiterated his position that the noise amendment should be a matter for public referendum rather than the decision of the council alone. After the council passed the ordinance amendment on April 27th, Seymour took steps to actualize his vision, and led a repeal campaign to bring the ordinance to referendum. By May 18, 2004, about two weeks after the ordinance passed, he furnished city hall with a petition signed by 623 people, which, according to Hamtramck's city charter, was enough to nullify the amendment and force the issue into public referendum.

In public statements, Seymour explained his position in the repeal campaign as anti-noise rather than anti-Muslim. During interviews with Hamtramck residents four and five years after these events, most of my informants, including both Muslims and non-Muslims, took Seymour's actions as face value and resisted labeling his repeal campaign as hateful against Muslims as Muslims.[73] Rather, his stance was generally understood to be "anti-Solidarity party," rather than anti-Muslim, that is to say, against the relatively new, multiculturalist, local political party (of which Saeed Zaman was a part) that had supported and crafted the amendment. Therefore, Seymour's criticism and his action against the noise ordinance amendment legislation as well as that of his followers might be better viewed as an expression of political rivalry within the context of Hamtramck's longer political history rather than simply an opposition to Muslim religious sounds. However, regardless of its founding spirit, Seymour's campaign became the rallying point for anti-Muslim sentiment, and was partially overtaken by a language of bigotry disparaging Muslims, as explored below.

[73] As described in the Chapter Six of this dissertation, Seymour has since become a staunch supporter and close ally of several Bangladeshi and Yemeni politicians, and has been an active participant in a range of Muslim-led political campaigns, especially those working from an anti-Solidarity platform.

Due to Seymour's petition campaign, the noise ordinance amendment was suspended until it would come up in a special election on July 20, 2004. Mosque leaders decided to begin issuing the call to prayer anyway, even after the noise ordinance amendment that would have "allowed" it was suspended by the petition. Moreover, they pledged to continue the practice whatever the results of the referendum vote. Therefore, although it didn't stop the adhan from sounding, the petition campaign had the effect of extending the ordinance debates for an additional three months, during which time Hamtramck remained in the center of an uncomfortable media spotlight. During this time, Hamtramck became the site of national curiosity and judgment as a symbol of the direction the US was taking with its Muslim immigrants. These representations of the Hamtramck conflict extended nationally and internationally, through print and electronic media, televised and satellite news reporting, and internationally read blogs, and more people joined the debate through writing letters to city council, publishing letters in the editorial sections of newspapers, and detailing their impressions within blog reports.

4.4 Muslim Takeover

While many non-Muslims in Hamtramck supported the noise ordinance amendment and expressed empathy for its Muslim proponents, others sorely regretted the Muslim bid for visibility. In narratives against the call to prayer, the adhan request was portrayed as an unfortunate display of over-reaching. In these discourses, Muslim and non-Muslims in Hamtramck had had exemplary relations until the Muslims stepped over the line by upsetting the proper balance between public and private space. Arguments against the call to prayer blamed Muslims for not "knowing their place" or for betraying

some kind of unstated social contract about how a good Muslim immigrant should behave, as in the narrative of an older Polish Catholic woman speaking at City Hall:

> I live in the middle of Bangladeshi people. They're lovely people. And they pray, they pray and I see them pray through the door in the summer time. They are avid, they love their God. And I admire this. But they don't say, come into my living room, and pray with me, nor do I tell them, come into my living room and pray with me. And that is how it should be. (City Council 2004c)

From these seemingly simple "not in my backyard" narratives of discontent, arguments against the call to prayer took rhetorical force by relying on a set of divisions between "immigrants" and "Americans," between Islam and "the West," and between Hamtramck's older Polish Catholic population and the encroaching Bangladeshi and Yemeni communities. Discourses about Muslims in Hamtramck echo anti-Muslim sentiments generated within a number of ongoing spatial contestations taking place within Europe and North America. Here, signs of Muslim visibility are automatically associated with Muslim domination that must be controlled, as they are read as expressions of "fundamentalism" and an increased likelihood for the "potential transition to terrorist activity or support of terrorist activity" (Cesari 2005a:49). Similar logics were reiterated in protests over the construction of the Cordoba House/Park 51 (a.k.a "Ground Zero Mosque") in New York (Vitello 2010) and in bans against building of minarets and other kinds of Muslim "confrontational architecture" in countries across Europe (Knöfel 2008). Although resistance to the call to prayer in Hamtramck echoed the same anti-Muslim logics found in contentions over other aspects of Muslim visibility in the West, contestations over the adhan, as an audible marker of space, presents an object of analysis that is in some ways qualitatively different from other spatial contestations due to the intimacies of sound (Allievi 2009:48-50).

Reactions to unwelcome sonic trespasses are expressed as highly embodied, evoking a visceral experience of "offense." In Hamtramck, opponents of the call to prayer and the press attempting to represent their ire stretched their poetic imaginations to get at the sensation, using terms such as "grating," "blaring," "crushing," "invasive," "inescapable" "intrusive," an "assault," a "bombardment" and an "imposition" to evoke a sound that "irks" them beyond toleration (Angel 2004b; Citizen of a Sister City 2004; Farmington Hills Resident 2004; Groening 2004; Kalellis 2004; Leland 2004b, 2004a; de Vries 2004). The pervasive, invasive qualities of the adhan were emphasized within residents' detailed descriptions of how the call to prayer would push past boundaries, estranging them from even the most intimate and familiar spaces, as in the following quotes:

> Don't force this on me. That in the sanctity of my own home, I have to listen to this. [In despairing tone]. I cannot close the door, I cannot close my window. I am going to be forced to listen to this. (City Council 2004b)

> I am here because this hurts my heart, my soul, my inner spiritual being. … I respect the Muslims, their religion, their God, but I don't have to hear their God praised in my ear five times a day, seven days a week, 365 days a year. And where can I go, I am 68 years old, and where will I go? I was born in this hospital.[74] You want me to go? No, I will not leave! It's my country, too, just as it is yours. I respect you, I have no malice for any of you, I just want my rights also, and that is to adore my God in my own home and not have to listen to a God I don't believe in—Allah. (City Council 2004c)

The adhan sounds were also represented as pushing past bodily boundaries through the vulnerable ear, pursuing residents into the most intimate reaches of their psyches in a way that would be intolerable and inescapable. One woman expressed:

> They are going to have it five times a day, 365 days a year. What other option do I have but to put my fingers in my ears because I do not want that invading my home? (City Council 2004b)

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[74] Hamtramck City Hall is located in the center of the city, within the same building that once housed the Catholic St. Francis Hospital in which many elder Hamtramck residents had been born,

> I do not deny these people the right to pray. Pray anywhere, however you may. But not in my ear! If I choose not to listen, what other options do I have besides complaining? … [Infuriated tone] Give me my options now! In this country, in my city, give me my options. (City Council 2004c)

Besides being too loud and disruptive, the call to prayer was also represented as out of sync with the natural, logical, rational rhythms of sleeping and waking. The idea that adhan would startle people from their beds early in the morning and prevent them from falling asleep at night was often repeated in critiques of the noise ordinance amendment, regardless of the fact that they would not be broadcast any louder or longer than the church bells. One man stated:

> I don't want that piped into my window. I got to get some sleep! … The church bells have been ringing as long as I can remember, I don't even think of it any more as noise. It's not noise. (WDIV-TV 2004)

The mobile adhan schedule was represented as unpredictable, and illogical in contrast to church bells that chime in perfect sync with the hours.[75] These descriptions hinge on an implicit notion that that a unified chronoscope is necessary for the good of the nation. In these and other figurations, the call traverses the sanctity of the front porch and living room, and creeps into the intimacies of bedrooms, requiring the use of earplugs, or even forcing one to move away; it is represented as an entity strong enough to reconfigure the dividing lines between polis and person, between public and private, in a way that would push non-Muslims first out of their homes, and then out of the city. In these narratives,

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[75] According to Laguerre, "The definition of the day in the Islamic calendar is not the same as in the civil calendar because among Muslims, the day starts at sunset and ends at sunset. The day has a rhythm provided by the five prayers, while the rhythm of the week leads to the peak day—Friday—after which a new weekly cycle begins (2004:62). However, scholars such as Shafer and others point to the Christian basis of the "secular" civil calendar, in a way that disrupts any easy distinctions between "Islam" and the "secular" West. For Schafer: "The association of clocks and church bells was by no means fortuitous, for Christianity provided the rectilinear idea of the concept of time as progress, albeit spiritual progress, with a starting point (Creation) and a fateful conclusion (the Apocalypse). Already in the seveth century it was decreed in a bull of Pope Sabiniasnus that the monastary bells should be rung seven times each day and these punctuation points became known as the canonical hours (1994:56).

the call to prayer was constructed as "matter out of place" a kind of social "dirt" or polluting agent that spoiled the purity of an imagined homogeneity, in this case, polluting the soundscape (Douglas 1966:2 and 164; see also Conquergood 1992:134). The disruptive qualities of the call to prayer were represented as giving it the power to spill over and spoil everything in its wake, advancing like a cancer (Al Jazeera 2004) and proliferating out of control, until it had dominated every corner of the city, and then the nation:

> If there are five mosques in the city[76] and each one of them wants to have the call to prayer at the same time, you are opening the city up to a cacophony of sounds that would be enough to drive anyone crazy. (City Council 2004b)
>
> I believe strongly in what the other people have stated here, tonight, that we are setting a precedent, not only for what we will have to have here as a community, but for what we as a nation will have to open up the gates to. (City Council 2004b)
>
> And I'm here because if it passes here, it's going to be passing everywhere. I wonder if the city is prepared for every religious organization that is out there, including the Satanists, including the Wiccas [sic], and what happens after we get through with the religious organizations—the civil groups, use your imagination, imagine the civil groups walking down the street, using a bullhorn, 365 days a year, spewing out their garbage. Think about that before you pass this. (City Council 2004c)

The association between the adhan and pollution or ruination are heavily overdetermined, relying on a familiar set of anti-immigrant conflations. Following this logic, the call to prayer is polluting because those who produce it are people out of place (Stallybrass 1986:107, 138; Conquergood 1992:137); here improperly assimilated foreigners who will not give up their public religion. The flood/pollution/disease metaphors are usually

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[76] As of Spring 2004, there were only threee mosques in Hamtramck: a Bangladeshi mosque and a Bosnian mosque on Caniff Street, and a Yemeni mosque on Joseph Campau. However, there were four additional mosques situated just over the Detroit borders in close proximity to three different sides of the city, including three Bangladeshi mosques and a Yemeni mosque, which may have been the source of the speaker's confusion.

associated with fears of the impoverished newcomer economic migrant. Yet in Hamtramck, many of the incoming Muslims, particularly the Bangladeshis, while undoubtedly working class, are seen as relatively moneyed individuals with more resources than the average Hamtramck resident, as dramatized by the fact that that they can be seen buying up properties, opening businesses and marking space at a rapid rate while the Polish institutions are facing disinvestiture. Yet, while the cause of resentment against the Bangladeshis in Hamtramck as resourceful new immigrants may be subject to a kind of reversal from the classically conceived hierarchies of solvent established resident vs. destitute newcomer, Bangladeshis and other Muslims in Hamtramck are still subject to the similar forms of nativist alienation and othering. This is particularly important to note because the relative class standing of monied Bangladeshis in Hamtramck vis a vis the rest of the city's population may reflect that of a significant swath of Muslims in the US today, especially that of South Asian Muslims. Rather than being destitute newcomers, the economic and educational standing of Muslims in the US roughly reflect that of non-Muslim Americans (Pew Research Center 2007:18-19). Here, Muslims are "othered" not so much due to fears linked to economic neediness, but because they are unwilling to part with their public religious traditions, and in this way threaten to upset cherished ideologies about what it means to be "American." Hence, most critics of the call to prayer in Hamtramck were careful to point out that they did not question the right of Muslims to inhabit the city, and some related that they considered the Muslims in the city as good friends and neighbors. It was only when Muslims overstepped certain lines by insisting on a municipal-level recognition of their religion and incorporation of its signs that the welcome mat was pulled out from under them, in

line with the "good Muslim, bad Muslim" dynamic elaborated by Mamdani and others (Mamdani 2004; Cesari 2005a:46; Cainkar 2009). Here, protests against the adhan in many cases were embedded in a message of qualified friendliness and welcome. Yet implicit within these messages was a warning that such welcome had its limits, and would only be extended if Muslims in the city, and by extension, in the US, did not attempt to mark or "dominate" public space.

4.5 Proselytizing

The fact that the adhan contained a worded message was another major point of critique. Here, the content rather than sound of the call to prayer was identified as objectionable:

> My name is Alice Martin. I live on Sobieski, in Hamtramck. I've been here for 59 years. … I am here about something that is not even in the noise ordinance. I am here about what is being said at the call to prayer. Because it's not just a bell ringing. This is what I am going to listen to five times a day. 'Allah is great,' said two times. 'Come to prayer." Great! [Voice darkens]'I bear witness that there is no other God except for Allah', spoken two times. [Voice breaks into a quiver]. 'I bear witness that Mohammad is the messenger of Allah,' spoken two times. 'I bear witness that Ali is a friend of Allah,'[77] spoken two times. 'Hasten to prayer, hasten to prosperity, prayer for prosperity, for prayer is the best of actions, Allah is great," spoken two times, 'there is no other God except Allah," spoken two times. Here is where I differ. I respect their love for Allah. But my God is Jesus Christ. Because I am a Christian. And I do not ask them to praise Jesus Christ. Because that is their God. I am asking that we all pray to God as we should. All of us love our God. But not to impose our God on the whole community. (City Council 2004a)

In this quote, the call to prayer is being spoken from the mouth of an outraged Christian who is only doing so in order to find fault within it, while misrepresenting the translation

[77] Martin is mistaken with this one line about Ali, here citing a Shi'a variation of the call to prayer, one that was never proposed in the almost completely Sunni city of Hamtramck. The next Muslim speaker at the meeting quickly corrected her on this point.

by pronouncing certain syllables in drawn out, exasperated tones to emphasize her disdain. Alice Martin was only the first of many Christians to publicly recite the call to prayer in English translation in this manner at City Hall, prompting Muslim recitations in Arabic and English translations to correct the distortions. These rehearsals and reiterations of the Call to Prayer at City Hall represent charged moments of collective audition in which a city listens intently to a set of sounds seeking to somehow invest them with shared meaning. This kind of collective audition is also emphasized in the chapter to come in terms of the role that it played in interfaith events designed to smooth out relations in the city.

Yet, in her comments about the meaning and import of the adhan, Martin asserted an idea that would become an important pillar among the opposition: that broadcasting the call to prayer would be offensive to Christians because its contents contradicted some of their beliefs. With these types of comments, Martin and other rejected the idea proposed by many Muslims at these meetings that the call to prayer was a message to Muslims that signified one thing for its Muslim listeners (a directive come to prayer), and another for non-Muslim listeners (a soundmark symbolizing their neighbors' faith). In Martin's logic, such nuance was impossible: a public sound must have a unitary stable significance and it had to apply to all equally. And people had no right to broadcast anything unless it was something that all could agree with. Another elderly Polish American lady who had been seated next to Alice Martin expressed similar ideas:

> My name is Ethyl Padalecki and I've been a citizen of Hamtramck all of my life. My parents came as immigrants with their beliefs and their traditions and now I'm being asked five times a day to listen to someone else preaching or calling out a prayer to their God. It's not my God, my God is Jesus Christ, He is the Lord and Master of my church, of my community, of my home. And I do not want [voice rising] this noise to be invading my privacy and the sanctity of my home at ten

> o'clock at night. … And if this council passes this noise ordinance then you are going against the constitution because you are not giving me the right to force my religion on somebody, you are forcing their religion on me. And I have no choice but to hear them five times a day, fifteen minutes out of every day, maybe two hours a week, maybe 1,000 hours a year, that I have to listen to them telling me about Allah, how great he is. My God tells me, 'You want to pray, go into the silence of a room and close the door and talk to me there.' I don't need any amplification through horns of anything telling me who Allah us. I know who God is. (City Council 2004a)

Like Alice Martin, Ethyl Padalecki equates the adhan with proselytizing. Both of them conflate the act of "hearing" with an invasive form of being indoctrinated. The sound itself, rather than being understood as free-floating and as impersonal or personal as the listener wants to make it, is invested with human qualities and agency, and a specific will to act upon each listener. Like Martin, Padalecki outright rejects the Muslims' explanation as a call that is intended only for Muslims to come to prayer, and insists that it is a tool of conversion or influence. Secondly, Padalecki refuses to accept the possibility of difference in the Muslim religion, asserting that the way of her Church, which is (purportedly) to pray silently in a room, is the right way to pray. Although the Muslims at city hall have explained that publicly calling all Muslims together has a specific meaning for them, the fact that she does not see a direct correspondence between the adhan and her own religion gives her the leverage to judge that claim as outrageous.

The fact that the message would be in Arabic and therefore not readily comprehensible to most Christians who might be offended by its message did nothing to soften the blow. Rather, in a somewhat contradictory fashion, the fact that the adhan broadcast would consist of words in a non-English language was used as another main point of argument against it. For some, it was self-evident that American citizens should not be subjected to non-English language, which would cause confusion and a feeling of

being at a remove from the soundscape. One young woman explained to an LA Times reporter, “It sounds like a bunch of jibber-jabber. … Because I don't understand the language, it's even more offensive” (Simon 2004). Another man angrily complained to TV news reporters: “We have no idea what’s being said, or sung, or anything. We have no idea. To us it’s just noise, that’s it. It’s a racket” (Fox 2 News 2004).

Exposure to heterogeneity of languages in the soundscape was taken for granted as a negative experience, assumed to instantly conjure up an affect of frustration and anger in the listener. The perception of language difference as “parasitic” or otherwise contrary to the unity and prosperity of the nation underlies the “intense reactions frequently expressed to public recognition of languages other than English” (Urciuoli 1996:16). Coupled with the earlier claims discussed above that the call to prayer proselytizes to non-Muslims, we see that the Arabic adhan is being constructed at a nexus of contradictions: it is at once meaningless and excessively meaningful, both alienating and irresistible, both distancing and evoking a sense of the “too-closeness” (Berlant 2010:8). Yet, these negative associations with foreign language supercede the familiar “English only” nativist logic and index the particularly stigmatized status of Arabic in the post-9/11 consciousness (Hirschkind 2006:17-18), as in the following:

> How sad, another thing to remind of us of 9/11. The thought of a broadcast over loudspeakers of calling Muslims to prayer five times a day will only make me think five times a day of 9/11. If the church bells bother the Muslims, they should move out in the country, where they can build their mosques and broadcast all they want. (Detroit Free Press 2004)
>
> It's throwing salt in a wound. I feel they've come to our country, infiltrated it, and they sit there looking at us, laughing, calling us fools. (Leland 2004b, 2004a)

In these narratives, the call to prayer, and by extension, Muslims, were coded as un-American. Several other speakers heightened this idea by describing Arab immigrants' countries of origin as un-American and anti-Christian:

> If we were to go to an Arabic country and try to establish a religious foothold there we would be treated like dirt. We would be looked on as the American insurgents. (City Council 2004b)

In this way, some speakers constructed a war between Islam and "the West" during the debates, a sense of two distinct cultures and worldviews that could never exist in the same place. The logical extension of these arguments about sound and space led some residents to imagine a noise war on the streets of Hamtramck in absurdist terms, in which dominance was re-established by Christians by making more noise than the Muslims, as in the words of Ron Martin, the husband of Alice Martin cited above:

> We now have the state saying, "OK, Muslims, praise Allah five time a day, seven days a week, 365 days a year, those who don't like it, we don't care." That's what you're doing. It's my understanding from reading this amendment that if I decide to have a religious meeting in my home, I may purchase equipment, and five times a day, beginning at 6am and ending at 10am, I can invite all to come and pray. [Shifts voice to a different register, filled with emotion]. And I will do that, and I will declare that the Lord of my Life is Jesus Christ, and that every knee shall bow, and that every tongue shall profess that He in the son of God, and I will do it five times a day, seven days a week, and 365 days a year. (City Council 2004c)

4.6 Jesus is Quiet

In contrast to the Muslim prayer calls, the Christian church bells were carefully defended as sound that was appropriate for a modern city in contradiction to the frankly religious noise of the call to prayer. In its wordlessness, melodiousness, and functionality in terms of keeping the hours, the church bell was counterpoised with the literalist,

invasive, commanding, blaring, irrational and militant noise of the call to prayer. Within these discourses, there were two different modes of accounting for and justifying the church bells while opposing the call to prayer. In one, the church bells are recognized as Christian and containing a Christian message, and in the other, it is argued that they have become secular. Those arguing along Christian lines argue that Christian sounds are not offensive to anyone since they are pleasant for all. In these narratives the church bells are naturalized, as in the following: "I do not impose Jesus on them because He's quiet. … Jesus calls in a quiet, gentle voice—He doesn't have to blare over a PA system to call His followers" (Groening 2004).

Those arguing along secular lines reason that because the church bells do not contain a verbal message their meaning is open to interpretation, and cannot be thought of as imposing any particular message on to anyone. This argument is capped with the claim that since the church bells carry the function of marking the hours, they are merely utilitarian sounds. Furthermore, the way they do so has come to be expected, customary and traditional within the city and therefore should not be changed. In these discourses, the church bells are awarded a secular stature and their history as a Christian symbol is made to disappear completely. Many speakers, however, blithely mix the Christian and secular arguments together, into a combined Christian/secular defense of the bells:

> My name is Beth Tobolowsky. I have lived in this city all of my life, I am 48 years old. I have never heard any ethnic group complain about the bells that tell time from the churches. Excuse me, the bells are music, this is not somebody screaming over a loudspeaker as a call to prayer … you can't even here the bells ringing anywhere. They signal a mass time, they signal noon, when it's time for lunch—this is not just a call for prayer, this is "what time is it." (City Council 2004b)

Furthermore, in some of these discourses, although the church bells are recognized as constituting a Christian religious sound, they are appropriate nevertheless because America should still be considered a Christian country, and therefore public space should only be open to Christian symbols. Tobolowsky continues:

> This country was founded on Judeo-Christian principles. We are not a Muslim-based nation. … And let's face it too. The churches have been here for almost 100 years. St. Florian will be celebrating its 100th anniversary in 2008. And never in my life did I think that mosques would outnumber churches. There are three Catholic Churches. And there are seven mosques.[78] … I want you to remember that we have been here all of our lives and we have rights too. (City Council 2004b)

Some speakers reasoning along these lines gave vent to their long-held, strong feelings of resentment at the ways in which "secularizing forces" were pushing Christian signs and symbols out of the public sphere. Here, the advent of the call to prayer in Hamtramck was represented as particularly troubling at a time when some Christian and Catholic groups are feeling constrained by restrictions of their modes of public visibility, such as nativity scenes, school prayer, and representations of Commandment tablets in public space:

> Everyone keeps talking about their rights. The rights of Christians have been stripped from them for the last 30 years of this country. And you are doing the same thing. This [City Hall building] used to be a Catholic hospital. With a cross. With the Ten Commandments. Bibles, with prayers, but it's now a city building, and you cannot, by law, allow any religious artifacts, or any religious undertones to take place in this facility. Yet last week, there was Muslim prayer allowed downstairs, during the council meeting. I will guarantee you, that if Christians had tried to hold a Bible study downstairs, it would have lasted 15 mins. I also guarantee you that if Christians were trying to do what Muslims are doing here, the ACLU would shut us down in 72 hours. (City Council 2004c)

While some of the discourses about the adhan evaluate the appropriateness of the sound for the national, American soundscape, the words of many others who were involved in the debate addressed themselves more to a consideration of the local level, and the

[78] See preceding footnote.

particularities of Hamtramck. In some of these, Hamtramck Polish, or Eastern European history is emphasized, and the call to prayer figured as a wrong note that would spoil or interrupt the harmonies that have been achieved by its older European populations. In these discourses, the call to prayer and its invasive sound qualities come to personify Hamtramck's Muslim population, with their improper modes of assimilation. They are compared unfavorably to that of the city's European immigrants who are praised for their abilities to lose the public aspects of their religions in order to blend in:

> I've lived in Hamtramck all my life over 81 years and I have this to say. … The Muslims are allowed to pray in their mosques, there are hardly any cities that face this problem. And I think that the grace belongs on the other side. If you really think about it, intolerance doesn't come from the few people who object to this, because they have a right to object, but it comes from the other side. Before this, every body got along. They speak their own language in their homes, they teach their children the religion they want, freedom of religion is not denied to them. … Why agitate this entire community? (City Council 2004c)

> When you come to this country … adjust to the customs and beliefs of this country. I respect their religion. I respect their faith. But you cannot wear this on your sleeve. … Fifty-two years ago when I came to this country, every nationality lived in their own community, and really, it was peaceful. And now politicians made a melting pot where you can live anywhere you want. That made a disaster. (Angel 2004b)

In such discourses, the production of Hamtramck as an immigrant city relies on a process of blending in rather than standing out. This train of logic fails to take into consideration the ways in which many Polish Catholics clung to their religious traditions in highly public ways, such as in tendencies to send their children to Catholic schools, the long traditions of nuns in Hamtramck, the wide range of church-centered social service agencies and the marking of public spaces with items such as front lawn "bathtub Madonnas" and nativity scenes, Christmas music played in streets and stores, municipal Christmas decorations, observance of Christian religious holidays in school, Friday fish

dinners in many restaurants and many others. It also leaves invisible the ways in which the city regularly supports Catholic symbolism in the city through subsidizing the Polish Day Parade, and the Pączki Day[79] festivals, and maintaining Pope Park as a public city park.[80] This telling of the Polish Catholic immigration story also ignores the ways in which our understanding of American secularism, such as modes of telling time and inhabiting public space, have developed around a sense of Christian normativity (i.e. the Gregorian calendar), and contains within itself a set of standards for public behavior and expression that have Christianity already encoded in it.

4.7 Muslims are Rebuilding Hamtramck

The older, Polish Catholic opponents to the call to prayer staked their legitimacy and authority to make judgments about what is appropriate for the city based on the number of years they or their parents have lived in the city and the relative contribution their ethnic group has made to the city. These discourses relied on the claim for that group to have established a neutral, unmarked public sphere free of the symbolic marking or dominance of any one particular group, and in doing so, to have achieved an idealized or default mode of American public space that Muslims were said to be spoiling.

In these narratives, Muslims were coded as relative newcomers with less of a stake in the city and less of a right to impact its shared soundscape. Their attempt to

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[79] The city of Hamtramck hosts and subsidizes the celebration of the nation's only "Paczki Day," the Polish Mardi Gras anticipation of Lent through mass consumption of jelly-filled fried dough treats.

[80] Pope Park is a small, concrete public park in the center of the city on the city's main street built around a monument to the Pope John Paul II. Hamtramck's Pope statue is one of the city's most cherished landmarks, commemorating a visit Karol Wojtyla made to Hamtramck in 1969 when he was Cardinal of Krakow. One of only two such life-sized figures in the world, the statue is a large bronze structure of ten feet in height, depicting the Pope with his hands raised in blessing.

impact the shared soundscape through amplification was exaggeratedly portrayed as a major offense with disastrous implications if left unchecked. As one long term Polish resident put it, "Why should they take over, you know what I mean? We been here living all of our lives and nobody took over, and they're taking over?" (Fox 2 News 2004). And another told a New York Times reporter, "We all lived in peace and had no problems. You [new immigrants] moved too fast" (Leland 2004b, 2004a). The call to prayer is de-legitimized in these narratives as an imposition of a too-eager, over-reaching newcomer. Yet, the Muslims of the city, as well as some non-Muslim supporters, begin to articulate their own claims to place, by rooting themselves in Hamtramck historically, economically and spatially, telling their own histories and drawing their own maps. One middle-aged Bangladeshi man narrates:

> My name is Majid Alam. I am a business owner in Hamtramck. I have been living in this city for the last twenty years. Hamtramck is my bread and butter. … When I lived on Harold Street there were two churches on two corners, I never woke up when the church bell rang, I never had any kind of disturbance. Today some people are saying that Hamtramck is being taken over by Muslims. But Hamtramck is not being taken over by Muslims. Hamtramck is being rebuilt by Muslims. Look at Conant five years ago, and look at it today. There was hardly any abundance of buildings there five years ago. There was just closed buildings, closed doors. And from then, Conant Street was being rebuilt by Muslims. (City Council 2004a)

A politically active Yemeni community leader comments:

> [A] gentleman before me mentioned that he is a citizen of this country. Well, he is not the only citizen of this country. We are all citizens of this country. I can recall that my grandfather served this country in WWII. And don't push this, "If you're not for me, you are against me." We are here to ask the honorable council to take a leadership role and to pass this amendment for the community. I have been here for 26 years. … and we ask you for a simple thing—to allow the call to prayer. … Now for some of you people here, we respect your view. … Now, we hear the bells everyday, every hour, we never say nothing. We never say the bells call us to prayer. Now, we are citizens of this country. Just because of the way we look, you think we come in yesterday. But we contribute to this country, and we've been here in the city longer than some of you. (City Council 2004b)

The production and circulation of these narratives during the call to prayer debates constituted an important moment in Hamtramck's history. The city historically has been publicly represented as an enclave built up by Poles and other Europeans, defined to outsiders by its Pope Statue, Polish Day Parade, and Pączki Festivals. Yet, at City Hall, an alternative narrative of Hamtramck began to emerge. But, rather than a narrative of domination, the Muslim speakers and their supporters advance a narrative about plurality and the mixing of Muslims and non-Muslim population.

The opponents to the call to prayer took an all-or-nothing approach to the soundscape of the city. Either it was a secular/Christian space or it was dominated by an Islamic trumpeting that would offend and contradict all other religions. However, some speakers represented the sound in a different way:

> Salaam aleikum everybody, my name is Mohammad Al Mansour, I was born and raised here … and still live in Hamtramck. All the mosques that have it, where are they, on Miller, on Mound? I live on Hanley, I don't hear it from Miller, this is not an issue about adhan that they get bothered. Where's the other mosque, Buffalo? Who lives by Buffalo, all Bengalis, Yemenis? Where's the other masjid at? … The mosques that they built are where all Arab Muslim communities are living. Miller, Dorothy, Oliver. How many non-Muslims live there, how many? Nothing. And I know the microphone is not heading toward Joseph Campau. It's heading toward the middle so that Miller, Dorothy and Oliver can hear it. (City Council 2004b)

This speaker points out that the mosques in Hamtramck and Detroit tend to be built in neighborhoods with high Muslim concentrations, and that the sound of the adhan carries only a few blocks. Although he doesn't state it here, Caniff Street, the location of al-Islah mosque, is a heavily commercial area, quite removed from private residences. The speaker here attempts to move his audience's envisioning of Hamtramck away from the uniform and eminently dominable space of the city imagined by the Polish Catholic

majority, to a more complicated landscape. Here, Hamtramck is a city with different intensities, rhythms and dynamics, and sounds emitting from particular spaces would effect those spaces differentially, rather than pervade the city in one fell motion. This is a Hamtramck with enough space and texture to embrace its differences.

4.8 Shared Indignities

During the debates, several African American community leaders each came to the podium to support these Muslim assertions and claims to space in the production of other narratives of heterogeneity. Some of these were prominent community leaders who were well known in the city due to their highly public engagement in a different struggle over urban space: a movement to gain long-awaited compensation that was due to families that had been forcibly displaced by an urban renewal project during the 1960s.[81] During the call to prayer debates, African American community activists linked the call to prayer struggle with the forms of discrimination that forced blacks out of the city, articulating a politics of resistance against the longstanding Polish Catholic domination of the city.[82]

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[81] Hamtramck has always had a sizable African American population, averaging about 12% of its total population (Kowalski 2005:36). In the 1950s, most of Hamtramck's African Americans lived in segregated enclaves in a few sites around the city. Under the national Housing Acts of 1949 and 1954, city officials engaged in an "urban renewal" project that entailed the building of a freeway that routed straight through one of these neighborhoods, displacing dozens of families without any aid or compensation. In 1968, a class action lawsuit was brought against the city, a federal judge Damon Keith found Hamtramck guilty of discrimination, calling the city's urban renewal plan "Negro removal". He ordered that new housing be built for 114 plaintiffs, but the city neglected this order for decades. Finally, in 1999, a new city administration began addressing the problem, and developed a plan to built new homes for the plaintiffs that would available with generous tax breaks and reduced rates, but by then it was too late for most of the original plaintiffs to get any form of restitution, since many had died in the intervening years. In 2004, the plaintiffs had yet to receive any compensation (Angel 2008).

[82] The three African-American speakers quoted here, Jemison, Smith, and Stewart were each heavily involved in activist work to advocate for and plan the restitution. Additionally, Jemison and Smith are

> My name is Nella Jemison. I am a former school board member. I was elected in 2000, and I was the first one elected as a minority since 1924. Listen to me, since 1924. There are many things that have happened to us as a community here in Hamtramck just as Mrs. Smith have stated.[83] I am not here to fight prayer. … But what I want to talk about is this, when the bells stop ringing, when you stop praying five times a day on your knees, don't jump up, and put your feet on the Black man's neck, as what has been done on this community as Judge Keith declared as "Black Removal," and is still not settled yet after 35 years. So you see that's what I'm talking about. I don't fight you as my brothers and sisters, because you are also of a darker race within this community. And you have perhaps felt some of the indignities that we Black folk have been through, through the years. I have many friends who are Catholic in this community. I love them dearly. I have even had the privilege of saying and reading prayers at Queen of Apostles Church whether you believe it or not. I have prayed and have prayers in the Protestant churches of the city. What I want you to do is, when you get through praying, pray for me. And I will pray for you. But when you get through praying, don't "P-R-A-Y" and then get up and "P-R-E-Y" on me. That is what I'm talking about. And I hope that all of you see, it's not about nationality, it's about prayers to the Almighty God to keep all of our minds together. (City Council 2004c)

Another well-known African American elder and community leader constructs a retelling of Hamtramck's history in a way that foregrounds African-American centrality and emphasizes the fact that Polish Catholics were once newcomers to the city as well:

> My name is Mae Smith. To me, this is really a disgrace. The reason I'm saying this is, I was born here on Jospeh Campau up over the Tom McCann shoe store in 1925. My parents came here before 1900. And the grounds didn't have sidewalks, and my parents along with other Blacks helped build this city. … When I was in school, many people came from Europe. And the teacher asked us African American kids to help the Polish kids learn how to speak English. … People would come from Poland, with just a cardboard box of clothes, and knock at our doors. My dad and mother would let them in and make a pallet on the floor and let them take a bath and feed them, and take them over to the Dodge brothers to get a job. They wanted to stay on with us, but my father would say, "you know there are rooming houses in the city" and take them over to the rooming house so they could find a place of their own.[84] (City Council 2004b)

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founding members of "Concerned Women of Hamtramck," a decades old community group dedicated to improving opportunities for African American women and girls in Hamtramck.

[83] Historically, there has been a dearth of African-Americans in elected and appointed offices in the city of Hamtramck, not only on the school board, but in the full range of positions. For example, as of 2004, there had never been any African American representatives on the city council.

[84] According to local historian Greg Kowalski: "In the early years of the city, it wasn't unusual for white Polish immigrants to rent out space in homes owned by African Americans. They shared space at a time when the rest of the country was almost entirely segregated. Black and white children played together and went to school together (2005:36).

And the next week, the same speaker adds:

> And what is everybody so afraid of? If you have your own religion, regardless, you know there's many other religions, and people pray to God from the culture they come from, and everybody has their own culture, except the Black people, and that's a fact. Because we were stripped and brought to this country, but we helped build this country. Hamtramck was built by many Blacks, because the Poles were not here in the beginning. … I am just telling you, be fair with everyone. One section, just because you may have the largest here in this country, to take away the rights of someone else, is wrong. And that's what I believe. (City Council 2004c)

Like Smith, Black community activist Leo Stewart also chides the opposition for its hegemonic stance:

> Just like you today, you have a cell phone, you have internet, you have a regular telephone in your house, you have all different modalities for people to get in touch with you. And you don't think that God Almighty has that same power that he can call his people in different ways? In the book of Daniel, I think it's the fourth chapter, Daniel, the same topic came up, in the Christian Bible, in the Jewish Bible. It came up and the council of the people on that day made a proclamation that the people could only pray to the King Nebuchadrezzar. And Daniel went up into his house, and he hollered, "There is no God but God." Ok, so it's the same thing I see it repeating itself. And I'm hoping that you would see the light. Leo Stewart is giving it to you here. I hope you live up under it. (City Council 2004a)

In his narrative, Stewart, an African American convert to Islam, links the city's Polish Catholic power brokers to the Babylonian rulers during the period after the siege of Jerusalem when the Jews were deported and exiled to Babylon. In his allegory, the Jews and Daniel represent the Muslims being forced to live under a repressive regime, subject to the laws and religion of the dominant Babylonians/Christians. In Stewart's telling, when faced with the erasure and denial of his religion, Daniel shouts out, "There is no God but God," which also happens to be the second line of the Muslim call to prayer.

4.9 A Pioneer City

A final set of narratives emphasize the importance of the adhan as an issue that could make Hamtramck a pioneer city in terms of expanding civil rights on a national level. The point is perhaps made best by a man from the Bosnian refugee community, who narrates something about what it was like to live in a country in which his rights as a Muslim were completely repressed, contrasting this with his hopes for America:

> Good evening council members, my name is Kemal Jancic, I am the imam at the Bosnian American Islamic center. What I'd like to say is that the Bosnian community is located here in Hamtramck, we established an Islamic center in Hamtramck on … Caniff Street. . . . I just want to make a comment regarding the Bosnians coming to this country. How grateful I am to be in this country, to be able to express myself and to hear other people express themselves. And if there is a democracy on this earth today, I think that this [city] is the first place we would see this democracy [loud applause]. Being able to express yourself religiously and in other ways, and this is very hard to explain, it would take a long time to explain, how difficult it was back home, to be able to say that you are a Muslim, being under a communist regime for 50 years. But we kind of think that everything's going to be easy here, although there are difficulties here too. My last words would be for the city officials to understand how it is with new communities, there are different religions, and the different communities should understand the communities they live in, the hosts and the guests, to build a nice community is hard, but it is my hope that you will understand and help us as much as you can. (City Council 2004b)

Some Hamtramck non-Muslims also convey a sense of hope that the city of Hamtramck will become an icon for civil rights in the country by setting this precedent, as in the words of this politically active, self-identified atheist and professional jazz musician:

> My name is Paul Evans, I was born two miles from here. That gentleman there who has been a citizen for two weeks has the same rights as I do. … I have the right to make noise any time of the day. If I want to play my saxophone on my front lawn, I can do it. But I want to say, what is going on here is a true example of democracy. This is democracy in action, this is what we live in this country for. People are going to have differences of opinion. We are going to argue and disagree, sometimes vehemently. We are not going to get out our weapons, as someone suggested, we are going to leave this place, whatever the decision is, and we're going to try to live together, in peace and harmony. We have to get together

> and there is no other choice. … I'm proud that Hamtramck is going to set a precedent for the entire country. This is amazing that you guys have to decide something important. It's got to be done sometime, and even though I'm not a Muslim and I'm not a Christian and I have my rights, I want freedom for all religions. (City Council 2004b)

Local community leaders placed a great deal of importance on Muslims rights at the local level. As one Yemeni community activist expressed: "It means a lot to me. It will show that everyone is treated equally in the city." And in the words of Councilman Saeed Zaman: "This is important so that the people here don't treat this city like a bus stop to where they are more welcome. … I love this city and I want these people to live together for many, many years (Crumm 2004). But, the national importance of the ordinance was not overlooked. In the words of mosque secretary Khatib Hasan, "Hamtramck is going to be a pioneer for the whole Unites States" (Angel 2004a). This message of positive expectation and hope was also picked up by national level Muslim American advocacy organizations, as Council of Arab American Relations Ibrahim Hooper expressed:

> This is a ground-breaking effort, and I hope it will set a precedent for other communities across the nation. … It sends a tremendously positive message to the rest of the world at a time when we face severe criticism. America supports religious diversity, particularly religious support for its Muslim citizens." (French 2004a, 2004b)

4.10 Conclusion: Muslims and the American Sensuous Public

This chapter's reading of the urban sensorioum focused mainly on the soundscape, by providing a reading of the sense and meaning the residents of Hamtramck bring to the adhan broadcast, which became a polysemic and highly charged object holding a range of different effects. For Muslim proponents, it represents an intimate call

to common prayer, and a diasporic sound reflecting the strength of the community. For opponents, it represents an annoyance, an imposition, the interruption of an imagined smooth and legible space, and a challenge to the Christian/secular normativity of the nation. For Muslims and non-Muslim adhan proponents, it represents a public recognition of Islam and an expression of American freedoms. The chapter analyzes how the opposition to the adhan sound was scripted within an anti-Muslim lexicon that grows out of older, more familiar nativist and anti-immigrant rhetoric.

The Polish Catholic opponents to the noise ordinance amendment emphasized the longevity of the Polish Catholic community in Hamtramck and the myriad ways that they had contributed to the creation of the city as justification for not allowing Muslim groups to impinge upon the norms and forms of public space the Polish Catholics had helped establish, which were described as Christian, secular and traditional. In these narratives, anti-noise ordinance amendment messages were linked with anti-Muslim and other forms of othering. In response, Muslims and their supporters developed counter-narratives to articulate a different set of claims to the city and to destabilize these Christian/secular hegemonic constructions by emphasizing the importance of non-European origin residents to building the city. These were articulated most sharply within Muslim as well as African-American reconstructions of the city history. African American residents saw in the Muslim struggle a reflection of their own long history of marginalization in the city. Within public debates, African American leaders linked the adhan issue with the then-ongoing struggle for justice over the forced displacement of many African-American families within an urban renewal ("Negro removal") project that had taken

place in the city decades ago, but for which restitution has still not been granted (discussed below).

Yet, this current chapter ends within the same impasse, or ceasera, from which it began. Action takes place, but no resolution: the mosque makes it request, the public debates it, and the city grants it, but then the new legislation is stymied by a repeal campaign. At the end of the chapter, Hamtramck remains in the same state of suspended animation and collective contemplation of the adhan as it was in at the beginning. The next chapter will cover a subsequent phase in the public debate over the noise ordinance amendment and then describe how the issue was finally resolved. In doing so, the coming chapter will continue to focus on the question of the urban sensorium, or collective construction of a sensuous shared public, but will expand its aims to trace the mutual constitution of municipal visual as well as audible elements of the urban landscape by analyzing how the norms and forms of both religious landmarks and soundmarks were challenged and reconfigured within an interfaith campaign to ease tensions brought on by the adhan issue.

The focus of this current chapter has been on investigating and analyzing the connections between sense and space by examining how people represent their relationship to, and their rights to control and determine, the sounds of the city and their right to the city. Residents of Hamtramck accept other signs of Muslim presence such as the growth and proliferation of mosques and religious schools, depictions of Muslim holy sites and Arabic wording within stores' signage and forms of dress such as the hijab, niqab and prayer caps. However, opening their city to amplified Muslim sounds proved to be a particular challenge, because of the intimacies and interiorities of the sensual

experience of sound. This chapter analyzes the sensual gradations in which the "public" becomes experienced as "private" as the limit point marking the moment religious expression of the other is experienced as an imposition upon the self. In looking at the micropolitics of how these entry points were represented and configured in one small city we gain insight into how the national sensorium is pitched in contemporary times to filter out "self" from "other," "American" from "foreign," and "familiar" from "unsafe." The chapter examines the ways in which these sensual and naturalized processes of discrimination were challenged and answered by alterative forms of connection to municipality and nation by a diverse group of citizens. In this way, the study offers a glimpse of what a politics of Muslim incorporation into the city on its own terms might look like which recalibrates the senses and widens the national sensuous public imagination to filter in an expanded sense of what counts as American.

Chapter Five

The Mosque and Pope Park:
Muslim Sounds, Interfaith Space, and the Paradoxes of Muslim Visibility

On a May afternoon in 2004, about a month after the contentious debates described in the previous chapter, a group of Hamtramck residents again assembled over the call to prayer issue. But this time, rather than meeting at City Hall, they met at al-Islah mosque, in the context of an interfaith ceremony. The group consisted of several dozen ethnically diverse residents of the city and some outsiders who had come in for the occasion. Many were there at the mosque for the first time. They sat closely pressed together in rows on the green and red striped carpet with its lines oriented toward Mecca, or leaned against the walls. A group of religious and community leaders sat in front of the room facing the gathering. They were Muslim and Christian, South Asian, Middle Eastern, African, and European Americans. They were dressed in suits and taqiyah (prayer caps), kurta pajama (loose fitting tunic and slacks), dupattas (scarves) and clerical collars. Yunus al-Haq, a Bangladeshi secretary of a local Islamic association spoke[85]:

> If this issue had not been brought up, we would not have been here today, creating a deep understanding and the sharing of both religions. Now there is a feeling of love we are receiving from the other end…. Just a few weeks ago, Congressman John Conyers was here, he asked us: how many would like to go to our church? All of them stood up, and he took us to a church. And we spent three hours together to listen, share and laugh. (Adhan Ceremony 2004)

As signaled by the language and phrasing of the speaker above, the adhan issue in Hamtramck had come to signify more than just a struggle over the legislation of sounds.

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[85] As was the case in for the material documented in the preceding chapter, I was not in the field for the events and ceremonies covered in this chapter. Therefore, I relied on the same ethnohistorical method in this chapter as I did in the last, in which I interviewed people involved in the events three and four years after they occurred, while also relying on videotaped footage of the events in question, as well as print media and City Hall records.

Rather, it had come to be seen as an issue with the potential to transform social relations among Muslims and non-Muslims in Hamtramck. And, as exemplified in this meeting at al-Islah and in other places, an interfaith[86] idiom had come to predominate in rhetoric supporting the call to prayer.

This chapter offers an analysis of the productive kind of social and cultural work that this interfaith concept accomplished in Hamtramck, but also advances a critique of how interfaith logics and conventions may also perpetuate hegemonic constructions of otherness by operating through a problematic "politics of sameness" that may mute expressions of alterity that fall outside of its purview (Shryock 2010b:8-11). In doing so, I also compare the way interfaith was used in Hamtramck to its emergence in later "conflicts over mosques" that have taken place in the US in recent years, analyzing the positive as well as the problematic dynamics of the increasingly dominant role that interfaith discourses have played in mediating situations such as the Park 51 debates and the angry spate of anti-mosque demonstrations that followed.[87]

In Europe and Great Britain, there is a long history of fear that Muslims are "barricading themselves away in basements and refusing to integrate themselves into society" (Knöfel 2008). In these formulations, the factor of "invisibility" or "being hidden away" is associated with a potential tendency toward terrorist activity. Yet, due to

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[86] By way of definition, the contemporary conventional understanding of interfaith or inter-religious dialogue generally implies interaction between two or more faith communities in which all participants recognize one another as belonging to different, but legitimate, alternative belief systems with the goal of promoting dialogue, mutual understanding, and mutual aid (Smith).

[87] The rehearsal of interfaith ethics was an important and highly visible part of the campaign to support and defend the establishment of the Park 51 Islamic center in Manhattan against virulent opposition that it stands too close to Ground Zero (Dias 2010; Flaccus 2010; Garcia 2010; Black 2010). Interfaith cooperation also played a part in mediating the spate of angry demonstrations against various mosques around the nation that occurred as local expressions of response to the "Ground Zero" debates, for example in Temecula, California, Murfreesboro, Tennessee and in other locales (al-Marayati 2010; Horeseman 2010; Anti-Defamation League 2010).

what Tariq Ramadan and some other scholars refer to as a "paradox of Muslim visibility," signs of Muslim integration end up setting off xenophobic anxiety as much, or more so then activities which are hidden away. In a 2010 interview, European Muslim scholar Tariq Ramadan elaborates on the growing effects of this paradox in a 2010 interview, when he describes how Muslims migrants, gaining in size, number, longevity and status, are increasingly inhabiting various realms of mainstream public life, "in the streets, on campuses, in the media, everywhere" (Ramadan 2010). Yet, just as the current generation of European Muslims are beginning to establish themselves and take on leadership roles in a range of public institutions, they are being confronted by a range of regulations designed restrict these modes of visibility, such as the growing movement to restrict the hijab, niqab, burqa in public spaces; the restrictions against domes, minarets and prayer calls in Islamic centers; and the censoring of Muslim founded public schools, charitable institutions and programs. Thus, ruling scripts of North American and European countries are giving its Muslim citizens a mixed and somewhat contradictory message, in which they are simultaneously encouraged to engage in public life and then are stigmatized for the ways they are doing it.

Across some European countries, Muslim populations are encouraged to become more visible by national leaders, as long as they are doing so "discreetly" (according to Sarkozy in Bremner 2009; Erlanger 2009); "unobtrusively" (according to Swiss leaders cited in Cumming-Bruce and Erlanger 2009; Islam in Europe 2009) and as long as they do not compete with Christian spatial markers (according to Angela Merkel in Chambers 2008). These imperatives of self-erasure that claim to be the opposite are constitutive of what Ramadan calls "the new era of invisible Islam, invisible Muslims—no symbols, no

visibility, no minarets, no mosques, nothing" (Ramadan 2010). Ramadan makes clear that he is referring to the European situation in contradistinction to that of the US. However, I as became more evident since the "Ground Zero mosque" events, similar trends toward the simultaneous encouragement and stigmatization of ordinary kinds of Muslim visibility are taking place in the United States. On one hand, Muslims are increasingly called upon to account for themselves in the public eye within various kinds of media and legal investigations (Bilici 2010; Shryock). On the other hand, there is also criticism and paranoia about the ways that Muslim Americans shape their own movements of civic engagement. This can be seen in intensified controversies over and surveillance of everyday forms of Muslim public presence, such as in mosques and community centers, Muslim student associations, and even businesses catering to Muslim clientele (Bartosiewicz 2012; Bayoumi 2012). I read Ramadan's "era of invisible Islam" as a virtual state, existing in both European and US fantasies and through nascent government policies, societal attitudes and rhetorical practices rooted in the fears about the destructive potential for Muslim modes of visibility to disrupt an imagined secular and/or Judeo-Christian national culture.

According to Ramadan, it is not emergent modes of visibility but rather their suppression that threaten the coherence and harmony of European nations. This is because large numbers of Muslims are already present and prominent in Europe. Ramadan argues that the failure to assert a positive Muslim visibility will only create a blank screen upon which fears and paranoia may be projected. Therefore, Ramadan asserts another (seeming) paradox: the more Muslims gain visibility for their differences, the more they are "fitting into the neutrality of the landscape and civil society" (Ramadan

2010). For Ramadan, the continued suppression of Muslim visibility only preserves the semblance of a false national homogeneity that will ultimately be impossible to maintain. Therefore, Ramadan urges Muslims leaders in Europe and America to find ways to interface with the public on their own terms and to offer their communities a satisfying way to do so (Ramadan 2010).

Hamtramck Muslim leaders confronted a similar kind of paradox of Muslim visibility in Hamtramck regarding their call to prayer movement. In an effort to incorporate the mosque concerns into municipal public life to the greatest extent possible, the mosque leaders immediately took their concerns over the adhan to City Hall. In doing so, rather than claiming the right to decide on the length, timing, and volume of the mosque sounds for themselves, the mosque fathers put these decisions into the hands of the city, asking only that any restriction that are placed on them be neutral and equivalent with those of any other community. Yet, both the Muslim desire for the adhan, and their act of going to the city for regulation, promoted outrage from among many in the Hamtramck community. For these adhan opponents, the presence of the mosque and the mosque sounds were by their very nature a marker of inassimilable difference and coded as beyond the pale of what the city should recognize through legislation.

Faced with this double bind, Muslims in Hamtramck appealed to an interfaith vocabulary in order to try and make their concerns more palatable and understandable to the non-Muslim communities of Hamtramck. The ways in which they went about doing so reflected larger trends that have been taking place in terms of the incorporation of non-Muslim institutions into North American and European public spaces. In the logic of the Hamtramck movement, the adhan had to become more than a call for Muslims to pray in

order to justify a claim for it in public space. It had to become a sound with interfaith relevance speaking to all communities of the faithful. Likewise, the mosque issuing the sound had to become more than a prayer space for Muslims in order for it to be understood as a legitimate municipal institution from which sounds could spill out into the community. It had to become a site of integration with the function of bringing together and uniting various individuals and communities in the same shared space. As will be detailed in this chapter, just in time for the press to arrive, the ethnically uniform and all-male space of the mosque's main hall is transformed into a kind of novel, multi-cultural and gender-integrated space of the kind it had never been before. And then, at the same time as the reformulated mosque opened its doors to the wider community, various kinds of symbolic spaces of power began opening up to Muslims as interfaith actors, from the podiums at city hall to the city's Polish Catholic sites of prestige and power.

This chapter focuses on the spatialization of these interfaith openings in the city by analyzing how a series of "public ritual events"[88] hosted by the interfaith coalition worked to both literally and figuratively re-construct boundary lines between Muslims and non-Muslims in the city. In carrying out this analysis, I am interested in understanding the ways in which urban ritual events are experienced as having the power to "symbolically transform" and recode urban spaces by "channeling emotion, guiding cognition, and organizing social groups" (Kertzer 1988:8). To do so, I explore how the specific histories, hierarchies and idiosyncrasies of places were reinterpreted, sometimes in unexpected ways, to facilitate the incorporation of Muslim newcomers into particular locales.

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[88] For Roger Sanjek and others, "public ritual events" mark special occasions or purposes, occur in central locations, and break the flow of ordinary events with formal behavior including invocations, speeches, processions, and the sharing of food"(see also Richards and Kuper 1971:4; Sanjek 1998:8).

Within this analysis, I attend in particular to how the Hamtramck interfaith movement's engagement with the local, national and international press impacted the way the debate progressed in the city. As was the case both in Hamtramck, and also on national and international contexts, the press generally plays an outsize role in determining how issues relating to spatial contestations between Muslims and non-Muslims play out even in the most remote neighborhoods (Allievi 2009:80-82). With this, media representations often exaggerate and end up exacerbating conflicts between Muslims and non-Muslims in North American and European contexts to excite readers and increase circulation (Allievi 2009:80-82). Yet, as demonstrated in the chapter, Muslim immigrants and those who champion their struggles are growing increasingly skilled in utilizing the press to their own advantage, often seeking professional help in the form of public relations experts to do so (Allievi 2009).

5.1 Interfaith Overtures

Within the adhan debates, Muslim leaders made their appeal for municipal recognition in both "abstract" and affective registers, and both as national and municipal citizens (Holston and Appadurai 1999). First, they asked the city leaders to grant them rights and recognition in a way that was neutral and equivalent to any other community. Yet, the Muslim leaders recognized that the support of the council for their abstract rights as national citizens would not be enough, and that popular recognition and support also would be needed in order to guarantee the call to prayer could be issued peacefully in the city. In interviews with the press and in my own later interviews with them, I found that the mosque fathers believed that exercising their civil rights to issue the call to prayer

without city and community mediation would have put them at risk. This position dramatizes what Andrew Shryock refers to as the "misfit between membership as an artifact of law and membership as a structure of feeling" (Shryock 2008:201). Here, contradictorily, exercising a rite of political inclusion sometimes increases the sense of vulnerability and alienation of stigmatized minorities, rather than enhancing their status as municipal and national citizens.[89]

To resolve the problem or gap between law and feeling, the mosque fathers made an appeal for empathy and support from Hamtramck residents expressed at least in part in an interfaith idiom. In this appeal, Muslims hailed the non-Muslims of Hamtramck as a community of the faithful who would naturally share a desire to protect religious expression in the city, and to promote unification and mutual understanding among the city's diverse religious traditions. For example, in his first letter to City Hall requesting the noise ordinance amendment, the president of al-Islah mosque wrote:

> This calling can be respected just as Church Bells are. … As a very culturally diverse community, by permitting this action it will build our city to become more unified and familiar with each other's religion. (Al-Islah Islamic Center 2003a)

Here, mosque president Khatib Hasan legitimates the Muslim call to prayer with reference to the church bells that have always been allowed to sound in Hamtramck. Rather than emphasizing a claim to the right to broadcast the call to prayer based solely on reference to the constitutional principle of neutrality, the letter centers on establishing a dialogic framework in which both adhan and church bells are to be valued and

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[89] As articulated by Sunaina Maira and others, the "the rights and obligations of legal citizenship are shaped by differences of race, ethnicity, gender, sexuality and religion" (Maira 2008:16). Indeed, minority rights are, by definition, negotiated in the context of "an uneven and complex field of structural inequalities and web of power relations" (Siu:9; cited in Maira 2008:23).

protected because of their potential to increase awareness, respect and understanding among members of these two religious communities. In phrasing the earliest communication over the adhan this way, Hasan inserts an interfaith message into the adhan request from its very first articulation. During a debate at city hall, one elder Bangladeshi man expressed similar themes as he explained:

> Religion is just the belief in God. One hand is God; and the fingers are Muslim, Christian, Jew, Buddhist, any kind. … We are not supposed to hate each other for the adhan or the bell ringing. … I request for the people to just get together peacefully and not make a big deal about the adhan. (City Council 2004a)

Another Bangladeshi speaker at City Hall used interfaith rhetoric in his wistful recollection of an earlier time of cooperation between Muslims and Christians in the city:

> I want to remind the residents of Hamtramck and the neighboring streets of Detroit, that after September 11th, the horrible incident that nobody will forget in his life, we all assembled in the Veteran's Park of Hamtramck, Christians and Muslims, side by side, sharing the mourning of the loss of life, where about 600 [of the victims] reportedly were Muslims. . . .Many statements and remarks in the first and second time [e.g. the two previous City Hall meetings] were sarcastic, derogatory remarks about other faiths. Please, listen. It really truly pained me to hear, especially from those of you who were present, and many of you were present, during the assembly that we had on 9/11, and remember the ceremony that we had. So, people all of a sudden began hating each other…. I know now you are blinded with the issue of the call of the adhan. I want to remind the Christians here, that Jesus, peace be upon him, in many passages in the Bible, he used to say let me go pray in the woods, pray to my God, and we Muslims pray to that same God that Jesus referred to, that is Allah. (City Council 2004c)

The idea articulated by some Muslims and Christians at City Hall that the both religions were somehow "praying to the same God," was deeply offensive to some other Catholics and Protestants in the city, who went on to explicitly link these sentiments to a rejection of the adhan, in some cases calling the idea a "sacrilege" (Detroit News 2004) and in others tying this blurring of the boundaries to various forms of un-Americanism and anti-Christianity. In a letter to City Hall, one Detroit indirectly references the wars in Iraq and

Afghanistan to call into question Muslim's loyalty to the nation, and by extension, the sincerity of their interfaith strivings:

> Muslims are no more concerned with coming together in prayer with the community than we are about praying with them. Their prayer could be against the U.S., our laws, our military, etc... I would not want to be a part of any such prayer, if the community agrees to accept their call to prayer they agree to accept the god they pray to and their laws etc. Amos 3:3 asks: "Can two walk together except they be agreed?" (Concerned Citizen 2004)

Although, as referenced in the previous chapter, a group of Christian-identified, elder, African American community leaders spoke out on their respect for and connection with Muslim prayer in an interfaith idiom during early stages of the debate, it was after the contentious series of City Hall debates that a faith-based movement began to take shape which publicly and decidedly answered the Muslim's call for an interfaith dialogue. Here, a group of Catholic and Protestant leaders began to chime their voices in with those of the Muslim adhan proponents to formally express their acceptance of the adhan in the Muslim leaders' terms as a sound with inclusive relevance for all who heard it.

One of the first and most influential non-Muslim voices to publicly emerge at this stage of the interfaith movement was that of Dr. Josef Sendler, a highly respected and prominent Polish Catholic leader, community elder, renowned historian, and emeritus professor. Sendler is also founder of Polonia House, a think-tank and demographic center that had became a nexus of Polish American life in the city. Sendler first issued his thoughts on the issue in the form of editorials picked up by two widely read local papers, and soon after began to lead and participate in public interfaith events that reflected these sentiments. He wrote:

> Let us be clear on the matter: the ringing of Catholic Church bells are a call to prayer…..To a faith as rich in symbols as is Polish Catholicism, the bells speak as eloquently as a muezzin's call to prayer…. Islam's presence is spare and

> puritanical, but Polish Catholicism with its liturgical genius not only fills the air with its bells, but the public space with its outdoor altars, corpus Christi processions, May Crownings, Holy Thursday pilgrimages and other paralitergies
>
> [….] The first step for both sides, who have begun only a few short years ago to live together, is to recognize that they do share a common belief with each other and their Jewish "elder brothers in the faith" in the God of Abraham. For Christians, the God of Abraham is known in Trinitarian personhood, but no knowledgeable Christian denies that it is the same God. Pope John Paul II, who has visited and prayed in a mosque, noted clearly last September: "I wish to affirm the Catholic Church's respect for Islam, the Islam that prays, the Islam that is concerned with those in need." (The Arab American News 2004)

In fact, as alluded to above, the Polish Pope John Paul II was known as an "interfaith giant," especially as it concerned his work building the foundation for dialogue and cooperation between Catholics and Muslims.[90] In his editorials and public addresses that followed, Sendler made even more attempts to educate the Polish Catholic community in Hamtramck about Pope John Paul II's stance on Islam and on his interfaith work in general. In invoking the Pope's embrace of Islam, Sendler authorized the notion of a common God between Catholics and Muslims that was first proposed by Muslims but then contested by some highly vocal Polish Catholic elders and others at City Hall.

Besides setting the record straight on where the city's beloved Polish pope would stand on the issue, in setting forth the history of the church bells and insisting on their import as religious sounds, Sendler nudges the church bells our of their status as secular

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[90] In addresses and encyclicals written throughout his long career, Pope John Paul II often referred to Islam as "foremost among the religions" in terms of potential interfaith partners for Catholics, and continually commended Muslims for their piety and good works (PCID 1994; ul Huda 2004; Jukko 2007). In marked contrast to prevalent attitudes at the time, Pope John Paul II promulgated the recognition of Islam as part of the Judeo-Christian tradition and legitimated Muslim faith and theological understanding as valuable and important to Christians and Jews based on his belief that they existed in a complex and mysterious relationship to Judeo-Christian revelations (Abu Rabi 1998; Jukko 2007). Indeed, it was not until the relatively recent World Council of Churches and Vatican II interfaith organizing of the late 1950s and early 1960s that the idea began to be popularized among Christians that Muslims should be seriously considered by Christians as religious interlocutors posited in relation to a common God, whose holy texts contain important messages for followers of all Abrahamic faiths (Abu Rabi 1998; Nasr 1998; Fitzgerald 2000; ul Huda 2004; Jukko 2007; Pratt 2009, 2010).

sounds that some were trying to claim for them and made them analogous to the Muslim prayer calls. Also, in taking pains to point out the historical and cultural importance of Polish Catholic visibility in marking Hamtramck public space, such as seen in church bells, processionals other practices, Sendler argues for understanding newly emerging Muslim markers of public space as a legitimate continuation of these same tendencies, rather than the introduction of a new and corrosive dynamic.

5.2 In Pope Park

An interfaith gathering and fundraiser that Sendler organized at Pope Park on May 12, 2004 was an important public enactment of the principles that he had written about in his editorials. Pope Park, officially "Karol Wojtyła Park," is a publically owned, municipal mini-park in the center of Hamtramck's downtown. The park was built to accommodate Hamtramck's celebrated Pope Statue, a large and imposing bronze likeness of John Paul II spanning twelve feet in height and set upon a twenty-six foot, two story base (Nawrocki 2008). The Pope statue was commissioned by Hamtramck city officials in 1978 on the occasion of Pope John Paul II's election to the papacy. The statue and park around it was also to commemorate the visit of the "Polish Pope," then Karol Cardinal Wojtyła of Krakow, had made to Hamtramck in September 1969, and in later years it also served to mark his return to Hamtramck as Pope John Paul II in 1987. The creation of this park was a gesture to permanently set aside a space for recognition and reflection on the "very special relationship" that the city has with John Paul II (Holusha 1987; see also Paukulski 1987; Wilkerson 1987; Kowalski 2005:140-141, Kowalski, 2010).

Pope Park is set at the far end of a narrow lot on the corner Joseph Campau, the city's main business corridor, and the entire stretch of its southern wall is decorated with a large, colorful scene of a Polish public square in Krakow, the city where the pope served as cardinal. The statue was designed by local Polish American muralist Dennis Orlowski, who used Hamtramck residents of all races and ethnicities as models in painting and composing the mural. The fact that the faces of Hamtramck residents appear in the mural further links the Polish pope and Krakow to Hamtramck's citizenry, as it imagines ethnically diverse residents of the city as sharing a kind of golden era Polish homeland.

By 2004, the beloved Pope monument had begun to suffer wear and tear and serious signs of aging. Cracks had formed in the statue's base, which were widening rapidly with every Hamtramck winter. The sand that had been placed inside to stabilize the monument was leaking out, and people who cared about the statue were growing increasingly concerned about crumbling foundations (Angel 2004c; Parris 2008). It was technically the city's responsibility to repair the statue's base, but with price estimates ranging from tens to over a hundred thousand dollars, Hamtramck residents were aware that the city might never be in a position to afford these repairs any time soon. Civic associations such as the Polonia House, the Knights of Columbus, and others began to rally together to raise funds for the statue's repair. Sendler saw this fundraising activity as an opportunity to invite Muslims to express their good will during a time of tension between the communities. He actively sought out Muslim support and participation in the fundraising, and then called together prominent Catholic and Muslim leaders from

Hamtramck and the surrounding areas for a ceremonial event in Pope Park to recognize and honor the joint effort of the two communities (Swiecki 2004).

As pieced together from interviews with people who were present after the event, as well as local media coverage, the events of the Pope Park fundraiser began with a press conference at the Polonia House. From there, dozens of guests, participants and press representatives made their way to Pope Park, where they gathered underneath the Pope statue for speeches. Flanked by Catholic, Protestant, and other Muslim leaders, the Muslim dignitary from Chicago expressed his admiration for "a visionary pope … who has done so much great work in bringing people of different faiths together." He also described the positive relations between Poles and Muslims in Chicago. "In Chicago, Poles are the Muslims' best friends" (Wasacz 2004b). Speaking next, Sendler reminded those assembled of the presence of a Polish Tartar mosque in Brooklyn, and emphasized how the Catholic Church in Poland celebrates a National Day of Islam, when readings from the Koran and Gospel are given (Wasacz 2004b).

In the context of the call to prayer debates, the invocation of a Polish Pope who prayed inside a mosque complicated the lines that were being drawn by some Hamtramck residents between Muslims and Catholics. The sentiments expressed at the meeting translated the Hamtramck concern from a local to national and international levels. It directed attention of those who were hyper-focused on Hamtramck to see events in a wider perspective, and provided a set of positive precedents for re-imaging relations between Muslims and Polish Catholics. In an interview about the importance of the event, Sendler explains:

> The thought of the Pope himself is rooted in the best and most generous part of the Polish tradition, so [the goal of my work] is to use the authority of the Pope to bring unity into the community. (Swiecki 2004)

During and after the event, Sendler continually referred to the Polish Pope John Paul II's respect and acceptance of Islam. Standing under the towering Pope statue with his Muslim neighbors around him, he called upon the Christians, and especially the Polish Catholics of Hamtramck, to follow the pope's example. His vision for the city of Hamtramck is a frankly utopic one, where the city is cast as a religious community "under the authority of the pope," following the tenets of the Abrahamic faiths, and accepting each other as brothers.

After the speeches, participants planted flowers around the base of the Pope statue. After that, the group reconvened several blocks away at a Polish restaurant, where the food was donated by its owners as well as by a local Bangladeshi restaurant. Participants enjoyed a mixed repast to the greatest extent possible, considering the centrality of pork to Polish cuisine and the Muslim proscription of it. This kind of "breaking bread together" is an important component of urban ritual events, with the potential to foster a deep and elemental sense of community between diverse groups of people (Kertzer 1988; Sanjek 1994). As the days' events came to a close, Muslims from al-Islah began to issue invitations to those new friend who had assembled to come and visit them at their mosque, which is located just about a quarter mile of Pope Park. In fact, these kinds of interfaith meetings at the mosque, which had been unprecedented up until that time in Hamtramck, did end up taking place just several weeks later, as discussed below.

5.3 The Formation of Hamtramck Interfaith Partners

The Pope Park gathering of May 12th provided the opportunity for an unprecedented public expression of solidarity among the city's Muslim and Christian populations. As the organizers had anticipated, representations of this event were circulated by the local and regional press, although not with the same velocity and reach as stories that emphasized the divisive aspects of the adhan debates. Yet, for those who participated in the event, this expression of solidarity provided an important counterweight against the heated words and negative reporting that persisted as the legislation and plans for issuing the call to prayer were moved along, interrupted, and pushed ahead.

As described in the previous chapter, al-Islah mosque leaders announced that they would begin broadcasting the adhan on Friday, the 28th of May, soon after the ordinance amendment was slated to pass which would provide the city with the power to legislate mosque sounds. The mosque leaders continued on with their plans to broadcast even after the ordinance in question was rescinded on May 25th, and put up for a referendum vote. During the period of limbo in which the waited for the referendum vote, the press began to produce a kind of intense countdown-until-the-explosion kind of reporting to cue their readers into a unified stance of tension and apprehension until May 28th. One Detroit News reporter wrote:

> You don't have to be imaginative to foresee vivid responses to the mosque prayer call: One speaker [at City Hall] asked if he could broadcast the Gospels at the same decibels, at the same time, as the mosque prayer call….The meeting wasn't about the community's need to share public space that's devoid of religious passion. It was about an ordinance that's creating its own escalating noise, the kind that some people hear hundreds of miles away. (Berman 2004)

And another reported:

> The City Council voted unanimously to reject the petition and place the issue before city voters in the next election. But Robert Zwolak of Hamtramck…was just as upset by the council's actions. "The damage has been done. This is Chernobyl," Zwolak said, referring to the nuclear power plant disaster in Ukraine in 1986. "The fallout will last for many years." As a result of the council's decision Tuesday night, the city has no power to regulate the volume or the time of day the calls to prayer may be broadcast. (French 2004a).

Besides including quotes that compared the city's failure to control the adhan sounding to a nuclear disaster, the press also reported on the presence of outsider demonstrators in Hamtramck in a foreboding way. Most specifically, it was widely reported how two days before the first broadcast, a vanload of charismatic Christians calling themselves "David's Mighty Men" arrived in Hamtramck from Ohio to demonstrate in front of the mosque. Newspaper and interview accounts described them as large, rough looking white men who created a spectacle in the street, punctuating their message with "piercing shofar blasts." One reporter ominously noting the bruised face of one of these men (Crumm 2004). A Bangladeshi businessman was quoted as saying:

> These men coming here like this, that's scary…People are too overheated. I'm alarmed at what could happen. I had a couple of windows broken in my shop last week. I think it could have been because of the call to prayer. Some people have called me names because of it. (Crumm 2004)

The local and national news also reported on the ways that threats of violence had been conveyed in the rhetoric of letters to City Hall and emails to council members supporting the call to prayer, which had come from all across the country. One such email, to a Bangladeshi Muslim council member, had included a death threat (French 2004b)

In the this context of this growing apprehension, al-Islah decided to organize an open house at the mosque on the day of the first adhan broadcast. That day, the mosque would be placed squarely in the center of a national and international spotlight. Mosque

leaders wanted to use this opportunity to emphasize how the call to prayer was serving as a means for interfaith cooperation and community building to offset negative reporting about the meaning and effects of their call.

The mosque fathers chose a prominent Pakistani community leader named Bashir Iqbal to coordinate this open house event. Like Sendler, Iqbal made a good candidate for the position of interfaith coordinator due to his familiarity with Hamtramck and his involvement with several different local and regional associations that placed him at the center of networks that could be deployed in his work for the city. A former Hamtramck resident who had moved to the nearby suburbs and had founded a mosque there, Iqbal still had close personal ties with al-Islah and with the city. Iqbal also had a leadership role within the Council of Islamic Organizations of Michigan (CIOM), an umbrella group coordinating regional activities among Muslim associations, and was on the board of the Michigan branch of an NGO that was then called the National Council for Justice and Inclusion (NCCJ).[91]

As part of his task to coordinate the May 28th meeting, Iqbal called together a group of local religious leaders to help prepare for the mosque open house. These included Catholic, Christian, and Muslim political, religious and community leaders from different ethnic and racial communities.[92] He also called upon Michigan NCCJ in Detroit to provide support, guidance, and public relations support for the group in an official capacity. Gathered around a table together for the first time, the leaders discussed their fears that the adhan broadcast might lead to aggression and even violence. People feared outsiders most particularly, such as the return of groups like "David's Mighy Men."

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[91] Since 200x, the organization has been called Michigan Roundtable for Diversity and Inclusion (CITE).
[92] This reconstruction is based on interviews with those present at the meeting as well as the meeting minutes and other documents that were generously shared with me.

Members of the group decided that their role during the call to prayer debates would be limited to promoting dialogue and education about the religious diversity and freedom of expression, rather than supporting or opposing the noise ordinance amendment itself. The noise ordinance issue was deemed too complicated and politically divisive to support specifically as an interfaith initiative. In fact, some believed that the noise ordinance amendment compromised Muslim freedom of expression. Others were against it for other reasons. Yet, they all agreed to use the call to prayer issue as a bridge to lead them into further kinds of interfaith community development, and they agreed to work on this under NCCJ guidance.

Following Iqbal's prompting, the NCCJ's Interfaith Partners division[93] had chosen Hamtramck, as a city experiencing discord along religious lines, the to become one of their projects or a "case studies." This meant that the NCCJ would offer to help fund, structure, oversee, aid and advise the Hamtramck leaders in their efforts at interfaith organizing. Another important role that the NCCJ would play would be to provide expert help in public relations at no cost to the Hamtramck organizations. The public relations aspect of the work would begin with the NCCJ's contribution in helping al-Islah mosque with planning and managing of the May 28th open house "adhan ceremony" meeting.

In his analysis of "Conflicts Over Mosques in Europe," Stefano Allievi stresses the importance of Muslim leaders having access to public relations expertise in issues concerning mosque controversies. This is due to multiple factors, including confluence between the press' tendency to magnify events relating to mosque conflicts; and the

[93] The section of the NCCJ that deals specifically with the interfaith mission, known as "Interfaith Partners," works "within corporations, within schools, and within communities" to promote conflict resolution "as organizations, institutions and cities transition into greater racial and religious diversity" (Michigan Roundtable for Diversity and Inclusion 2010)

action of "political entrepreneurs of Islamophobia" who exploit controversies over mosques for their own political gain:

> The media and anti-Islamic political forces have a common interest in raising the conflict in a logic of mutual reflection, both in its evolution and its outcomes… And these declarations [e.g. against Muslims] play a key role in defining public opinion and the discursive strategies of the game's players, who are forced to find a place within the initial logic proposed by the actors who were the first to intervene in the public arena (Allievi 2009:82).

For Allievi, public relations expertise is needed by Muslims and their supporters during mosque conflicts because the cards are already stacked against those fighting for Muslim visibility. As was the case in some of the early call to prayer reporting, the press, which increases its circulation by reporting on conflict, often features or leads with the anti-mosque perspective, thereby allowing that perspective to set the terms of the debate. For Allievi, Muslims in Western countries benefit from working with experts in order to level the playing field; to untangle the terms of the debate so that the discursive field might accurately reflect their position; and to help populations who may be new to the country in question put across their message in a clear and culturally appropriate manner. The Hamtramck mosque was not alone in seeking out professional public relations support during a conflict over visibility, rather, according to Allievi, this is becoming a trend for mosques in Europe (Allievi 2009:82).

As mediated by the NCCJ, the first public appearance of the group that would soon become known as "Hamtramck Interfaith Partners" would take place at the open house and press conference at al-Islah mosque that had been scheduled for an hour before the 1pm sounding of the adhan. On this day, Muslim, Catholic, and Christian religious leaders from diverse racial and ethic backgrounds would stand together as a united front and make their voices heard. At 5pm, on the evening before the first adhan was to be

sounded, American Baptist Reverend Margaret Thompson, who was later called upon to lead the interfaith group, set the following email to a group of her friends and colleagues in Hamtramck:

> A formative meeting was called today, bringing together a large group of interfaith clergy in Hamtramck around the Muslim Call to Prayer. I have been asked to speak at a Press Conference Friday at noon in front of the mosque on Caniff. Please pray for me as I seek to build peace and unity in the City. (Friendship House 2004)

5.4 Opening the Mosque

At just before noon on the morning of Friday May 28th, the day of the first adhan broadcast in Hamtramck, more than a dozen of the religious leaders who had attended Iqbal's meeting the day before were already assembled inside the small mosque.[94] At just after noon, mosque secretary Khatib Hasan came to the front of the room to call the meeting to order. Dressed in a white kurta pajama, a black vest, and topi, or Bangladeshi prayer cap, the young, bearded mosque secretary smiled warmly at the crowd and welcomed them. With a gesture, he motioned for the guests who were still standing to find places on the green and red striped rug, explaining that within a mosque, it was customary for people to be seated on the floor. He then explained that the chairs that had been set up in front of the room were reserved for those who would be speaking at the event.

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[94] My account of the May 28th open house is based on video footage of the event that was provided to me by mosque leaders as well as on footage of the event that was recorded from television by other residents in the city, as well as print media about the event and interviews.

Some of these speakers were already seated behind him. This included City Council President Anna Dembrowski, who was dressed modestly for the occasion with most of her light brown hair covered under a wide, white dupatta (scarf, Bangladeshi style). Next to her sat Father Joe Lenske, the Catholic pastor from across the street dressed in his black suit and white clerical collar, and Salman al-Razi, a tall African American imam with his head covered by a white prayer cap. Hasan began calling up other speakers to come to the front of the room and take their seats, introducing them by name and position. There were a total of about twenty-one of these speakers in all, a diverse group including religious and civic leaders from the Yemeni, Bangladeshi and African American Muslim communities; a Polish Catholic priest and two other Polish Catholic community leaders, a Baptist Reverend; the entire Hamtramck city council consisting of five members; and two representatives from the NCCJ, one Muslim, one Christian. The press was also acknowledged and as the speakers found their seats at the front of the room. Reporters from several different local, national, and international agencies were setting up their videotapes and recording devices to document the meeting.

After Hasan's welcoming remarks, the religious and civic leaders began coming to the podium one by one to deliver their remarks about the importance of the day. Salman al-Razi, an African American imam from Detroit, was one of the first speakers. A tall and thin middle aged man with a short white beard, dressed in a suit and tie, prayer cap and round wire-rimmed glasses, al-Razi cut a striking figure whose charisma and warmth came though in his delivery:

> I am very proud of the brothers here at al-Islah mosque, you know this tiny mosque in Hamtramck is making news all over the world, for wanting to exercise a basic right of our religion, and I applaud them for showing the restraint they've shown, I applaud them for having the respect for their neighbors, and I applaud

> them for wanting to give an expression to our religion. Thank you to all the people that are here to support this. We don't have to be antagonistic toward each other just because we are different. In our Holy Book, the Holy Qur'an, God says that, "I have made you different, but that is just so that you may know each other, not so that you may despise each other. And the best of you is he or she who has the most God consciousness in their heart."[95]

Here, al-Razi interprets the request for an ordinance to regulate the adhan with reference to the Qur'an as form of Muslims reaching out to interact with the non-Muslim community in an interfaith framework so that "they can know each other." Later on, Bashir Iqbal of NCCJ expressed similar sentiments:

> I want to greet all of you with the greeting of peace, with the greeting of our ancestor Abraham, peace be upon you, and in Arabic, salaam aliekum. … The Holy Qur'an makes it incumbent upon all Muslims to establish cordial dialogue with people of the book, the Christians in particular. … And I want to congratulate the Muslims who made the commitment to work with their Christian neighbors to work together …. Let us repeat Jesus' call to be good to thy neighbor, and the Prophet Mohammad's call that to be a good Muslim, your neighbor must be happy with you.

Here, Iqbal deploys an interfaith idiom from the outset of his speech, by reminding the Christians and Muslims of a common spiritual ancestor in Abraham, using the Muslim formula "people of the book" (Arabic *ahl al-kitab*) to accomplish this. Iqbal continues by tracing a link between Jesus and the Prophet Mohammad's teachings about the importance of relationships with one's neighbors,[96] thereby stressing the local importance of the mosque's movement for adhan legislation as an appropriate mode of local

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[95] The impetus for different religious communities to "know one another" more intimately while respecting and learning from differences is a central and defining feature of contemporary interfaith movements, as articulated by their Muslim, Catholic and Protestant interfaith proponents (Abu Rabi 1998; ul Huda 2004; Smith 2004; Pratt 2010). Here, al-Razi quotes from the Quran, Surah al-Hujarat 49:13, which reads as follows: "O mankind! We created you from a single (pair) of a male and a female, and made you into nations and tribes, that ye may know each other (not that ye may despise (each other). Verily the most honored of you in the sight of God is (he who is) the most righteous of you. And God has full knowledge and is well acquainted (with all things)." (Ali 1991)

[96] In doing so, he invokes another convention of interfaith activism, the emphasis on the "love thy neighbor" commandment, as specified in The "A Common Word Between Us and You" letter as one of the two major interfaith principles, the other being the belief in one God (DeLong-Bas 2007; Royal al-Bayt Institute for Islamic Thought 2007; Borelli 2009; H.R.H. Prince of Jordan Ghazi 2009).

community activism because it led to the interaction of many different community members in a way that increased familiarity and understanding.

Like the Muslim speakers at the rally, Catholic and Christian religious leaders also re-told the adhan story from an interfaith perspective, as in the address of one Polish Catholic priest:

> I'm Father Joseph Lenske, I've been the pastor of St. Ladislaus Church across the street for the past 22 years…. I am very familiar with this building. Many years ago, it was the office of a chiropractor, my chiropractor who certainly helped my back on many occasions, so it was a place of healing. When unfortunately he could not continue his work any longer, it became the residence of an artist who did stained glass windows, so it was a place of creativity and beauty. Today it is a house of prayer, a place where hands are joined to give God thanks, to give God praise, and to ask Him to bring his blessings upon us…. Yesterday when various leaders met, we pledged that we ….would come to know one another better that we would visit each other's houses of worship, that worship would not be something that divides, but rather something that brings us closer together.

Lenske uses his time at the podium to script al-Islah mosque into Hamtramck history, by narrating the changing uses of the building over the years. In doing so, he legitimates and even sanctifies the mosque leaders and congregation by adding them to a chain of respected and valued caretakers of the building who had fostered healing, beauty, and now interfaith prayer in the community.

Before drawing the speeches to a close, the secretary of al-Islah mosque calls City Council President Anna Dembrowski back to the podium. He takes a key from his pocket and holds it out before him:

> In front of the audience, I would like to offer this key. We have our amplification system locked up. I will offer this key to our President of the Council Anna Dembrowski to come to the podium and accept this key. She will say, make it loud, we'll make it loud. She's gonna say, make it low, we'll make it low. So please accept this key.

Carefully adjusting her white duppatta around her head, Dembrowski approaches the podium laughing and accepts the key. She holds the small metal object out before her horizontally, pausing appropriately so that the moment can be caught adequately on camera. The room is filled with laughter at Khatib Hasan's joke that the Polish Catholic city council president might, in her newfound zeal for Islam, demand that the mosque fathers' pump up the amplification of the adhan even louder than the Muslim themselves had wanted it. "I don't know what to say about it," Dembrowksi says with a smile and a shrug, "the key speaks for itself. Our Muslim neighbors have been very cooperative all along, and we appreciate it very much and don't anticipate any problem."

With Hasan's artfully scripted speech and gesture, a symbolic transfer has been made. The Muslim leaders, who have pushed ahead to carve out a place for their religious sounds in the city, symbolically hand over control of the mechanism for issuing those sounds to a non-Muslim, Polish Catholic woman in a hijab. The handing over of the key was a surprise to Dembrowski because such direct and unmediated access to the adhan amplification speakers had never been discussed as part of the legislation. By offering the city official the key, mosque leaders were symbolically breaking down a barrier blocking off a Muslim interior from the reach and control of city authorities. This gesture was orchestrated to occur just at the moment before the sounding of the adhan, which represented the breaking down of another barrier in the city, that between the inside and the outside of the mosque, through sound.

After the key was given to Dembrowski, the Bangladeshi mu'adhin approached the microphone connected to the loudspeaker box in one corner of the mosque interior. He arranged his hands around his ears, fingers partially fanned out, in the characteristic

gesture of calling the prayer. Those inside the mosque, Muslim and non-Muslim, male and female, of many ethnicities, crowded around him in a circle. Visiting non-Muslims pressed in close against the men in kurta pajama and topis who are the mosque's regular daily attendants. The mu'adhin takes a deep breath and begins: "Allahu akbar…". The Muslims around him murmur the ritual response formula. The slow and rhythmic call and response is punctuated by the quick staccato of many camera shutters as members of the press crowd in close as well. The faces of those gathered around the mua'dhin, are serious and concentrated, listening hard for a new significance within old sounds, as the Arabic words made their way through the amplification system and into the waiting city beyond.

In the May 28th sounding of the adhan, the mosque leaders carried through on their firm intention to continue broadcasting the adhan regardless of the noise ordinance amendment suspension and regardless of the results of the referendum. But the issue was not yet over. The mosque leaders still wanted legislation to legitimate the act, and passing the noise ordinance amendment still carried a great symbolic and practical weight for the mosque leaders and their city hall supporters. The vote to support the call to prayer would place the power to regulate the adhan, and not just a key that symbolized this, into the hands of the city. It would provide a ready local solution in case the mosque's right to issue the call was challenged, for example, in case the police confiscated the loudspeaker due to a neighbor's complaint. It would save the mosque leaders from having to take the issue to a higher court in case they were challenged. And perhaps most importantly, it would express that the majority of Hamtramck residents were on the side of the mosque. As one informant put it, the vote had become "a referendum on Muslims in the city." For

some involved in the debates, the adhan had become metonymic for the Muslims of the city, where a vote on the noise amendment had the weight of a vote on whether or not Muslims were to be fully accepted in Hamtramck.

5.5 The Press in Their Stocking Feet

During his address to the mosque assembly, former Polish Catholic mayor Hamtramck Mayor Stan Nowick, who had traveled all the way from New York for the adhan ceremony, jokingly drew attention to the fact that members of the press, like the other mosque visitors, had removed their shoes before entering the mosque out of respect for the Muslim convention:

> Salaam aliekum, good afternoon. We have a lot of religious leaders and civic leaders and community people here today to celebrate a very important event. And, I think that this is a very historic event in Hamtramck. In my ten years in Hamtramck city government, I've never seen the press cover an event in their stocking feet, so this is a first. (Adhan Ceremony 2004)

As the stocking feet of the press indicated, along with the visitors' willingness to sit on the floor, and the Polish Catholic City Council President's hijab, new modes of engagement between Muslim and non-Muslims in Hamtramck were being enacted in the ceremony. In Hamtramck during the adhan debates, this included the local and national press' growing sophistication in finding their way around the mosque.

The opening of the mosque in Hamtramck was the occasion for changes and preparations on the part of both host and guest. In Hamtramck, the adhan issue represented the first occasion for a large scale opening of the mosque to diverse groups of non-Muslim visitors and the press. The fact that the Hamtramck mosques had not yet fully developed the kind of public relations function that included these kinds of open

houses until that point may be due in part to the fact that Hamtramck is a working class city, and its mosques are mainly led by first generation immigrants who are still often learning the language, establishing themselves within the city, and providing basic functions for their congregations. According to a typology established by some scholars, the inward-looking nature of the Hamtramck mosques during this pre-adhan controversy period contrasts with the orientation of a second type of mosque that is found in "the West," one in which members and leaders devote considerable time and energy to interfacing with non-Muslims. This second type of mosque is usually longer established, more ethnically mixed, and more affluent.[97]

I had the chance to gain some firsthand experience comparing how different types of mosques handle relations with outsiders during my preliminary fieldwork period in Hamtramck and the surrounding areas. I found that in the nearby, more affluent city of Dearborn and within moneyed suburbs such as Sterling Heights, it was relatively easy to find contact information for representatives from mosques, and my requests for meetings and interviews were usually promptly fulfilled, in many cases by personnel whose positions were dedicated to handling requests like mine. Some of these mosques provided ample opportunities for curious non-Muslims like myself to engage in open house or other mosque events, which I found out about through websites, pamphlets, or personal invitations from the mosque representatives with whom I spoke.

In contrast to the case of the Dearborn mosques mentioned above, none of the mosques in Hamtramck nor those over the immediate Detroit border had websites set up at the time of the beginning of my fieldwork period, although several have since

[97] As noted by Allievi, within French debates mosques are distinguished as either "mosquées de proximité" (small local neighborhood mosques), or "mosquées cathedrals" (large mosques that offer a range of services to both Muslim and non-Muslim communities). (Allievi 2009:58).

established them. Contact numbers for the mosques were often available in the phonebook or posted on signs on the mosque exterior, yet I found that in many cases that the messages left at these numbers were not returned despite repeated attempts. Like most non-Muslim ethnographers, I follow the custom of refraining from entering into mosques without an appointment unless I am accompanied by and have been specifically invited by a mosque member, or, in the case that I have become a frequent and expected visitor of a particular program at the mosque, such as a women's halaqa.

Due to these factors, while in Hamtramck, I had to wait until I had developed enough personal connections within the community before these networks allowed me to gain access to mosque leaders or invitations to visit the mosque. Even after establishing relations with Muslim mosque congregants, my desire to visit the mosques to meet mosque leaders were often further delayed. In some cases, mosque members told me that they had had to gain permission from a specific official, or from the women’s leader, or both, before they could take me to the mosque with them. Also, there were no programs in place that I was aware of to welcome outsiders. My eventual ability to make the connections that I desired was completely dependent on a highly personal set of relationships cultivated over time in which I had to earn the trust and cooperation of individuals connected to me in a social network rather than being facilitated by the kind of well-oiled public-relations mechanisms from which I had benefitted in places like Dearborn.

The call to prayer controversy in Hamtramck had the effect of making al-Islah, a mainly single ethnicity, Bengali-language medium, and first generation immigrant mosque, into a space that was more permeable to outsiders, at least temporarily, by

exerting pressure on the mosque to quickly compose a public face with which to deal with the onslaught of local, national, and international reporters at their doors. Thus, the city and the nation's angry reaction to the call to prayer served as the catalyst for Hamtramck mosque leaders and their interfaith advisers to begin opening up their spaces, preparing for photo-shoots, creating programs, and organizing meetings within the mosque involving a specific self-conscious, mainstreaming, and integrationist presentation of the mosque to outsiders (see also Howell and Shryock 2003; Shryock 2004, 2010a). Not only al-Islah, but other mosques in the vicinity as well, opened themselves to the press during the call to prayer debates.

On the day of the May 28th ceremonial adhan broadcast, news viewers were presented with a novel, multi-cultural mosque interior, in which the presence of religious and community leaders transform al-Islah mosque into an ethnically heterogeneous and gender integrated space. The camera flashes onto assembly of leaders who are lined up by the podium to give speeches: the angular red-headed former mayor in a suit, the Catholic priest in his frock, the city's fair-faced city council president in hijab; the Yemeni elder with the long beard dressed in a long flowing white shift and black vest. The camera frames the shot to include unfamiliar sights and signs as the backdrop for familiar and unfamiliar faces. For example, we see the "Time for Jamat" display over the politicians' heads: six large black and white round-faced clocks set to different times to indicate the prayer times scheduled for that day. The sign for "Wudhu (Ablution) Restroom Downstairs" in Bangla and English is framed into shots of the multi-faith speakers at the podium, and the camera also captures the long brown strands of prayer beads set on coat hooks along the walls. These tableaux, jointly produced by the Interfaith Partners and the

press, mix the familiar and the unfamiliar together, de-exoticizing the mosque interior in a way that integrates it into the landscape in which the business of the city takes place. When the hour is over and the time for the mu'adhin to sound the prayer call arrives, the video and still cameras jostle for position through the mixed crowd of civic and religious leaders who stand in a circle around him. The camera watches them watching him, as he take the classical mu'adhin's stance of fanning his hands around his ears and leaning in before he begins. The presence of the city leaders at this first utterance, Muslim and non-Muslim, male and female, in different forms of dress, some strange and some familiar, further lend an air of belonging and legitimacy to these foreign sounds.

Outside, crowds had gathered on both sides of the street to await the mosque's historic broadcast, yet these were not the angry masses that had been fearfully anticipated. According to the article in the Hamtramck Citizen, "Media Zoom in on Prayer Broadcast," most of them were journalists who "carried microphones, tape recorders, notepads and cameras" (Wasacz 2004a). The atmosphere outside the mosque at 1:30 pm on May 28th was civil and even celebratory. In contrast to the press reports emphasizing strife and opposition that had preceded this day, much of the television and press reporting for that day's event focused on the interfaith meeting that had gone on inside the mosque, and featured interview clips of the civic and religious leaders who had poured out of the mosque after the call had sounded. The press circulated images of the integrated crowds in front of the mosque smiling and shaking hands with an air of elation and relief conveyed through their postures.

Channel 7 Action News' camera zooms in on one a young Bangladeshi-American teen passing in front of the "Envy Me" salon on the way to the mosque for prayer as the

adhan sounds. He is stopped and handed a microphone. “It’s great, it’s great, it’s like I am in my country again!” he tells the reporter grinning widely. The smiling, round-faced Catholic Father Lenske, from the church across the street is then pictured, saying: “I am telling them to give it a chance.” The news segment flashes back to the interfaith meeting within the church, showing the full complement of religious and civic leaders and then a close up of city councilman Glenn Adams at the podium: “I hope that we are setting an example, for the country here, that Christians and Muslims can live together side by side in harmony, and build a prosperous community” (WXYZ-TV 2004). The interfaith collective had finally established center stage in the adhan reporting, setting the terms for how the story of the adhan broadcast was told, if only briefly, just at the moment that Muslim sounds were released into the city.

5.6 Unity in the Community

The May 28, 2004 first broadcast of the adhan was seen as success for the mosque and its supporters because of the positive press and the lack of violent or aggressive incidents. But the struggle was not yet over. The date for the referendum on the noise ordinance amendment was set for July 20th. After the May 28th event, Hamtramck’s interfaith leaders geared up for a long summer of contentious campaigning and debates, in which the struggle over the noise ordinance amendment would continue to be played out until election day.

The NCCJ sent representative Alan Morris to help organize the Hamtramck interfaith group. However, following the NCCJ philosophy, the administration and management of the group was almost immediately turned over to local leadership with

the NCCJ taking an off-stage, supporting role. Thus, an American Baptist minister and social worker Margaret Thompson took on the position as coordinator. Hamtramck Interfaith Partners began meeting regularly and planning events in different locales throughout the city, such as larger roundtable, potluck, or educational or social meetings for the community. The groups meetings were held in mosques, Catholic and Baptist churches, social service agencies, and other Hamtramck community spaces. These interfaith meetings and events became forums not only for exploring religious identities, but also ethnic and racial difference through the rubric of a shared immigrant experience to promote dialogue in the community.

The interfaith gatherings were organized around two different, yet interrelated registers or themes. The first were events that specifically emphasized the relationship between Muslim and Polish Catholics in the city. There was also an effort to explore the similarities between the Muslim and Polish experience in historical perspective as new immigrant religious minorities in the country. This aspect was brought out the most during the Unity in the Community Event at al-Islah mosque, as expressed o.n the event flier:

> Inviting the Catholics and Muslims of Hamtramck to spend an evening together at the Al-Islah Islamic Center (across from St. Ladislaus parish)…. Both Polish-Catholics and Muslims enjoy a rich tradition of hospitality. Come join us in getting to know each other…. We will ask those who are Catholic or Muslim (or of any other persuasion—all are welcome) to be seated in mixed groups. If you like, you can look or listen, but any of you who are willing will be asked to share with your group the story of how you or your family came to America. (Al-Islah Islamic Center 2004)

The event attracted several dozen participants, who met inside the mosque to "share their personal stories about how they immigrated to the country and how they adopted to it" (Swiecki 2004). The other meetings and events had a wider focused and were concerned

with linking together the entire faith-based Hamtramck community. This included the adhan ceremony of May 28th, in which various faith and civic leaders gathered within the mosque to help usher in the first call to prayer; the July 20, 2004 "Day of Prayer" events, when the Interfaith Partners worked to make their presence felt in the community through hosting different press conferences and fellowship meetings throughout voting day; and later on, and about a month after that, a "Call to Dialogue" dinner at the Bosnia Herzegovina Hall.

The July 20th Election Day interfaith events played a similar role to the May 28th "adhan ceremony" events in attempting to center press and resident attention on interfaith readings and interpretations of a controversial event. Hamtramck residents knew that droves of local, national, international reporters and other media would be zeroing in on Hamtramck on the July 20th election day. As one Hamtramck resident put it in a July 20th news report: "People around the world are watching what happens in Hamtramck" (Crumm and Angel 2004). The Hamtramck Interfaith Partners organized a series of events to make their presence felt on July 20th, which they billed as the "Day of Prayer." These events included a press conference at the African American Corinthian Missionary Baptist church, at which interfaith leaders would be present to make statements and answer questions. It also included a mid-afternoon interfaith prayer service at al-Islah mosque, during which Nabeel Akhtar led a prayer service that would "follow a theme of unity and community peace." Additionally, there was an evening "Interfaith Potluck Fellowship Dinner" during which "representatives from all faiths and their families will share a meal in a communal setting."

5.7 A Call to Dialogue

On July 20, 2004, Hamtramck residents voted to decide the noise ordinance amendment issue in favor of the mosque. There were 1,462 "no votes" cast, meaning votes not to repeal the amendment; and 1,200 cast "yes" votes to indicate support of the repeal campaign. Local papers describe a joyous scene outside of Hamtramck City Hall, where Muslim and non-Muslims of Hamtramck cheered, chanted and held up copies of the election results. Nabeel Akhtar, the president of al-Islah mosque who had first penned the request for the city to consider the adhan, recited the call to prayer from the steps of City Hall soon after the decision was announced. "A long time we are waiting for this amendment," he told reporters. "Today, Hamtramck residents are accepting our call to prayer amendment. We feel very good" (Crumm and Angel 2004).

Finally, about a month after the noise ordinance amendment vote took place in the city, the Hamtramck Interfaith Partners held a second dinner "in celebration of the Hamtramck Call to Prayer" as the last in the series of events relating to the noise ordinance amendment. The dinner, held in the Bosnia and Herzegovina Association Hall, was billed as "A Celebration… Moving on to a Call for Dialogue and New Community." The purpose of the dinner was a chance for the members of the movement to get together to reflect on and celebrate what they had achieved, to solidify their ties, and to look ahead to what its new focus would be now that the immediacy of the adhan conflict was behind them. It was also thought of as another chance to "get some media coverage" in order to circulate a series of final, positive images of Hamtramck as a unified and diverse

community whose members, Muslim and Christian, had learned how to work together (Hamtramack Interfaith Minutes of 8 11 04 Meeting 2004).[98]

Religious leaders from the Muslim, Catholic, and Protestant communities were chosen to address the group. Nabeel Akhtar, president of al-Islah mosque, who had scripted the request to City Hall that had instigated the debates, was the first to speak:

> Today, we celebrate as brothers and sisters, many faiths, one family….A crisis brought us together but the richness of our faith traditions will keep us together…. We share the same God as revealed to Abraham. We must devote ourselves to another "Call," the "Call to Dialogue" and the shaping of a new community. We call on the wisdom and strength of our spiritual leaders and families to live and work together in peace, to listen to, to respond with intelligence and kindness, to live together as brothers and sisters. The new community will emerge if we are true to our calling.

In the logic of Hamtramck Interfaith Partners, here voiced by movement leader Nabeel Akhtar, the adhan, or "Islamic call to prayer" is rhetorically refigured as a "call to dialogue," and takes on the added meaning of a calling linking the Muslims and non-Muslims within its ambit together as one community united in faith, peace, and respect.

Other Catholic and Protestant speakers at this event expanded upon the idea of the call to prayer movement in Hamtramck as a catalyst that has led the way for profound and lasting changes within Hamtramck and the formation of a "new" or "inclusive community" based on cooperation, dialogue, and openness among the residents of the city. In the words of Joseph Sendler:

> We are gathered here because the people of Hamtramck have publicly decided to commit themselves to build an inclusive community. … We have the resources in the best wisdom and experiences of our ancestral traditions, in the genius and

[98] Archived emails exchanges between Hamtramck Interfaith Partners and the NCCJ press consultant indicate that the group had to struggle to attain any press coverage for their event. The press consultant wrote that although NCCJ press relations advisor had given some thought to the issue, "we weren't able to get a 'news hook' to it. Therefore, the dinner did not get as much media coverage as the Partners had hoped, and was limited to a few local papers.

> generosity of the ideal and principles of the America which is our common home, in the rich history of the pluralism which has marked the story of our city at it's best and most importantly in the religious faiths which sustain us and guide our lives.

This "inclusive community," would be based a common ethical system based on the wisdom of diverse cultural and religious traditions which would teach the way to accept and negotiate differences. For Sendler, the al-Islah mosque leaders who have "reached out the hand of friendship and hospitality" in the way that they handled their adhan request and the movement which followed it, served as paradigmatic examples of the types of leadership this new community would require.

In her speech, Thompson pointed to the importance of continuing the work of Hamtramck Interfaith Partners, even in the absence of the kind of direct conflicts and confrontations that had eventuated its founding. In fact, the Hamtramck Interfaith group did survive after the call to prayer event, and continues as a loosely organized "council of elders" at the time of this writing.

In the years that followed, several other Hamtramck mosques joined al-Islah in regularly issuing the adhan. There were only a few complaints about these mosque sounds, and they were dealt with by the city in a summary fashion, with no excess of hostility or emotion. Several newspapers carried stories about the call to prayer aftermath a couple of years after the event, describing how it had become a non-issue in the city (Detroit News 2005). Most of the people with whom I spoke to about it, whether or not they supported the adhan ideologically, described the sound as something to which they had grown accustomed.

5.8 Rights and Permissions

Although they were glad for the new forms of community building it had brought about, in my interviews with them some Hamtramck residents, including interfaith movement leaders, such as Joseph Sendler himself, were quite critical of the noise ordinance amendment as a piece of legislation that was compromising or detrimental to ensuring Muslim freedom of expression. For example, in 2008, about four years after the noise ordinance vote, I was discussing the call to prayer controversy with one Hamtramck Bangladeshi Muslim community leader. When I asked him if he had been involved in the call to prayer movement, he shrugged dismissively. He said that he had been, but that his heart hadn't really been in it:

> It's like you and me walking down this sidewalk here, in front of this house. No one questions our right to do it, it's public property. But if one of us should go up and knock on the door of the house, and ask the people inside if we have their permission to walk on the sidewalk in front of their house, then they might start thinking about it. Who knows, it might end up as some kind of big issue.

Other Hamtramck residents to whom I spoke also questioned the necessity of the call to prayer movement, stressing that if the city council's original noise ordinance had been legal in the first place, the whole fracas never would have happened. These informants pointed out that the city could have easily taken upon itself the responsibility to resolve the problem with the original amendment in a less controversial way once it had been pointed out to them, without bringing issues of religious identity and/or Muslim minorities into it. Informants who were particularly cynical about the council and the Solidarity party described their sense of how the local political ruling faction had generated an unnecessary controversy out of a simple noise ordinance issue to use it as a

platform for advertising their multiculturalist tolerance and to gain more support for themselves near an election year. One informant explained:

> You know what the city council should have said when the mosque leaders came and asked them for permission to broadcast the call? They should have said, by all means have your call to prayer. It's your constitutional right. It's not for me to give it to you or to take away. Then, they should have gone ahead and rewrote any part of the noise ordinance that might have been used against them in a quiet way, without bringing Muslims or call to prayer or anything else into it.

The noise ordinance amendment gave the city new powers to regulate, and even to terminate a mode of religious expression that was constitutionally protected. As detailed in the previous chapter, it was the case that ultimately, the new ordinance made the adhan highly vulnerable to the council's discretion, providing it with the means to determine its volume or even completely suppress it, a power over the adhan that exists nowhere else in the nation today on any local, state or federal level. In creating a noise ordinance amendment to give the city control to legislate or even prohibit the adhan, when it did not have this power before, and then using this new power to grant the mosque permission to exercise constitutional rights that they technically already had anyway, the noise ordinance amendment movement ended up further solidifying power in the hands of the dominant majority rather than affording minorities any new rights. In a 2009 work, Zizek translates and elaborates on a quote taken from John-Claude Milner's L'arrogance du Present:

> "Those who hold power know very well the difference between a right and a permission. . . . A right in a strict sense of the term gives access to the exercise of a power, at the expense of another power. A permission doesn't diminish the power of the one who gives it; it doesn't augment the power of the one who gets it. It makes his life easier, which is not nothing." (see Milner 2009; Zizek 2009:59-60)

Zizek comments on the above:

> This is how it goes with the right to divorce, abortion, gay marriage, and so on, these are all permissions masked as rights; they do not change in any way the distribution of powers. They make life easier, but they don't encroach upon powers. (Zizek 2009:59-60)

Using the terms as developed by Milner and Zizek above, the noise ordinance amendment indeed was merely an instrument for granting permission, rather than for securing the rights of the Muslim minority community. As hinted at by Milner, these "permissions masked as rights" are "not nothing" for those who receive them. Understanding just what this "not nothing" is for disenfranchised communities such as Muslim minorities leads us again to the gap between an understanding of rights and citizenship in an abstract sense, where all members of a nation are considered to be equal, and the understanding of rights as a lived feeling of cultural citizenship, in which rights that are technically granted to all are for some out of reach. In this sense, the adhan issue can be understood as part of a complex and not always straightforward process by which members of minority communities establish cultural citizenship, or the embrace of difference on its own terms in public and political realms, out of de-facto states of disenfranchisement and stigmatization.

Muslims in North America and Europe are currently in the process of trying to reconcile abstract and cultural levels of citizenship within various struggles over visibility that are often played out on a local level. Within this, the mosque has become one of the primary sites in which negotiations over the rights and belonging of Muslims are currently being carried out:

> The mosque not only expresses the presence of a local Muslim community, it also represents the evolution of Islam from the private to the public space. Whereas, in the past, Muslims in Europe were isolated within invisible and private prayer rooms, the mosque openly, publicly and visibly marks an Islamic presence…. Every project that concerns the construction of a mosque entails time-consuming

> processes in which leaders of the Muslim community must discuss and negotiate with local, city and regional authorities. (Cesari 2005a:1018)

As Cesari points out, the evolution of the mosque from "invisible" prayer space to a legible and city-regulated institution thrusts Islam into the public gaze in a way that usually invites censure from the non-Muslim community, as public manifestations of Islam are still raise controversies across North America and Europe. The elevated levels of public interest in and concern about mosques, and the readiness with which local communities bring these concerns to the municipal authorities have brought forth new political configurations in which the intricacies and details of mosque establishment, and by extension, of the practice of Islam itself, has become a "subject for urban policy" and for the vicissitudes of local political cultures and judgments in a way that is more rigorous than is the case for the affairs of other religious communities (ibid.:1020). Within these thoroughly local configurations the municipal arena "emerge[s] by default as the principal regulatory and administrative body for Islamic religious institutions" (ibid.:1021). In other words, local citizens of cities who debate about the mosque and utilize and interpret "urban space" currently have a very wide measure of control in determining the norms and forms that the public expression of Islam will take in North America and Europe, as what happens in cities often become projected onto the nation as a whole.

The growing power of the municipality vis-a-vis Muslim visibility can have a range of potential and contradictory effects, and may work to either suppress Muslim visibility or provide the means for its expression. By initiating public debates according to their own agendas, local Muslim groups may make these municipal spaces into forums from which to express a sense of relationship to the city on their own terms. As discussed

in the previous chapter, the mosque leaders who fought for the noise ordinance amendment were fully aware that they already had the constitutional right to issue the call to prayer. But, there was more to the issue than the legal level and a technical claim for the unmediated ability to make sounds. The al-Islah mosque leaders and their supporters were interested in their right to enter into a contract with the city as religious minority. They freely chose specific city regulation as the best possible outcome as concerns the call to prayer. For the Muslim leaders, the issue was not merely a desire to issue the call to prayer, but a desire to be seen and recognized as a unified religious minority community with a stake in the city. The mosque leaders chose to deal with this issue by strengthening their relationship with the municipality, and by employing an interfaith framework to do so, rather than by making a claim that their abstract constitutional rights must be accepted without them taking the responsibility for sustained efforts of cultural translation (Rutherford 1990). Thus, it was not just the city who "used the Muslims" to enhance the reach of its power and a sense of its own largesse; but the Muslims were also "using the city" as a forum to express the drama of their political inclusion and as a playing ground upon which to build and develop social and cultural capital. For the Muslims leaders in the city, handing the key to loudspeaker box to a Polish Catholic woman in a dupatta during an adhan ceremony of their own design, was, curiously, an expression of mutual empowerment, control, and incorporation on the terms in which they desired it.

5.9 Paradoxes of Muslim Visibility

Over the past decades, and increasingly so in recent years, there has been a pronounced and growing tendency for Muslim leaders in North America and Europe to open their mosques to a wide range of educational, social, cultural, political, and inter-religious functions (Poston 1992; Schmidt 2004:138; Cesari 2005b; Allievi 2009; Democracy Now 2009; ACLU 2010). Scores of mosques across Europe and North America are now devoting considerable time, space and resources to a broad range of activities that seek to provide education for non-Muslims about Muslim prayer and everyday life; to serve as a link between Muslim communities and civic organizations; and to provide other social services for the community. Mosques across North America and Europe regularly host events such open houses, events including field trips into their prayer spaces, three-day "know Islam" seminars, guided tours of the mosques, and many other types of events (Agence France-Presse 2009; BBC 2009; CAIR 2009; Islam in Europe 2009). Mosque leaders are also making efforts to improve public relations by bringing local police and other municipal service providers through their doors. These mosque leaders are hosting training sessions in "Islamic traditions and etiquette" for police, firefighters and council officers as well as police recruitment drives and "anti-radicalization programs" targeting Muslim youth (Islam in Europe 2009; Dewsbury Reporter 2010).

Of the various extra-mosque functions of Islamic community centers, the "interfaith use" seems to carry a particular importance. For example, proponents of the Park 51 (i.e. "Ground Zero Mosque") project continually emphasize the fact that the building will be used for a host of non-worship purposes, including interfaith space and a

9/11 memorial, as a way to defend the project (Barnard 2010; Hajela). One Park 51 project insider reassured the press that the "designated Muslim prayer space" would take up only eight per cent of the total space, and that the developer of the project is also "considering the possibility of an interfaith education/meditation/prayer space as well" (United Press International 2010). Mosque proponents often emphasize these "extra-mosque" aspects of these new complexes as way of erasing the stigma of the mosque within it. The extra-mosque functions such as those cited above can be seen, on one hand as productive means of expanding and translating and transforming of Muslim prayer space, but on the other, may also function as a problematic kind of camouflaging device in some ways lending itself toward Ramadan's era of invisible Islam that was described in the opening of this chapter. The interfaith use of mosques may also be seen as a transformative device that affects the nature of religious practice itself.

In Hamtramck, the interfaith intervention into the adhan debates had an undoubtedly positive effect in terms of circulating a set of images and representations of cooperation and harmony among Muslims and non-Muslims to support Muslim visibility in the city. Yet, there is also something unsatisfying in the fact that the adhan could not just have been defended and accepted as a Muslim sound; just as the way there is something unsatisfying in the way that mosques have to open themselves up to a range of different purposes and events in order to make themselves palatable as Muslim prayer spaces. Indeed, according to Steven Allievi, the Church and interfaith collectives as defenders of Islam "should be a substitutive and temporary roles, which cannot become a generalized and stable practice, if only because it cannot be accepted that there cannot be direct negotiation solely for Islam" (Allievi 2003:372).

These interfaith and multi-use mosque trends leave us to question how these new conventions and standards will affect the public reception of mosques that wish to constitute themselves simply as places for Muslims to pray. Next to the mosque honoring interfaith practice, the mosque honoring September 11th victims, and the mosque hosting anti-terrorism initiatives, the mosque simply devoted to Muslim prayer that defines itself as such may appear radical or backward. Just as Sufism has been put forward as the "good," "tolerant" "Western" "spiritual" form of Islam (Dalrymple 2010); the interfaith" brand of Islam and mosque as a "multi-use" community center as mosque have been set forth as the paradigmatic signs of, to borrow from Mamdani, the the "good mosque" (i.e. see Mamdani's distinction between "good Muslim" and "bad Muslim," Mamdani 2004). Unfortunately, it will be those mosques with the least resources and those which serve the needs of the newest immigrant populations that are most likely to be categorized as "bad mosques" according to this grid, due to their lack of human and material resources that would help them establish public relations functions. Following a pattern noted by Shryock and others, here again it is lower-class and recently arrived Muslims and their institutions who are most likely to fall outside of the national embrace and become stigmatized (Howell and Shryock:14).

5.10 Conclusion: Muslim Sound and Interfaith Space

In the post 9/11 North America and some parts of Europe, Muslims' unmediated and direct claims to public space are experienced as unpalatable and threatening to some non-Muslims around them. In response, some Muslim leaders such as those involved in the Hamtramck adhan movement and in the Park 51 Project in NY have learned to frame

their claims to space in new and creative ways in order to make them more appealing to non-Muslims around them. For example, they have learned to encode their claims for space within an expression of inclusion, sensitivity, cooperation and caring for their non-Muslim neighbors. This is evident in Hamtramck in how rather than claiming their "abstract" and constitutional rights to issue sound, the Muslim leaders encoded their request for the adhan as part of a movement expressing identification with Polish Catholics and desire to become stewards for the city as a whole.

Interfaith cooperation has already played a significant role in negotiating Muslim claims to space in various contexts, but it remains to be seen how the use of interfaith logic will continue to condition the evolution of Muslim visibility in the North America and Europe. In this chapter, I have suggested that there are some limitations to the interfaith frame for asserting the rights and claims of Muslims to the extent that over-reliance on that frame may hinder the development of a vocabulary in which Muslims could articulate claims for space based on a legitimization of their religious differences as well as commonalities.

In Hamtramck, the Muslim leaders cannily employed an interfaith frame and a carefully crafted appeal for inclusion in order to secure their rights for the adhan, whereas many Muslim groups in North America and Europe have failed to secure this right, due to the strength of the opposition or because they were too discouraged to even try. Those who wish to establish mosques often find themselves beleaguered with an endless round of restrictions against them legitimated by dusted-off zoning, parking, or building codes that suddenly make an appearance after years of quietude. One reporter covering a mosque conflict in a nearby Michigan suburb facing a battle over parking vowed he

would not ask to issue the call to prayer to leverage the mosque's request to re-zone an area around a new mosque (Lawrence 2009).

Other challengers to mosques' expanding visibility dispense with the pretense of bureaucratic minutia and base their attacks on purely ideological claims. Mosque leaders often chose to self-censor by keeping the adhan sounds within the mosque, rather than broadcasting outward into the community due to the anticipation of this kind of negative reaction to Muslim sound marking (Allievi 2009). I once asked a Muslim leader who had been engaged in a decades-long, exhausting struggle to establish an Islamic center in a suburb outside of Boston why his organization decided not to raise the issue of broadcasting the call to prayer. He responded: "The mosque would still be a mosque without the adhan. But there would be a big problem if we couldn't open our doors before 6am for the morning prayer because of some zoning issue. Then, we couldn't function as a mosque. It's basic things like that we had to fight for, not the call to prayer."

In Marseille, after many years and a great deal of struggle untangling red tape and navigating various forms of protest, Muslim leaders were able to establish a large and imposing mosque in the center of the city (Cody 2009; Erlanger 2009). Yet, instead of demanding the right to issue an audible call to prayer from this new and central locale, the French mosque leaders decided instead to indicate the call by flashing a light, wishing to choose their battles over public space wisely. Because white and green lights were already being used for other official municipal functions (light house, ambulance) the mosque leaders, along with the city officials, decided on the use of a purple flashing light for the adhan, in what must be an international precedent for marking the Muslim prayer times. In Marseille, the substitution of an arbitrary generic visual cue for a highly

particular sound evades some of the difficult feelings about trespass and invasion that were detailed in the previous chapter. The adhan's worded message in Arabic, which punctuates the divisions of the Islamic day, inducts listeners willingly or uneasily into linguistic and temporal modes of alterity. For the city's Muslim residents, the adhan's particular sound qualities and the schedule of its release connects the municipal sensorium to Muslim diasporic space. Yet in the struggle to legitimate this, the adhan's supporters had to invest the adhan with a different set of meanings, transforming it from a highly specific Islamic call to an American Muslim to a "call for dialogue" hailing the entire city. Despite the novel kinds of polyphony added to the Hamtramck call to prayer, its Arab and Muslim sounds nevertheless alter the city's sensorium in a way that is different--more frank, intimate, and unavoidable--than a flashing light could ever do.

Chapter Six

Assimilation to a Queer Nation: Intersecting Futures of Muslim and LGBTQ Visibilities

I first I heard about the American Family Association coming to Hamtramck through a phone call from my friend Mujeeb. He had called to invite me to a meeting at the Polish Delight restaurant. “I know you are interested in Bangladeshi community politics, so I thought you might want to come to this,” he explained. “A Christian group is coming tonight to help us with some issue we are having with City Hall.”

That warm July evening in 2008, my husband and I climbed the two sets of burnished wooden stairs that led to the restaurant's second-story meeting hall. The meeting had not yet been called to order and a few dozen people were milling around the room. Mujeeb spotted us as soon as we stepped out of the stairwell and called us over to introduce us to the two representatives from the American Family Association who were in attendance. They were Neil Parker and Alex Landler, both middle-aged white men in suits and ties.

About forty people were assembled in the room. The majority of them were Bangladeshi business and community leaders, with a few Yemeni men among them, including the city official Dr. Hamdi. A local Catholic priest was there as well, along with local politician Mike Seymour and his wife. Besides the politician’s wife, I was the only woman in the room. When the meeting was called to order, everyone took a seat around the long wooden tables that had been arranged in a horseshoe formation. There

was a round of introductions before Neil Parker from the Michigan chapter of the American Family Association took the floor:

> Let me start of by making one thing clear. We have a councilman tonight who voted for this ordinance, but I don't blame him for that, because these ordinances are always camouflaged, they are always packaged as something they are not…Federal and State law already prohibit discrimination on the basis of race, creed, color, sex, ethnic origin all of those things. So this ordinance has no effect whatsoever on all of those things. In fact, the only thing that it adds new to the law is to equate homosexual behavior and cross-dressing with the color of your skin, and to say they are legal and moral and social equivalents. And that those two are categories upon which it should be possible for any person to be able to quote unquote discriminate against you.

Parker's first line of attack against the new Human Rights Ordinance that had passed in the city was to convince Muslims present that the ordinance held no benefits for them as ethnic and religious minorities. Rather, in his argument, the new ordinance would in fact only benefit "homosexuals and cross-dressers" who are not their "legal, moral, and social equivalents." Moreover, Parker suggested that when the rights of sexual and gender minorities are included together with other minority rights, they work at cross purposes, making members of racial and religious minorities vulnerable to forms of discrimination enacted by, or on behalf of, these newly empowered "homosexuals and cross-dressers."

Parker went on to enumerate a long list of cases in which Human Rights Ordinances such as the one that had passed in Hamtramck been used by these "homosexuals and cross dressers" to interfere with the rights of people of faith to control their own environments and institutions. His examples include recent cases such as one involving single-sex locker rooms and bathrooms in Lansing (Peters 2002; Silverman 2002); the Catholic Charities in Boston being "forced out of the adoption business" when they denied service to same-sex couples (Filteau 2006); and the eviction of the Philadelphia Boy Scouts from their offices when they refused to hire "homosexual

scoutmasters" (Urbina 2007). Parker warned that similar things could happen in Hamtramck, even though there were exemptions for religious organizations written into the ordinance, a claim that would become a major point in the debates that followed. A Bangladeshi teacher and community leader named Hussain was the first Muslim speaker to take the floor after Parker:

> Hamtramck is a historically Polish Catholic city. Then the Muslim community came here…Now I just want to point out that most of the people in Hamtramck are religious people, whatever faith they have. Now, with this new law, where are my rights, as a religious person? And, the second thing is custom. Custom is always a source of the law. So, why don't we look at Hamtramck culture and history. Polish culture, Catholic culture, and now Muslim culture. I think logically, this is, I am sorry to say, this is wrong here... They already have rights, I respect their rights…And I don't see any discrimination here…But where are my rights in this new ordinance?

6.1 The Ordinance

The "Ordinance to Reaffirm the Natural Rights of Hamtramck Residents" or "Hamtramck Human Rights Ordinance" (HHRO) was passed through city council in Spring 2008 by a margin of six to one (Carreras 2008). The ordinance, which was designed to protect city residents against discrimination in housing, employment, and public accommodation, was controversial for including "sexual orientation, gender identity, and gender expression" among its list of protected classes. This made the ordinance an instrument for extending protections to Hamtramck's LGBTQ community on a municipal level beyond those offered in Michigan on the state or federal level. The ordinance also set up a local system for mediating complaints, levying fines, and arbitrating solutions for allegations of discrimination based on gender or sexual orientation. It thus set into place the sole mechanism to which Hamtramck LGBTQ

residents would have recourse in the event of discrimination, in the absence of any such county, state or federal mechanisms.

The ordinance was valued by some Hamtramck residents as a powerful statement of acceptance and legitimization for LGBTQ groups in the city. Yet other Hamtramck residents, including both conservative Muslims and Christians, resisted the ordinance. Their opposition campaign was formulated around two basic ideas: that the ordinance threatened the proper balance between church and state; and that it legitimated immoral public expressions of sexuality in the city. Some ordinance proponents were particularly hurt and puzzled by the Muslim opposition to the ordinance, since they had expected that the city's Muslims would come to the fore as their natural allies in any struggle against discrimination. This was compounded by the fact that earlier the same year, the city had passed another human rights measure whose primary aim was to protect new immigrants against biased policing. In this earlier ordinance as well, the rights and protections for racial, religious, and sexual/gender minorities were scripted together, but the passing of that ordinance did not foment any similar dissent. The HHRO ordinance supporters reasoned that the victimization, blame, and vulnerability that Muslims are currently facing in the post-9/11 United States should make them eager to promote new forms of anti-discrimination legislation. They reasoned that Muslim groups would be keenly sensitized to other groups who are facing disenfranchisement and inequality.

When this support failed to materialize, the HHRO issue brought about a sudden and dramatic sense of dis-identification between progressive and conservative groups in the city that fractured a range of personal, institutional, and community relationships at the same time as new ones were being built. Chief among those fractured were the

interfaith relationships that had been developing over recent years from the time of the call to prayer issue, which had been framed in a liberal-secular-progressive mode of valuing plurality and difference. Some of the interfaith leaders in Hamtramck who had been united on the call to prayer issue became divided over the gay rights issue. New lines were drawn, resulting in an alliance among the city's conservative Catholics, Muslims, and outsider Christian right activists on one side, and an alliance among the city's self-described liberal, progressive religious and secular humanist activists on the other.

In focusing on how relationships between diverse Hamtramck individuals were tested and reformulated over the course of the debates, this chapter offers an analysis of how processes of identification and dis-identification between Muslims and non-Muslims in politicized conflict concerning public space are in part shaping and coloring the direction of Muslim social, cultural, and political incorporation in urban American locales. The production of identifications and dis-identifications between Muslims and non-Muslims during these debates can be read through a Barthian lens as exercises in boundary formation, in which previously overlooked, devalued, or "content-less" forms of commonality and difference take on salience and meaning when articulated against the backdrop of a divisive social or political issue (Barth 1969). These operations reveal the instability of meanings attributed to signs and symbols of Muslim religious difference, and how the production and status of such meanings is dependent upon the political positioning of communities in a shifting terrain.

In Hamtramck, conflict over the Human Rights Ordinance acted as a rich and generative nexus for the proliferation and exchange of ideas about the incorporation of

Muslim values, sentiments, and expressive forms in the public arena. Studying the meanings attributed to Muslim political participation within these debates offers insight into the status of Islam as a minority religion and the symbolic space it currently occupies in the US. A study of the conflict over gay rights in Hamtramck also opens up questions about how to make sense of conflicting claims to justice when the rights-based claims of one group are experienced as an infringement upon the cultural or religious ethics of a second group. It studies the "impasse of tolerating intolerance" in which secular liberal progressive actors find themselves in as they search for ways to control and/or contest forms of Muslim difference that strike at the foundations of their own understanding of a just society without behaving unjustly by their own standards in the process (see also Brown 2006; Zizek 2009). In turn, an examination of the power relations that shaped the Hamtramck debates offers a grounded ethnographic perspective on wider national and international trends toward the "institutionalization of secularism – both as a political doctrine and a political ethic" aimed at "producing a particular kind of religious subject who is compatible with rationality and exercise of political rule" (see also Asad 2003; Mahmood 2006). In also offering an analysis of how differently positioned Muslim social actors figure themselves and are figured into a national-level culture war debate writ small, the chapter also takes an ethnographic look at how relatively new Muslim minority social actors, through their local political projects, are weighing in on debates that are central to the formation of American national identity.

6.2 History of Gay Rights in Hamtramck

In passing an ordinance banning discrimination based on "sexual orientation" [99] in employment, housing, and public accommodation,[100] Hamtramck joined approximately 150 cities and counties in the US (National Gay and Lesbian Task Force Action Fund 2011)[101] including sixteen other Michigan cities (United Press International 2009), to include these protections in their legislation. In additionally including bans against discrimination based on "gender identity," and "gender expression," [102] Hamtramck also joined a smaller, more select set of cities and counties (about 108) that have added transgender inclusive measures to their anti-discrimination legislation protecting gays and lesbians (National Gay and Lesbian Task Force Action Fund 2008a; Transgender Law and Policy Group 2010).[103] In doing so, Hamtramck also pushed to voice support for eventually aligning the state of Michigan with those twenty-two states currently offering protections in housing, employment, and/or public accommodation

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[99] "Sexual orientation" is defined in the Hamtramck Human Rights Ordinance as: "Male or female homosexuality, heterosexuality or bisexuality, by orientation or practice" (Hamtramck United Against Discrimination 2008:4)

[100] Not all the cities offer protection in all three categories: some are limited to only one or two of the three dimensions "employment, housing, and public accommodation."

[101] The exact number of counties and cities with ordinances that offer protections on the basis of some or all of the categories sexual orientation, gender identity, and/or gender expression in some or all of the categories housing, employment and/or public accommodation is in constant flux, and organizations that keep statistics on such numbers tally them differently. By way of achieving an estimate, recent newspaper and policy issue reports document a range of statistics: "nearly 150 cities and towns nationwide have local ordinances to protect LGBT groups from employment discrimination" (National Gay and Lesbian Task Force Action Fund 2011); "180 cities and counties prohibit discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation in at least some workplaces" (Ontario Consultants on Religious Tolerance N.d.); "over 108 cities and counties [that have] explicitly transgender-inclusive nondiscrimination laws" (National Gay and Lesbian Task Force Action Fund 2008a).

[102] The HHRO defines "Gender Identity; Gender Expression" as "A person's actual or perceived gender, including a person's gender identity, self-image, appearance, expression, or behavior, whether or not that gender identity, self-image, appearance, expression, or behavior is different from the one traditionally associated with the person's sex at birth as being either female or male" (HUAD 2008).

[103] In general, laws protecting on the basis of gender identity/expression are considered more difficult and controversial for legislative bodies to pass than those offering protections based on sexual orientation

based on sexual orientation, as well as the thirteen states (plus District of Columbia) among these which also include measures offering protections on the basis of gender identity expression (National Gay and Lesbian Task Force Action Fund 2009).

These state, municipal, and county level measures are important and controversial because currently there are no federal-level anti-discrimination measures protecting LGBTQ individuals, with the exception of legislation offering some protections to federal employees,[104] that affects only a very small percentage of the national population. Gay rights advocates have been engaged in movements to attain these anti-discrimination protections for LGBTQ communities on municipal, county, and state, and federal levels since the early 1970s.[105] Some LGBTQ rights activists consider the struggle for city level protections to be particularly productive and rewarding forums for action, due in part to what some perceive as the slow-moving and sometimes discouraging pace that the course of gaining state and federal level anti-discrimination measures is taking (Schacter 1994).

Indeed, in passing the HHRO, Hamtramck stepped into the fray of a larger ideological contestation that has been developing for decades in which municipalities serve as the playing ground for national-level pro-gay and pro-family groups in their struggle for influence, dating back to 1977, when Anita Bryant and her "Save the Children" coalition traveled to Dade County, Florida to contest the first pro-gay civil rights legislation to be passed in the nation (Winick 2002). The rhetoric, strategies,

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[104] In 1998, Clinton passed federal level protections against discrimination based on "sexual orientation" within the federal civilian workforce (Executive Order 13087), but this protects only a very small percentage of working Americans.

[105] Because some gay rights organizations marginalize or exclude transgender concerns, movements have also been fostered by organizations focusing specifically on transgender inclusion in civil rights legislation. The most current large-scale manifestation of federal-level activism on a national level is the movement to pass a transgender inclusive Employment Nondiscrimination Act (ENDA), for which there were recently hearings in both the House and Senate (National Gay and Lesbian Task Force Action Fund 2011).

logics, and aims used by conservative Christian groups in their efforts to fight against gay rights legislation has been well-documented in scholarly analysis and in newspaper and journalistic reports over the past few decades (Herman 1997; Buss and Herman 2003). Yet, the Muslims' involvement and leadership in the debate brought a novel set of race, class, and religious dynamics to the debate and to the ideological struggle over the civil rights issues in question.

In the current polarized political climate, the inclusion of categories such as "sexual orientation" and/or "gender identity" in any piece of legislation, whether municipal, county, state, or federal, is often seen as a hot-button issue and usually becomes a point of debate and contestation. Critics see such legislation as legitimizing the idea that sexual and gender orientation are "immutable characteristics" in a way that can set a precedent for, and open the door to, the fulfillment of demands for many kinds of civil rights protections based on these identity categories. Nevertheless, in Hamtramck, municipal-level recognition of "sexual orientation" was evident in two earlier pieces of legislation that predate the 2008 HHRO debates. Notably, as was the case with the HHRO, in both of these cases the promotion of "sexual orientation" as a protected class in Hamtramck took place within the context of larger municipal initiatives concerning the status and rights of immigrants and racial or ethnic minorities.

The first of these was in the "Ordinance Creating a Human Relations Commission," which passed in 2004, setting into place a commission of twelve members drawn as equally as possible from Hamtramck's diverse racial, religious, and ethnic groups whose purpose was to "to promote mutual understanding and respect for multiculturalism and diversity, advocate for peace and justice, and encourage tolerance

and constructive communication in order to develop a functional, sane, and harmonious community" (Hamtramck 2004b:1). Then-mayor Donald Stepnowski explained that his motivation to design the Human Relations Commission Ordinance came out of his experience witnessing the divisiveness that grew out of the call to prayer debates. According to my interview with Stepnowski, this experience motivated him to put a council in place that could dispel the formation of such great tension in the community through fostering pre-emptive communication strategies among community leaders (Mahfuz 2004).[106] According to the HRC ordinance, the commission's intent was to protect Hamtramck residents from "all forms of discrimination for reasons including nationality, religion, race, class… and sexual orientation."

The second precedent for municipal recognition of "sexual orientation" in Hamtramck was also connected with an ordinance that was primarily motivated by a desire to protect new immigrants. This was the 2008 passage of an ordinance known as the "Community-Participation in Local Government and Local Law Enforcement," which was also known as the "Anti-bias in Policing Ordinance." This ordinance created a ban against discrimination in the provisioning of public services to Hamtramck residents. Most notably, however, the main issue at stake in its passage was a measure to restrict

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[106]Stepnowski's 2004 Hamtramck Human Relations Commission in fact had an earlier precedent in the Human Relations Commission that had formed in 1999 and had been active for several years before it dissolved. This earlier commission, however, was not voluntarily assembled by the mayor, but rather, it was ordered to be established in Hamtramck by federal authorities. This occurred after federal courts had ruled against Hamtramck in a case where the city clerk and other Hamtramck city officials were found guilty of committing voter discrimination offenses specifically against the city's Yemeni and Bangladeshi American voters (Sercombe 2008a). Along with levying large fines upon the city and city officials in question and mandating federal election monitors for Hamtramck elections for the coming years, a third condition imposed upon the city was that it must establish a Human Relations Commission in order to address racial, ethnic, and religious tensions in the city. This resulted in the 1999 Hamtramck Human Relations Commission. It is interesting to note that both the 1999 and the 2004 Human Relations Commissions formed specifically to address tensions between Muslims and non-Muslims in the city. At this point, it is unknown to me whether or not the 1999 Human Relations Commission mandate included a concern for sexual orientation or gender identity.

city employees and police from making inquiries about people's immigration status (Hulett 2008). This was a particularly significant measure for new immigrants due to trends that have been taking place in the country since 9/11 concerning an urgently problematic blurring of boundaries between police and immigration monitoring services (Nguyen 2005). Due to Hamtramck's history and culture as a pro-immigrant, gateway city, this ordinance easily passed through council. In passing such legislation, Hamtramck became only the second city in Michigan to pass these kinds of protections. Thus, in doing so, the city took on a leadership role in passing state and national level protections for the rights of immigrants.

The passing of the "Community Policing Ordinance" with the "sexual orientation" protections intact encouraged city councilman Carl Thomas to design and advance the Hamtramck Human Rights Ordinance (HHRO) later that same year. The HHRO further extended civil rights protections to sexual and gender minorities. In crafting the new piece of legislation Thomas modelled the HHRO almost directly upon Ann Arbor's Human Rights Ordinance, which had used an expanded version of the Michigan state level "Elliot Larsen Civil Rights Acts of 1976" as its reference point. The municipal ordinance in Ann Arbor, and subsequently in Hamtramck, had the effect of "reaffirming" the protections already provided within the state level Human Rights act, while adding the new categories of "sexual orientation" and "gender identity/expression," among others.

A further innovation from the state level ordinance was that that HHRO provided a local means of dispute resolution. As compared to other municipal-level Human Rights ordinances that have passed in the US over the past few decades, the ordinance that

Thomas crafted for Hamtramck gave the city particularly powerful enforcement leverage, as concentrated in the hands of the City Manager. The ordinance did so by creating a means for Hamtramck residents to appeal to the City Manager for dispute resolution, and furnishing the Hamtramck City Manager with broad legislative, executive and judicial powers in resolving the issue. It gave the city manager the power to investigate, adjudicate, issue corrective orders in cases of complaints against discrimination, levy substantial fines, and/or bring to court any individuals who are found to have committed injuries upon others under the ordinance. The consequences for violating the ordinance could be quite severe since they could be punishable by a fine of up to $500, and every day that the violation continued could be considered to constitute a separate and new violation. Furthermore, the ordinance also gives the City Manager the power to "promulgate and publish" further "rules guidelines and procedures for the conduct of its business." One of the important ways that these powers were limited, however, concerned a set of exemptions for religious institutions. The exemption section reads:

> Notwithstanding anything contained in this Ordinance, the following practices shall not be violations of this Ordinance. 1) For a religious organization or institution to restrict any of its housing facilities or accommodations which are operated as a direct part of religious activities to persons of the denomination involved or to restrict employment opportunities for officers, religious instructors and clergy to persons of that denomination. It is also permissible for a religious organization or institution to restrict employment opportunities, housing facilities, or accommodations that are operated as a direct part of religious activities to persons who are members of or who conform to the moral tenets of that religious institution or organization. (Hamtramck United Against Discrimination 2008; see Appendix D)

Although some of the city's progressive religious leaders spoke favorably about the soundness of these exemptions, the exemptions were problematic for ordinance opponents. The opposition zeroed in on the phrase "direct part of religious activities,"

which was repeated twice in the short section, as signaling that the protections provided to religious organizations or institutions were not total and complete, but rather that there was some measure of arbitrariness and flexibility in deciding what would count as these "direct religious activities" of religious organizations. In their speeches and at public rallies, opposition leaders devoted a great deal of time and care to enumerating the ways in which similarly crafted ordinances were being used in cities and states across the country to compromise the autonomy of religious institutions in ways that troubled the line between church and state.

Neil Parker and others were careful to point out their belief that the ordinance could be used in Hamtramck to curtail freedoms of faith-based institutions. This was because the ordinance potentially could be interpreted in such a way that the exceptions would leave out different kinds of educational, social, economic, and social service functions that might be organized by religious institutions. For example, the ordinance limited employment exceptions to the hiring of "officer, clergy, or religious instructor," in a way that effectively excluded or placed into question the rights for religious institutions to control employment choices in other categories, such as secretarial or janitorial staff working within a church, or teachers of academic subjects within Catholic schools, or staff within a church or mosque, hospital or charitable organization. They cautioned that such an ordinance could also be used to coerce organizations run by these institutions to offer particular kinds of services to certain clientele in a way that might go against their ideologies (Miller 2008).

Questions about controlling the decision-making structures at mosques and Islamic centers were especially sensitive ones for Muslim community members because

some of them were involved with faith-based institutions that were optimistically looking ahead to long and expansive trajectories of growth. Within only a couple of decades, Muslims had been involved with the establishment of three Islamic Centers and numerous schools for religious instruction within Hamtramck, and more of these institutions were being developed. Some mosque leaders that I interviewed in Hamtramck apart from the HHRO issue spoke about plans and ambitions that they had for these centers to take on even greater projects in terms of expanding to provide youth organizations, childcare, and other social services to the community. This issue of control over multi-use religious centers was seen as taking on even more salience since the advent of George W. Bush's faith-based funding initiative, which makes these institutions eligible to compete for national and state funding.

The debate over the extent to which religious institutions may conduct their civic and social projects unencumbered by the state or municipality also stood out particularly for Hamtramck Catholics. According to interviews with local Polish Catholic community leaders and historians, this is due in part to their local history of creating "institutionally complete communities" around the hubs of churches (Radzilowski 1974). In the Hamtramck-Detroit area in particular, as well as on a national level, Catholics had worked through their churches to establish a wide rage of institutions such as schools, hospitals, insurance collectives, burial associations, charitable institutions and other social organizations. Thus, in the social imagination of some Hamtramck Catholics as well as Muslims, the functions of a church do not begin and end with the sermons provided within the church interior or the religious instruction provided within the Catholic school, but rather spill out into its wider civic functions.

The interrelationship between church and state agencies has been a perennial, foundational, and definitive point of debate throughout the course of US history. As Hamburger points out, the line has always been ill-defined, blurry, and subject to contestation and negotiation, and there is always necessarily a certain level of state or municipal intervention and regulation of religious institutions (Hamburger 2002). Yet, the solution proposed by the HHRO about how to handle this relationship vis-à-vis the question of LBGTQ-anti-discrimination was perceived as threatening to weigh too heavily on the side of "the state." Indeed, like the role the city cast for itself within the noise ordinance amendment, this HHRO ordinance also represented a moment in which the city made a bid to take upon itself the power to legislate, execute and adjudicate, indeed to act as judge and jury in term of determining damages and exacting compensation in issues regarding the management of religious institutions. Thus, some Hamtramck residents who found fault with the ordinance on these grounds understood their activism against the ordinance as rallying to protect the autonomy of mosques and churches against an encroaching liberal-secular municipality.

Among the powers the HHRO attributed to the City Manager were access to several different means of enacting dispute resolution and enforceable arbitration. It gave him the power to call together the plaintiff and defendant in order to enter into conciliation agreements, if he so desired, which if not fulfilled would constitute new violations of the ordinance that would be further punishable. The HHRO also afforded the City Manager with the means to select and convene hearing panels to help him adjudicate cases, if he chose to do so. It was generally anticipated that he would use the members of the Human Relations Commission for these hearing panels, although this

was not specified in the Ordinance text. For some HHRO supporters, these local means of dispute resolution were represented as compelling and powerful in their own right because it was believed there was something inherently positive and generative about carrying out dispute resolution on a local level and about having a group of peers intervene in the situation. The hearing panels in particular were enshrined in such narratives as representing a move to open up the kind of space for discussion, dialogue, and debate on a local level that constituted a truly democratic exercise in community making (Lindeman 1945; Essert 1948 ; Brookfield 1990:89-90). Those hopeful about advancing democracy did not take into account the problematic ways that the City Manager himself was solely responsible for selecting the members of the hearing panel, a fact that could introduce an element of bias into the proceedings that would go unchecked.

Nevertheless, a sense of trust and familiarity prevailed in pro-ordinance descriptions of how the City Manager would deal with HHRO complains, and how these hearing panels would work to resolve allegations of discrimination. Carl Thomas, the Solidarity City Council member who scripted the ordinance, dismissed questions and concerns about the mechanics of the ordinance enforcement this way:

> For me, this is a really simple matter. We can intellectualize and contextualize all we want. But in the end, what it comes down to for me, is respect for human dignity. And the human dignity of every single person. And respect and protection of that dignity. And you know we can debate whether this particular remedy will work best in Hamtramck or not, I have no problem with the solution to the problem that we've outlined here. It will probably work as well as any other solution. I can remember in the call to prayer, we had a pretty similar solution actually. Complaints go to the city manager, and the city manager decides how to deal with it. So, you know, to me, the picking apart of those details of how this is going to be enforced I think really misses the bigger point of the message that this ordinance sends.

In line with this attitude of "pass first, question later," there was a sense of hope and trust that the ordinance would take its own shape in time, and that the powers that put the ordinance in place and those that would put it into effect had the city's best interests in mind. This paralleled attitudes toward the noise ordinance amendment, in which few were concerned about limiting or carefully defining the new forms of power and control they were handing over to the city because of their strong faith that the current Solidarity-dominated administration would use the ordinance well.

6.3 Muslim Perspectives

Besides their concern for maintaining autonomy over religious institutions, Muslim and Christian opponents to the ordinance also described other reasons behind the vocal Muslim opposition. Shamsideen Naser identified the main motivation behind his activism against the ordinance as located in his desire to maintain a moral atmosphere in the public spaces of a city in which he feels a strong sense of belonging:

> One reason is our culture is a conservative, culturally. And when this ordinance comes up, we think how am going to raise my kids here, how will I live here. If I am a new immigrant, I don't have the wealth right away to move to Bloomfield Hills.[107] As a new immigrant, I can't go to Bloomfield Hills, I have to stay here. This is our place, we have to be here, raise a family here in a nice way, we can't just move away if things change.

Rafeek, a Bangladeshi community leader who had grown up around Hamtramck, explained the driving force behind the ordinance movement as a collective public expression of morality tied to a sense of religious obligation:

> Our society is very conservative... So the biggest reason for the opposition would be the challenge to our faith itself. If these issues [i.e., gay rights] are too much

[107] Bloomfield Hills is an affluent suburb close to Hamtramck that is known as a re-location point for Bangladeshis in Hamtramck and Detroit who have increased in wealth and status.

> openly discussed or embraced, something is that the community feels in danger of losing their values in the new country…Islam forbids homosexuality altogether…. So, if the city wants to establish something that goes against the religious teaching, then chances are that people who closely follow religion will be against it…Now, that doesn't mean that they are going to hate someone who is gay, it just means they are not going to be able to support that ordinance.

Indeed, in the conservative view of Islam espoused by Rafeek, the Qur'an and other Islamic sources are considered to be "very explicit in its condemnation of homosexuality, leaving scarcely any loophole of a theological accommodation of homosexuals in Islam" (Duran 1993:188; cited in Minwalla, et al. 2005:115).[108] Yet, contemporary scholars of Islam have arrived at differing interpretations. Some believe that the Qur'an neither warrants harsher treatment of "same-sex indiscretions" than opposite sex indiscretions; nor even specifically condemns homosexual acts or lifestyles as such, especially in the terms we understand "homosexuality" or a "queer lifestyle" today (Dossani 1997; Jamal 2001; Minwalla, et al. 2005).

In recent years, some progressive Muslims, like their Catholic and Christian counterparts, have re-interpreted their religion to accommodate alternative sexual and gender orientations in different ways, viewing Islam as an "evolving religion that must adapt to modern day society" (cited in Minwalla, et al. 2005:115; Al-Fatiha Foundation N.d.). A growing number of contemporary LGBTQ Muslims are involved in identity-based movements to re-claim Islam as a religion that supports their sexuality and lifestyle choices, as reflected in Queer Muslim activism and scholarship (Merabet 2004; Kugel 2010) and in the literature of activist movements (Minwalla, et al. 2005; Al-Fatiha Foundation N.d.). For example, the mission of Al-Fatiha Foundation is to provide

[108] In the contemporary era, there is consensus among most mainstream Muslim scholars from the different schools of Islamic jurisprudence "that all humans are 'naturally heterosexual,' and that homosexuality is 'a sinful and perverse deviation from a person's true nature'" (Minwalla, et al. 2005:114).

education, resources, and a safe space for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer or questioning Muslims and to "support LGBTQ Muslims in reconciling their sexual orientation or gender identity within Islam" (Al-Fatiha Foundation N.d.).

Despite the multiplicity of Muslim positions to be found on the issue in the national and international context, Hamtramck Muslims generally remained unified in advancing a conservative interpretation of Islam's view on homosexuality. In Hamtramck, the construction of an apparent conservative consensus to "Vote No" among otherwise diverse Hamtramck Muslim groups was a complex and multi-determined phenomenon, but the fact that area mosques had publicly come out against the ordinance was cited by Muslims as a significant factor. The pressure exerted on community members to conform was such that even the Yemeni and Bangladeshi Muslim city council members who had initially voted for the ordinance equivocated when confronted by opposition leaders, saying that their votes had been based on a misunderstanding.

Indeed, there were very few, if any, Hamtramck-based Muslims who would go on record as supporting the ordinance, at least during the months in which the campaign wore on. Additionally, in this city that is estimated to have a 40% Muslim population, there was also a curious and complete absence of any gay, lesbian, or queer-identified Hamtramck Muslim voices in the debate, although ordinance supporters made concentrated efforts to find ways of locating and bringing these out during their campaign. With this, some pro-ordinance activists mentioned to me that a few young Muslims from Hamtramck had "come out" to them as gay and as privately supportive of the ordinance, but that they could not be persuaded to take on any kind of public role in the ordinance debates. After attempts to find pro-ordinance allies and spokespeople

among Hamtramck Muslims repeatedly met with frustration, gay rights activists discovered several Muslim leaders in Dearborn, Detroit, and the surrounding suburbs who adopted a more progressive view of the relationship between religion and homosexuality, which they used to legitimate their support of the ordinance on religious grounds.

By cultivating relationships with these progressive Muslim leaders, the pro-ordinance faction gained official endorsements for their campaign from Muslims working within several state-level Arab-American Associations, such as the Michigan branches of ACCESS (Arab Community Center for Economic and Social Services) and NAYA (National Association for Yemeni Americans). One of these Muslim pro-ordinance spokesmen was a member of the Hamtramck Human Relations Commission and had once lived in Hamtramck, although he had been living and working in Dearborn for many years. Gay rights activists also found moral support from Muslims and Arabs who were representatives of local LGBTQ organizations, such as Affirmations of Michigan and al-Gamea), and online, through internet communities based around groups such as GLAS and Al Fatiha.[109]

I discussed the absence of the queer Hamtramck Muslim voice with Jamal, one of the founders of al-Gamea, a LGBTQ association for Middle Eastern Americans in the South East Michigan area. Jamal explained that in South East Michigan, and even more so in low-income areas like Hamtramck, non-heteronormative Arabs and Muslims might face an even more restrictive environment regarding the public expression of alternative

[109] GLAS is the international Gay and Lesbian Arabic Society, Al Gamea is a South East Michigan LGBTQ Association of Middle Eastern Americans, and Al Fatiha is an international organization for lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender Muslims.

sexual identities than they had in their countries of origin (Minwalla, et al. 2005; Manalansan 2006). According to Jamal, the overwhelmingly dominant attitude of conservatism regarding LGBTQ-concerns among the South East Michigan Arab and Muslim community, and in Hamtramck in particular, had to do with demographic factors, such as lower or working class origins, short length of time in the US, and the fact that many Arabs and Muslims in the area came from "small villages" rather than cosmopolitan urban centers:

> Well, that's why people get freaked out about coming out to their family. They get harassed, or kicked out of the house, or beaten up…And over and over again it's the same story. Either take him to the doctor because they think it a mental illness, or make him sign up in any army, they think they're going to make him a man, or take them back to the country where they came from, and just drop them off there, saying, well, there's no gays allowed there. Buts it's like, you guys are crazy. There are more openly gay people living in Arab countries than there are here.

Although a strong advocate for LGBTQ youth in the community, Jamal said that he, himself was not very interested in the idea of mobilizing support for pro-LGBTQ civil rights measures like the HHRO ordinance at the current time. Instead, Jamal was convinced that his efforts were better spent creating social support networks for young LGBTQ-identified Muslims and Arabs in the area through which they could maintain the privacy of their identities while meeting some basic needs. For Jamal, involvement in controversial legal struggles would bring his organization and its members out on the public stage in a way that might work at cross-purposes to these main goals.

Jamal's explanation of the silence in Hamtramck basically comes down to the idea that LGBTQ Muslims exist in Hamtramck, but are too repressed by either internal or external factors to "come out," coincides with explanations given by of a number of scholars and activists (Barbosa and Lenoir 2004; Minwalla, et al. 2005). Yet another,

complementary explanation might also be derived from the work of theorists such as Joseph Massad (2007) and Jasbir Puar (2007), who have pointed out the way in which some Muslims experience their gender and sexual subjectivities may fall outside of al-Fatiha-type styles of self-representation and identity politics. These scholars explain there is a wide range of variation in how same-sex desire has been perceived, experienced, and constructed historically and geographically. With this, the dominance of the identity-based model for experiencing non-heteronormative kinds of sexuality has been subject to critique by queer theorists who deconstruct the notions of "identity," "gender," "sexuality" and "freedom" underlying paradigms of "gay liberation."

If we are to follow this explanation, some non-heteronormative Muslims did not come into public visibility with the advent of the HHRO movement not because they were afraid to heed the call to do so, but because they did not recognize themselves as the ones being hailed by the call.

6.4 Conservatism

In Hamtramck, the local Muslim and Catholic opposition to the HHRO did not begin until the American Family Association made their intervention into the city several weeks after the ordinance was passed. For this reason, in their narratives, local Muslims and Christians often described the AFAM as having "woken up" Hamtramck's religious communities, or as having "sounded the alarm" for those who were "sleeping" when the ordinance had passed. Within a few weeks, the Muslim and Christian group called together by the AFAM, which later came to be known as Hamtramck Citizens Voting No (HCVN), had gathered the requisite number of signatures to get the ordinance on the

ballot for popular referendum. Co-chaired by a Catholic priest and a Bangladeshi community leader, and operating under the support and guidance of the AFAM, the group began a vigorous campaign to sway popular opinion against the ordinance in time for the referendum vote scheduled in November. This repeal campaign lent itself to the same type of harried, contentious, and extended political debate that was fomented by the call to prayer opposition four years earlier. Yet this time the debate wore on with what many considered to be a more confusing and troubling set of dynamics than the call to prayer fracas, because, among other reasons, this time the city's self-identified pro-immigrant liberal, secular, and/or humanist factions felt themselves to be divided from the immigrant groups whose interests they believed themselves to represent.

Although several conservative Christian groups are active in Michigan, the American Family Association of Michigan (AFAM) has risen to prominence as the preeminent conservative Christian voice in the state when it comes to efforts to reverse or ban LGBTQ-inclusive measures.[110] The AFAM is an independent subsidiary of the larger, national-level American Family Association, which was established in 1977 and had affiliates in twelve states by 2008. The Thomas Moore Law Center, another conservative Christian organization, came on board to work for the Hamtramck "Vote No" movement on a pro-bono basis. TMLC is a national public interest Catholic law firm based in Ann Arbor, which, along with its affiliate Ave Maria in Gainsville, Florida was founded by billionaire Domino's Pizza magnate Tom Monaghan. The TMLC cooperation

[110] AFAM leaders explained to me that these groups tend to specialize when it comes to the specific social and political issues they choose to make as their focus. Thus, while the AFAM might be the most active group when it comes to banning or reversing gay rights legislation, other conservative Christian groups in the area are more active in other issues such as pro-life legislation, the right to death movement, stem-cell research initiatives, and others.

with the AFAM continues a long history of connection and cooperation between these two powerful organizations that in some ways reflects larger trends of growing cooperation between conservative Catholic and Christian groups over the past few decades (Kirkpatrick 2009).

The Hamtramck Citizens Voting No (HCVM) collective that came together at Polish Delight restaurant in late July re-activated some of the alliances and bonds that had been put in place during the call to prayer debates. Some of the key community and religious leaders from across Hamtramck's different mosques and churches who had worked together to support the noise ordinance amendment were brought together again through HCVN. Yet, the campaign collectively alienated them from the Solidarity politicians of the city's ruling liberal-progressive party who had ushered in the HHRO ordinance, who had scripted the call to prayer legislation four years earlier, and who had brought in the city's first Muslim, and first Bangladeshi council member in 2004. Instead, the campaign aligned the Muslims and conservative Christians of Hamtramck with the anti-Solidarity faction known as the "Old Guard." This was signaled by the Muslim opposition's embrace of Mike Seymor, the Hamtramck career politician who had led the repeal campaign against the call to prayer ordinance in 2004.

Besides creating the context for political alliances, the HVCN collective also fostered attendant forms of sociability and fellowship among the city's Muslim and Catholic communities as well as between them and outsider conservative Christian representatives. As in the call to prayer debates, these forms of sociability were generated by participation in regular meetings and other movement activities, which often entailed crossing boundaries into novel spaces and the sharing of food. For example, the Saint

Lad's church rectory was also used for HCVN business, making the church more familiar and approachable to some Hamtramck Muslims who visited for campaign activities. Catholics and Christian activists gathered in mosque meeting halls to help organize voter drives. At break times they sometimes sat together on the floor of the mosque and sustained themselves with takeaway curry from the corner Bangladeshi café. The un-official headquarters of the movement, a nearby Bangladeshi restaurant, also simultaneously served as the site for the Bangladeshi led pro-Obama voter drive campaign.

During and after the campaign, members of the Vote No faction spoke of the growing warmth they felt for each other, with Catholics, Protestants, and Muslims all elaborating points of positive identification. Within interviews, meetings and public rallies, Muslims and Christians both engaged in a public, performative, and self-conscious extension of boundary lines to encompass the other as that "certain type of person" who exhibited the "same standards of morality or excellence" by which their own communities are respectively judged (Barth 1969). Jeff Zalenski, a well respected Polish Catholic elder who had lived in Hamtramck most of his life described to me how he had slowly come to know Muslims in the city over the years through his work as a supplier and distributer of Polish imported foods to grocery stores throughout the city. In an interview with me, he described how his participation in the movement has given him a way to deepen his relationships and friendships with his Muslim colleagues, and how what he has learned from them in the movement has encouraged him to see signs of Muslim modesty, such as the veil and the segregation of men and women in public, as

being in line with the old Polish Catholic values that were evident in the streets of Hamtramck when he was growing up there decades ago:

> Ever since this city of Hamtramck was established ninety years ago, the city has had its own moral code that was established…. So the Muslim community, as they move in, there is no conflict, because their moral code is even higher than the one that the people that lived here had. Now, what happened is that the moral code that the people in Hamtramck would practice fifty years ago were higher than the one that we would practice right now, because there is a lot of loosening that came about…For instance, the Muslim girls, their attire. They will not dress in a provocative manner. There attire is much much more conservative then you would see anywhere else. And the men, let's say they will not even walk around holding or kissing the girls in public, or whatever. They just don't do that, because their moral code doesn't allow it. All that means is that their discipline is much more. And if you take that discipline away, then you are really wiping away some of the standards of the civilization.

In reflecting on their participation in the recent debates, Zalenski figures the Muslim immigrants as exerting a positive influence on Hamtramck, with the capacity to restore its moral center and the high standards of its original communities. This capacity centers on Muslim discipline, behavior and comportment, especially as concerns maintaining traditional families and gender relations. In such a narrative, signs of Muslim piety such as veiling and gender segregation that in other contexts are coded as signs of Muslim failure to assimilate are now seen as expressing shared values that unite Muslims and Catholics together with the same "civilization."

Another way that the Muslims, Catholics, and Christian-right members of HCVN experienced solidarity was through participation in a shared mode of "family values" rhetoric that was disseminated in Hamtramck by the AFAM, which consisted of a specialized vocabulary and a set of framing devices.[111] One of the most important of these framing devices was the self-representation of opponents as vulnerable victims of

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[111] See Harding's work on the followers of conservative Christian leaders such as Jerry Fallwell as belonging to a speech community (Harding 1991, 2000).

an ordinance that would allow "discrimination against people of faith." The Christian right-cum-HCVN rhetoric also used the idea of the "culture war" as another important element of their frame. In doing so, they portrayed the Hamtramck case as part of a disastrous national and international trend in which cities, counties and states have been falling under the sway of atheistic and unnatural forces.

A third frame emphasized by the AFAM was that the ordinance presented a threat to public safety. The argument here is that the ordinance could be used by a man to gain entry into women's locker rooms or bathrooms, since the criteria for determining an individual's gender is to be legally determined with reference to that individual's ("the actor's) perception alone.[112] This mode of "bathroom rhetoric" took on deep and pronounced homophobic overtones by centering itself on a figure of the bathroom lurker or "pervert" as an object of public loathing and disgust (Schacter 1994; Herman 1997). The bathroom lurker figure was a cross-dressing man with heterosexual desires who nonetheless was a pervert and a sex criminal due to his uncontainable voyeuristic lust for women, which was now legitimated by an ordinance that enabled him free range into women's private spaces. According to the logic of this argument, by passing an ordinance that so thoroughly confused the lines between men and women, sex and gender, the community would open the door wide for this lowly and disgusting figure and leave itself no recourse for dealing with the havoc and destruction he would wreak upon the city. A cartoon image of this bathroom lurker, in the form of a transvestite in a pink dress, that was circulated within the HCVN literature ended up raising the greatest and most

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[112] The ordinance language institutes a ban on discrimination based on an individual's "actual or perceived" membership in the identity categories listed. It then further clarifies that "perceived" refers to "the perception of the person who acts, and not to the perception of the person for or against whom the action is taken" (Hamtramck United Against Discrimination 2008).

concentrated outcry among the pro-ordinance supporters as a direct and flagrantly unacceptable expression of homophobia. This cartoon showed a muscle-bound man with big feet and hands and heavy stubble squeezed into a party dress and strappy heels, coyly smiling from very red lips. When I asked Muslim leaders what they personally thought about the images that had been produced by the AFAM to represent their campaign, they mainly shrugged them off as "politically expedient" forms of communication.

Other direct expressions of homophobia also occurred within the campaign. Several of these overt expressions occurred just before the vote, at a large Knights of Columbus rally that drew hundreds of mainly Muslim attendees from the local community. Like city council meetings and other events pertaining to the repeal campaign movement, the Knights of Columbus rally was videotaped and put up on Youtube, where it was circulated among activists on both sides of the debate. During this rally a Bangladeshi speaker mocked Carl Thomas, the openly gay member of city council who had introduced the ordinance to the city. He jeeringly said that if the ordinance passed, then Carl Thomas (who was not a cross-dresser) would buy a new dress for himself to celebrate. An African American Muslim speaking against the ordinance proclaimed at an elevated volume and in an agitated register that within all the major religions, homosexuality was considered an abomination, repeating this term several times for emphasis. The angry emotional and jeering at that event frightened the pro-ordinance supporters, who discerned homophobia pervading all levels of the attack against the ordinance.

6.5 Negotiating Alliances

While the HCVN collective grew more unified, those who supported the ordinance regarded the formation of these alliances with a sinking feeling. During one "Vote No" rally in front of City Hall early in the movement, that I attended and videotaped, Solidarity council woman Susan Decatur grew flabbergasted by the large gathering of several dozen Bangladeshi Muslims standing in solidarity with a few conservative Protestant and Catholic representatives. After several attempts to engage the Muslim demonstrators in dialogue, she burst out in exasperation, shaking her finger at the Muslim leaders:

> Go ahead and have your little hate rally …You better be careful who your allies are. Because they didn't stand up for you during the call to prayer. I hope you know that…We stood up for you during the call to prayer. I have been to Palestine. Human rights are for all humans! They are going after the gay folks now, and then they are going after you next.

The use of the term "hate rally" raised cries of indignation from the HCVN members gathered around, and Decatur almost immediately apologized for using that term. Yet in saying "hate rally" the councilwoman only voiced what many ordinance supporters were thinking. The HCVN movement stirred up a sense of anger, betrayal, and confusion among the pro-ordinance activists, especially because the Muslim majority's position in the current movement seemed to betray and contradict the shared tenets of their earlier activism in the call to prayer movement. A Bangladeshi leader answered:

> You supported our call to prayer, we appreciated that. And now you are demanding that we have to support this ordinance. I have to support whatever you demand, that is what you are right now asking me.
>
> … You see one girl raped by somebody. You save her, and bring her home, and let her wash, and let her sleep. Then you rape her. So one side is good, and one

> side is bad. We are appreciating the good side. But we are not going to be supporting the bad.

As spelled out in the rape analogy of the speaker above, within interviews, Muslim ordinance opponents expressed a sense of having been betrayed by their former allies. They believed that the pro-Ordinance politicians were "demanding" that they support moral and ethical system that contradicted their orientation as Muslims and publically insulting them when they refused to do so. In an interview after the rally, a Bangladeshi leader named Sharif explored the anxieties raised by Decatur's challenge in front of City Hall:

> Then there was that comment the other day…that we came forward for your call to prayer, is a reference, that we came forward for you Bangladeshis. And I was concerned that this would come up. And I didn't want to take a bellicose approach… You know, I wanted to be diplomatic, you practice and protest within your rights. But sometimes your rights [to speak out] need to be limited so that your greater rights won't be endangered. So I am I trying to see, what are the consequences of getting into this…But how it will affect the future of not just homosexuals, but of Muslims, altogether…We [the Muslim communities] need to get into mainstream politics, but we need to make sure before we fight for one thing that we are not jeopardizing everything. Because you don't know what's coming next. We don't know who's going to be elected or what kind of Patriot Act is going to be imposed. We will need these people. We will need the entire Hamtramck population to come to our support, as much as they need us to support them. So that's the thing. It's a small community. You don't want to jeopardize your relationship with everyone.

Here, Sharif expresses his discomfort about what he sees as a "bellicose" dynamic that is emerging from within these debates. He locates the bellicose dynamic directly to a form of hailing that he perceives in which the dominant progressive party is addressing a segment of the population as "you Bangladeshis" and thus racially scripting them according to an "us" vs. "them" language. In the quote above, Sharif makes plain his feeling that there was something inherently more problematic and dangerous in the community being seen and labeled as "you Bangladeshis," rather than as part of a racially

mixed group of conservative religious actors. In the quote above, Sharif expressed his anxiety about the effects that such a dynamic might have on the future status of Bangladeshis and Muslims in the community, especially in the context of Muslim vulnerability in the post-9/11 era. He also expresses his belief that the low status of Muslims in post-9/11 America might have to constrain the ambit and scope of the political expressions they allow themselves to take.

In the interview, Sharif expressed his wish for more Catholic visibility during such rallies and further integration of Catholics and Muslims into a united front. This would legitimate the Muslims' opposition and de-racialize the issue so that the opposition to the ordinance was not seen as "Bangladeshi" or "Muslim," portrayed as alienated groups set apart from the rest of the city.

> I had said [to the AFA organizers], I can get people, however many you want, just give me a couple of days and I can get people. That's not the point. The point is that I don't want to get too many of the Bangladeshi people there, and then make it look like it's Bangladeshi verses white. And then, we're talking about something quite different…I mean I don't know what kind of reaction would come from the people…Because my concern is, what will it mean if everybody will come out from the mosque and none from the churches.

Here, Sharif, like some other Muslim community leaders, figured the activism of the local conservative Catholic community as providing the Muslim movement with legitimacy and a kind of buffer against anti-immigrant vitriol that might otherwise have been directed against them if this was seen as "their issue" alone. The same speaker phrased his assessment of the alliance between the local Muslims and the outsider Christian-right organization in slightly different terms:

> I look at this as a strategic alliance, and maybe an awkward alliance. Of course we will have differences. That's completely expected. But at this point, it doesn't matter. The unity is for one issue. And after this is done, we will differ on different matters…So, I consider this more of a strategic alliance for us to learn

> some things, for us to get some help. Because I think that this is the first time the Bangladeshi community is involved fighting something which has to do with national identity so to speak. So, alone, the community alone, we can't stand against it. It just is not possible. I wouldn't recommend it. Especially when we don't have people who are good debaters in mainstream politics, who understand the rights, we don't have any lawyers who are expert in these areas, so all these things. We are just not properly equipped to handle these situations. That's why I called this a strategic alliance.

Above, Sharif describes what the AFAM has to offer the Bangladeshis in terms of their ability to help them to acquire an appropriate skill set and learn how to comport themselves in the American public political arena. Some Christian-right leaders, in turn, represented the alliance with Muslims as mutually beneficial for both parties and as having the power to mediate a stigma that conservative Christians themselves are facing in the current socio-political climate. TMLC attorney Matt Duke explains:

> Because for us at the law center, for Catholics and Christians, we have to have likeminded people involved in these coalitions. Because the more people you have involved in them, the less the argument that we are just closed-minded, bigoted people. The last acceptable bigotry in this country is the bigotry against Christianity.

In this telling, groups like the AFA and the TMLC need the help of conservative, like-minded Muslims as much as Muslims need them. Just as the conservative Christian groups were represented as having the capacity, by standing together with Muslims, to quell fears about their "radical" or "un-American" potential, so do the Muslims, by standing together publically with Christians, have the capacity to improve the conservative Christian reputation by attesting to the fact that they are not bigots based on their inclusiveness of racial and religious minorities.

The mutual friendliness and interest between Muslim and conservative Christian leaders in Hamtramck, and the way conservative Christian leaders supported them and identified with them as "family guys," may be considered part of a national, or even

international, trend in which a variety of evangelical leaders are reaching out to support Muslim interests in various ways (Esposito 2009; Vu 2009). For example, over the past several years popular megachurch preacher Rick Warren has been publicly advocating such Christian right-Muslim alliances and expressing his strong personal wish to form close working relationships with Muslim groups (Esposito 2009). In fact, Richard Warren had been the keynote speaker at the Islamic Society of North America's annual meeting the previous year (Duin 2009).

Yet at the same time, Christian right groups also often portray themselves and are portrayed in media as being linked with anti-Muslim attitudes. Some of their leaders are known for figuring Islam as an "evil religion" fundamentally opposed to "western culture and society" (i.e. Esposito 2009).[113] This is borne out in some recent national-level attitudes and actions of these same evangelical Christian groups against Muslim interests and concerns.[114] For example, an American Family Association spokesperson was one of the earliest and most high profile denouncers of the Park 51 project in New York, and phrased his opposition to the Islamic center in highly nativist and Islamophobic terms (see also Cook 2010; Fischer 2010). Taking this in mind, the contradictory nature of the relationship between the conservative Christians and Muslims in Hamtramck is indicative

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[113] Among myriad other factors, one reason that conservative Christians are linked with an anti-Muslim stance in the American popular imagination may be due in part to the tendency of some high-profile Christian right spokespeople to reference "Islamo-fascism" and to call Islam an 'evil religion'" (Esposito 2009).

[114] For example, in 2010, the president of the AFA was one of the earliest and most vocal critics of the Park 51 project, calling it a "monstrosity" and "a potential jihadist recruitment training center" (Fischer 2010; see also Cook 2010). Also in New York, the TMLC had worked diligently to fight against the founding of the Khalil Gibran Academy, an Arabic language charter school (MilitantIslamMonitor.org 2007). These are only a couple of the most high profile cases. In looking through the websites and carrying out online searches about these organizations, many other cases come up where the AFA and the TMLC are associated with policies and attitudes that counter the positions advocated by the majority of Muslims about their civic engagements (See also Haberman 2011).

of larger nation-wide tendencies and the fact that neither conservative Christians, nor Muslims groups, in any way represent a unified voice.

6.6 Progressivism and its Discontents

By the time the HCVN petition to repeal the ordinance was officially submitted to city hall, Councilman Carl Thomas, who had scripted the ordinance, had already organized an action group to work in its defense. This collective, which later came to be called Hamtramck United Against Discrimination (HUAD) eventually grew to around forty members, mainly consisting of local LGBTQ-identified young people and their supporters, faith leaders, community leaders, and Solidarity-party-identified members and supporters. Additionally, other HUAD members were representatives or board members from state branches of national-level LGBTQ groups such as Ferndale Michigan Equality, the Detroit Triangle Foundation, and the National Gay and Lesbian Taskforce, and regional-level LGBTQ groups such as Affirmations and the Ruth Ellis Foundation.

The HUAD members who I interviewed located their motivation for working to support the ordinance within a crosshatching set of personal, political, religious, cultural, and ideological commitments. Chief among these was a concern for protecting Hamtramck's LGBTQ communities, as well as sending a symbolic message to the state and nation about these issues. Yet the concerns of movement members extended substantially beyond attention to LGBTQ-rights and visibility to encompass a wide range of concerns over minority rights. In fact, it was precisely this recognition and advancing of an organic connection between gay and immigrant rights that was continually cited as

the most compelling and meaningful aspect of the movement for many of its supporters (Lugo-Lugo and Bloodsworth-Lugo 2010). One HUAD organizer and Baptist religious leaders described her motivation for working on the ordinance this way:

> I have been an advocate for many years for persons who express their sexuality differently in the church…In this case, the ordinance that's before us is being perceived as [ultimately] a gay rights ordinance. Because Carl Thomas introduced it in the council, you could even maybe make a greater argument for that. But, to me it's timely in that you get to see more hate crimes, you are seeing more of a rise in ethnic intimidation, certainly more since September 11th, you are seeing more, in the Detroit area, backlash against Muslims, so, as a person of faith, I really, no matter what the perceived origin of the ordinance might be, or how it came about in our community, I would put my name and my action behind it, because I believe it's for all people, for all times, for the benefit of the community.

For the HUAD supporters, one of the most exciting aspects of the Hamtramck situation was the way in which it opened up a potential avenue for communication, recognition, and alliance formation between Muslims and non-Muslims in a progressive framework. In some HUAD narratives, Hamtramck's Muslims were figured as partial outsiders to the political process whose status and position had not yet solidified due to their status as newcomers. And, although some Muslims in the city had been instrumental in working to overturn the ordinance, some HUAD members believed that other Muslims still potentially represented a powerful base of supporters who could be brought in and cultivated as important allies who might reverse that trend, in a way that would be mutually beneficial for those concerned with both Muslims and with LGBTQ rights. According to one ordinance supporter:

> The message [to Muslims] should be: we have to join with diverse groups, and support diversity. The key there is not that gay is great, or that Arabs should join the gays, it's that Hamtramck is an open and diverse city where everyone should be valued and treasured. Including, Bangladeshis, the Arabs, and the gays, and the Muslims. We have to put it that way, and it will works…The key is to get people to share the concept that diversity is a good thing, and that non-diversity is a bad

> thing. So that way, it looks like it's in their own self-interest as Muslims. Because if they go after the gays, then they could come after the Muslims.

One Solidarity-party city councilwoman explained:

> In its simplest form, it's [the LGBTQ-inclusive measure] an expression of the positive direction that America is going in. Barack Obama is an example of that…. The push for progress. The push for human rights. The push against war and the push against poverty. And so, the baby boomers are the majority. So as much as there's a whole bunch of them that went on to have greedy suburban little lives, we really thought at the time that we were going to see the fruits of that push. And a lot of that dissipated for one reason or the other. It's kind of exciting to see that it's finally starting to have an impact. And so, nationally, I think that ordinances like this just show that there is progress forward on some of these more critical issues of human rights. That's another example, that's another nail in the coffin of discrimination.

As in the council woman's description above, the HHRO's movement's progressivism was often linked to the civil rights movement of the 1960s. Narratives such as this one reflect a strong belief in the symbolic power of a piece of legislation that would list on equal grounds the many forms of discrimination that could potentially be found in the city and that put measures in place to account for and resolve these problems (Brown 2006).

Phrased in such terms, the issue in Hamtramck was exciting and fulfilling for activists because it placed individuals squarely in the center of an unfolding national level history of liberation and social justice involving the urgent Human Rights concerns of both Muslims and gays in America. As in the movement to support Muslims during the call to prayer debates, the passing of the ordinance was valued as important not just as a sign and/or indication that the city had advanced. Rather, the campaign's was that it was putting into place a process, or a means from which to accomplish a transformation. It was not just a time to shore up resources and to get out the vote. Rather it was revolutionary time: a charged time of heightened importance to instruct, demonstrate, and

teach through example so that residents of the city could learn to share this collective vision of community progress and change that would benefit them all (Guyer 2007; Berlant 2010).

Another aspect of the HUAD rhetoric centered upon improving the city's reputation. Some pro-ordinance activists believed by publishing its Human Rights Ordinance, Hamtramck would be taking a step to enhance its image as a welcoming city. In this respect, the HHRO was seen as a tool that could help diminish the lingering associations linking the city to racism and discrimination due to incidents such as the R-31 housing discrimination case[115] and the 1999 Voter Harassment Scandal targeting Muslims in the city, mentioned above. In an interview, Mayor Dembrowski described what was at stake in retaining the ordinance:

> This is how we're known regionally at least, as a place that welcomes everyone, and we're inclusive, and progressive, and yet kind of old school at the same time. And this reputation is very important to us. Economically it's very important to us. Socially, it's important to us. Legislatively it's very important to us. I mean, this is the image of Hamtramck that we are trying to build. Inclusiveness and tolerance, and welcoming. And kind of, the America that we would all want. Both old and young, and different backgrounds, and different languages, and different religioms. Kind of laissez-faire. As long as you keep your lawn clean. As long as you dig out your spot [from the snow] and don't take somebody else's you have a place here. And that's what could be really harmed by this campaign, by losing this fight.

[115] As described in Chapter Four, the Hamtramck municipality was found guilty of large-scale discrimination affecting hundreds of its Black residents due to the mass evictions it had ordered during a 1960s urban renewal project. To the city's further disgrace, there had been an exceedingly long delay between the court's ordering of compensation to the R-31 families. In fact, with this case, Hamtramck put itself on the map as the city with the longest running urban renewal damages case in the history of the nation. It was the current administration that had taken the decisive steps in fulfilling the compensation, which came in the form of offering the descendants of families that had been effected by urban renewal new homes at discounted rates with substantial property tax benefits. This fulfillment had occurred as recently as 2008.

In this vision, Dembrowski, like other ordinance supporters, represents Hamtramck as a city with potential to serve as a model for the nation in terms of how it handles its diversity, providing that it takes the right turn at the crossroads over gay rights.

Coming from this expansive multiculturalist perspective, there was a series of individual attempts by various HUAD members to engage opposition members in deep and extended dialogue about the ordinance on a one-to-one level. Appointments for lunch and coffee were made and kept, and there were also attempts to connect and coordinate the parallel kinds of pro-Obama campaign activities in which Muslims and non-Muslims were engaged during the lead-up to the 2008 presidential elections. There was also a reconvening of the Children of Abraham Unity Council that had so successfully worked to unite communities during the call to prayer debates. Yet, most of the HUAD and HCVN members that I talked to ultimately reported a sense of discouragement and failure in the aftermath of attempts at dialogue and meetings, and began to express feelings that it might prove impossible to find common ground over the issue. HUAD and HCVN members alike spoke about their regret and sadness as relationships became strained and fractured.

Other attempts at community reconciliation were made by Louis Arnold, the head of the Hamtramck Human Relations Commission, who publicly and repeatedly urged the two sides to open up lines of dialogue. He asked residents and councilors to consider the possibility of amending the religious exemption section of the ordinance in consultation with religious leaders from the opposition party so that they could feel protected in supporting the ordinance. Yet Arnold's public examination of the ordinance was read as a veiled attack against it by the mayor and HUAD members, and in retaliation, he was

personally attacked for his work on the issue. Due to city regulations, the ordinance would have to go into referendum just as it was. Therefore, any open critiques of the ordinance, constructive or otherwise, was thought to undermine the ordinance passage, and treated as a betrayal of the movement's cause. Arnold made several concerted attempts to organize public meetings, workshops, and educational events about the ordinance issue in different venues. However, these attempts were met with so much resistance and suspicion that he ended up reluctantly postponing his plans for focus groups until after the ordinance vote in November.

As their sadness, anger, frustration, and dismay mounted, HUAD members tried to make sense of the troubling alliances that had emerged against them and account for the unexpected position that Muslims were taking in them. Some HUAD members reasoned that if the local Muslims really understood the network of other issues and positions that the Christian-right represented, then they would not be joining with them on this issue. Some of these HUAD members believed that it was part of their mission as ordinance advocates to reveal what was really going on in order to help Muslims "connect the dots" about who their friends and enemies really are. One councilmember phrased it this way:

> I would say to the Islamic community: Go to another part of the country, and see how welcome you are. You've got a community here that is willing to protect you as well. All it's gonna take is another terrorist attack that's tied into Islamic people, and you are only a minute away from a concentration camp in the middle of Arizona or New Mexico. If you don't think that could happen, you don't know American history…This country is completely capable of doing bad things. And the very people that they have allied with around this issue, the American Family Association and Thomas Moore Law Center will be at the forefront of loading them up into boxcars. You know, they will be saying: "Load'em up. This is a Christian country." And they are not getting all that. There is a disconnect.

Within this line of reasoning, there was a tendency for some HUAD supporters to portray the Muslims as the puppets of the AFAM, uncomprehending of their larger goals, and as victims of false consciousness. This idea was spelled out graphically on the HUAD website, in which images of three of the main conservative Christian leaders were arranged just above pictures of three local Muslims leaders, with three vertical lines, representing puppet strings, drawn between the two sets of images.

As the movement wore on, I noticed a new tendency for progressive-type community activists to make generalizations about the Muslim community based on bitterness and hostility of a kind I had not heard in their comments before. Within interviews, some pro-ordinance activists questioned the basis and viability of Muslim citizenship:

> What you've got going on now in Hamtramck is that you have all these people who haven't even been here a generation yet, they are the ones who are stirring up the hatred in this town…And I question how many people who are in that coalition are actually full citizens…I would guess to think that many of them are not full-fledged citizens. I mean, how many really know the English language? How many are really familiar with American customs?...I think they have been given a lot of misinformation. I really do. I don't even think they understand what constitutionally makes a person a different sexual orientation. They don't even understand what gender identification is. All they understand is… I mean, their mind is filtering from their country of origin. They don't understand what it is to be an American.

Other pro-ordinance activists played upon the Muslim groups' status as recent immigrants to erect boundary lines between 'us' and 'them' in ways meant to unsettle and undermine the Muslim position. In these narratives, Hamtramck was coded as "our city" with a specific culture of progressivism and multiculturalism that was under siege from Muslim modes of intolerance. For example, at one City Council meeting a veteran gay rights activist from a nearby town angrily told the Muslims present that as

newcomers to the city, they should not be trying to take away the rights of people who had been there longer than they had. The rhetoric took on harsh disciplinary tones, as in the following open letter written by a HUAD leader:

> The Bangladeshi community…does not have… critical social institutions in place - the inevitable result of which is a culture of political and religious polarization that leads to extremist voices going unchecked…Bangladeshis must…do the tough work that every immigrant community has done in America - build respected civil society organizations from the ground-up that assist immigrants in their journey to become full American citizens, and partner with other communities to help smooth the road…And if the Bangladeshi community continues to allow voices of extremism to flourish, I guarantee you this - you will continue to be publicly called out, and embarrassed, until you learn to reject and root out the anti-American element in your community, and work instead to build the civil society infrastructure your community so desperately need.

This sense of displeasure against Muslims came in different forms. There was a tendency to equate Muslim rejection of the ordinance with other forms of oppression that were believed to be at work within the community. For example, the "tyrannical" Muslim "anti-gay" stance was linked with the "deplorable treatment of their women." Critics pointed to how these women are "forced" to veil and keep out of certain aspects of public life as evidence of this oppression, using familiar assertions of Islamophobic gender logics (Abu-Lughod 2002; Cesari 2005a; Ahmed 2011a), but then extending out from the "treatment of their women" to the "treatment of their gays." One young HUAD leader explained:

> Christian society went through the reformation. We went through the enlightenment. Islamic society still has to do that…But also, like balancing that with the fact of regional conflicts, and poverty, and all the different factors that come into play... And then like applying… what's going on in Iran, like Saudi Arabia, and other countries, that execute gay people, like Indonesia, like Bangladesh, where it's kind of like, almost like, I haven't heard of any executions over there, but it's almost like there are not, and it's important not to be paternalistic about development issues, or anything like that, but it's almost like they have more on their plate then even thinking at this point about gay people. And you know, Thailand has an Islamic insurgency in the south, they are dealing

> with this, how can we expect them to be dealing with LGBTQ rights when this is going on. It's very complicated.
>
> I don't think the answer is pinning the blame on them, like blow them all up, that's not the answer. It's about building the democracies, getting them out of poverty…And once you start, you know, getting out of poverty, what results is more respect for women's rights and gender and everything. And it's been found that once—there are so many correlations and connections between educational level, and poverty, and infant mortality, and that kind of thing, that you can raise all those. You know, and with that education comes a less fundamentalist, more secular worldview.

Third world feminist scholars have traced the ways in which colonial and imperial systems have justified their intrusions into Muslim nations with reference to the need to "liberate their women" from the tyrannical gender systems of their society and religion (i.e. Mohanty, et al. 1991). We have seen these dynamics emerge again recently in the rhetoric surrounding US incursions into Iraq and Afghanistan (Abu-Lughod 2002; Ahmed 2011b). A subsequent wave of scholarship has suggested that rhetoric about "the way they treat their gays" is being used similarly as a strategy to promote the idea of western superiority. Scholars have labeled this tendency as "homonationalism," meaning the systematic deployment of liberal-secular "western" constructions of sexuality to discipline and pathologize conservative Muslim gender and sexual ethics that has emerged as part of the "war on terror" (see also Duggan 2003; Puar 2007). Although scholars have begun to analyze how universalizing constructions of homonormativity are being used been as a mode of dominance by those seeking to wield influence on Muslim societies, there has been less discussion of how these modes operate on the domestic level in disciplining Muslims, with the exception of Van der Veer's notable analysis of the Netherland case (van der Veer 2006).

In some Hamtramck pro-ordinance narratives, the question of Muslim acceptance of gay rights at home and abroad was linked to universalist developmental discourses that assumed a direct correlation between material advancement and social progress along liberal-secular lines. As in the above quote, other community members I interviewed reasoned that American Muslims who were opposed to the ordinance were under the influence of foreign ideologies and systems of justice that condoned the murder or execution of gays since homosexuality carries a penalty of death some Muslim countries. One area interfaith activist who visited Hamtramck to consult during the repeal movement explained it:

> For Muslims, homosexuality is evil…You know for the Bangladeshis, especially, the al-Queda or Taliban presentation of the evil western world and the promisciuous hedonistic ways. You know this permissive teaching about not just gays and lesbians, a lot of folks can get there, but it's the transgender and cross dressing, that's just being put in their face…So these people were raised on that, and in some Muslim countries you could be killed for being a homosexual. And so here they are in a place where the law is saying something totally different than maybe in a sharia law culture, so they are like, oh man, it's their jihad, they are doing a holy war to be opposed to this.

This equation of immigrant Muslims with the "repressive," "backward," "tyrannical" politics and policies of their countries of origin based merely on speculation is another familiar thread of Islamophobic rhetoric and assumptions (Cesari 2005a). Indeed, as documented in previous sections, in their interviews with me, some Muslims did in fact link their opposition to the ordinance to the standards and norms of public behavior and the public/private divide in their culture of origin. Yet the terms in which they did so had no relationship to the kinds of portrayals and representations like the one above in which Muslim opposition to the ordinance is linked with allegiance to political regimes that advocate physically harming, murdering, or executing LGBTQ individuals. In fact, local

Muslims frequently linked their position against the ordinance to their loyalty to the US constitution, which they believed provided sufficient protections for all, rather than as a form of loyalty to a "foreign" system of justice.

With these assumptions that Muslim opposition stemmed from foreign and extremist attitudes regarding the punishment of gays, reports and rumors began to spread in the community that HCVN Muslim leaders had publically condoned violence against gays in general, or had threatened violence against specific individuals. In editorials in the local paper, rumors were spread that one high profile Muslim leader in particular had said particularly bloodthirsty things and his reputation suffered. Some young pro-gay activists speculated that they would probably have been attacked by an angry mob if they had attended one of the Vote No rallies, making ululating noises to illustrate the point. Other community members described the rallies as having "whipped up" Muslim into a "frenzy" of hatred in which, they speculated, "anything could have happened."

6.7 Election Day

On Election Day 2008, Hamtramck residents were already assured of an Obama victory in their city. The city's Polish Catholic majority and other residents had been voting Democratic in every presidential election since Hamtramck first became incorporated as a city in 1922. Hamtramck residents were also assured that the newest waves of immigrants would also overwhelmingly be voting Democratic.[116] But there was little talk of Obama vs. McCain at the polling stations, where attention was centered

[116] The Gallup Center for Muslim Studies estimates that US Muslims favored Obama at levels nearly matching those of African-Americans, ninety-three percent of whom voted for Obama (Vitello 2008).

upon the HHRO issue. Polling stations were flooded with campaigners from both sides of the HHRO debate, waving placards, shouting slogans, and trying to gain some last-minute votes. In the midst of the chaos and confusion, Hamtramck made an exceedingly strong showing for the Democratic Party, with about 86 per cent of Hamtramck citizens voting for Obama (Sercombe 2008b, 2008a). And, the Hamtramck Human Rights Ordinance was repealed by a margin of 600 out of a total 5236 votes. One of the most remarkable things about Hamtramck's 2008 elections was the unprecedentedly strong showing of Muslims the polls. The Muslim residents with whom I discussed the vote tended to attribute the unusually high Muslim turn out first to the local ordinance issue, and only secondarily to the Obama election.

After the results came in, most of the city shared a feeling of elation over the Obama victory. Yet, the pro-rights supporters grappled with conflicting waves of joy and sorrow. These mixed feelings were also shared by gay rights supporters across the nation. As it turned out, the year that Obama was elected also saw a striking roll back for LGBTQ rights on several important referendum nation-wide. The most high-profile of these was the passage of Proposition 8 in California, which repealed the state legislation legalizing gay marriage that was not yet a year old.[117] The California repeal was echoed by ballot losses concerning gay marriage in Florida and Arizona. In these two states, voters supported amendments to define marriage as between a man and a woman, while also voting Democratic in the presidential vote. In Republican Arkansas too, voters supported legislation that restricted adoption to married, and thus heterosexual, couples only. In national-level coverage, the Hamtramck vote was mentioned alongside these

[117] More than $35 million each was raised by activists working for and against Proposition 8, making it the "second most expensive race of 2008, second only to the presidency" (Kim 2008).

state-level contests as another example of a demoralizing national trend against LGBTQ gains, in which “the 2008 election was a success for nearly every segment of the Democratic coalition, with one stark exception: gay rights activists” (see also National Gay and Lesbian Task Force Action Fund 2008b; Richardson 2008).

Analysts working on the election's racial demographics found that in California, it was minorities, and most particularly Black voters who were most emphatic in their backing of Proposition 8 to overrule the legal sanctioning of same-sex marriage. In California, “black voters came out to the polls in record numbers to support Mr. Obama, and then turned around and voted in favour of traditional marriage by a margin of 70 percent to 30 percent" (Richardson 2008). In the words of one *Washington Post* reporter: “The same voters who turned out strongest for Obama also drove a stake through the heart of same-sex marriage" (Vick and Surdin 2008). A 53% majority of Latinos in California also voted to support Proposition 8 while supporting Obama, and together with Black voters “overcame the bare majority of white Californians who voted to let the court ruling stand” (Vick and Surdin 2008).

Hamtramck’s African-American community, which represents between 10-13 percent of the city’s population, was not especially vocal during the HHRO campaign. Thus, whereas in California and Florida, defeat of pro-LGBTQ measures was mainly associated with African Americans, in Hamtramck the repeal of LBGTQ rights was more or less associated with Bangladeshi and Yemeni American Muslims. As it was in Hamtramck, the vote against gay marriage on the part of racial minorities was “surprising and disappointing” to gay rights supporters across the country who had hoped that minority citizens would “empathize with their struggle” (Vick and Surdin 2008).

Another similarity between the Hamtramck and the Prop-8 cases is that there was a tendency for ethnic and racial minority leaders at the highest echelons to come out as gay-rights supporters although the majority of the voting public was against this position. For example, in spring of 2009, several months after the majority of African Americans in California voted in support of Proposition 8, both the NAACP chairman Julian Bond and the NAACP President Ben Jealous agreed to came out publically in support of repealing Proposition 8 (Serwer 2009). In a letter to the California Legislature, Bond wrote: " Proposition 8 subverts… basic and necessary safeguards, unjustly putting all Americans, particularly vulnerable minorities, at a risk of discrimination by a majority show of hands (Serwer 2009). Like the pro-ordinance Muslim leaders living in the suburbs around Hamtramck, these Black community and religious leadership nevertheless extended their support to LGBTQ measures to counter what they see as an issue involving overt injustice or discrimination even though they knew this would bring them out of step with their constituencies. The division in the community, and the presence of an elite leadership more sympathetic to LGBTQ concerns vis-à-vis a more socially conservative majority, parallel, in some ways, the situation in Hamtramck where upper level Arab and South Asian community leaders based in the affluent nearby suburbs spoke in favour of LGBTQ reforms while the great majority of the community opposed it.

6.8 Local Fallout

In the period immediately following the November 2008 elections, a number of changes and developments took place in Hamtramck's political scene that were seen by

Hamtramck residents and those involved as linked directly to the Human Relations Ordinance debates. The first of these involved changes to the Human Relations Commission (HHRC) composition, when HHRC head Louis Arnold nominated David Smith to be the first Human Relations Commissioner in Hamtramck to be appointed on the basis of his sexual orientation,[118] and thus set a precedent for the commission.[119] Smith was a young HUAD leader who had begun attending the monthly HHRC meetings as part of his activism to champion and educate about the HHRO. In doing so, the city implicitly affirmed and legitimated sexual orientation as a category of identity in need of representation and protection as much as any racial, ethnic, or class minority. This was perhaps only a minor victory compared to what the passage of the HHRO would have been, but it nevertheless represented a victory for HUAD in terms of gaining legitimization for LGBTQ groups as an identity category deserving protected class status in the eyes of the municipality.

Some LGBTQ activists like Smith chose to see the Hamtramck HHRO repeal, rather than as a total failure, as the first step in a positive process of beginning to come into visibility on the part of the city's nearly invisible LGBTQ population. Indeed, even councilman Carl Thomas who had scripted the ordinance had never openly "come out" as gay to his constituents until his move to pass the ordinance. Some HUAD activists reasoned that the large-scale legal and social changes they desire can not happen over

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[118] The Ordinance Creating a Human Relations Commission, or Hamtramck Ordinance No. 348 (Hamtramck 2004b; see Appendix E) does not mention minority status based on sexual orientation or gender expression as a factor for inclusion of representatives. Rather the Ordinance "created and established a commission… consisting of twelve members" who, "as nearly as possible, shall be representative of the various racial, religious, national, cultural, labor, business, and ethnic groups of the city" (Hamtramck 2004b:1-2).

[119] It is presently unknown to me whether or not there is any movement to amend the Human Relations Commission ordinance text to indicate that representatives may be chosen according to sexual orientation, gender identity and/or gender expression.

night, but require the sustained work of a group of motivated individuals who are devoted to the cause and who will find creative ways to express themselves and to build up positive associations with LGBTQ presence in the city. With this, some HUAD members reasoned that the failed ordinance battle itself, and the changes that it brought to Hamtramck's political culture, might serve as the foundation for new kinds of political projects and levels forms of LGBTQ visibility in the city that could lead to the eventual passing of an anti-discrimination ordinance.

HUAD members like Smith began thinking creatively and expansively about other future projects that they could be a part of, such as a project to help identify business owners and community stakeholders who were openly gay in order to form coalitions or associations with non-LGBTQ individuals based on common interests. Jones was not alone in his re-focusing, as other HUAD members were also inspired to join city commissions or become further involved in Hamtramck politics to forward the interests and visibility of the city's LGBTQ members. With this, there were also some conservative Muslims in the city who expressed a desire to engage in community work to increase education about their views on homosexuality, and to make sure that their opposition to the ordinance was not thought of as based on hatred against LGBTQ communities, or a desire to commit any violence or harm against their members.

Another change within Hamtramck's municipal life fomented by the HHRO debates was the mayor's abrupt and angry dismissal of Human Relations Commission chairman Louis Arnold who had held that post since 2004.[120] Officially, Mayor Dembrowski dismissed Arnold as chair of the commission based on the claim that he had

[120] As noted earlier, the 2004 re-formulated Human Relations Commission was pre-dated by the earlier Human Relations Commission in Hamtramck that had lapsed or dissolved.

committed an infraction of the Human Relations Ordinance bylaws due to a technicality in the way that he put together a subcommittee and planned a "Common Ground" meeting to foster dialogue and negotiation over the HHRO in the immediate aftermath of the elections. As he expressed in an open letter, and in an address to city hall, Arnold and his supporters firmly believed that the real reason behind his dismissal was not this technical infraction, but because he had openly and persistently challenged the Mayor and the powerful Solidarity collective.

After dismissing Arnold, Dembrowski brought in Sulaiman Ahmed to fill his place as the chair of the Human Relations Commission. As the head and founder of a new, up-and-coming Arab American Social Service NGO group, Ahmed had remained neutral on the Hamtramck Human Relations Ordinance. Therefore, the elevation of visibility on the part of both LGBTQ and Muslim individuals during the HHRO debates was reflected in the re-composition of the HHRC in its wake, with the inaugural inclusion of a member based on his ability to represent sexual orientation minority status, and a change in the leadership of this organization from an white "secular humanist" identified Hamtramck older community leader who had critiqued the ordinance to a younger Yemeni male community leader who had remained silent.

A third change that the HHRO debates led to in Hamtramck was the reformulation of Hamtramck's branch of the NAACP. This reformulation was instigated and led by then HHRC chair Louis Arnold in what would prove to be his last of several successful projects geared toward the African American community as the HHRO

head[121] Arnold's decision to start working on the NAACP at that time was connected to the HHRO. During the course of the HHRO debates, Arnold had become increasingly frustrated as his various attempts to create forums for dialogue about the Human Rights Ordinance were consistently rejected. At some point, he decided to re-direct his community-building efforts away from the HHRO issue and into an initiative to revitalize Hamtramck's branch of the NAACP that had been relatively dormant in the recent years as an alternative forum in which to bring the community together. To do so, Arnold called together a large number of African Americans and other religious, community, and business leaders as well as individuals who were active in previous phases of NAACP work in Hamtramck. Besides African Americans, Bangladeshi and Yemeni American Muslims of the community also responded enthusiastically to the call for NAACP chapter revitalization.

The Hamtramck chapter was officially re-inaugurated in February 2009, three months after the HHRO repeal, at a meeting in the Hamtramck public library. In this meeting, state-level NAACP officials oversaw the election of the Hamtramck's new officers and officially recognized Hamtramck's new NAACP chapter. The meeting was attended by about 30 Hamtramck residents, about half of whom were African Americans. The other half was made up of Bangladeshis and Yemeni Muslims, almost all of whom had been active members of the HCVN. Both African American and Muslim leaders were nominated for every position, including secretary, treasurer, vice president and president. As it turned out, the majority of the official positions were given to Bangladeshi and Yemeni Muslims.

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[121] Among other such activities, Arnolds is well known in Hamtramck's African American community for organizing and hosting the highly successful "African American Recognition Dinner" of 2007, which was to be the first of several such dinners honoring different communities in Hamtramck.

The vote for NAACP president was evenly divided between Khalil Uddin, a Bangladeshi businessman who had been extremely vocal and involved in HCVN, and James Leander, pastor of the African American Grace Baptist church and active member of the national-level NAACP for many years. The state-level officers asked that Uddin and Leander step out of the room in order to privately discuss the matter and decide together who should take the position. After a quick moment of discussion, they returned and stated that they had mutually agreed that Uddin should take the position. I learned from later interviews with both leaders that Leander had agreed to cede the position to Uddin based on his desire to open up the NAACP to new directions and to promote the possibilities for its expansion and growth into other communities. Although some NAACP members were excited about Uddin's headship of the Hamtramck branch, others were critical about the idea of a Bangladeshi leading the organization, believing that the NAACP should remain primarily an African American organization. Some voiced that Leander had let his community down by ceding the presidency, and that there was something inherently disrespectful about the "Muslim takeover" of the NAACP.

Former HUAD members took up another line of critique against the newly revitalized NAACP, dismayed that the local NAACP chapter could accept a president who was openly "anti-gay." According to Simon Warner's open letter to the local paper, the stance went against the NAACP's stated goal of anti-discrimination and represented a conflict with the NAACP's national leadership. Warner spoke out publicly in several interviews about the issue with the local press, and in open letters, decrying Uddin's presidency and trying to raise a movement to challenge his right to this position. There were also rumors floating around the community, and published in the local press, that

former HUAD members had plans to disrupt the first NAACP meeting. No such disruption took place, and public expression of anger over Hamtramck NAACP leadership eventually settled down.

A third way that the HCVN repeal campaign stretched beyond the vote to repeal the HHRO was in the effects it had upon Hamtramck's next local election. Many people base the remarkably strong showing of Hamtramck's Bangladeshi and Yemeni Muslims in the 2009 election to the modes of public visibility and the voter recruitment advances that they had made in 2008. For example, during the 2009 elections s Yemeni councilman who a vocally against the ordinance, made a serious bid for the mayorship. This was the first time that a Muslim candidate had came so close to the becoming mayor of Hamtramck, a post held by individuals of Polish ancestry ever since Hamtramck had first become incorporated. Secondly, two Bangladeshi businessmen were newly elected on to council, joining Sayyid Khan whose position had not been up for the vote that year. One of these Bangladeshi candidates who had note been part of the HHRO debates, the Solidarity-backed Khushtar Chodhury, distinguished himself by winning the greatest majority of votes out of all the candidates, by a large margin. That made three out of six Hamtramck councilmembers Bangladeshi Muslims. The 2009 election was the first time that Hamtramck had elected half its council as Muslims.[122]

Taking these events and developments into perspective, the HHRO debates in Hamtramck resulted in several changes in the city's political public culture in the aftermath of the elections, shifts that may or may not be enduring. The first of these was

[122] There had been one period in the past where three of Hamtramck's councilmembers were Muslims: this was when Shahab Ahmed (Bangladeshi Muslim); Abdul al-Gazali (Yemeni Muslim), and William Hood (African American Muslim) had sat together for a brief period during 2006-07. It should be noted that Hood had not been elected onto council the same way as these others, but rather took over the position as the person who had the next highest number of votes when one council member suddenly passed away.

the expansion of Muslim visibility and prominence in city life, including Muslims who were both supportive, neutral, and in opposition to the ordinance. This was especially evident in the election and appointment of several Muslims into positions of prominence who had been neutral on the HHRO in a way that was seen by some as a way for Solidarity to reward these Muslims for their silence. Another change was a push toward greater LGBTQ and Muslim presence and visibility in the city. Finally, frustration over the roadblocks and potential problems of city-mandated anti-discrimination solutions resulted in a move on the part of some Hamtramck citizens to revitalize of the city's NAACP in a way that brought the city's Muslim and African American communities into close contact, in a way that may or may not end up being inclusive of LGBTQ concerns.

6.9 Conclusion: Queer Time and Municipal Time

The Hamtramck situation gives us an example of an interesting kind of municipal-level impasse in which two opposing sides became locked into seeing the situation from polarizing positions that had already been laid in advance. Each side was stymied in its ability to think its way forward into a better way of dialoguing about the issue, especially in the harried context of the schedule for the ordinance passage. In this constellation of factors, the Muslim majority missed the opportunity to creatively and publicly express their conservative point of view in a way that exceeded the AFAM framework for imagining the issue. Their complete and uncritical adoption of the AFAM framework and rhetoric was described by some Muslim leaders as a "politically expedient" solution, but Muslim leaders never made a public accounting of what had been left out in the margins of such a compromise. As part of this, the Muslim majority did not respond to or take

seriously the kind of distress that their position was causing to their longtime trusted allies.

Some progressives in the city translated their distress over the Muslim position into an Islamophobic response. Those who did so missed the chance for the emergence of a different kind of LGBTQ ethic that might have had to potential to queer the conflict in unforeseen ways. Drawing the kinds of paradigms that queer activists and scholars have developed for understanding difference and stigmatization, they may have come up with ways out of the impasse that did not trade one form of demonization for another. But the conflict played out in the same predictable terms that have been set by the tenor of post-9/11 America, and one kind of ugliness was returned for another. In responding to homophobia with Islamophobia, those who took this tack were reinforcing the very position that they were trying to contest--that Islam is against gays. Thus they magnified the most damaging implications of the HVCN message, the idea that conservative religious groups cannot exist peacefully with LGBTQ communities.

The temporal framework of the ordinance-passing process itself was a root cause of the negativity. The vote on the ordinance was enshrined as a quintessentially democratic and therefore salutary exercise in community building. Yet it introduced deep and unproductive anxieties and led to distortions in the way the two sides looked at each other. A sense of great urgency, the "ordinance passage time" was suddenly foisted upon the slower and heterogeneously experienced sense of everyday time. Instead of pushing ahead this linear agenda, there could have been a way to queer time itself, to reject the demands of the municipal framework, and to insist on not sacrificing the now for the near future, but rather to think about the now in concert with long term desires (Guyer 2007).

As it was, the harried concern for the near future led to a breach in time on both sides in which anything was acceptable as long as it would help the campaign. It led to a damaging and dangerous disjunction in the way immigrant incorporation was normally imaged in the trajectory of this gateway city. Before the ordinance time crept in, this immigrant incorporation was largely imagined as a slow and sensuous process involving many levels of experience, including repeated exposures, visits to restaurants and festivals, the slow formation of friendships, and the minute negotiation of public space in this city that had a reputation as serving as a haven for religious and other kinds of minorities. The dominant, white, non-Muslim majority began to wonder if the forms of diversity they had let in, which had never hurt them before, were now doubling back on them in a threatening manner whereas up until that point, their encounters with Muslim difference had generally been regarded as pleasurable and productive in a way that was experienced as a point of pride for the city, as it had been in the call to prayer outcome.

Struggles over values-based political issues such as the HHRO ordinance debates in Hamtramck are known for being particularly acrimonious for communities; hence the term "culture war." In Hamtramck's case, the way that the issue was split along racial, ethnic, and religious lines introduced a set of complications to the already divisive issue of LGBTQ rights. The outcome of the vote came to represent an issue about the place for both LGBTQ and for conservative Muslim religious expression in the city. Within this constellation of desires animating the pro-ordinance movement, there was a particularly urgent desire to reform the Muslims position on the legislation. This was the case in Hamtramck not only because the Muslim vote represented the biggest roadblock to passing the ordinance. It was the case also because the Muslim anto-ordinance attitude

was seen as working against the possibility of a unified, progressive city in which individuals defined by their minority statuses joined together according to a logic of shared difference. The Muslim refusal to recognize shared difference was represented as a force that would drag Hamtramck back, rather than allowing the city to take its ideal and complete progressive form.

The hectic pace of the referendum campaign exacerbated a sense of frustration on the part of ordinance supporters and the development of an all-or-nothing attitude, in which city residents were coded by HUAD members coded city residents as either "for us or against us." It led to impatience, anger, and a belief that quick change or conversion to the other side would be possible if their Muslim neighbors only would listen to reason and understand their shared interests in time for the referendum vote. The certainty that Muslims would change their views about same-sex desires in time further added to the impatience, since in these formulations the Muslims in question were seen as "slow" incoming around rather than ultimately different. In their anxiety to see this specific ordinance passed, ordinance supporters worked from a theory of social change in which transformations in the consciousness of a community may be accomplished through one-sided pedagogy and tied to an arbitrary timeline. The ordinance supporters also wishfully worked from an implicit set of beliefs about alliance formation that failed to take into account the complexities underlying their formation.

Theorists of race and gender have extensively studies the politics of alliance formation between distinct groups. Black Feminist and Third World Feminist scholars others have made particularly important advances in understanding the complexities of alliance formation in situations where minority groups confronting multiple axes of

oppression (Collins 1990) are invited to join the struggle of other groups who many also in fact be identified with some of those same sources of oppression. For example, Black women who were being enlisted by white women to unite under the common banner of feminism during the 60s and 70s had their own complicated set of reactions when they were confronted with these kinds of contradictions. This was based not only on the ways in which white women's movements failed to represent them, but also upon the fact that some of the tenets of these movements were considered to be actively insidious to Black women's concerns and cultural values. A different but related set of contradictions were faced by "Third World" women who were invited to share the feminism of their former colonizers in ways that at times made them feel partly compromised (Mohanty, et al.). In both cases, Black and Third World women had to draw on their own cultures and experiences to re-invent "feminism" and "women's liberation" from their own standpoints, and only then could they begin to negotiate terms of alliance formation and identification with white, upper-class feminist movements. Therefore, rather than undermining "feminist goals" or "women's status," the resistance and critique that has been expressed by Black and Third world women has enriched, strengthened, deepened, and nuanced the practice and theory of feminism and, have also affected other forms oppositional politics.

Although, as discussed above, important differences exist which separate them, scholars and activists have pointed out some of the ways in which immigrants, minorities, and gays (and also women) do share productive points of contact based on common marginalization, especially in a patriarchal nativist war-time climate, and thus have proposed using a similar kind of strategic essentialism to unite them as was used to unite

differently-situated women in various feminist movements. Following this model, there may be a way for Muslim resistance to mainstream forms of LGBTQ language and politics to be used to critically reflect on, and strengthen, a movement that sees itself as universalist. Some scholars such as Massad and Malanasan point to the need for LGBTQ rights activists to develop a nuanced appreciation for alternate modes of understanding gender and sexuality to avoid perpetuating certain forms of oppression in their liberation movements. Scholars such as Lisa Duggan, taking a more pragmatic approach, postulate that the key to these forms of expansion for pro-GLBT rights activists would be to formulate movements around social and legislative goals that are identified as important to multiple groups, taking seriously the terms in which they may articulate their needs, desires, and limits (Duggan 2003). In such a reading, the failure in Hamtramck situation can be thought of, at least in part, as representing a failure to negotiate a shared vision and goals. Activism proceeding from this standpoint would dictate that pro-ordinance activists take seriously the Muslims' claims that the ordinance did not protect their religious institutions, and some form of negotiation might have started along those lines. If that kind of overture did not work, according to Duggan's model, it would become the responsibility of the party that seeks to forge an alliance to find an alternative project that would be considered valuable by the potential partner in the struggle, rather than letting a sense of resentment destroy the potential for any future cooperation (Brown 2006).

Political theorists such as Brown, Berlant, and Duggan who have studied the affectual basis of identity politics have pointed out the complexities and problematics that arise from political movements based on "wounded identities," or pain, sentimentality, and the deployment of victimhood as a mode of alliance formation or as a platform upon

which to seek rights. Such movements work through an expectation that revealing the self as human and convincingly recounting the wrongs done to the self as a minority will foment a sense of recognition and a wish to compensate the injured party on the part of others. In such a formulation, those who refuse or withhold this recognition become monstrous because they have failed to recognize and respond to human pain. In turn, this position can lead to the idea that those who do not recognize one's own humanity do not deserve to have their humanity recognized; they in fact are the ones who are sub-human and dangerous perhaps as fundamentalists or terrorists. These feelings of what Brown, following Nitezche, calls *ressentiment* may be critiqued, not for the purpose of blaming the victim or asking the victim to adopt a stance or complacency and forgiveness against those that are seen as his/her oppressors or those who are supporting this oppression. Rather, critics like Brown and Berlant perform this critique in order to suggest that there may be a more helpful affective registers for social movements other than that based on woundedness as a shared mode of identification and a demand for recognition and compensation from the oppressor.

In my interviews in the aftermath of the debates, I found that many of the Muslims and non-Muslims who had been most vocal and divisive in the debates were now asserting a strong sense of personal motivation for "building bridges" between opponents in the city to prevent further stigmatization of Muslims and LGBTQ individuals through dialogue and mutual education projects. In these interviews, I found that "the city" and municipal citizenship frequently emerged as key categories of alternative boundary formation, and the municipality was figured as a distinctly important mediating institution in narratives about relationships between Muslims and non-

Muslims. As a figure within these interviews, the city as an "imagined community" (Anderson 2006) came across as a collective that was sometimes valued, and sometimes stigmatized, but always profoundly marked by virtue of its high Muslim population.

In the aftermath of election day, the theme of repairing relations became a common talking point in public and private venues, at events such as a Peace Pole rededication ceremony in front of City Hall and an intensive roundtable discussion organized by the Hamtramck Human Relations Commission. However, these efforts towards reconciliation did not result in any consensus, much as both sides may have wished for it. In contrast to the call to prayer issue, the human rights debates gave Muslims in Hamtramck a chance to emerge on the political stage as a religious minority group with perspectives and opinions opposed to some of the dominant political ideas about multiculturalism and inclusion that animated the call to prayer movement. In the HHRO debates, Muslims in Hamtramck had come out with a position and a plan for the city that was clearly and unapologetically at odds with the liberal, secular, multiculturalist vision that the majority party claimed would represent them. The conflict in values resulted in frustration, an exchange of angry words, and a sense of betrayal on both sides.

Nevertheless, the community will still have to work together, even after such an eruption of "radical diversity" disturbed the semblance of identity and raised the possibility that future modes of relation must be founded on different tactics. Ashish Nandy (Nandy 2009), describing the recent Indian national elections, writes: "In our society, we live with radical diversities – diversity that is not based on tamed forms of difference […] Radical diversity is when you tolerate and live with people who challenge some of the very basic axioms of your political life." Some Hamtramck residents see the

HHRO debates as a dark and destructive phase in the history of the city that led to the exposure of pervasive, irreconciliable differences that could threaten to divide the city. Yet in the process of these debates, the people engaged got to see sides of each others' social and political commitments that they were not aware of before, challenged to learn to live with them anyway. The knowledge that was gained within the HHRO debates may be used to develop more and better-grounded political projects of community-building and alliance formation. Hamtramck citizens living together in the densely populated, deindustrialized, and financially strapped rust belt city have no other choice but to recognize and capitalize on the bonds that unite them as they negotiate shared visions for a safe and prosperous city reflecting the needs and interests of all.

Conclusion

Formations of the Post-secular in an American City

In the introduction to the dissertation, I set out the goal of understanding the social, political and cultural implications of Muslim spatial assertions on Hamtramck Michigan's municipality. In articulating my theoretical and methodological approach to this question, I identified three distinctive yet overlapping modes for defining and analyzing Muslim space that each came into play throughout the dissertation. These were: the territory-based approach, the practice-based approach, and the phenomenological approach. In the "territory based" approach, "Muslim space" denotes those spaces in the city that are associated with Muslim use, such as neighborhoods with concentrations of Muslim people living in them, and also includes the spaces enclosed within built forms that were self-consciously designed and set aside for the use of Muslim residents of the city with their specific needs and inclinations in mind. Using this approach, I identified the importance of such spatial forms as the Yemeni enclave, the Muslim majority private and charter schools, the mosque and halaqa spaces, certain stores and businesses such as the offices of Dr. Samir with its gender segregated waiting room, as spaces of belonging, inclusion, and prominence for various Muslim groups in the city.

The "practice-based" approach is a related approach in which "Muslim space" is seen as not being fixed and territorially bounded but rather as being produced by the rehearsal of expressive forms that Muslim and non-Muslim study participants associate with Muslim identity. In this vein, I talked about Muslim space being produced within the

city's public high school by the Muslim students who dress and comport themselves a certain way, within festivity halls that are rented by Bangladeshis and Yemenis Muslims for meetings and gatherings that are carried out according to Muslim logics and with reference Muslim cosmologies, and the spaces that are produced by mobile and transitory practices such as when Yemeni and Bangladeshi Muslims create certain paths to the mosques through the streets on Friday. This kind of space is also created when Yemeni women wend their way through the park to the school to control their visibility in a Muslim way, or when the call to prayer resounds through the city. In the dissertation, I show how the rehearsal of these expressive forms leave traces or grooves upon the city landscape, inviting repetition and re-articulation of these passages over time and for others in the community.

The third approach, which I found to be the most nuanced and productive, was a "phenomenological" approach in which Muslim space is understood from the perspective of Muslim practitioners in heterogeneous locales who experience a sense of Muslim identity by interpreting and "occupying space in a Muslim way" (Henkel 2007). This approach differs from the practice-based approach because it centers and relies on the Muslim perspective to the exclusion of the others. I found this third approach to Muslim space the idea most compelling and productive at the outset of the study. And as the study progressed, I also found that it corresponded to the way that some of the Muslim individuals I got to know were working on constructing of a seamless lifeworlds in which they could go about every aspect of their everyday life from school, to work, to home, to a city wide event, in a heterogeneous secular city but never once feel as though they have stepped outside of the "Muslim space" created by themselves and their communities.

This conceptualization of space-making came to the fore most directly in the chapter concerning LBGTQ-rights debates in the city.

This conceptualization contradicts the idea that Muslims in Diaspora must experience space differentially and fragmentarily, as spaces of belonging or exclusion, depending on external circumstances, depending on the presence or absence of particular "Muslim" expressive or performative practices, or depending on the cooperative interpretive work of non-Muslims around them. As anticipated in the introduction, approaching the question of Muslim spatial practices through the lens of totality attuned me as a researcher to a specific kinds of questions concerning everyday life as much as a marked or ritual identity-making performances in my study of the production of space.

The Muslims informants I came to know also had divergent ideas about what it meant to use space in a Muslim way, and a variety of different maps for using and traversing the public places of the city in a Muslim way (Sarroub 2005; Henkel 2007). These interpretations varied widely between individuals based on any number of factors: ethnicity, age, length of time in the US, education, personal inclination, and others. In making sense of this multiplicity, I was most interested in locating and defining the creative impulse to translate one's own interpretive repertoire into a collective and institutionalized spatial practice from which new forms of sociability may take root and emerge: whether it be manifested in a particular way of walking to the ESL class, a particular mode of dress, or in a tendency to patronize a particular institution, like a Muslim majority school. In studying the ways in which shared spatial processes led to the re-negotiation of social boundaries, I found that the production of Muslim space in Hamtramck to be a multi-directional process in which social practices found their

expression in spatial productions and re-mappings of space, and in which these spatial mapping in turn affected social and political projects. Thus, I attempted to articulate the agentive capacity that inhered in spatial re-formulations, how impulses and visions left traces that continued to influence the production of related social processes.

The first three chapters of the dissertation focus largely on intra-communal space making processes that were negotiated among Muslims. I found that these space making processes were mainly preoccupied with a concern for preserving gender norms as the cornerstone for the development of moral Muslim space in the city. This was seen in a number of ways, from the preservation of gender segregation within the Yemeni enclave, and in certain Bangladeshi forms of socialization, to the development of female specific places of worship, to collective forms of dress and comportment that were practiced to varying degrees by Muslim young women in the secondary schools, to the establishment of Muslim majority schools that were seen as places in which these norms might be further institutionalized in formal and informal ways. In interviewing my set of informants about their participation in these gendered space making processes and their effects, what was most notable to me was the ways in which Islam was consistently referred to as the means through which further kinds of mastery and control over public space could be legitimated and authorized, rather than as a force of restriction as it is sometimes represented by the mainstream society. The Muslim women that I spoke to consistently used Islam as a way of authorizing an legitimating their spatial innovations as a means of furthering personal and community standards of mobility, and opening new spaces for women, sometimes seen in tension with Yemeni and Bangladeshi cultural

practices which were perceived as overly restrictive in comparison to the perceived Islamic ideals.

Secondly, the space making processes such as women's forms of dress and behavior were also viewed as markers of both religious and ethnic identity that served to create and strengthen different kinds of identities and collectivities. In studying the Yemeni and Bangladeshi communities of the city, I found that some spatial projects were articulated around the desire to strengthen and preserve ethno-religious forms of identity, and others were forged with an inclusive, pan-Islamic, and self-consciously global and inclusive ideal. For example, in Chapter One I analyze the production of the gendered Yemeni ethnic enclave as an exercise in Muslim space making that was as tied up in the preservation of Yemeni customs as a means for preserving Islamic morality. I argue that here, for these women, the nature and sense of their own particular religious project could not have been advanced outside of the context of ethnic exclusivity because the project in some way was to extend a uniquely Yemeni Muslim transnational lifeworld into the spaces of the city. I would argue that this religious project entailed language preservation and an intensification of Yemeni ways of being as reflected in habits of dress, association, ritual, and sociability that are an integral part of the articulation and preservation of Muslim identity. I would argue that as these "conservative" Yemeni women demonstrate, there are some ways of being Muslim in the city that do not "transcend" but rather which inhere in culturally and ethnically specific complicated sensuous lifeworlds. The same could be said for ethnic or cultural articulations of gender segregation that were being practiced by Bangladeshis in the city in the form of certain

kinds of constraint or "loose" segregation strategies practiced in the context of mixed gatherings or in their more flexible but still highly organized, styles of dress.

Yet at the same time as these ethno-religious expressions identity are persisting and even becoming re-invigorated, there is also second and overlapping impulse toward the formation modes of Muslim identity production that transcended the ethnic exclusivity. For example, when I interviewed Yemeni and Bangladeshi women on their relationship to dress and other aspects of public space, there was a tendency for individuals from each group to reflect on the other, and to define themselves in relation to the other in explaining or legitimating a specific practice. This mutual awareness and recognition among Yemeni and Bangladeshi women that they are struggling with the same kinds of questions, even if perhaps coming to different conclusions, signaled a shared membership in an overlapping interpretive community of practice as Muslims as much as adherence to the same norms and forms of dress and behavior would have signaled this for me.[123]

Besides the process of working out Muslim standards of dress and ethical standards for gendered visibility, the dissertation discusses several other ways that the ethnically diverse Muslims of Hamtramck have mutually negotiated global Islamic formations. This was also seen in the emergence of the Muslim-majority charter schools which catered to the multi-ethic Muslim community by offering multi-ethnic Muslim teachers and administrators. It was also seen in the production of the self-consciously multi-cultural programs such youth halaqa as an exercise in municipal citizenship based

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[123] My interpretation of Muslim American collective identity construction echoes Shryock's formulation concerning Arab American identity, "A willingness to engage in [the] shared struggle for definitions, both as Arab and as American, is what best defines Arab American identity (Shryock 2004:299)

on an ethic of care for the ummah and for the larger community. It was seen in expressions of welcome and inclusiveness expressed by mosque leaders in general, even if this impulse was at times contradicted by simultaneously experienced ethnically exclusivist impulses and were played out in the demographic characteristics of congregations. But perhaps the deployment of the ummah ideal was seen most dramatically in Chapters Four through Six, in the way it was used to rally support for specific political projects organized around religious lines,

Although the dissertation focuses both on ethnically exclusive and on global Muslim expressions of religiosity among Muslims in the city, there is more of a focus on the global Muslim forms when dealing with institutional and political life running throughout the dissertation in every chapter with the possible exception of Chapter One. This tendency is a reflection of my observations about the way that when Islam entered the shared, mainstream, public sphere of the city, and spoke out for itself to non-Mulims, it almost always did so in its global form. As is the case in the national mainstream as well, the public voice of Islam very often claims for itself a "culturally free," standardized and generic status. Part of the production of an American Islamic identity is the studied and careful disavowal of any kinds of cultural or sectarian differences among Muslims as a way of them entering the mainstream all together. This phenomena may be seen as a post 9/11 effect, in that is a mode of identity formation designed to shore up similarities in order to present a smoothly surfaced performative front of "good Muslim" identity that is clearly distinguishable from the "bad Muslim" identity at the center of a current global campaign of stigmatization and blame (Mamdani 2004). This idea follows the Barthian theory of how the renegotiation of boundaries around collective identity

forms are usually accomplished via a distancing from "bad" or unacceptable forms of difference that the communities in question collectively decide to define themselves against (Barth). Thus, one of the main conclusions of the dissertation is that the production of Muslim space in the city is a dialectical processes between Muslims and non-Muslims in which non-Muslim sentiments and interpretations profoundly affect the formation of Muslim spatial expressions, and in which Muslim sentiments and interpretations profoundly effect the shared public spaces of the city.

Negotiations over public space taking place between Muslims and non-Muslims allowed non-Muslim residents of the city to collectively work out, on a direct and tangible level, a set of issues about Muslim minorities that are preoccupying the rest of the nation. What is the meaning of Muslim difference? Does the public expression of these differences contradict American values? Are these differences assimiliable or unassimilable? Once given free range, is the expression of these Muslim differences containable, or will they somehow interfere with non-Muslims to carry out their lives as usual? Are these differences life affirming or pathological; are they ultimately “other” or do they share common ground with Judeo- Christian American forms, and if so, to what end? Are they, like Judeo-Christian forms are assumed to be, flexible enough to be compatible with “secular modernity”, or will they drag us “backward” into an uncanny confrontation with an abandoned and stifling past (i.e. van der Veer)?

One unexpected finding of the dissertation concerning this dialectical process was in the way that the assertion of Muslim space in the city tended to set the grounds for and call forth the emergence of new and re-invigorated Catholic and Protestant spatial interpretations in the city, and rehearsal of a wide range of Christian identities, assertions,

and claims in the city that were both competing and complementary to Muslim claims. Most specifically, in each case, the Muslim assertions in public space caused a questioning and testing of the boundaries and meaning of Polish Catholic identity as the historically dominant ethnoreligious identity which had given Hamtramck its character, colored its public image, and animated its politics since the city's founding.

An early example of this in the dissertation comes from the way that reflection on the meaning of Muslim charter schools prompted some residents of the city to mentally revisit and reappraise the Catholic private schools that once held such an important place in Hamtramck. Yet, a more dramatic example of this comes in the call to prayer debates that took their most intense expression with the angry way that some Polish Catholics city residents confronted Muslims in city hall that was widely reported in the local and national press. In response, an interfaith coalition led by Polish Catholic and other Christian community elders, and Muslim mosque leaders, and supported by the multi-culturalist progressive Solidaity party rose to neutralize these nativist expressions. In the campaign that followed, it was found that the assertion of Catholic and Protestant humanitarian ethics supportive of an interfaith ethic served as the most effective and persuasive means to mediate the expression of Muslim difference for residents of this city.

The Muslim call to prayer proponents were particularly canny political actors because they recognized the importance of appealing to an interfaith sensibility when making their initial written request to the city, well in advance of the contentious debates. This is reflected in the way that their opening language in the call to prayer request to city hall presciently compared the call to prayer with church bells as a means to legitimate it

and invoked a call for respect and recognition among the faith communities of Hamtramck. In doing so, from the outset, the Muslim leaders in question chose to represent themselves as Abrahamic religious actors living in a monotheistic Judeo-Christian society reliant upon the grace, good will, and recognition of other religious actors, rather than as abstract citizens living in a secular democracy.

The interfaith call to prayer campaign was largely successful, I would argue, because it offered the city a way to relate to, identify with and make sense of Muslim difference in a Christian idiom as filtered through an interfaith sensibility. It was a victory not only for Muslims but for all religious actors in the city, because in this moment city space was re-interpreted largely as religious space, in which the possibilities for fellowship and coalition were articulated largely through the rubric of religiosity and a respect for other right to worship as they would, rather than as a respect for others' rights to make an unmarked sound in a neutral soundscape.[124] With the success of the call to prayer debates, the a version of the Polish Catholic sense of centrality and control over space, in its inclusivist aspect, "under the authority of the Pope" himself, as Sendler would have it, was reinstated and put forth as a regulatory mechanism in the city just as Muslim space was being celebrated and re-interpreted.

Yet the gains made in the passage of the noise ordinance amendments were also critiqued by some Muslims and non-Muslims in the city as only a partial or even a pyrrhic victory. Critics wanted to know why the legislation had to necessitate that Muslims to sacrifice some of their autonomy over sound in exchange for being granted permission to exercise a right that was already constitutionally guaranteed. By the same

[124] Indeed, some critics of the amended noise ordinance legislation regulating the call to prayer pointed out that the ordinance in question was in fact unfair and unconstitutional because of the way it protected religious sounds over and above non-religious sounds.

token, I read the interfaith movement in the city as articulated upon somewhat constraining and hegemonic imaginaries of municipal and national belonging because in the rhetoric and imagery produced by the campaign there was a way in which Muslims had to become "just like" non-Muslims. In his work, Shryock issues a strong caution against politics of representation that work along the politics of sameness, explaining how they merely rearticulate the Mamdani's good Muslim/bad Muslim binary. He also described the unanticipated and "sometimes bizarre" results of these kinds of projects for progressive non-Muslims aiming to re-fashion a homogeneous type of Muslim as a "Figure identified with the Self, with whom legitimate conflict is not possible" (Shryock 2010b:9).

Four years later, some of the bizarre and negative results of Islamophilia such as anticipated by Shryock's theory did indeed come to pass in Hamtramck. This occurred during the debates over a Human Rights Ordinance, which offered protections for the LGBTQ community in Hamtramck. In this campaign, many of the same political players who were most active during the call to prayer fell on opposite sides of the fence. Most surprisingly to the mainstream political actors of the city, the great majority of Muslims teamed up with conservative Christians to oppose the Human Rights Ordinance on the grounds that it encouraged immoral public expressions. The call to prayer campaign of four years earlier was continually referenced during this second campaign, and served s a kind of palimpsest upon which ideas and expectations about the new campaign were inscribed. Against this backdrop, the Muslim contestation of the Human Rights legislation was represented by some influential city leaders as first and foremost a betrayal of the liberal humanist progressive ethics they were assumed to have promoted

in the past, rather than as the expression of a different kind of movement on its own terms.

In such a formulation, the dominant, liberal progressive representation of Muslim conservative voices in the city was one in which they were presented as merely a "bad copy" of the Christian right, in a way that ignored the possibility that the conservative position could hold a different set of meanings for them. The anti-LGBTQ rights campaign was seen as part and parcel of a larger, complex, and internecine way of being conservative in the US nation that was automatically linked with white privilege, racism and xenophobia. In this construction, Muslims are represented at best, as naïve political actors, and at worst, as indiscriminate hatemongers. In such as formulation, there was no room for debate and an articulation of the issues according to the logics of an alternative ethics. Indeed, in Shyrock's words, the situation was constructed by the liberal progressive actors as one in which "legitimate conflict [was] not possible" (Shryock 2010a:9).

In the call to prayer debate, Muslim difference in the form of publically issuing their prayer call in Arabic according to an Islamic temporal schema, was easily harmonized into the urban soundscape because, the request for these sounds, as strange as they were at first to "western" ears, was fundamentally already in tune with liberal secular logics. The Muslim request allowed the city as an institution to expand its institutional capacity and to function in its definitively secular mission as the institution responsible for interpreting, regulating and administering religious difference. By seeking legitimization and permission from the municipality as religious actors subordinated to the city's whim, the call to prayer advocates allowed the city to swell up glowingly in its

own largesse. Therefore in seeking the city's permission, the Muslim leaders behaved as exemplary minority subjects, as religious minorities who knew themselves to be subordinated to the terms and definitions of the liberal secular state. By seeking out permission and accepting the municipal intervention into the mosque and the reduction of their autonomy, they initiated the rite of political inclusion that some Muslims in the city saw as demeaning and unnecessary and diminishing, but which others interpreted as necessary and even highly positive kind of negotiation.

As an outcome of the call to prayer, the Muslim leaders gained permission to issue an unbounded spatial marker throughout the city, making the city for those few moments, three or four times a day, Muslim space in the "interpretive" use of the term, both from the perspective of the Muslims and the non-Muslims who regarded it. Yet, as pointed out in the dissertation's introduction, the kind of "Muslim space" denoted by the interpretive mode still presupposes, or is suggestive of, an unequal binary relationship with hegemonic, normative, and unified "non-Muslim space."

A totalizing project by definition seeks an unmediated public voice and will spill out into the spaces that are opened for it through the democratic process and by other means. For "members of social project vying for hegemony," (Gramsci 1971; Williams 1973, 1980) to suppress this tendency for enactment would be a form of self-abnegation that would in effect plant the seeds for the destruction of the social project in question. Therefore when the vote opened on the gay rights issue, conservative Muslims of the city were eager to make their alternative sense of conservative gender politics felt on the public stage even though it shocked and upset the secular progressives who supported the ordinance.

Throughout Chapter Six, I compare the kinds of political and social formations that developed during the two debates, and here in the conclusion I would like to suggest that this comparison provides an interesting illustration of what Beaumont and Baker refer to as the secular city versus the post-secular city. In Hamtramck as a secular city, the various heterogeneous religious and secular elements at play were tamed by the organizing hegemonic force of the municipality. As a secular city, Hamtramck's municipal structure perated as a system which neutralizes and digests religious differences and which channeled and used forms of religious morality to feed into its liberal secular humanist projects of betterment and moral uplift (Beaumont and Baker 2011).

In contrast, I would argue that the Human Rights debates in the city showed Hamtramck in its aspect as the post-secular city. Other triumphs of the post-secular may include the various ways that women spatial segregation strategies are leaving their mark on the city, and the way that Muslim gender ethics are shaping the spaces of various publically funded schools, both traditional and charter. The post-secular city is a place in which secular and religious lifeworlds and modes of authority and power are coming together in new formulations and toward yet to be imagined ends. The past several decades have seen an assured overturning of the secualarization thesis, the once-foundational idea that forms of religious life and religious understandings of the world would wane with the rise of enlightenment thought, the capitalist age, and the mass migration of people from suburban to rural areas. In fact, scholars writing in the current time tell us that the reverse has happened, and we in fact have witnessed instead a rise in the public effects of translocal world religions such as Christianity, Hinduism, and

Buddhism. The effects and implications of this rise in religiousity is most often postulated about and described national and international levels, in terms of the way religious social movements have affected national and international level cultural and political configurations. Yet the rise of these translocal historical religious is also experienced on the level of cities. In fact, the city is the level at which scholars such as Holston and Appadurai, and Beaumont and Baker, ask us to turn our gaze in order to understand the new configurations of citizenship that are emerging in the late modern age.

Within these urban formations, the post-secular city erupts when the gap or fissure between secular and religious ethics is exposed, and when those individuals and institutions whose politics are counter to that of the secularist state embrace and work with, rather than deny and try to cover those differences. This was the case in Hamtramck, a city whose transnational illiberal population came together with the native conservative Catholics and Christian right groups such as the American Family Association. Thus, in the post-secular city, the city is the site not only for the manifestation of immigrant illiberal difference but for the many forms of American social and political modes of organizing the world that fall outside of the liberal secular vision.

A post-secular city, a post-secular politics, and a post-secular scholarly project is one that is learning to grapple with the presence of multiple life worlds and senses of morality that co-exist in the same public sphere. With its compact size, its density, the sense of urban belonging, particularism, affection, stewardship, and commitment that some of diverse residents of Hamtramck feel toward their city, Hamtramck represents an ideal case study for a post-secular kind of social experiment. As an iconic city of

immigrants, a city with its own proud sense of its self as different culturally and demographically from the American mainstream; and different also from the ocean of Detroit surrounding it. For many years in Hamtramck, highly diverse kinds of residents of working class and middle class backgrounds have lived in close proximity with one another and have had to learn to work with and make the best use of the shared municipal and community resources that were available to them. As a result of continual and intensive encounters with difference between Muslims and non-Muslims, and as a result of the fact that Muslims in Hamtramck are assimilating to the city as Yemeni Muslims, as Bangladeshi Muslims, as Bosnian Muslims, and as African American Muslims and as global Muslims who greatly value the cultural expressions of their religious identity, and who greatly value their city and act as its irreplaceable stewards, the residents of Hamtramck are learning to adjust to each other based on the shared connections to place and space. Based on repeated exposure, the dominant majority is learning what it means to understand the moral and social projects of their neighbors on their own terms, rather than labeling them as other, as incommensurate, as irrelevant, as backwards, and as falling outside the margins of legibility. A politics of representation, both in cities and in academia, will follow the same kind of process that the residents of Hamtramck are forging in their municipality, by learning to grapple with the kinds of heterogeneity and adaptation that are born from contestations over values between liberal and illiberal actors in the contemporary public sphere as a potential source for growth and change in the rapidly globalizing world.

Appendix A: Ordinance No. 343. Hamtramck, MI 1989

ORDINANCE NO. 434

AN ORDINANCE to prohibit unlawful noise and sounds and setting forth certain prohibited acts and to provide for a penalty for the violation thereof.

THE CITY OF HAMTRAMCK ORDAINS:

Section 1. Unlawful noises prohibited. That it shall be unlawful for any person to create, assist in creating, permit, continue or permit the continuance of any excessive, unnecessary, or unusually loud noise, or any noise which either annoys, disturbs, injures, or endangers the comfort, repose, health, peace or safety of others within the City. The following acts, among others, are declared to be loud, disturbing, injurious and unnecessary and unlawful noises in violation of this section, but this enumeration shall not be deemed to be exclusive. EACH SUCH ACT WHICH EITHER CONTINUES OR IS REPEATED MORE THAN ONE-HALF (½) HOUR BEYOND ITS INCEPTION SHALL BE CONSIDERED AND MAY BE PROSECUTED AS A SEPARATE VIOLATION OF THIS CHAPTER.

A. Horns and Signal Devices. The sounding of any horn or signal device on any automobile, motorcycle, bus, train or other vehicle while not in motion, except as a danger signal or to give warning of intent to get into motion, or if in motion, only as a danger signal after or as brakes are being applied or decelerating of the vehicle has begun; the creation by means of such signal devices of any unreasonably loud or harsh sounds; and the sounding of any signal device for any unreasonable or unnecessary period of time;

B. Radio, Phonograph, Musical Instruments. The playing of any radio, phonograph, television set, amplified or unamplified musical instruments, loudspeakers, tape recorder, or other electronic sound producing devises, in such a manner or with volume at any time or place so as to annoy or disturb the quiet, comfort or repose of persons in any office or in any dwelling, hotel, hospital, or other type of residence, or of any person in the vicinity. The operation of any such set, instrument, phonograph, machine or device in such a manner as to be plainly audible on a property or in a dwelling unit other than that in which it is located, shall be prime facie evidence of a violation of this section;

C. Shouting and Whistling. Yelling, Shouting, Hooting, Whistling, Singing or the making of any other loud noises on the public streets, between the hours of 11:00 P.M. and 7:00 A.M., or the making of any such noise at any time or place so as to annoy or disturb the quiet, comfort or repose of persons in any dwelling, hotel, hospital or other type of residence, or in any office or of any persons in the vicinity;

D. Hawking. The hawking of goods, merchandise, or newspapers in a loud or boisterous manner;

E. Animal and Bird Noises. The keeping of any animal or bird which by causing frequent or long continued noise, shall disturb the comfort or repose of any person;

F. Whistle of Siren. The blowing of any whistles or sirens, except to give notice of the time to begin or stop work or as a warning of fire, or danger;

G. Engine Exhuast. The discharge into the open air of the exhaust of any steam engine, or stationary internal combustion engine, except through a muffler or other devise which effectively prevents loud or explosive noises therefrom;

H. Construction Noises. The erection (including excavation therefore); demolition, alteration, or repair of any building, and the excavation of streets and highways on Sundays, and other days, except between the hours of 7:00 A.M. and 8:00 P.M., unless a permit therefor be first obtained from the Hamtramck Building Superintendent.

I. Handling Merchandise. The creation of a loud and excessive noise in connection with loading and unloading any vehicle or the opening and destruction of bales, boxes, crates and containers;

J. Devices to Attract Attention. The use of any drum, loudspeaker, amplifier, or other instrument or device for the purpose of attracting attention for any purpose.

Section 2. That if any section, subsection, clause, phrase, or portion of this Ordinance is for any reason held invalid or unconstitutional by any court of competent jurisdiction, such portion shall be deemed a separate, distinct, and independent portion of this article, and such holding shall not affect the validity of the remaining portions of this Ordinance.

Section 3. That all ordinances or parts of ordinances in conflict herewith are hereby repealed.

Section 4. That this ordinance shall become effective after its adoption by the City Council of the City of Hamtramck and upon publication thereof.

Section 5. That any person violating any of the provisions of this ordinance shall upon conviction thereof be subject to a fine of not more than Five Hundred ($500.00) Dollars or to imprisonment for a period of not more than ninety (90) days or to both such fine and imprisonment in the discretion of the Court.

I HEREBY CERTIFY that the attached is a true and complete copy of an Ordinance adopted by the City Council of the City of Hamtramck, County of Wayne, and State of Michigan, at a Regular Meeting held on the 13th day of July, A.D., 1989.

ETHEL FIDDLER, City Clerk

I HEREBY APPROVE THE FOREGOING ORDINANCE.

ROBERT KOZAREN, Mayor

Date Signed by Mayor: July 14, 1989

Appendix B: Ordinance No. 503. Hamtramck, MI 2004.

AN ORDINANCE TO AMEND ORDINANCE NO. 434

The City of Hamtramck ordains that:

Section 1. Ordinance No. 434 amended.

Section 1 of Ordinance No. 434 shall be amended to add Subsection K, which shall read as follows:

1. The City shall permit "call to prayer" "church bells" and other reasonable means of announcing religious meetings to be amplified between the hours of 6:00 a.m. and 10:00 p.m. for a duration not to exceed five minutes.
2. The City Council shall have sole authority to set the level of amplification, provided however; that no such level shall be enforced until all religious institutions receive notice of such levels.
3. All complaints regarding alleged violations of this Section shall be filed with the City Clerk and placed on the agenda of the next regular meeting of the Common Council. The Common Council shall take all appropriate action they deem necessary to alleviate the complaints, with such action to include, but not be limited to, an order to reduce the volume or an order to change the direction of the amplification or an order to terminate use of amplification. If the Common Council deems that the duration of the call to prayer must be reduced or that the permitted hours identified in clause one of this subsection must be reduced, the Council shall amend this Ordinance. The Council may also determine that a complaint is without justification and choose to take no action on the complaint; if such determination is made, such decision shall be made by resolution of the Common Council.
4. This section shall supercede all other ordinances of the City that may conflict herewith.

Section 2. Severability.
The invalidity of any clause, sentence, paragraph, or part of this Ordinance shall not affect the validity of the remaining parts of this Ordinance.

Section 3. Repeal clause.
All ordinances in conflict with this Ordinance are hereby repealed to the extent of their conflict.

Section 4. Effective date.
This Ordinance is effective twenty days after publication by the clerk in the manner provided by law.

Appendix C: Letter from Al-Islah Islamic Center

AL-ISLAH ISLAMIC CENTER

আল-ইসলাহ ইসলামিক সেন্টার مركز الإصلاح الإسلامي

• AL-ISLAH JAME MASJID •

• AL-ISLAH ISLAMIC SCHOOL & TAHFEEJUL QURAN • AL-ISLAH ISLAMIC LIBRARY •

2733 Caniff, Hamtrmack, MI 48212. Tel: 313-365-9000 www.alislah.com

December 28, 2003

Common Council Members
The City of Hamtramck
3401 Evaline
Hamtramck, MI 48212

Dear Council Members:

This letter is a request for an amendment to the City of Hamtramck's Ordinance No. 434, which prohibits unlawful noise and sounds. As part of the Islamic religion, it is our duty to "call" all Muslims to prayer five times a day. This is a short Arabic verse that takes approximately two minutes to complete. As an Islamic Center in the City of Hamtramck, we are requesting that this calling to prayer us permitted to be done on a loud speaker at the five intervals during the day and night.

The five times of prayer change by about one minute per day, depending on the sunrise and sunset. If this request is approved, a time schedule will be submitted for each calendar year, accordingly. The Islamic Center is located on a very commercial street; therefore few people will feel disturbed by the loudspeaker. This calling can be respected just as a Church's bells are. Also there are Mosques in the city of Detroit such as Masjid Muaj Bin Jabal, Masjidun Noor and Baitul Islam Jame Masjid that allow this as well. As a very culturally diverse community, by permitting this action it will build our city to become more united and familiar with each other's religion.

The dedicated members of this Islamic center are willing to cooperate with the City of Hamtramck in any way to allow the possibility of obtaining a permit that will allow the Al-Islah Islamic Center to use a loudspeaker to announce the calling to prayer.

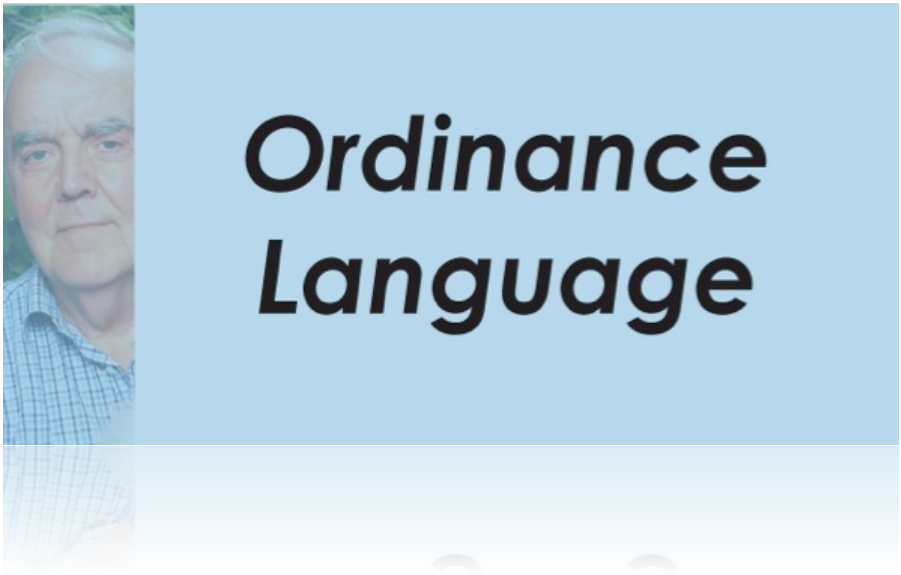
Thank you for your attention to this request.

Sincerely,

AMotlib 12-28-03

Abdul Motlib
President

Appendix D: Hamtramck United Against Discrimination
An Ordinance to Reaffirm the Natural rights of Hamtramck Residents



AN ORDINANCE TO REAFFIRM THE NATURAL RIGHTS OF HAMTRAMCK RESIDENTS

I. Intent.

It is the intent of the City of Hamtramck that no person be denied the equal protection of the laws; nor shall any person be denied the enjoyment of his or her civil or political rights or be discriminated against because of actual or perceived race, color, religion, national origin, sex, age, height, weight, condition of pregnancy, marital status, physical or mental limitation, source of income, family responsibilities or status, educational association, sexual orientation, gender identify, gender expression, or handicap. As used herein, "perceived" refers to the perception of the person who acts, and not to the perception of the person for or against whom the action is taken.

Nothing herein contained shall be construed to prohibit any affirmative action laws passed by any level of government, not otherwise prohibited by law.

II. Definitions.

As used in this chapter, the following words and phrases have the following meanings:

1) "Age". Chronological age.

2) "Bona Fide". The term bona fide is not to mean the continuation of a practice, which, while neutral on its face, tends to or in fact does continue in practice a form of discrimination not sanctioned by this subchapter.

3) "City Manager". The City Manager of the City of Hamtramck or his or her designate.

4) "Contractor". A person who by contract furnishes services, materials or supplies. "Contractor" does not include persons who are merely creditors or debtors of the City, such as those holding the City's notes or bonds or persons whose notes, bonds or stock is held by the City.

5) "Discriminate". To make a decision, offer to make a decision or refrain from making a decision based in whole or in part on the actual or perceived race, color, religion, national origin, sex, age, height, weight, condition of pregnancy, marital status, physical or mental limitation, source of income, family responsibilities or status, educational association, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, or handicap of a person or that person's relatives or associates. Discrimination based on sex includes sexual harassment, which means unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal or physical conduct or communication of a sexual nature when:

(a) Submission to such conduct or communication is made a term or condition either explicitly or implicitly to obtain employment, public accommodations or housing.

(b) Submission to rejection of such conduct or communication by an individual is used as a factor in decisions affecting such individual's employment, public accommodations or housing.

(c) Such conduct or communication has the purpose or effect of substantially interfering with an individual's employment, public accommodations or housing, or creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive employment, public accommodations, or housing environment.

Discrimination based on actual or perceived physical or mental limitation includes discrimination because of the use by an individual of adaptive devises or aids. As used herein, "perceived" refers to the perception of the person who acts, and not to the perception of the person for or against whom the action is taken. The prohibition against discrimination as provided for in this Ordinance shall not be deemed preempted by federal or state law.

6) "Educational Association". The fact of being enrolled or not enrolled at any educational institution.

7) "Employer". A person employing one (1) or more persons.

8) "Family Responsibilities or Status". The state of being in a family or functional family. Family includes anyone of the following:

(a) An individual who is pregnant; or

(b) Two or more individuals related by blood within four degrees of consanguinity, marriage, adoption, or in a foster care relationship.

"Family Responsibilities or Status" also includes the state of being or the potential to become a contributor to the support of a person or persons in a dependent relationship.

9) "Functional family". A group of individuals who do not meet the definition of "family," living together as a single housekeeping unit and intending to live together as a single housekeeping unit for the indefinite future. "Functional family" does not include a fraternity, sorority, club, hotel, or other group of persons whose association is temporary or commercial in nature.

10) "Gender Identity; Gender Expression'. A person's actual or perceived gender, including a person's gender identity, self-image, appearance, expression, or behavior, whether or not that gender identity, self-image, appearance, expression, or behavior is different from the traditionally associated with the person's sex at birth as being either female or male.

11) "Handicap". A determinable physical or mental condition of an individual or a history of such condition which may result from disease, accident, condition of birth, or functional disorder which constitutes a physical or mental limitation, which is unrelated to an individual's ability to acquire, rent, or maintains property (as defined by the Michigan Handicappers' Civil Rights Act).

12) "Housing Facility". Any dwelling unit or facility used for a person to regularly sleep and keep personal belongings including, but not limited to, a house, apartment, rooming house, housing cooperative, hotel, motel, tourist home, retirement home or nursing home. Discrimination in connection with housing facilities shall include discrimination based on the state of having or not having a fixed residence, including, but not limited to, the state of owning or renting (with or without receiving public housing

assistance) a place to live.

13) “Marital Status”. The state of being married, unmarried, divorced or widowed.

14) “Mental Limitation”. A limitation of mental capabilities unrelated to one's ability to safely perform the work involved in jobs or positions available to such person for hire or promotion; a limitation of mental capabilities unrelated to one's ability to acquire, rent and maintain property; or a limitation of mental capabilities unrelated to one's ability to utilize and benefit from the goods, services, activities, privileges and accommodations of a place of public accommodation. "Mental limitation" includes, but is not limited to, developmental disabilities, psychological disabilities, etc. "Mental limitation" does not include any condition caused by the current illegal use of a controlled substance.

15) “Minority”. A person who is Black or African American, Native American or Alaskan native, Hispanic or Latino, Asian, Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander.

16) “Physical Limitation”. A limitation of physical capabilities unrelated to one’s ability to safely perform the work involved in jobs or positions available to such person for hire or promotion; a limitation of physical capabilities unrelated to one's ability to acquire, rent and maintain property; or a limitation of mental capabilities, unrelated to one’s ability to utilize and benefit from the goods, services, activities, privileges and accommodations of a place of public accommodation. “Physical limitation” includes, but is not limited to, blindness or partial sightedness, deafness or hearing impairment, muteness, partial or total absence of physical member, speech impairment and motor impairment. “Physical limitation” does not include any condition caused by the current illegal use of a controlled substance.

17) “Place of Public Accommodation”. An educational, governmental, health, day care, entertainment, cultural, recreational, refreshment, transportation, financial institution, accommodation, business or facility of any kind, where goods, services, facilities, privileges, advantages or accommodations are extended, offered, sold or otherwise made available to the public, or which receives financial support through the solicitation of the general public or through governmental subsidy of any kind.

18) “Sexual Orientation”. Male or female homosexuality, heterosexuality or bisexuality, by orientation or practice.

19) “Source of Income”. Any legal source from which a person obtains money.

III. Discriminatory Housing Practices.

1) No person shall discriminate in leasing, selling or otherwise making available any

housing facilities.

2) No person shall discriminate in the terms, conditions, maintenance or repair in providing any housing facility.

3) No person shall refuse to lend money for the acquisition, purchase or repair of any real property or insure any real property solely because of the location in the City of such real property or on account of discrimination.

4) No person shall promote real estate transactions by representing that changes are occurring or will occur in an area with respect to race, color, religion, sex, or national origin, nor that the presence of individuals of any particular race, color, creed, religion, ancestry, national or sectional origin, sex, sexual orientation, gender, gender identity, age, condition of pregnancy, marital status, handicap, or source of income in an area will or may result in:

(a) A lowering of property values in the area;

(b) A change in the area as to the race, color, creed, religion, ancestry, national or sectional origin, sex, sexual orientation, gender, gender identity, age, condition of pregnancy, marital status, handicap, source of income of its owners or occupants;

(c) An increase in criminal or antisocial behavior in the area; or

(d) A change in the racial or ethnic composition of schools or other public facilities or services in the area.

5) No person shall place a sign or other display on any real property which indicates that the property is for sale or has been sold when it is not for sale or has not recently been sold.

6) No person shall adopt, enforce, or employ any policy or requirement, or publish, post, or broadcast any advertisement, sign, or notice, which discriminates or indicates discrimination in providing housing.

7) No person shall refuse to receive or fail to transmit a bona fide offer to engage in a real estate transaction from any person based in whole or in part on the race, color, creed, religion, ancestry, national or sectional origin, sex, sexual orientation, age, condition of pregnancy, marital status, handicap, or source of income.

8) No person shall discriminate against another by knowingly or intentionally presenting false or substantially misleading statements or by presenting statements for

which the person has no factual proof to any individual or groups applying for the purchase, lease, rental, or financing of housing units, real estate, or housing accommodations. No person shall file a false or misleading claim or make false or misleading statements in a claim under penalty of this subchapter.

9) No person shall discriminate against another by continuing to solicit the sale or listing for sale of real property by telephone, mail, or personally, with notice that the property owner has requested in writing the solicitor or the company the solicitor represents to cease such solicitation.

10) Real Estate Agents, Brokers and Agencies.

(a) All real estate agents, brokers or agencies conducting business in the city must possess a business license.

(b) All real estate agents, brokers or agencies conducting business in the city must file quarterly income tax statements.

(c) All real estate signs posted in the city of Hamtramck by any real estate agent, broker or agency offering real property for sale must be registered with the clerks office, and shall bare a current registration sticker. A registration sticker shall expire when the real property is sold or if the property is withdrawn from the market. To obtain a registration sticker, the agent shall report the name, address and phone number of the seller; the name, address and phone number of agent, broker, or agency. The registration fee shall be fully refundable at the time of sale, only, when the city clerk is notified of the buyer's name, address, and phone number as well as the price the property sold for.

IV. Discriminatory Public Accommodation Practices.

No person shall discriminate in providing or making available full and equal access to all goods, services, activities, privileges and accommodations of any place of public accommodation.

V. Discriminatory Employment Practices.

1) No person shall discriminate in the employment, compensation, work classifications, conditions or terms, promotion or demotion, or termination of employment of any person.
2) No person shall discriminate in limiting membership, conditions of membership or termination of membership in any labor union or apprenticeship program.

VI. Nondiscrimination by City Contractors.

1) All contractors proposing to do business with the City of Hamtramck shall satisfy the nondiscrimination administrative policy adopted by the City Manager in accordance with the guidelines of this section. All contractors shall receive approval from the City Manager prior to entering into a contract with the City, unless specifically exempted by administrative policy.
2) In hiring for construction projects, contractors shall make good faith efforts to employ local persons, so as to enhance the local economy.
3) The City Manager shall monitor the compliance of each contractor with the nondiscrimination provisions of each contract. The City Manager shall develop procedures and regulations consistent with the administrative policy adopted by the City for notice and enforcement of non-compliance. Such procedures and regulations shall include a provision for the posting of contractors not in compliance.
4) All City contracts shall provide further that breach of the obligation not to discriminate shall be a material breach of the contract.
5) In addition the contractor shall be liable for any costs or expenses incurred by the City in obtaining from other sources the work and services to be rendered or performed or the goods or properties to be furnished or delivered to the City under the contract.

VII. Exceptions.

Notwithstanding anything contained in this Ordinance, the following practices shall not be violations of this Ordinance.

1) For a religious organization or institution to restrict any of its of housing facilities or accommodations which are operated as a direct part of religious activities to persons of the denomination involved or to restrict employment opportunities for officers, religious instructors and clergy to persons of that denomination. It is also permissible for a religious organization or institution to restrict employment opportunities, housing facilities, or accommodations that are operated as a direct part of religious activities to persons who are members of or who conform to the moral tenets of that religious institution or organization.
2) For the owner of an owner-occupied one-family or two-family dwelling, or a housing facility or public accommodation facility, respectively, devoted entirely to the housing and accommodation of individuals of one sex, to restrict occupancy and use on the basis of sex.
3) To limit occupancy in a housing project or to provide public accommodations or employment privileges or assistance to persons of low income, over fifty (50) years of age or who are handicapped.
4) To engage in a bona fide effort to establish in affirmative action program to improve opportunities in employment for minorities and women.
5) To discriminate based on a person's age when such discrimination is required by

State, Federal or local law.
6) To refuse to enter a contract with an unemancipated minor.
7) To refuse to admit to a place of public accommodation serving alcoholic beverages to a person under the legal age for purchasing alcoholic beverages.
8) To rent a housing accommodation for not more than twelve (12) months by the owner or lessor where it was occupied by said owner or lessor and maintained as the owner's or lessor's home for at least three (3) months immediately preceding occupancy by the tenant and is temporarily vacated while maintaining legal residence.
9) For an educational institution to limit the use of its facilities to those affiliated with such institution.
10) To provide discounts or products or service to students, minors and senior citizens.
11) The rental of a housing accommodation in a building which contains housing accommodations for not more than two (2) families living independently of each other if the owner or members of his or her immediate family reside in one (1) of such housing accommodations, or to the rental of a room or rooms in a single housing unit by an individual if the lessor or a member of the lessor's immediate family resides therein. ***IMMEDIATE FAMILY*** for the purpose of this section shall mean a spouse, parent, child, or sibling.
12) For a governmental institution to restrict any of its facilities or to restrict employment opportunities based on duly adopted institutional policies that conform to Federal and State laws and regulations.
13) To restrict participation in an instructional program, athletic event or on an athletic team on the basis of age or sex.
14) To restrict membership in a private club that is not open to the public except to the extent that private clubs which permit members to invite guests on the premises are not exempted as it concerns a member's guests.

VIII. Information and Investigation.

1) Powers. Subject to the policies established by the City, the powers and duties of the City to implement and enforce this subchapter shall be:

(a) To receive, investigate, make findings and recommendations upon complaints, and initiate its own investigations and complaints of violations of this subchapter;

(b) To issue or cause to be issued appropriate corrective orders, including orders to cease and desist, and to compel through court authorization compliance with the orders;

(c) To promulgate and publish rules, guidelines, and procedures for the conduct of its business; to issue publications and reports of investigations and research.

2) No person shall provide false information to any authorized employee investigating a

complaint regarding a violation of this Ordinance.

3) No person shall coerce, threaten or retaliate against a person for making a complaint or assisting in the investigation regarding a violation or alleged violation of this Ordinance, nor require, request, conspire with, assist or coerce another person to retaliate against a person for making a complaint or assisting in an investigation pursuant to this Ordinance.

4) Complaints for Violation of this Ordinance.
.
(a) Any person claims to have been injured under this ordinance may file a written or oral complaint with the City. In addition, any third person or social service organization engaged by the injured party may file a written complaint on behalf of the injured party.

(b) Complaints shall be in writing or, if oral, shall be reduced to writing, shall be verified, shall contain such information and be in such form as the City requires, and shall specify the section of this subchapter alleged to be violated. The City shall provide a translator for those persons whose English skills are poor.

(c) The City shall take steps to investigate the complaint and give notice in writing to the complainant and to the respondent of the investigation and the actions, if any, which will be taken. The City may defer its investigation to state or federal authorities when the same or similar complaint has been filed with state or federal authorities.

(d) A complaint under division (A) shall be filed within one hundred eighty (180) days after the alleged violation of this subchapter. Complaints may be amended reasonably and fairly at any time. A respondent may file an answer to the complaint within twenty (20) days after receipt of the complaint and, with leave of the City or its designee, reasonably amend the answer. All complaints and answers shall be verified.

(e) Housing complaints, which tend to be supported by the evidence, after investigation by the City, may be referred to a hearing panel consisting of five (5) persons representing various interests in the housing field. The panel for each case shall be selected by the City Manager from a standing committee of eleven (11) members, including, if possible, representatives of all City organizations related to housing.

(f) After the hearing, the panel shall refer its findings and recommendations to the City Manager for action.

(g) For an investigation, the City Manager may request a person to produce books, papers, records or other documents which may be relevant to a violation or alleged

violation of this Ordinance. If said person does not comply with such request, the City Attorney may apply to Wayne County Circuit Court for an order requiring production of said materials.

IX. Conciliation Agreements.

In cases involving alleged violations of this Ordinance, the City Manager may enter into agreements whereby persons agree to methods of terminating discrimination or to reverse the effects of past discrimination. Violations of such agreements shall be violations of this Ordinance.

X. Prosecution.

Prosecution for violation of this Ordinance may be initiated by complaint of the affected person or by the City Manager on the basis of an investigation initiated by the City Manager.

XI. Injunctions.

The City Attorney may commence a civil action to obtain injunctive relief to prevent discrimination prohibited by this Ordinance, to reverse the effects of such discrimination or to enforce a conciliation agreement.

XII. Penalties.

1) A violation of any provision of this Ordinance is a civil infraction punishable by a fine of not more than $500.00 plus all costs of the action. The Court may issue and enforce any judgment, writ, or order necessary to enforce this Ordinance. This may include reinstatement, payment of lost wages, hiring and promotion, sale, exchange, lease or sublease of real property, admission to a place of public accommodation, and other relief deemed appropriate.

2) Each day upon which a violation occurs shall constitute a separate and new violation.

3) A violation proved to exist on a particular day shall be presumed to exist on each subsequent day unless it is proved that the violation no longer exists.

4) Nothing contained in this Chapter shall be construed to limit in any way the remedies, legal or equitable, which are available to the City or any person for the prevention or correction of discrimination.

XIII. Private Actions for Damages or Injunctive Relief

1) An individual who is the victim of discriminatory action in violation of this Ordinance may bring a civil action for appropriate injunctive relief of damages or both against the person(s) who acted in violation of this Ordinance.

2) As used in subsection 1), "damages" means treble damages for injury or loss caused by each violation of this Ordinance, including reasonable attorney fees.

3) Private actions and remedies under this Section shall be in addition to any actions for violations which the City may take.

XIV. Severability

The various parts; sections and clauses of this Ordinance are declared to be severable. If any parts, sections, sentences, or paragraphs are determined to be unconstitutional or invalid by a court of competent jurisdiction, the remainder of this Ordinance shall remain in full force and effect.

Appendix E: Ordinance No. 348. Hamtramck, MI 2004.

HAMTRAMCK ORDINANCE NO. 348 (Oct.1, 2004)

AN ORDINANCE CREATING A HUMAN RELATIONS COMMISSION AND DEFINING ITS PURPOSE, ORGANIZATION AND DUTIES

THE CITY OF HAMTRAMCK ORDAINS:

SECTION 1. PURPOSE

The Hamtramck Human Relations Commission is established to promote mutual understanding and respect for multi-culturalism and diversity, advocate for peace and justice, and encourage tolerance and constructive communication in order to develop a functional, safe, and harmonious community. The Commission will work to safeguard equal opportunity, overcome divisiveness, violence, and all forms of discrimination against people for reasons including nationality, religion, race, class, physical and mental disability, gender, marital status and sexual orientation.

SECTION 2. COMPOSITION; APPOINTMENTS; TERMS; QUALIFICATIONS

(a) Composition - There is hereby created and established a commission to be known as the "Human Relations Commission" consisting of twelve (12) members.

(b) These Commissioners shall have the power to select additional volunteers to various Advisory Groups as needed.

(c) Appointments – Initially, after gathering suggestions from the community at large, the Mayor and City Council shall each appoint six (6) Commissioners; two (2) each for a term ending July 1, 2005, two (2) each for a term ending July 1, 2006, and two (2) each for a term ending July 1, 2007. Each year on July 1st, the Mayor shall appoint one (1) Commissioner, the City Council shall appoint one (1) Commissioner, and the Commission shall nominate at least five (5) candidates with one (1) to be chosen by the Mayor and then one (1) to be chosen by the City Council. No approvals are necessary.

(d) Terms - Initially, four (4) Commissioners shall be appointed for a term ending July 1, 2005; four (4) Commissioners shall be appointed for a term ending July 1, 2006; and four (4) Commissioners shall be appointed for a term ending July 1, 2007. Each

year on July 1st, four (4) Commissioners shall be appointed for three-year terms.

(e) Qualifications - The members of the Human Relations Commission, as nearly as possible, shall be representative of the various racial, religious, national, cultural, labor, business and ethnic groups of the city. They should support the purpose of this Ordinance. Membership shall not be limited to residents of the city, but appointments may be made from the entire local community.

SECTION 3. OFFICERS; RULES; REMOVAL; REPLACEMENT; QUORUM

(a) Officers - The Commission shall designate one of its members as chairperson, secretary and other essential officers.

(b) Rules - The Commission shall adopt rules and regulations governing its meetings and procedures.

(c) Removal – Upon written recommendation by the Commission, the Mayor may remove a Commissioner for reasons consistent with the rules and regulations of the Commission, with approval by the City Council.

(d) Replacement - In the event of death, resignation, or other termination of membership, the authority who appointed that Commissioner shall appoint a successor for the balance of the unexpired term.

(e) Quorum – Shall be defined as seven (7) Commissioners

SECTION 4. COMPENSATION

The members of the Human Relations Commission shall serve without compensation, but subject to approval of the Mayor and City Council and within the amounts as appropriated by the city, shall he reimbursed for expenses actually and necessarily incurred in connection with their duties as members of the Commission.

SECTION 5. OFFICE SPACE; SUPPLIES; CLERICAL HELP

The City Council shall make available to the Human Relations Commission, when possible, the necessary accommodations or office space required for the performance of its functions, and shall provide reasonable supplies and clerical and secretarial help for the chairperson and for the Commission.

SECTION 6. DUTIES

In order to achieve the purpose set forth in Section 1, the Human Relations Commission shall:

(a) Promote mutual understanding and respect among all residents of our community.

(b) Discourage and prevent by persuasion, prejudice, intolerance and discriminatory practices against any individual or group.

(c) Disseminate information and educational materials consistent with the purpose of this ordinance.

(d) Investigate, collect data and study complaints and problems arising between groups or individuals which result or may result in tensions, discrimination, or prejudice in the city.

(e) Provide conciliation and mediation services as a means to resolve complaints. May request the City Attorney to issue subpoenas for information relevant to ongoing investigations.

(f) Formulate educational programs and campaign to assist various groups and agencies in our community.

(g) Coordinate programs with schools that promote mutual understanding and respect in the school system.

(h) Cooperate with city, state, federal, and other governmental or private agencies in the promotion of better human relations.

(i) Prepare and submit reports to the Mayor and the City Council of its activities, making at least one complete report annually by January 1st, and such other reports and recommendations requested by Mayor or City Council.

(j) Review employment practices and hiring procedures and make recommendations to the Mayor and City Council on ways to ensure a diversified work force.

(k) Adopt, promulgate, amend and rescind suitable rules and procedures to carry out the provisions of this article.

(l) Review the dissemination of important city information, voting materials, and other information critical to the health and welfare of the residents of the city, in languages other than English, and make recommendations to the city.

SECTION 7. SEVERABILITY

The sections of this ordinance are declared to be severable, and if any section thereof is declared illegal or void for any reason, it shall not affect the remainder of the ordinance.

SECTION 8. ADOPTION

This ordinance shall become effective 20 days after its adoption by the City Council of the City of Hamtramck upon publication thereof.

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