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**Muslims in Manhattan: Those Who Built It Up and Those Who Brought It Down**

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**Muslims in Manhattan: Those Who Built It Up and Those Who Brought It Down**

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## **Muslims in Manhattan: Those Who Built It Up and Those Who Brought It Down**

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Muslim immigration to the United States has not been studied in detail. The subject has received attention but has been conflated with the study of Arab Americans or Arabic-speaking peoples. The study of Muslim immigration is further obscured by the misconception that all Arabs are Muslim and all Muslims speak Arabic. Muslim immigrants are frequently grouped with other immigrants according to language, ethnicity or nationality. This constellation of factors makes it challenging to extract from the existing literature data which exclusively pertains to Muslim immigration. While conducting research, it became apparent that the immigration of Muslims to the United States needed to be addressed specifically.

Presently, the two largest Muslim communities in the United States are located in Dearborn, Michigan and the New York-New Jersey area. The latter will be the focus of analysis since New York City, and later its surrounding boroughs and New Jersey, was the “mother colony” of the first Muslims to arrive in the United States. Additionally, the

New York-New Jersey area has been a locus for radical Islamist activity and the site of numerous terrorist plots in the last fifty years. This analysis will trace the immigration of Muslims to the United States from the late 19<sup>th</sup> century until 2001. This span is appropriate for analysis because, prior to the 19<sup>th</sup> century, Muslim immigration was sparse and the period after September 11<sup>th</sup> has been examined extensively. It will be divided into six sections: pre-19<sup>th</sup> century and the early immigrants, 19<sup>th</sup> century through World War I, Post World War I, the 1930's, 1947 to 1965, and 1965 to 2001. Each section will contain two parts with the first covering the immigrants who arrived during that time. The second will focus on formation of the Muslim community in the New York-New Jersey area, both its mainstream and radical elements, and the important events which effected that community. The diversity of the Muslim community is frequently dismissed but will be highlighted here. The community includes various sects of Islam, including Sufi, Shia, Sunni and the Nation of Islam and its offshoots, and multiple ethnicities, including African American, Indian, Pakistani, Bengali, Afghan, Sri Lankan, African, Moroccan, Jordanian, Palestinian, Syrian, Lebanese, Egyptian, Thai, Malaysian, Indonesian, Philippino, Bosnian, Yugoslavian and Albanian. The development of each of these sub-communities and the relationships between them will be addressed. The task is to conduct a historical analysis of the Muslim community in the New York-New Jersey area from its inception until the September 11<sup>th</sup> attacks thereby presenting a comprehensive understanding of that community in this region of the United States.

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## **Chapter 1: Introduction**

There has been debate as to who was the first Muslim immigrant on American soil; some argue a Moroccan guide and translator or a Franciscan monk in the 16<sup>th</sup> century, or a camel driver for Jefferson Davis at the turn of the century. Regardless, the first significant wave of Muslim immigration began in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century and emanated from Syria. They blended in easily with the Christian population from their home country and the majority settled in the New York state area and became peddlers. These early settlers' intention was to make their fortune and return home. At the turn of the century, Muslim immigrants used the wealth they had amassed through peddling to purchase other businesses. This pattern of success was common among the first generation of Muslim immigrants (Al-Qazzaz 20-21; Haiek 14).

During the first decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, immigration was curtailed as a result of immigration quotas and nativist sentiment among Americans. The immigrants who arrived during this period were largely family and friends of earlier settlers. With their communities growing, Muslim immigrants ultimately accepted the fact that they would not be returning to their homelands. As a result they began building an infrastructure to support their communities including mosques and social and religious organizations. In the 1950's, Muslim students came seeking greater educational and professional opportunities. These immigrants frequently chose to remain in the United States after their studies. This phenomenon added a professional and educated elite to the existing



Muslim community. In 1965, the United States relaxed its immigration laws and Muslim immigration increased significantly. These new immigrants were less educated and less affluent but more political. They had experienced several monumental events in the Muslim world: the creation of Israel and the numerous Arab-Israeli wars, the rise of Abdul Nasser in Egypt, revolution in Iran, civil war in Lebanon, the Iraq-Iran War, civil strife in Pakistan, a military regime in Uganda, and the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan. During the 1980's and 1990's, Muslim immigrants continued to seek refuge from the ethnic cleansing in Bosnia and the turmoil stemming from the Gulf War. As the numbers of Muslims in the U.S. swelled, the marked differences within the community became more apparent. The various generations of immigrants and native-born Muslims were disparate in education, income, ethnicity, nationality, political views and religious observance and zeal.

How did the Muslim community in the New York-New Jersey area develop and some individuals radicalize? By understanding the formation and variations of the Muslim communities in this area, and the radicalization of individuals within those communities, a more effective and successful counterterrorism strategy can be formulated. Purging Muslim communities of violent or criminal elements without alienating law-abiding citizens is crucial to any effective program. There must be a differentiation between the American Muslim who is a legitimate threat and the Muslim community as a whole in which he resides. The utmost efforts must be made to extract threats while at the same

time not disrupting the fabric of a positively contributing and wholesome Muslim community.

## **Chapter 2: Social Networks theory**

The Social Networks theory is a useful tool in the analysis of communities and terrorism. It provides a framework for analysis of the Muslim community in New York City and the surrounding areas. As explained by Khosrokhavar, “Jihadist cells are based on anthropological characteristics rather than skills: the role of the family, nationality, and immigration status are by far more important than other factors” (Khosrokhavar 9). Social affiliation among cell members has become increasingly important. A high degree of homogeneity exists within a terrorist cell with regard to location, age, kinship and friendship (Khosrokhavar 9). More recently terrorist cells have emerged as, “networks including friends and relatives that do not seem to have formal ties to Salafi networks that radicalize with little outside interference; and that do so in the country in which they live, often together with family members or friends” (9).

Social Networks theory makes a closer look at the Muslim community in the New York-New Jersey area more relevant. The unit of analysis is not the individual or the organization, but social relationships specifically kinship and friendship ties. The aim is to identify the primary and peripheral actors and assess the significance of relationships and commonalities. A detailed examination of shared language, history, ethnicity and religion is imperative in this form of analysis (See Figure 1 in Appendix B).

## **Chapter 3: Muslim Immigration to the United States**

### **Pre-19<sup>th</sup> Century and the Early Immigrants**

There is no agreement as to who the first Muslim was to come to America. Many theories and stories exist as to Arabs coming to the New World whose heritage and religious beliefs are unknown. Writings of an Arab medieval geographer, Al Idrisi, were uncovered who wrote of Arab adventurers who ventured across the Atlantic Ocean. The book by Idrisi was found among Columbus' possessions (Al-Qazzaz 15). Marcos de Niza, a Franciscan monk was sent by the Viceroy of New Spain in 1539 to explore the southwestern part of North America. Included in these accounts is the mention of, Estephan or Estevanico, a Moroccan Arab who served as his guide on the expedition (Al-Qazzaz 15; Mohammad 31). Diplomatic ties with the Middle East date back to the early years of this nation. After the Revolutionary War, Morocco was the first to recognize the United States and signed a treaty of friendship and cooperation with the fledgling nation (Haiek 18). The U.S. also established treaties with Algeria in 1795, Tripoli in 1796, and Tunis in 1797 (Younis 40).

The slave trade brought Muslims to American shores. As early as 1717, accounts of African slaves speaking Arabic and practicing Islam appear. Some cite that 10%-20% of the slaves who came to America were followers of Islam but no evidence exists that they were able to maintain and practice their religion. It was more common that they were quickly converted to Christianity (Haddad, "Century of Islam" 1; Nyang *Islam* 13).

With the turn of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, relations between the newly established nation and the Middle East continued. An Omani ship, *Al-Sultanah*, traveling from Zanzibar seeking trading partners was welcomed at New York harbor in 1840 (Haeik 19). General Flavianus Kfoury, a Monastery director from Lebanon visited the Bishop of New York, John Hughes, to discuss religious matters and donations in 1849 (Younis 42). Jefferson Davis, the Secretary of War in President Franklin Pierce's cabinet, sought to create a camel highway across the American southwest and sent a convoy to the Middle East to purchase camels. One of the camel drivers who came with the convoy in 1856 was Hajj Ali or, "Hi Jolly" as he was known. He was born a Christian but raised in the Muslim faith and worked as a camel driver and scout for the United States Government in the Territory of Arizona. He spent his life in the American southwest and died in Quartzsite Arizona in 1902 (Younis 66-69; Mohammad 31; Orfalea 47-48). Also, a small trickle of Turkish immigrants began making their way to the U.S. beginning in the middle of the century as well as immigrants from Egypt, Morocco and Algiers (Younis 45). Immigration documents reflect that 54 Turkish citizens reached the U.S. through New York City from 1847-1860 (Ernst 188; Younis 45). With the opening of the Suez Canal, many Arabs from Yemen immigrated to the U.S. through the port of New York (Haiek 20). The faiths of these immigrants were not known.

The most prominent and well documented Arab immigrant to the U.S. was Anthony Bishallany. Born in 1827 in the Metn region of Lebanon, he came to the U.S. in

1854 seeking religious education (Haiek 20). Bishallany had been born into the Maronite Church but converted to Protestantism (Younis 51). He came to New York City to visit the Americans he had met in Syria, where he had served as their guide while travelling in the region (Younis 48-49). Bishallany was the first Arab to gain U.S. citizenship (Haiek 20). He lived in New York where he worked as a waiter for a family on Fifth Avenue. Bishallany attended the Amenia Seminary in Dutchess County New York for his religious studies and the Pilgrim Church in Union Square for worship (Younis 54-55). However, he was forced to cease his education as result of tuberculosis, the illness which took his life in 1856. According to his wishes, Bishallany was buried in Brooklyn's Greenwood Cemetery (Al-Qazzaz 16; Younis 61). Although his stay in New York was brief, Bishallany:

Became the 'symbol of the aggressive freedom, race vitality, and aspiration toward progress of the Syrian race.' In Bishallany there was a fusion of late Puritanism that mingled with a slight flavor of Oriental mysticism. The way out seemed by way of the West, and the United States the director of that way. (Younis 64)

Although Bishallany was not Muslim, but his story inspired later immigrants from the Middle East many of whom were followers of Islam.

### **The First Wave: 19<sup>th</sup> Century Until World War I**

The first significant wave of Arab immigration occurred from the late 1800's until the second decade of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The individuals who came to the United States were overwhelmingly Christian but among them were followers of Islam. This wave was

spurred by the presence of missionaries in Syria and the Philadelphia, Chicago and St. Louis Expositions. Throughout the 19<sup>th</sup> century Protestant missionaries had ventured into the Middle East. First Palestine and later Beirut, became important centers of American evangelical activities (Younis 12). In 1864, the Syrian Protestant College and Roberts College in Constantinople were combined under the auspices of the Department of Education at Albany as part of the University of the State of New York. In 1920, the institution became known as the American College of Beirut according to the Board of Regents of the University of the State of New York (98). The missionaries built an extensive Christian educational system throughout Syria (Hopkins 3). Syrians developed favorable impressions of the American missionaries and:

Whether Christians, Moslems, Druse or Jews, gradually overcame their doubts and admired their new neighbors selfless zeal. They worked without seeking personal or political gains. By the end of the first period in 1850 the Americans began to earn for themselves an inestimable position in the hearts and minds of the Syrian people. (Younis 2)

The missionaries provided support to the native population during difficult economic times and outbreaks of violence. The presence of the Americans was accepted and encouraged a dialogue between the Syrians and the missionaries. Formal relations were established between Syria and the U.S. in 1830 when a treaty of commerce and navigation was signed with the Ottoman Empire, and later when the American consuls to Syria were appointed and the American consulate in Aleppo was formally established

([www.usembassy.gov](http://www.usembassy.gov); Younis 33). The Syrians gained a greater knowledge of the United States and the American ideal (Younis 37).

The expositions held in Philadelphia, Chicago and St. Louis fostered cultural exchange between the Middle East and the United States and encouraged greater streams of Muslim immigrants to America. The Philadelphia Centennial Exposition took place in 1876 and attracted only a few traders from Turkey, Egypt and Morocco but these individuals reaped great economic benefits (Younis 132,182). The *New York Daily Tribune* made note of the presence of Moslems at the exposition and listed the numerous religious and traditional items the delegations had brought including gold filigree jewels, ambers beads, ceramic art, perfumes, olive wood carvings and religious objects from Jerusalem (Younis 185; "Turkey's Exhibit").

The Columbian Exposition of 1893, also known as the Chicago World's Fair, provided Moslems more exposure to the United States. The delegations which came from the region were greater in size and number and their exhibits were more elaborate. They included replicas of Eastern buildings, reenactments of festivals and celebrations and restaurants, shops, theaters, and Turkish coffeehouses. Notable among the replicas was the Mosque of Sultan Selim with a *muezzin* to perform the call to prayer (Younis 199). The delegations brought Arabian horses, coffee, cigarettes, dried fruits, and silk (162, 188, 196-198). At the conclusion of the Chicago Exposition many



members of the delegations remained in the U.S. and some later attended the St. Louis Fair in 1904 (200).

The St. Louis Exposition featured a life-size replica of the Holy City of Jerusalem, including the Church of the Holy Sepulcher, the Mosque of Omar, the stables of Solomon, the Golden Gate, and the Mount of Olives (204). The mosque was:

Completely orthodox in design and decorated in geometric figures 'fashioned into shapes unlike any living thing'...The mosque represented the first such structure to rise on American shores, representing Islamic culture, art, and faith unknown to many. (Younis 204, 214)

On the opening day of the fair a cleric from each religion, Protestant, Catholic, Jew and Moslem led a prayer (210). Immigration documents reflect that there was an increase in immigration from the Middle East to the United States in 1904 (204). It is apparent that:

The three expositions had helped to increase knowledge of America among the people of the Near East. The first in 1876 proved significant not so much in numbers but more in the spirit of the event. The birthday of American independence left an indelible mark on the young rising generation aspiring for similar freedom for themselves. The American ideal became contagious. By the time of the Columbian and the St. Louis Fairs the United States had assumed greater proportions in the minds of the Syrian populace in their search for a fuller and more meaningful life. The two events coincided with the periods of marked emigration and in many instances the Expositions became the beckoning finger to lure hundreds from their age-old fortresses. (Younis 213)

The push and pull of events in the United States and Middle East affected the flow of immigrants to America. Many Middle Easterners came to escape political turmoil in Lebanon in the 1860's during the clash between the Maronites and Druze, the Urabi Revolt in Egypt, or the depressed economy and famine in Syria and Lebanon (142). The

U.S. intervened in Ottoman politics on the Lebanese' behalf which engendered amity towards the United States (Al-Qazzaz 19). Other immigrants were encouraged by ticket agents working for the steam lines or returning immigrants who related the wealth and opportunity in America (Sawaie xiv). Although increased economic stability in Syria at the close of the 19<sup>th</sup> century decreased immigration, the Homestead Act of 1862 became known in Syria by 1870 which again enticed Syrian immigrants with the hopes of owning land in the U.S. (Younis 129, 149). The outbreak of the Civil War evinced sympathy from the Syrian populace for the Union and many sent donations:

Knowledge of the United States, already acquired from American teachers, preachers, and medical doctors, was increased further during the American Civil War. It was a rare fact in those days to learn about Abraham Lincoln, a towering figure who had risen from log-cabin birth to occupy the presidential mansion. This knowledge fired the imagination of the rising young who became impatient with static restrictions which retarded progress...The popularization of men like George Washington and American democratic principles added to the desire for improved opportunities in a land where good government and progress tied neatly together. These two principles had a profound effect on countless Syrians. (Younis 126-128)

Many immigrants from the Levant sought to improve their standard of living in the face of declining silk prices. The children of many successful silk traders were unable to achieve the wealth of their parents due to the decline and chose to seek their fortunes in the United States (Kayyali 30). When the Ottoman Empire initiated its forced conscription policies in 1908 many Christians and Druze fled fearing they would be put on the front lines. Food seizures, a yellow fever epidemic and a massive earthquake all increased immigration from the Ottoman Empire (30). Moslem immigration was

curtailed by Ottoman policies but some still succeeded in joining the growing Muslim community in the United States (Younis 167-168).

The majority of immigrants who came to the U.S. were poor, uneducated, Christian, single males. A large proportion originated from the administrative district of Mount Lebanon in the Ottoman province of Syria, which is present day Lebanon and Syria (Naff 3; Haiek 13; Al-Qazzaz 19). Many came from other rural areas of what was called Greater Syria, which was controlled by the Ottoman Empire and what is now Syria, Lebanon, Israel and Jordan (Smith 51). According to the U.S. Department of Commerce and Labor, over 40,000 Syrians arrived in the United States in the first years of the 20<sup>th</sup> century (Naff 4). The vast majority arrived at the port of New York located in lower Manhattan at Castle Garden and settled in New York and New Jersey (Naff 5; Haiek 13; Hopkins 4). Muslims were less than 10% of the immigrants who came in the first half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century because they were hesitant to live in a secular non-Muslim country.

In the last twenty years of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, significantly more families immigrated together to the U.S. (Younis 125). In this same period, many single women came to the United States seeking a husband or increased opportunities not available in the Arab world (Kayyali 30). The trickle of Muslim immigration began to increase as they followed their Christian neighbors and friends to the United States (Kayyali 29). The Muslim wave of immigration post-dated their Christian counterparts by approximately 20 years

(Orfalea 102). The majority were single and unskilled men from the ages of 14 to 40 intending to make money and return home (Kayyali 29). Immigration documents reflect that from 1899 to 1910 8,000 Syrian Muslims came to the U.S. (Hitti 58). Some Shia Muslims from Greater Syria, India and Iran immigrated to the U.S. seeking greater religious freedom (Takim 218; Haiek 238). Many Muslims came to the U.S. to avoid conscription into the Turkish army (Lovell 95). Evidence exists of a small group of Muslims seeking job opportunities who landed at Castle Garden in 1879 (Younis 133). The Muslims who came to America viewed their passage as a temporary flight like that of Mohammed from Medina to Mecca and therefore, saw no need to build places of worship (Sawaie xv).

By 1910, the population of Syrians in the United States was over 55,000 and the majority of them had come to join friends and family already living in the United States (Naff 4; Al-Qazzaz 22). The composition of the Muslim community in the U.S. became more diverse. Africans from Morocco, Somalia, West Africa and Algeria came not as part of the slave trade but as students, seamen, stowaways and political refugees and settled in New Orleans and the New York/New Jersey area (Nyang "Convergence" 250-251). In 1919, 40,000 Albanians came to the U.S. after the Greek attack on Southern Albania (Nyang *Islam* 107). Bosnians, descendants of Serbo-Croatian speaking people who had accepted Islam centuries ago, followed their Christian neighbors who had immigrated (61). Ukrainians joined their fellow Southern Europeans (60). South Asian Muslims from

the Punjab and Pathan immigrated to the United States as a result of land shortages, drought, and overpopulation. They were mostly illiterate, unmarried young peasants (Mohammad 31).

Significant ethnic classification difficulties complicated the immigration of the Muslims who came to the United States. Before the division of the Ottoman Empire, immigrants from the region were all seen as “Turks” and shared one nationality although numerous ethnicities existed (Nyang *Islam* 39). In 1899, for the first time Syrians were classified separately from other citizens from the Turkish Empire in immigration documents (Younis 219). The term “Syrian” was used until the end of World War I when the Ottoman Empire broke apart and the immigrants were referred to according to their new national identities (Younis 219; Kayyali 46). The terms “Arabs”, “Syrians” and “Bedouins” were also used interchangeably (Younis 138). In 1882, the Chinese Exclusion Act was passed in the United States in order to decrease immigration from China. Many Southeast Asians were grouped together with the Chinese (Kayyali 48; Mohammad 32).

This confusion also created obstacles toward citizenship. In the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, Muslims were considered polygamists and ineligible for citizenship (Kayyali 51). Until 1909, Arabs were considered “white” but in 1910 Syrians and Palestinians were considered Asian because the Ottoman Empire was on the Asian continent. Many Arabs argued that they were Semites so they should be considered “white” (48). Many Arab

Americans were denied American citizenship because the Ottoman Empire fought with Germany in World War I (50). To resolve the matter, Naoum Mokarzel, an editor and owner in the Arabic press, raised money for the Syrian Society for National Defense to make the case that Syrians should be classified as “white” and therefore eligible for American citizenship (51). Mokarzel succeeded when a U.S. court ruled that Syrians were “white” and an immigration act was passed officially categorizing Syrians and Palestinians as Caucasians (52).

This uncertainty also influenced Muslims Americans’ identities. Many identified first as Turks from the Ottoman Empire, some affiliated with the villages of their birth and others identified with the larger Arab community (Al-Qazzaz 29). The Syrian immigrant community’s close proximity to Ellis Island:

Focused attention on the Syrians. The settlement served to magnify their traits in the eyes of perplexed Americans of the older generations, the social-service workers, newspaper reporters looking for stories, or the immigration officials at Ellis Island. The Syrians, as a result, came under close scrutiny in the whole reappraisal of immigration policy. There was a general fear that this whole new immigration from the eastern shores of the Mediterranean would biologically pollute the already established Western European blood strains in the United States. The Syrians, caught in the middle of this conflict, came in for their share of sharp debate within this early period as well as later during the 1920’s. (Younis 217-8)

The most notable immigrants who came during this time was the family of Professor Joseph Awad Qaloush Arbeely of Damascus who arrived in 1878 (Hitti 48). The Arbeelys reached New York City in the summer of 1881 and their arrival was noted by the *Daily Tribune* (Younis 134). Members of the Arbeely family achieved academic and scholarly

distinctions and became prominent in the Arabic press and literature. Arbeely's sons started one of the first Arabic newspapers in the United States. Joseph Arbeely's close relative, Dr. Najeeb Yousef Awad Arbeely, earned his juris doctor and became the U.S. Consul General in Jerusalem and the main inspector at Ellis Island to assist the new Syrian immigrants. He could speak seven languages and met President Grover Cleveland (Naff 6; Haiek 21). The quintessential image of early Arab immigrants was Dr. Joseph Arbeely and his sons holding a sign in Arabic which read, "Here we are enjoying freedom" (Friedlander 46-53).

A community of Muslim immigrants had begun to form in the New York – New Jersey area. This period spanning from the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century to World War I was:

Often alluded to as a 'time of invasion,' even though a peaceful one. The newcomers from Syria were caught within this great human tide. On debarking at New York City over fifty per cent chose for their homes the North Atlantic states, with concentrations in such large cities as New York itself, Boston...New Jersey and Pennsylvania because of industrial and commercial opportunities. When concentration took place in either New York or Boston, the Syrians drew attention to their way of life. Writers attempted to evaluate and compare them to other newly arrived immigrants. The results were never conclusive since the Syrians, in their minds, remained an enigma clothed in mystification. Frequent discussion followed in press and books; in the latter they were generally treated as a part of the entire immigration tide. The press followed more specific analysis, even if at times bordering on sensationalism. This fact may be noted in the New York City newspapers from the period under study. (Younis 217)

Syrian immigrants arrived at Castle Garden and later Ellis Island, which opened in 1892 (Kayyali 35). After clearing customs they exited through the door marked "New York" to waiting friends or relatives, recruiters or thieves. They boarded the ferry to the First

Ward at the tip of Manhattan where they encountered Washington Market at Washington and Rector Streets (Naff 4). During the 1890s, New York City became the center of the Arabic-speaking community and Washington Street was the locus of commercial activity. New York, known as the “Mother Colony” for the early settlers, had the most diverse and most concentrated population of Arabs before 1900. The neighborhood had previously belonged to earlier immigrants of Dutch, Irish and Italian descent but for Syrian immigrants:

New York City embodied and represented the United States. ‘Nayirk’ was often used in conversation interchangeably with the United States, which was generalized to be America, which in turn was called ‘Merka.’ The area around Washington Street in Lower Manhattan became known as ‘Little Syria,’ an ethnic enclave with many Arab-owned businesses and residents. (Kayyali 35)

New York was the intellectual and economic center of the Arab community for both Muslims and Christians (Kayyali 36). The majority of the Arab intelligentsia resided in New York where they founded churches, mosques, organizations, newspapers and political clubs (36). The first Arab owned bank by the Farour brothers operated in New York and provided capital for businesses (Haiek 22). In 1901, 6,000 Syrians were estimated to be living in New York City and approximately 10% were Muslim (Younis 222).

Syrian immigrants living in the area were employed as clergy, editors, engineers, artists, teachers, bakers, barbers, blacksmiths, butchers, engravers, gardeners, and a large number were carpenters, joiners, clerks and accountants (Younis 227). Syrian



immigrants from urban areas were artisans and merchants and those from more rural areas had operated cottage industries out of their homes like pottery making, leather tanning, soap making or silk-worm raising (Younis 243). Syrian Americans became established manufacturers, importers and wholesalers. They had agents purchase products from Italy, France, and China and even outsourced the production of some goods to China and the Philippines (Naff 9). Along Fifth Avenue Syrian-owned showrooms appeared, displaying the goods from Syrian manufacturing houses in Lower Manhattan which produced Turkish cigarettes, suspenders, mirrors, brushes, fine linens, Oriental rugs and kimonos (L. Miller 29; Hitti 68). Notable among these was the Palestine Drug Company founded in New York City by Vladimir Halaby which sold cosmetics and pharmaceuticals (Haiek 27). Syrian immigrants proved to be adept businessmen and opened grocery stores, bakeries, clothing shops, and haberdasheries. These endeavors were usually family run and the relatives lived above or behind the store. The female members would keep the home, the men of the family managed the store, and the children would attend school during the day and stock shelves or clean the store at night (Kayyali 40). The *Syrian Business Directory* written by S.A. Mokarzel and Dr. Nagib Abdou's *Travels in America* catalogued the commercial activities and business endeavors of Syrians throughout the United States (Younis 257). As the 20<sup>th</sup> century progressed, Syrian immigrants achieved wealth and success by utilizing adeptness in commerce.

The growing community in New York necessitated the creation of the Arabic press. The first Arabic newspaper, *Kawkab America* (The Star of America), was published weekly beginning in 1892 by Dr. Najeeb Arbeely and Dr. Ibrahim Arbeely in New York (Al-Qazzaz 35). *Al-Hoda* (The Guidance) was produced by Naoum Mokarzel in New York beginning in 1903. It was the first weekly Arabic newspaper and the longest running Arabic paper in the U.S. *Al-Ayam* (The Days) was another important publication by Yousef Nimaan Maloof (Haiek 186). These newspapers were followed by the founding of *Al-Founoun* (The Arts), a scholarly journal intended to showcase the literary contributions of Arabs (187). Most of the papers initially were written entirely in Arabic but, as the new generations' proficiency in Arabic declined, it was necessary to publish in both languages or solely in English (187). The papers provided an outlet for the spread of Arab culture, the practice of English and Arabic and provided information pertaining to events in the Middle East and the United States. The editors and owners of these publications became the leaders of the nascent community (Naff 8-9).

Along with the Arabic press, an infrastructure of social and religious organizations began to appear. In 1896, a group of educated women from prominent families created the Syrian Women's Union of New York to aid the poor and the Syrian Ladies Aid Society to assist immigrant girls who arrived in Ellis Island find work. Muslim women frequently encountered difficulties locating work because of lack of education, poor proficiency in English, and religious restrictions pertaining to uniform suitability,

housing and interactions with men (Kayyali 78). The Syrian American Club was founded to assist Syrians in navigating the American legal system and encourage naturalization (Haiek 22). A Lebanese Nahda Club was founded in New York in 1911 with 15 chapters consisting of 8,000 members. The Nahda club was affiliated with the cultural renaissance which took place in many Arabic speaking countries at the time, most notably in Egypt and Lebanon. Also at this time, the Syrian Trade Association was founded to protect Syrian businessmen (26). Some organizations were more specific in their goals such as Mawlawi Barkatullah's Pan-Aryan Association in New York against Great Britain's rule in India and the Muslim Brotherhood founded by Mubarak Ali Kahn in New York (Afzal 1).

Many of the Muslim immigrants who came to New York City were overwhelmed by the crowded streets, bustling markets and awestruck by the technological advances of the city. Some embraced these changes and others longed for the simplicity of their homelands (Suleiman 31-38). Their ability to adapt to New York was determined by their education levels, preconceived ideas of New York, attendance at missionary schools, year of arrival, generation, permanency of residence, conditions of immigration, political and social values and the treatment of the host society (43-44). Some immigrants were surprised by the difficulty of life in New York specifically, the extremes of wealth and poverty, the lack of leisure time, the struggle for survival and the rampant racism (43-

44). Others looked more favorably on American society and were in awe of the equality of women and the great wealth and technology of the city (44-45).

Lucius Hopkins Miller's detailed research on the Arab population living in the New York area in 1904 provides rare insight into the community. He identified three Arab communities in Manhattan, South Ferry and South Brooklyn (L. Miller 6). Miller catalogued approximately 1,600 Arab individuals living in Manhattan, 600 in South Ferry and 200 in South Brooklyn totaling almost 2,500 in the New York area (6). He provides a religious breakdown of these communities which revealed that only two Moslems were living in the Manhattan community and the remaining portion were Catholic, Maronite, Greek Orthodox and Protestant (11). The community had a slightly greater percentage of males than females (36).

He explained that the stores, factories and business houses where Syrians were employed were located in Manhattan and those individuals living in the South Ferry and South Brooklyn communities commuted to Manhattan to work (L. Miller 10). The peddlers in the community however plied their trade throughout the five Burroughs and into Connecticut and New Jersey (10). The individuals living in the Manhattan community were primarily store owners, employees in factories and stores and a small percentage were professionals. Women living in Manhattan had also created a sewing cottage industry. The South Ferry community held greater percentages of employees working in stores, clerks and professionals and less so of individuals who peddled or

worked in factories. The South Brooklyn community consisted of an even greater percentage of people who were employed in stores and much less in peddling and factories (28). Miller explains:

The average residence in the United States of members of the Manhattan community is 5.5 years; of the South Ferry community, 7.8 years, and of the South Brooklyn community, 8.5 years. It has been proved clearly that the South Ferry community is superior to the Manhattan community, and the South Brooklyn community superior to both. Thus length of residence in the United States and a general advance in wealth, position, education and morals go hand in hand. (L. Miller 43)

As the population moved from Manhattan, to South Ferry and then to South Brooklyn, Miller's research reflects that the literacy rate and income of the inhabitants increased (13).

Miller uses his findings to evaluate the contributions of Syrian immigrants to American society. He discovers that although Syrians are more familiar with a despotic form of government rule, they embraced the freedoms democracy allows and take pride in their American citizenship (L. Miller 40). He concludes that the Syrian immigrant is:

A substantial contributor to the economic well-being of our land. The variety and the usefulness of his commercial enterprises, the ability with which he prosecutes them, the industry which insures their success, and the sobriety and the politeness that accompany them, make clear that he is a valuable addition to our economic strength. Here his individualism shows to greatest advantage. Spurning socialism, anarchism and unionism, he devotes himself to his task with an energy, persistence and acumen which stimulate competition and advance. (Hopkins 41)

The occupation that most clearly defined the community of Syrians and the Muslims within that community was peddling. The Expositions in Chicago, Philadelphia

and St. Louis proved that trade was extremely profitable in the United States. The selling of religious items from Jerusalem by the individuals at the exhibits was the Syrian's first foray into peddling. Additionally, many Syrians were accustomed to being outside because of their homeland's favorable climate and this made factory work unappealing (Younis 243). The New York Tribune explained the organization of the peddling business which radiated out from "Little Syria" as:

Brimming with success and the shopkeepers were casting about for more business...It was a buzzing trading center and middle eastern bazaar...the wellspring of Syrian peddling in America...The wholesale dealers are of great help to their poorer countrymen, often advancing to them not only goods but money with which to trade, and although there are large sums outstanding at time, the Syrian colony has yet to furnish a case of bankruptcy, and the credit of the tradesmen is first class...The houses, especially on the Washington side of the block are old, weather beaten, dingy and sometimes dirty cellars are devoted to trade and packed full of everything which a peddler can carry in his pack or find a market for in his wanderings, and the first or ground floor is generally used as a display-room and office where the goods are sorted out and bargains made- these sojourners from the east are sharp traders. (Naff 6; Mokarzel "Picturesque Colony")

Peddlers began by creating a network of contacts in "Little Syria." They were employed by businesses and manufacturing houses to sell their goods in more rural areas. The peddlers would purchase these goods on credit or make the items themselves. They would carry on their back as much as possible, usually 50-200 pounds, of a variety of items including; crucifixes, rosaries, toiletries, buttons, thread, ribbons, needles, lace, handkerchiefs, cloth, and linens (Kayyali 36). They would travel with their packs door-to-door sleeping wherever was available. The networks grew as new forms

of transportation like the horse and cart and car took peddlers farther away from “Little Syria” (39). As the networks became more extensive and peddlers spread out from the “Mother Colony,” suppliers set up receiving stations along rail lines in places like Utica and Buffalo, New York (Younis 154). Peddlers would travel for months at a time and the suppliers would manage the peddler’s finances, organize their routes and operate boarding houses for them. The peddler determined which cities and suppliers to patronize.

Peddling was an attractive vocation for new immigrants because it required little training, capital and knowledge of English (Kayyali 37). There was little competition because peddling was not a highly-respected or coveted occupation (Al-Qazzaz 20). The ability to give up or resume peddling was also attractive to immigrants who planned on returning to their homelands (Naff 7). The most attractive feature of peddling was its lucrativeness. The average yearly income of peddlers ranged from \$1,000.00 - \$2,000.00. This was a large sum when compared to an industrial laborer’s \$650.00 yearly income and the average per capita income of \$382.00 per year (Kayyali 38). Peddling was also resistant to economic downturns because peddlers were able to barter in order to subsist (Kayyali 38-39; ). Lucius Hopkins Miller’s study found that in 1904 1 in 3 peddlers were Syrian (Al-Qazzaz 20).

Peddling was individualistic, entrepreneurial, and encouraged self-reliance (Kayyali 39). Success was usually determined by a peddlers' personality and charm.

Peddling facilitated Syrian immigrants' assimilation to American society because:

As an economic activity it put the Arab immigrants in direct contact with other Americans, where they had to speak English and where the situation allowed social contact and the development of relationships. This experience helped them accommodate themselves to the new environment and achieve success. (Al-Qazzaz 20)

Peddlers were welcomed in areas which were distant from commercial centers (Al-Qazzaz 20). They traveled to rural and remote areas, usually mining or farming towns, that were predominantly ethnic and non-English speaking. Already bilingual, Syrians were able to pick up additional languages quickly (Kayyali 39). Orfalea describes the Syrian peddler as:

An emissary from the exotic land, and, at the same time, an American entrepreneur in the making. He even helped the American export trade. When World War I cut Latin America off from European trade, the Syrian peddler – supplied by the Syrian-owned warehouses in New York of Bardawill, Jabara, Tadross, Ackary, Sleiman, and Atiyeh families, fanned out to South America, where Syrian emigrants provided necessary rest stops: 'The Syrian merchant in every country of South America, Asia and Africa, and Australia thus became the distributor of the products of the United States. (Orfalea 84)

With the profits from peddling, Syrians opened their own stores and supply points. By World War I, many were able to move their stores from Washington Street to Fifth Avenue and their homes to Brooklyn to escape overcrowding (Haiek 14). These early immigrants were able to use the proceeds of peddling to educate their children and as a



result the next generation consisted of a great number of educated professionals (Al-Qazzaz 20-21).

Over time it became evident that women could be very successful at peddling. Many men had their female relatives accompany them because they found that the American home was the woman's domain and the presence of another woman was an asset (Al-Qazzaz 22). As the popularity of female peddlers increased, some widowed or single women peddled on their own and others continued to be accompanied by male relatives and would return to their homes at night. These female peddlers ranged from thirteen to twenty years of age and many remained peddlers until marriage or retirement (Younis 247; Kayyali 39). Many would return to peddling if their family needed a quick infusion of cash (Kayyali 39). By 1910, American rural women had purchased \$60 million worth of goods from Syrian peddlers one third of whom were female peddlers (38-39). However, after the turn of the century women began leaving peddling for factory work or the sewing cottage industry (Younis 252-254).

This trend was mirrored by their male counterparts. The peddling industry began to fade after the first decade of the 20<sup>th</sup> century due to the rise of mail order businesses like Sears and Roebuck and department stores and the increasing mobility of the American population due to the use of cars, trains and buses (Kayyali 39). The attractiveness of peddling also declined as a result of increased competition from new immigrants, the hazards of inclement weather and the upheaval in family life as a result

of long absences (Younis 253-254). Miller explains the decline of peddling at this time because:

The work is irregular, the financial return irregular, and the whole effect upon the social and moral nature more or less injurious. In the early days of the Syrian immigration this was a thriving business, but it has long been sadly overdone; and while there are many who, by long establishment or by dint of perseverance and native ability, still make much money from it, the average return is much reduced. This fact, along with the contempt for this class of work which has sprung up of late years, has been the cause of the great increase in factory workers among the newly arrived Syrians. (L. Miller 29)

The 1915 New York state census showed that peddling was no longer in the top five occupations for Syrian heads of household (Kayyali 39). Peddlers began to establish permanent communities at old supply points called *haras*. The residents of the *haras* were usually from the same village, were often related and shared the same religion. Each household commonly held three generations as family members immigrated to the U.S. in a pattern of chain migration (39). Although Muslims took part in the peddling movement, successful Syrian peddlers were more likely to be Christian because they shared the same religion as their customers (40).

The Muslims who came in the first wave of immigration to the United States came after their Christian neighbors. Consequently, Muslims were less successful, had lower literacy rates and inferior living conditions. Muslims also encountered greater difficulty assimilating in comparison with the Christian immigrants who shared the same religion as the majority of the American population. The identity of the nascent 20<sup>th</sup> century Muslim community in the New York area was complex, melding national origin,

ethnicity and religion (Haddad "Inventing" 111). Ethnicity and national origin were frequently blurred as Chechens and Circassians came from Syria and Jordan, Kurds from Iraq and Syria, Assyrians from Lebanon, Iraq and Syria, and Armenians from Lebanon, Syria, Jordan, Egypt and Palestine (111). Followers of Islam were grouped together although the Muslim community consisted of Sunnis, Shia, Ithna Asharis (commonly known as Twelvers), Ismailis, Zaidis, Alawis, Druze and Ahmaddiya (112). The lack of a Muslim religious authority allowed many movements and manifestations of Islam to develop in the United States (GhaneaBassiri 136). Like other recent immigrants, American Muslims were solely concerned with survival and adapting to their new homes. The importance of ethnic versus religious identity varied with the individual (GhaneaBassiri 23-24). However diverse their community, efforts were made to establish mosques and organizations to maintain their cultural and religious values (Leonard *Muslims* 10). Younis explains that:

Wherever the Arabic-speaking people traveled, their religions went with them. The United States, as a Christian nation, had many churches to offer. But the Oriental Christians preferred rites endemic to their native soil. This was true also for Syrian Hebrews and Moslems. When large groups of one faith assembled in a locality, a place of worship rose to meet their needs. (Younis 267)

In 1907, Polish, Lithuanian, and Russian immigrants founded the American Mohammedan Society in Williamsburg, Brooklyn which was the first institution organized around a mosque (Ferris 209-210; Smith 56). Later the Society bought three permanent buildings to house the organization and this was the first case in which a

Muslim organization purchased property in New York City (Ferris 210). By the 1950's, the Society had approximately 400 members and still exists today as the Muslim Mosque. Recently, it has struggled due to changes in the neighborhood and the apathy of its members (212).

At this time, interest from African Americans in Islam increased substantially. African Americans had come as slaves but in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century began migrating to the North and wanted an alternative to “white Christianity” (Leonard *Muslims* 5). In the early 1890's, Alexander Russell Webb, the American consul to the Philippines established the Muslim World Publishing Company. He had embraced Islam while serving at his post and sought to publicize its message (Nyang *Islam* 103; Ferris 210). Webb signed a contract with members of the Indian organization, American Islamic Propaganda, who would support his venture. The Moslem World was headquartered in New York and published books, pamphlets, and newspapers. In 1893, Webb began the American Moslem Brotherhood which was the first Islamic institution in New York and conducted study circles throughout the U.S. (Smith 189; Ferris 210; Singleton 474). It was established under the largess of Saudi Arabian businessmen and wealthy Indian merchants (Ferris 210). The ruler of the Central Province of British India frequently came to the U.S. to meet with Webb and discuss missionary activities (Afzal 1).

The Moslem World was plagued by controversy and infighting (Ferris 210). Accusations of financial misdealing by Webb and the eventual departure of two of

Webb's senior executives, Emin L. Nabakoff and John A. Lant, caused the decline of the Moslem World and the American Moslem Brotherhood (Singleton 473). Nabakoff and Lant formed the First Society for the Study of Islam in America which published their own newspaper in 1894 (477). Nabakoff aimed for more traditional Islamic practices for the Society which led to his disagreement with Webb. Nabakoff from a window of the World's Union Square building on the morning of December 10, 1893 made, "For the first time in New York's history, cosmopolitan as the city is, the melodious call of the Muezzin, celebrated by every traveler in Mohammedan countries" (Singleton 476). Lant and Nabakoff's disagreements caused another split when Lant formed the American Moslem Institute (481). Webb's foreign backers urged reconciliation between the groups but were unsuccessful. Webb continued lecturing and publishing the World's newspaper, *Voice of Islam*, until 1896 (480-481). The discord and negative outcome concerning the Moslem World curtailed foreign backing of Muslim American organizations for decades to come (484). Despite his failures Webb is still viewed as the pioneer of missionary activity in America, called *dawa* in Arabic, and the Moslem World is considered the "mother of the U.S. Islamic Press" (Smith 189; Nyang *Islam* 103).

Many African American leaders sought to bring Islam into their community. Marcus Garvey founded the Universal Negro Improvement Association (UNIA) in Harlem. He wanted all African Americans living in the diaspora to return to Africa, their homeland. Garvey was highly successful until 1925 when he was incarcerated for

perjury and income tax evasion and deported to his native Jamaica upon his release (GhaneaBassiri 137-138). Garvey was one of the first leaders to form an African American organization and later Islamic groups looked to his example.

In 1913, Noble Drew Ali established the Moorish Science Temple in Newark, New Jersey (Smith 205). Ali was born in North Carolina as Timothy Drew and took the name Noble Drew Ali (Lincoln 220; Kepel 20). Ali was the first to unite African Americans using an Islamic symbol and greatly influenced the African American identity (Haddad and Smith 80). Ali was affiliated with Garvey and his association but did not see African Americans' roots in Africa, but in Morocco (86). He aspired to create a community for African Americans by focusing on a shared heritage, identity and belonging based on an amalgam of world religions (82-83). Ali declared himself a prophet whose goal was to bring black Americans back to their true religion and identity (83). Lincoln explains Ali's dogma:

Although it made use of what was known of the more romantic paraphernalia of Islam, including the Holy Qu'ran, the wearing of fezzes, Muslim names, and the repudiation of certain fundamental Christian beliefs, Noble Drew Ali's movement was essentially a *mélange* of Black nationalism and Christian revivalism with an awkward, confused admixture of the teachings of the Prophet Muhammad. It was not Islam, but it was a significant recovery of the awareness of Islam. (Lincoln 221)

Ali wanted no ethnic distinctions between his members and gave them identification cards to signify their new identity. He wanted his followers to be recognized as "Moors" to give them a sense of pride and tradition (Kepel 21-22). Ali sought recognition for his

community within American society (Haddad and Smith 85). By the 1920's, the Temple had 30,000 active members and places of worship in all the major cities in the North. It was incorporated as a civic organization and built a major infrastructure for economic support and social services for the surrounding communities (Kepel 20; Haddad and Smith 87).

Another Muslim group emerged seeking to attract African American converts. The Ahmadiyya was founded by Hazarat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad who was born in India in 1835 and died there in 1908 (Haddad and Smith 53). Ahmad claimed that God had spoken to him. He recognized Jesus as a prophet but believed that he did not die on the cross but was brought back to health and lived in India until his death (Walbridge and Haneef 124). Although Ahmad's teachings were seen as blasphemous by Orthodox Islam, he began attracting followers (Haddad and Smith 51). The central belief of the Ahmadiyya is the supremacy of Islam over other religions and the focus on its peaceful spread (Walbridge and Haneef 127). As a result, the Ahmadiyya were very active in proselytizing in the U.S. It is commonly believed that the Ahmadiyya were responsible for converting Russell Webb to Islam when he was serving as an American consul (Haddad and Smith 59). Ahmadis appealed to American converts because they were more egalitarian in accepting other religions and women's roles and distributed literature and conducted sermons in English (Walbridge and Haneef 127; Griggs 78-79; Haddad and Smith 72). The Ahmadis are unique in that they have a central cleric who

determines the course of belief and practice (Walbridge and Haneef 128). Ghulam and his followers took a distinctively pro-British stance in India and continue this pro-government stance to present day:

While anti-imperialistic feelings festered in India, Ahmad taught that the British were just and fair in their governance. *Jihad* against the British would not be carried on by his followers. This pro-government sentiment has become part of the general teachings of Ahmadi Islam: They believe that they are abiding by the Quranic injunction 'O ye who believe! Obey Allah and obey His Messenger and those who are in authority among you...' (al-Nisa, Sura 4). (Walbridge and Haneef 123)

With the outbreak of World War I many Muslim Americans saw an opportunity to not only express their patriotism for their new home but to fight against the Ottoman Empire and liberate Syria (Kayyali 41; Haiek 28). A confluence of allegiances encouraged Muslim Americans to join the American armed forces. Until the U.S. joined the Allies, many Syrian and Lebanese Americans joined the French Army. An outpouring of support for the war effort flowed from the Syrian community in New York. The League of Liberation was formed in New York City to encourage young Syrian Americans to fight against the Ottomans. Documents show that New York Syrians bought over \$1 million worth of liberty war bonds during the First World War (Kayyali 41; Haiek 28). Seeking the sense of belonging and respect that came with being a veteran, 7% of Arab Americans served in World War I compared to 3% of the general American population (Kayyali 41; Haiek 28).



## **The Second Wave: Post World War I**

After the conclusion of World War I, the nascent American Muslim movement experienced difficulties. In 1929, Noble Drew Ali died and stark divisions emerged as to who would succeed him as leader of the Moorish Science Temple. The most notable among them was Wallace Fard, a member of the Temple who Ali had placed in charge of the Chicago headquarters (Haddad and Smith 90-92). Fard claimed he was the reincarnation of Noble Drew Ali and should assume leadership of the Temple. The Temple became mired in controversy and in 1930, Ward formed what would become the Nation of Islam (NOI) (90-92). Although the Temple ceased to exist in its previous form what Ali did achieve, “was a pronounced American awareness of Islam, its power and its potential. Because of him, there was a temple or mosque in a hundred cities where no mosques had existed before” (Lincoln 223).

The Ahmadi continued their missionary work in the United States with the visit of Mufti Muhammad Sadiq to New York City where he established the Ahmadiyya headquarters in 1920. His efforts were aimed at both immigrant Muslims and American citizens. The Ahmadi’s negative view of racism attracted many African American followers and there was significant exchange of members between the UNIA, the Ahmadi and the NOI (Haddad and Smith 60-62). Sadiq wrote in his publication *The Moslem Sunrise*, “The African is slowly but surely realizing that under the Crescent he will be better able to reach the goal of his ambition than under the Cross” (Walbridge

and Haneef 125). A second Ahmadi missionary, Mutiur Rahman Begalu, came in 1928 to establish major Ahmadi centers throughout the country (Haddad and Smith 63). These missionaries sought converts of all ethnicities, classes and races and encouraged them to unite under the shared bond of Islam (Walbridge and Haneef 125). Despite these efforts, tensions still existed between immigrant and African American Muslims. African American Muslims were not adequately represented in national Muslim organizations because immigrant Muslims did not view them as true Muslims due to their ignorance of Islam and the Arabic language (GhaneaBassiri 172-173).

The conclusion of World War I brought a new wave of immigrants fleeing war-torn Europe and the former Ottoman Empire. With the borders left uncertain by the war, issues of nationality and race emerged. Fearing an inundation, Congress passed the Immigration Act of 1917 also known as the Asiatic Barred Zone or Exclusion Act, which made a literacy test mandatory and significantly curtailed immigration from the Middle East and Asia (Younis 288-289; Afzal 3). In 1921, the Emergency Quota Act created a system which limited immigration from any country to 3% of the extant population in the U.S., not to exceed 350,000 immigrants (Younis 288-289). Three years later, the Johnson-Reed Act was passed which further limited immigration to 2% of the immigrant population living in the U.S. according to the census in 1890 (288-289). This Act aimed to stem immigration from outside of Europe (Kayyali 23; Leonard 9). Allowances were made for immigrants seeking to join family members who were naturalized American

citizens and refugees from Armenia, Greece and Syria (Younis 291). These laws brought about a heated debate between those who believed that America had been built by immigrants and those who held more nativist sentiment. The latter won out, effectively bringing Muslim immigration from Asia and the Middle East to a standstill (295-296).

Due to these immigration laws, the majority of new immigrants were relatives of individuals who had entered the United States during the first wave (Younis 235). This second wave of immigrants was largely uneducated with little knowledge of English (Smith 54). They could only find menial work as migrant laborers, petty merchants or miners and, “the lack of language skills, poverty, loneliness, and the absence of coreligionists all contributed to a sense of isolation and unhappiness” (Smith 54).

American Muslims, with few immigrants to augment their communities and growing nativist sentiment, made increased attempts to assimilate by building successful businesses and pursuing their educations (Kayyali 290; Younis 277). Many Muslims, fearing they would be classified as polygamists and denied citizenship, distanced themselves from Islam (Kayyali 49-50). With the collapse of the Ottoman Empire, immigrants who had come intending only a temporary stay found themselves permanent U.S. residents (Hitti 60). The first generation’s ties to the home country loosened as the numbers of new immigrants decreased (Kayyali 31-32).

The New York-New Jersey area continued to be a commercial center for Muslim immigrants. Paterson and Hoboken, New Jersey had in excess of 25 Syrian-owned silk

factories attracted by the special tax incentives and privileges offered by the state to silk weavers (Haiek 30; Hitti 70). Syrians were also heavily involved in the kimono, lace, and textile industries (Hitti 69). At the time, half of the sweaters made in New York were produced by Syrians (Orfalea 81). These businesses frequently employed their countrymen as silk weavers and textile workers (Hitti 72). Other immigrants who had left peddling sought permanent employment as small businessmen, owning coffeehouses, restaurants, bakeries and groceries (Smith 55). These businesses were supplied by Syrian farms in upstate New York (Hitti 73). Syrians were also involved in New York's financial sector. Joseph Mandour became the first Arab American to establish a shareholder company in the United States when he opened the Bank of Lebanon on Fifth Avenue in 1920 (Haiek 29).

The interest in commerce:

Was well reflected in their early newspapers. The first page did not carry the most important political or social news of the day. Instead, large advertising space displayed either the pictures of the plants in operation or the articles produced for sale. The names appeared in bold type in English and Arabic to emphasize their importance. (Younis 239)

By 1928, six Arab dailies were published in New York City alone in addition to several monthlies (Sawaie xx). Among them, the *Al-Bayan* newspaper, specifically published for the Druze and Muslim communities, and the, *al-Asr-al-Dhahabi* (The Golden Age), a religious publication printed by Syrian Russellites in Brooklyn (Hitti 94). The burgeoning Arab American and Muslim press reflected the focus on education and literacy which

was common in the communities. Many Muslims were well educated, fluent in Arabic and English, and looked to these newspapers as their connection to their homeland and culture (Kayyali 41).

New York was rich in Arab American journalists, playwrights, poets and novelists and Gibran Khalil Gibran was notable among them. He came to the U.S. in 1894 from Lebanon. He studied extensively at al-Hikmah School in Beirut, the Ecole de Beaux Arts and Academie Julien in Paris (Haiek 49-51). Gibran is considered the most well known Arabic poet and novelist. The admiration and respect he received not only from the Arab American colony but also the general New York intellectual community was unprecedented. In 1920, he founded the Pen League (*Arrabitah al-Qalamiyyah*) in New York with the best Arabic writers of the time including, Elia Abu Madi, Mikhail Naimy, Rihani Ameen (Kayyali 126; Haiek 49). Although the membership of the League was primarily Maronite Christians, the prominent position they held in New York society reflected well on their Muslim counterparts in the Lebanese community. The League sought to bridge the gap between cultures. They wrote in both Arabic and English and traveled between their Lebanese homeland and the United States, which they saw as a land of opportunity and freedom (Kayyali 126). The Pen League wanted to maintain a more literary form of Arabic, which it used in its works on metaphysics, romanticism, realism and poetry in the same vein as Byron, Shelley and Keats (Younis 333-334).

In 1927, the Conference of Greater New York was held for writers, businessmen, and professional men of the Arab American and Muslim communities. Its purpose was to better represent their community to American society and encourage education among new immigrants (Haiek 30). The growing intellectual elite, press and literary accomplishments of the Muslim American community is aptly conveyed by Hitti, a scholar present at the time:

Coming from a country where the Muhammadan would stoop in the street to pick up a paper and deposit it in a hole in the wall lest there be on it the name of Allah that might be defiled by the feet of the passers-by, the Syrian holds the printed page in special reverence and esteem. (Hitti 96-97)

Reeling from World War I and the influx of immigrants from the previous century, Americans' nativist sentiment and hostility toward immigrant populations grew. The growing Middle Eastern intelligentsia residing in New York City frequently discussed the race tensions that were pervasive in the 1920's. Their beliefs were conveyed by the article, "History of the Syrians in New York," published by Salloum A. Mokarzel in *The Syrian World* in 1927. The article highlighted the literary, financial and commercial achievements of Syrians in New York City specifically, the newspapers, novels, intellectuals, businesses and importing houses on Fifth Avenue (Younis 318-319). The study, "Who are the People of Asia Minor?" was conducted to clarify the history of Syrians and increase understanding and dialogue with the general American population. The study revealed that Arab Americans believed:

That only a few in any race may achieve distinction and bring honor to their national group. They pointed to inequalities in wealth and education among themselves and that inferiority complexes were felt among the less successful. Attention was usually drawn to those in that group who were passing through trials of transition. Their task, the men asserted, was that of education to dispel these inferiority feelings and to interpret themselves better in American communities. (Younis 318)

Hitti described the “modern Syrian” as individualistic and suspicious of cooperative effort (Hitti 94). With the majority of the Arab American community of Christian descent, Moslem, Druze and Jews of Middle Eastern descent still remained on the periphery. The important Muslim communities were located in the Midwest but the numbers of Muslims in New York grew and became significant by the 1920’s and 30’s (Younis 272).

With the Arab American community fostering ties to American society, social organizations in the colony emerged. In the 1920’s, after dispersal of the *haras* many women’s and men’s clubs held events called *maharajans* to foster a sense of community. These festivals increased in popularity over the next thirty years (Kayyali 111). With the vast amount of Middle Eastern immigrants concentrated in New York and New Jersey, Manhattan became a meeting place for the community and specifically the followers of Islam among them (Hitti 67,108). The Muslims within the community experienced two opposing trends. In reaction to growing xenophobia, some Muslims sought to assert their religious identity by establishing social and cultural organizations. Other Muslims reacted by distancing themselves from their Muslim faith to further

assimilate into American society (Smith 54). In keeping with the first trend, a Syrian Community Center was built in Brooklyn, and the American Mohammedan Society of Tatar Origin and the Young Men's Muslims Association of Arab Origin were established (Haiek 238; Hitti 118; Nyang *Islam* 48). The Rashid Sales Company organized screenings of Egyptian films at the Brooklyn Academy of Music (Kayyali 123). Some immigrants who came at this time returned to their countries of origin to escape the anti-immigrant sentiment (Sawaie xvi).

The changes in family values, sexuality, and gender roles occurring during the 1920's in American society were also evident in the Muslim community. Prior to 1920, most Muslim marriages were arranged within the community but later mixed marriages became more prevalent (Kayyali 42). During this time, increasing numbers of Muslims naturalized which in turn increased their political awareness and clout. Decreased usage of Arabic by the newer immigrants highlighted gaps between the generations of immigrants (Kayyali 41). The period was punctuated by the stock market crash in 1929 and the subsequent Great Depression which reverberated globally for the next decade. Arab Americans encountered difficulties finding employment because of nativist sentiment and the Depression (Younis 298). With the economic downturn many Arab Americans sold their holdings in their home countries and those with small businesses were able to subsist.



### **The Third Wave: The 1930's**

During the Great Depression and until the Second World War, there was a resurgence of religious and social aid organizations in the Muslim community (Kayyali 42). Most notably in the Islamic proselytizing efforts directed toward the African American community. The Moorish Science Temple which had a significant following at the turn of the century evolved after the death of its founder, Noble Drew Ali, in 1929. Wallace Fard Muhammad assumed leadership of a faction of the Temple which became the Nation of Islam. Fard was an evangelist with an uncertain past who proclaimed that he was the reincarnation of Ali. He preached that African Americans were the lost tribe of Islam and that they were oppressed because they had distanced themselves from Allah (Lincoln 221-222). Fard established the Fruit of Islam to provide paramilitary training and the University of Islam to offer religious education to its members (Kepel 11, 17). Fard recruited members from ghettos, inner cities and prisons (Lincoln 223).

Fard mysteriously disappeared in 1934 and leadership was assumed by Elijah Poole, later known as Elijah Mohammed. Mohammad drew his following mainly from poor Southern African Americans who had been attracted by employment opportunities in the industrial belt during the First World War (Kepel 20). Under Mohammad's leadership, the Nation's membership and financial holdings grew immensely. Fard and Mohammad's activities were focused in Chicago and Detroit and thus the Nation of

Islam did not achieve prominence in New York until Malcolm X's split from the Nation in 1963 (Leonard "South Asian" 237).

Other Muslim organizations enjoyed success during this period. Sheikh Daud Faisal, an African American musician of Moroccan and West Indian descent, succeeded in spreading Islam throughout the African American community in the New York area (Nyang *Islam* 19). He established the Islamic Mission of America for the Propagation of Islam and the Defense of the Faith and the Faithful, also known as the Islamic Mission of America (Ferris 212-213; Smith 57). The Mission opened the State Street Mosque in Brooklyn which served as the locus of the African American Muslim community in the area (Nyang *Islam* 19-20). Faisal criticized aspects of American society that opposed Islamic values and he built the State Street Mosque to help Muslims maintain their Islamic identity in the face of American culture (Ferris 212-213).

The individuals who succeeded in immigrating to the United States in the 1930's and 1940's, mirrored the settlement patterns of earlier generations, preferring the North Atlantic states of New York, New Jersey and Pennsylvania (Younis 321). The census revealed that over 25,000 foreign born Arab people or those of native or mixed parentage were living in these states at the time (321). They came from more diverse socioeconomic backgrounds and sought to make permanent homes in the U.S. They mainly originated from Syria, Palestine, Yemen and Jordan. Students from the African continent also began coming to the U.S. to further their education (Nyang "Continental

African” 252). These immigrants were willing to take blue collar jobs as opposed to earlier immigrants who preferred peddling. Some of the immigrants of the 1930’s succeeded in opening restaurants, dry goods stores, grocery stores, import-export businesses, or other small service oriented businesses (Sawaie xvi-xvii). The Christian community of Arab Americans spread throughout Manhattan and Brooklyn but the Muslim minority remained concentrated in Manhattan (Younis 325-326).

The children of the earlier generation of immigrants sought to assimilate to American culture. Many moved out of the *haras*, became professionals, intermarried and anglicized their names (Kayyali 53). The connection between these individuals and their parents’ homeland became tenuous. This move toward Americanization highlighted the growing schism between the different generations of Muslims living in the United States. Efforts were made to establish organizations to close the gap between the generations:

Organizations became vital to maintain ties either within groups or among the scattered communities. Social or emergency needs dictated the formation of associations. The early founders stressed cultural unity particularly among the new generation born here in an effort to perpetuate Near Eastern customs. (Younis 287)

For example, the Arab American Institute was formed in 1945 in New York City to disseminate information and raise consciousness of events in the Middle East (Haiek 34).

The Arab American press served to unite the different generations and strengthen the relationship between the Muslim American diaspora community and their homelands. It played:

An important role in imparting news about local communities or the homeland, particularly after the formation of new states and the mandates imposed on Syria, Lebanon, and Palestine. Writers and editors also assumed an important role during the transition period until these countries became sovereign after the Second World War. Periodicals, newspapers, and books rolled from their presses to satisfy the hunger for satisfactory reading matter among those who knew Arabic only. Among the intellectuals who were equally learned in English and in French the desire to express their ideals and literary culture in the tongue of their forefathers continued. (Younis 287)

Some newspapers were meant for the average and perhaps poorly educated Arabic speaker and used basic language to be more accessible to this audience. This trend had begun with the newspapers that circulated at the turn of the century (Younis 332).

*The Syrian World*, a monthly magazine active from 1926-1932, appealed to the cultural and intellectual elite. The magazine's main objectives were:

To acquaint the rising Syrian-Americans with their historical heritage and eliminate doubts in their minds concerning their value in American life; second, by wide circulation to inform American readers about the Syrians in their midst; third, to establish a forum for open discussion to create a public opinion among Syrians throughout the United States. (Younis 310)

To accomplish this goal, it included the publications of both notable Arab and American writers including, Salloum A. Mokarzel, Dr. Philip K. Hitti, Dr. K.A. Bishara, and Reverend W.A. Mansur, Habib I. Katibah, Ameen Rihany, Dr. Fuad I. Shatara, a medical doctor in New York City, attorneys Joseph W. and George A. Ferris, Labeebe A. J. Hanna and

Sumayah Attiyeh, Dr. Talcott Williams, Professor A. T. Olmstead, Albert W. Staub, and Richard Spillane (Younis 309-310). Most famous of the magazines articles was Gibran Khalil Gibran's, "To Young Americans of Syrian Origins," which encouraged Syrian-American youth to celebrate their dual heritage:

The directive emphasized destiny, duty, citizenship, and honor for one's self and one's country. He drew an analogy between the deep roots in the cedars of Lebanon to the same roots one plants in a new country to become fruitful. He referred to Abraham Lincoln as the 'blessed.'...The closing lines paralleled constructive living in both areas of the world. 'Stand before towers of New York, Washington, Chicago, and San Francisco saying in your heart. I am descendant of the people that builded [sic] Damascus, and Biblus, and Tyre, and Sidon, and Antioch, and now I am here to build with you, and with a will. It is to be proud of being an American, but it is also to be proud that your fathers and mothers came from a land upon which God laid His Gracious hand and raised His messengers. Young Americans of Syrian origin, I believe in you.' (Younis 312-3)

The outbreak of World War II gave many Arab and Muslim Americans the opportunity to express their patriotism. Approximately 30,000 Arab Americans served in World War II (Haiek 33). After the First World War, the terms "Lebanese" and "Syrian" were still the predominant nomenclature, not until after World War II when the nations reached full sovereignty did the two ethnicities become distinct (Younis 287). The war also caused further assimilation as the GI's returned to the U.S. and Arab Americans moved their homes from "Little Syria" to Brooklyn. After the construction of the Brooklyn Battery Tunnel, their businesses followed (Kayyali 43).

## **The Fourth Wave: 1947-1965**

Unlike previous waves of immigration which had mainly consisted of Christian Maronites, Melkites and Syrian Orthodox faithful, the fourth wave of immigration contained significant numbers of Muslim immigrants (Sawaie xvii). The upheaval in the Middle East after the conclusion of World War II drove the intellectual and social elite of the region to the U.S. They came from throughout the Middle East, South Asia, U.S.S.R. and Eastern Europe escaping new regimes and revolutions and seeking economic, political and religious freedom (Leonard *Muslims* 9; Sawaie xvii). A large group:

Consisted of Palestinians displaced by Israel, but there were many from other lands, such as Egyptians whose property had been nationalized by Nasser; Iraqis fleeing their country after the 1958 revolution; Syrians of position who had been excluded from government participation; and East European Muslims from countries like Yugoslavia, Albania and the Soviet Union, escaping from communist rule. (Haddad "Century of Islam" 2; Kayyali 32)

Many Turkish Muslims came after World War II as part of Cold War-driven programs (Nyang *Islam* 61; Smith 52). Palestinians immigrated after the Arab-Israeli War and the independence of Israel in 1947. Many Indian Muslims came to the United States, mostly from Hyderabad, after the collapse of the colony in 1948 (Mohammad 35). These Indian immigrants were extremely successful and assimilated well into American society (Afzal 5-6). A significant number of the fourth wave came to further their education and earn advanced degrees. With wealth, education and proficiency in English, these newcomers had little in common with the earlier waves of immigrants (Kayyali 32; Haddad "Century of Islam" 2).

The first organizations formed by the new generation of immigrants were to perpetuate their cultural traditions. The associations organized *haflas* (parties) with music and entertainment and *maharajans* (festivals) that had appeared in the 1920's. These festivals attracted thousands of people and were held not only to celebrate Middle Eastern cultural and religious holidays, but American ones as well, such as Labor Day and the Fourth of July (Rashid 76-82). The Rashid Sales Company which had begun screening Egyptian films at theaters throughout New York, began shipping Arabic music nationwide to meet demand. In 1944, it opened a store in Manhattan which was later moved to Brooklyn where it remains today (Kayyali 123).

The political currents in American society and the significant current events which occurred in the Middle East politically galvanized the Arab American and Muslim communities in the United States. The intellectual and professional elites who had recently immigrated provided a leadership cadre around which organizations formed. Many of the immigrants who came in the 1950's subscribed to Nasserist, socialist and pan-Arabist ideologies which encouraged civic participation (Haddad "Inventing" 113). These leaders advocated organizing along national, historical, lingual and cultural lines. Phillip K. Hitti founded the Institute for Arab American Affairs in New York City in 1945 and he advocated for the Palestinian community (Orfalea 156). In 1952 Abdullah Ingram, a second generation Arab-American and veteran of World War II, established the International Muslim Society. Two years later, Ingram became the first president of

the Federation of Islamic Associations which was founded by second and third generation Lebanese Americans who sought to unite the Muslim population of the United States (GhaneaBassiri 24-25). Some Muslim refugees, who came mainly from Morocco and Egypt during this wave, subscribed to the more radical ideologies of Sayyid Qutb, Mawlana Abu Ala al-Mawdudi and the Muslim Brotherhood (Nyang "Continental African" 254; GhaneaBassiri 26).

These individuals were prominent in the newly formed Muslim Student Associations (MSA) (GhaneaBassiri 26; Ferris 215). The first chapter of the MSA was founded in 1963 at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign to accommodate the waves of Muslim students who came to study in the U.S. in the 1950's ([www.msanational.org](http://www.msanational.org)). The Association sought the Islamicization of all ways of life, isolation from the general American society, and:

Believed Western secularism had already led to the social and moral degradation of the West. By adopting Western values and political institutions, the Muslim world risked also becoming corrupt and losing its Islamic identity. (GhaneaBassiri 27).

The MSA advocated uniting all Muslims under an Islamic state. The founders of the Muslim Student Association:

Found the type of Islam practiced by the earlier generations of immigrants tainted by secularism and materialism and were...determined to deal with the challenges from both the dangers of 'Americanized Islam' and heretical brands of Islam of the NOI and Ahmadiyya varieties. (Nyang *Islam* 66, 77)



The MSA at Columbia University became highly successful, receiving funds from overseas and hiring full time employees (GhaneaBassiri 27). The MSA spawned numerous other organizations including the Islamic Medical Association, Association of Muslim Scientists and Engineers, Association of Muslim Social Scientists, Islamic Book Service, Islamic Teaching Center, American Trust Publications, and the Muslim Communities Association of the United States and Canada (27).

Although these organizations were intended to unite Muslims across ethnic boundaries, South Asians and Arabs competed for leadership positions and discrimination against African Americans was common (Mohammad 197-198). Arab Americans were dominant in positions of leadership as imams, clerics and educators because of their knowledge of Arabic (Leonard *Muslims* 9). The majority of the Muslim immigrants who came during the 1950's were not religious but more concerned with their ethnic or national identity rather than their Muslim identity. On the whole, they did not attend mosques and instead focused on raising political consciousness (Kayyali 93).

Those who did attend prayers looked to their local neighborhood mosques rather than national organizations for their religious practices (GhaneaBassiri 33). Consequently, the mosque achieved a function in the U.S. that was uncommon in the Muslim world because it served as a, "mediating link between Muslims and their host society" (Kayyali 92; GhaneaBassiri 34-35). Imams aided with the family, financial and

social problems of their congregants and provided a social hub for converts. Similar to other houses of worship in the United States, mosques were not only places of worship but also sites for weddings, funerals, and religious education classes (Haddad "Century of Islam" 7). Most survived on donations from congregants and were led by a Board of Directors (GhaneaBassiri 35). Muslims viewed their mosque as:

Not just structures in which Muslims pray and listen to sermons (*khutba*), most Muslims become active members of a mosque only if they agree with its understanding of Islam and the way in which Islam should be practiced in the United States. Hence, Muslims in the United States take the time to shop around for a mosque that represents their perception of Islam. And if such a mosque does not exist, they may found their own centers for religious gatherings at their homes. (GhaneaBassiri 35)

With the mosque's growing importance, the New York Mosque Foundation was created in 1952 with the contributions of foreign governments and professional Muslims to build mosques in the New York area (Ferris 214).

As a result of "the absence of a religious authority in the United States [which] allows for Muslims to establish organizations based on their particular understandings of Islam," many sects of Islam exist in the United States (GhaneaBassiri 23). The Tablighi Jamaat, which has existed in the United States since 1952, was the first organization to construct a building specifically designed to be a mosque in the New York area (Mohammad 181-184). Members were mostly of South Asian descent specifically, Pakistani, Indian and Bangladeshi but the movement actively recruits from the lower classes of American society which accounts for the growing diversity of its membership.

The Tablighi Jamaat adhere to a conservative interpretation of Islam and advocate an isolationist lifestyle, living separately from the host society and only interacting with non-Muslims when absolutely necessary (Mohammad 181-184). The number of members is difficult to quantify but it is surmised that approximately 1,000 members reside in the New York area and 10,000-15,000 nationally (181-4).

The Nizari Ismaili Muslim community is a sect of Shia Islam whose followers began immigrating to the U.S. in the 1960's. These individuals were primarily professionals and were of African or South Asian descent. They were educated and proficient in English which ensured their success upon arrival. As the community grew, they were able to organize prayer groups and social gatherings (Nanji 156). In 1972, Ismaili numbers in the U.S. increased again as a result of upheavals on the African continent (151). This wave of immigration was comprised of refugees without capital and those with professional skills found it difficult to find employment during the economic downturn. Ismailis continue to have a presence throughout the United States with a major center in New York City (158).

Also with a headquarters in New York City is a growing community of followers of the Sufi sect of Islam (Mohammad 188). There are several branches of Sufism but the most popular in New York is the Naqshbandi, with 10,000 members nationwide and 1,000 in the New York area. Generally, Sufis adhere to a mystical version of Islam and advocates an ascetic lifestyle. The 1960's brought an increased interest in spirituality

and Eastern religions, which attracted many American converts to Sufism (Haddad "Century of Islam" 7).

African American converts were also attracted to Islam during the 1960's due to the growing "black nationalist" movements. Islam provided an alternative to the "white-dominated Christianity" followed by the mainstream. In 1950, Sheikh Faisal had established the Institute of Islam as part of the Islamic Mission of America he had begun earlier. Over the next two decades, the Institute offered Arabic and Islam classes daily (Ferris 213). The classes attracted 300 members including students, diplomats, businessmen and blue collar workers. The Institute welcomed both immigrant Muslims and African American converts and sought to build bridges between the two groups and build cohesiveness within the Muslim community. The Mission exposed converts to Sunni traditions and served as an alternative to the Nation of Islam (Ferris 214). Faisal advocated a reclaiming of both his follower's Muslim and American identities. Sheikh Faisal was aided by another Moroccan immigrant Mohammed Kabbaj who assumed leadership of the Mission after Faisal's death in 1980 (Mohammad 128-9).

Despite Faisal's efforts to unify Muslim immigrants and African American converts, the two groups remained at odds. Two of the members of the Mission, Rijab Mahmud and Yahya Abdul Karim, founded the Darul Islam Movement specifically for African American converts. Darul Islam was stricter in its teachings and was affiliated with the Tablighi Jamaat and the writings of Abu Ala al-Mawdudi (Nyang *Islam* 20). By the 1960's,

Darul Islam was the largest indigenous Sunni organization with around 20 mosques in the New York area (Haddad "Century of Islam" 20). It practiced *dawa* (proselytizing) and developed a significant following in the New York state prison population ([www.rightsidenews.com](http://www.rightsidenews.com)). It was frequently at odds with the NOI and maintained a paramilitary wing called *Rad* (thunder) which emphasized, "physical/martial readiness and combat appearance" (Griggs 82). By the late 1970's, Darul Islam's more radical factions included Al-Fuqra, which maintains a headquarters and military-style training facilities in Hancock, New York (Leonard "South Asian" 237). Darul Islam's leadership rebuffed efforts to create unity between Muslim organizations and it is argued that this tension led to the shooting deaths of two of its leaders outside the Ya Sin Mosque (Nyang *Islam* 146).

The most well-known Muslim movement in the African American community is the Nation of Islam. Malcolm Little, more commonly known as Malcolm X, was Elijah Mohammed's most prominent disciple. He was the minister of Temple No. 7 in New York and the Nation's chief spokesman and brought attention to Islam in the U.S. throughout the 1960's (Ferris 216). Malcolm X became disillusioned with the Nation's departure from orthodox Islam and the controversies surrounding Elijah Mohammed (Haddad "Century of Islam" 4). He left the Nation and made the *hajj* (pilgrimage) to Mecca. Upon his return to the U.S., he disavowed racism and founded his religious

organization, the Muslim Mosque, Inc. (Smith 205). A year after separating from the Nation of Islam, Malcolm X was murdered (85).

After Elijah Mohammed's death in 1975 his son, Wallace Deen also known as Warith Deen Mohammed, assumed leadership of the Nation of Islam (Lincoln 224). Warith Deen sought to remove black nationalism from the Nation's ideology and more closely adhere to traditional Islam. Deen changed the organization's name first to the World Community of Al-Islam in the West and then to the American Muslim Mission (Lincoln 229). These changes were representative of Warith's desire to move away from the radical roots of the Nation. Deen's American Muslim Mission welcomed members of all races, displayed the American flag at meetings and recited the Pledge of Allegiance at its schools (Lincoln 225-227). Warith also dismantled the paramilitary security forces of the group (Mamiya 243). The Mission's members were urged to take part in the political process and military service was permitted (Lincoln 230). Warith declared to a group of his followers, "I am a patriot of the true blood of the Constitution of the United States" (Lincoln 230). Warith Deen's leadership signaled a new era for the movement.

However, some followers did not adhere to his vision for the Nation and left the movement with Louis Farrakhan shortly after Elijah Mohammed's death (Lincoln 224). Farrakhan assumed leadership of Malcolm X's Temple No. 7 in Harlem and adhered to Elijah Mohammed's view of the Nation (Mamiya 238-239). Farrakhan believed that orthodox Islam was not suitable for African Americans (GhaneaBassiri 153-154). By

1980, Farrakhan's Temple No. 7 had 400 members mainly from lower social strata (Mamiya 244). The Nation of Islam is the most recognizable Islamic organization in the United States. It has mosques and study groups throughout the country and has been successful in attracting many African Americans to Islam (GhaneaBassiri 158-159).

The Ansaruallah community was founded in 1970 and followed the precedent of the Nation, combining black nationalism and Islam. Ansaruallah's founder, Isa Mohammed, was inspired by the teachings of Elijah Muhammad. Isa was born Dwight York in the Sudan. As an adult he attended the State Street Mosque and was a member of both the Nation of Islam and the Moorish Science Temple (Haddad and Smith 108). Imam Isa claimed he was a descendant of the *mahdi*, a prophet-like figure in Islam, and changed his name to Imam Isa al-Hadi al-Mahdi to validate his lineage. Imam Isa asserted that he was an inspired interpreter of the Quran, that Allah spoke through him and he alone preached the true Islam (Haddad and Smith 108). Isa established his headquarters in Brooklyn, New York and renamed his group the Nubian Islamic Hebrew Association to distinguish it and his followers from other Muslim organizations (Haddad "Century of Islam 21-22; Haddad and Smith 104-108).

### **The Fifth Wave: 1965-2001**

Between 1965 and 1992, 400,000 Arab immigrants came to the United States as a result of the change in American immigration laws (Kayyali 33). The 1965 immigration

act passed by President Johnson established preferences for immigrant visas that exist until today. The act established an overall annual quota of 170,000 immigrants and a country maximum of 20,000 immigrants. Visa preferences were awarded to immigrants seeking family unification, refugees and highly skilled workers (Kayyali 24). The act changed key factors for receiving a visa from country of origin to education and skill levels (Al-Qazzaz 25).

In the 1950's and 1960's, optimism was growing in the Arab world as a result of an improving economy and the emergence of capable leaders. This optimism ended with Israel's victory in the 1967 Yom Kippur War and the outbreak of civil war in Lebanon. As a result, thousands of immigrants from Lebanon, Palestine, Jordan and Egypt came to the United States. Upheaval in Libya, Tunisia, and Algeria resulted in asylum seekers fleeing to the U.S. to escape religious and political persecution (Haddad "Inventing" 117). The rise of Khomeini and the subsequent Iranian revolution in 1979 led to an increase in Muslim immigration from Iran (Nyang *Islam* 17). The spread of communism throughout the Russia and Central Asia augmented the numbers of Muslims emigrating from the region to the U.S (16). In 1978, 8,000-10,000 Afghan refugees came to settle in Queens and Brooklyn (Ferris 226). The 1991 Gulf War sparked immigration from Iraq and the Gulf States (Kayyali 33). Strife in Pakistan, the Soviet occupation of Afghanistan, civil war in Somalia, the rise of a military regime in the Sudan, ethnic cleansing in Bosnia



and the Iran-Iraq War all contributed to an increase in Muslim immigration to the U.S. (Smith 53).

A significant portion of these immigrants came for professional and educational opportunities. Although the educational system in the Arab world had improved, there were not sufficient jobs to match the skills of these new graduates and they sought employment in the United States. Many immigrants chose to pursue degrees from American schools because they offered the best instruction in medicine and engineering. In 1973, 7,000 Arab students were attending American universities, in 1978 this number had jumped to 20,000 and in 1980 the number of Arab students reached more than 180,000 (Al-Qazzaz 24; Lovell 93). Many of these foreign students remained in the U.S. after completing their education because there were better professional opportunities, a higher quality of life, and some had married American spouses (Kayyali 34; Al-Qazzaz 25). In contrast, some of the immigrants who came during this wave were granted visas according to family reunification and refugee status. These individuals were uneducated and lacked professional skills (Al-Qazzaz 23).

Some of the immigrants who were granted visas due to their high education and professional skills were able to gain positions in managerial, sales, technical or administrative fields as doctors, pharmacists, programmers, technicians, and engineers (Kayyali 101-102). Others found it more difficult to find positions which matched their high skill levels and were forced to take positions for which they were overqualified such

as hotel receptionists, clerks, cab drivers, bartenders and waiters (102). Their ability to find employment was highly dependent on the state of the American economy upon their arrival. Examples of this were the recession and high unemployment rates of the 1970's or the technology booms of the 1990's and 2000's.

The immigrants who came with little education and professional skills had difficulty gaining employment and earning promotions. They chose to use the existing networks and contacts within their communities to open their own businesses in insurance, banking, restaurants, hotels, travel agencies and small retail industries (Mohammad 43). Some purchased franchises which were part of national chains (Kayyali 102). There are a large number of Muslim-owned small businesses including delis and convenience stores located in the Bronx and to a lesser extent in Manhattan (Cristillo and Minnite 128).

Since the 1960's Muslim immigrants have tended to settle in areas with a high concentration of immigrants of the same ethnicity and religion. This included many cities in New York and New Jersey which held 24% of the Muslim population of the United States (Numan 3; Kayyali 99). Over the last forty years, the Muslim population of New York increased due to immigration, conversion and high birth rates (Ferris 209). As the population increased it spread from New York City to Brooklyn, Queens and New Jersey (Ferris 209).

By 1991, it was estimated that 300,000-600,000 Muslims were living in New York and New Jersey and 1-3 million were living in the United States (Ferris 209; Haiek 116).

Estimates of the number of Muslim living in both the U.S. and the New York area vary according to the source. Depending on the estimate, 7% to 25% of Muslims living in the New York-New Jersey area are of Arab descent originating from Palestine, Lebanon, Syria, Egypt and Yemen (Cristillo and Minnite 128). They reside in the Astoria, Long Island and Brooklyn areas (128-129). A significant population of North African Muslims from Morocco and Algeria reside in Astoria as well (132). There is a large Egyptian Muslim community located in Jersey City, New Jersey (Kayyali 99). Muslims from Iran, Albania, Bosnia, Kosovo, Ghana, Senegal, Niger and Sierra Leone also reside in New York (Cristillo and Minnite 127).

The most notable result of the 1965 immigration act was the influx of immigrants from South Asia specifically, Indonesia, Malaysia, Bangladesh, Pakistan and India (Smith 53; Nyang *Islam* 53). It is difficult to determine exactly the number of South Asian Muslims because religion was not asked upon immigrating, the "Asian Indian" category did not appear on the census until 1980, and Bangladesh did not exist prior to 1971 (Mohammad 32). However, it is probable that a large number of the South Asian immigrants which emigrated mainly from Pakistan, Bangladesh and India were followers of Islam (Leonard "South Asian" 235). The Indian immigrants came to the U.S. for professional opportunities because rampant favoritism and nepotism, high unemployment and Muslims were a persecuted minority in India (Mohammad 36-37). Pakistani immigrants came to the U.S. to escape violence in Karachi and Peshawar.

Bengalis immigrated after the 1971 civil war fleeing the political strife and depressed economy (Mohammad 37). Many South Asian Muslims came as students and stayed for better professional opportunities after they completed their education (38). In the 1960's and 70's, there was a need for physicians in many hospitals in the U.S. which attracted doctors from South Asia who were having difficulty finding high-paying positions (Mohammad 36).

The Indian Muslims emigrated from Uttar Pradesh, Maharashtra, Assam, Bengal, Bihar, Kashmir, and Tamil Nadu (35). The Pakistani Muslims hailed from large cities mainly Lahore, Karachi, Rawalpindi, Faisalabad, Hyderabad and Peshawar (35). The Bengali Muslims came from metropolitan areas such as, Dacca and Chittagong (36). These Indian, Pakistani and Bengali immigrants settled in large urban areas in the U.S. due to their similarity to where they had lived in their home countries. New York City attracted:

The highest concentration of Indians and probably of South Asians of all the urban centres in the United States. Most are grouped in the five boroughs of the city: Manhattan, Queens, Brooklyn, the Bronx and Staten Island. Long Island also has significant numbers, in particular Nassau County. (Mohammad 34)

South Asian Muslims' pattern of settlement was similar to immigrants of other ethnicities. The first waves of émigrés lived close to the city center in the Bronx and Brooklyn and moved south of Manhattan to Queens and Long Island when they became more successful (Mohammad 51). The neighborhood of Coney Island in Brooklyn has held a concentration of Pakistani immigrants since the 1970's (46). A significant

population of Bengalis lives in Queens and Astoria. The area between 26<sup>th</sup> Street and Lexington Avenue is known as “Little India” because of the large number of Indian restaurants, shops, and markets (Mohammad 35). Mohammad estimates that the number of South Asian Muslims living in New York is 30,000-50,000 (35). In 1992, it was surmised that the U.S. Muslim population was 42% African American, 24.4% South Asian (India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Afghanistan, and Sri Lanka), 12.4% Arab (Arab speaking countries of the Middle East and North Africa), 5.2% African, 3.6% Iranian, 2.4% Turkish, 2% Southeast Asian (Thailand, Malaysia, Indonesia, Indochina, Philippines), 1.6% American whites (West European, native Americans), 0.8% Eastern European and 5.6% other (Numan 2). With the increase in the South Asian Muslim population, the number of Muslims in the American population has increased significantly and the percentage of Muslims of Arab heritage has decreased (Haddad “Inventing” 121).

The South Asian Muslims who came during the 1980’s and 1990’s were less educated and skilled than those who came in the 1960’s and 1970’s (Afzal 5-6). The second wave was mainly wives and unmarried children of permanent residents or siblings of U.S. citizens with families. These newcomers lacked education and professional skills whereas those who came in the previous decades were successful professionals, mainly doctors, engineers, scientists, teachers and businessmen who became very successful (Mohammad 41).

South Asian immigrants have become an educated, accomplished and prosperous elite in American society (Williams 17). The 1990 census showed that a much greater percentage of both Indian men and women had college degrees than the general American population (Mohammad 42). A significant percentage of Indians who came to the U.S. possessed university degrees and continued studying to earn American qualifications (41). Indian immigrants have the highest median household income, family income, per capita income, highest percent with a B.A. degree or higher, highest percentage in management and professional field, and the most education in English since childhood of any foreign born group in the U.S. (Leonard *Muslims* 14). Indian immigrants are more successful than Pakistanis and Bengalis, and all three groups are more successful than the general American population (Mohammad 42). These accomplishments can largely be attributed to:

The higher standard of education – modeled on the British system – achieved by the South Asian Muslims, their good English, their exposure to Western values and their upper middle class origins all combine to equip them to structurally integrate into American society. (Mohammad 42)

The ability of immigrants to assimilate into American culture was dependent on the individual's success and the time period of immigration. Those immigrants who came earlier and enjoyed great success integrated easily but those who came later and found less opportunities had more difficulty assimilating into American society. Among those who immigrated later, there has been a greater rate of isolation and conflict over their dual identity as South Asian and American. They settle in closed communities with

others who share their ethnicity and religion (Afzal 11). Consequently, they have limited proficiency in English, have been more attached to their home country and have minimal contact with the host community. As a result, they are more resistant to American values and see the United States as corrupt and alien (Afzal 7-8). Only 20-30% of South Asians in the U.S. are practicing Muslims but South Asian Muslims have become more religious over time and generations in the U.S. South Asian Muslims have a higher rate of being affiliated with Muslim centers and mosques than other ethnic and cultural Muslim groups (Afzal 8; Mohammad 56). Level of education is negatively correlated with religiosity so as an immigrants' level of education decreases, the degree of religiosity increases (Mohammad 57). The later wave of immigrants exhibited a greater degree of religious involvement because the organizations and mosques were available to them as opposed to a lack of Muslim infrastructure during the earlier waves of immigrants (58).

## **Chapter 4: Contemporary Trends in the American Muslim Community**

### **Rise in Religious Identity**

Religion is an important component of an immigrant's identity and:

Takes on a fundamental role in the lives of immigrants as they settle into the new country, and the structure and practice of religion become a central part of the process as the individual and the group adapt and maintain their identity. (Mohammad 58)

Islam is one of the fastest growing religions in the U.S. and for new immigrants provides solidarity and tradition (Peek 216-219). The high concentration of educated Muslims and religious freedom in the U.S. provides American Muslims with an opportunity to openly practice Islam (Mohammad 266). In fact:

Immigration itself is often a theologizing experience; immigrants frequently react to the alienation and confusion that result from their arrival in a new country by turning to religion. In an attempt to resolve adjustment issues, they build religious institutions and re-establish familiar social and cultural activities in the new host society. Consequently, religion can assume greater importance for immigrants' definition of self and group affiliations than was the case in their homelands, where religion may have been taken for granted or at least been of lesser importance. This is particularly true if the immigrant comes from a society where they were part of the religious majority and then moves to a host society where they become a religious minority... (Peek 218-219)

As a religious minority, more effort needs to be exerted to ensure that the next generation of Muslim Americans carries on religious practices and beliefs (Lovells 106). This is evident in the appearance of more Muslim schools, traditional Islamic dress, public space for prayer in work places and universities, and widespread building of mosques (Kayyali 94).



This increase in religiosity can take two forms, as merely a desire to perpetuate family traditions and connection to ones roots or it becomes more insidious as a hatred of the host society and its values. In the 1960's, a worldwide Islamic revival took place and many fundamentalist Islamic thinkers emerged such as Abu Ala al-Mawdudi of Pakistan and Sayyid Qutb of Egypt. They asserted that Islam stood in opposition to Christianity and saw a clash of civilizations between righteous Islam and the morally bankrupt Christian West (Mohammad 125; Kayyali 94).

Islamic consciousness rose among American Muslims in the 1980's (Kayyali 94). Many African immigrants who came from North Africa specifically Somalia, Libya and the Sudan were more religious and isolationist and subscribed to fundamentalist Islam. They shared the ideologies of more fundamentalist groups like the Muslim Brotherhood, Wahhabi, and Sudanese National Front (Nyang "Continental African" 258-9). It can be argued that the increase in religiosity among American Muslims is a result of the increase in the importance of religion in American society and the rise of the evangelist movement in Christianity over the last thirty years in the U.S. (Kayyali 97). At the same time, moderate and secular Muslims immigrated to U.S. to escape the rise in Islamic fundamentalism in the Muslim world (Kayyali 34-35).

The religious freedom available to Muslims in the U.S. has attracted several different sects of Islam. The Ahmadi community in the U.S. continued to grow through the 1980's as great restrictions were placed on their practice in Pakistan and spurred

immigration to the U.S. (Walbridge and Haneef 130). Prior to this influx, the majority of members in the movement were African Americans but they were outnumbered by Pakistanis after this wave of immigration (130). The differences in social class between the South Asian and African American members of the community created tension within the community (130-132). Ahmadi mosques located in the Bronx, Brooklyn, Buffalo, Long Island, Manhattan, Rochester, and Syracuse continue to operate ([www.ahmadiyya.us](http://www.ahmadiyya.us)).

The rise in African Muslim immigrants has increased the prevalence of Sufi Islam in the U.S. The most visible Sufi brotherhood in New York is Mouride Sufism, whose followers began arriving in the U.S. in the early 1980's (Babou 150). Mouride Sufism was founded by the Senegalese holy man, Amadu Bamba Mbakke, who emphasized practical education and not ideology. He focused on meditation, patience, humility, endurance and sharing. A Mouride follower explained, "it's not a sect that pulls away from the world. Bamba told his followers to engage the world. He was not antimodern, anti-learning or antiwomen" (Hecht 12). Bamba's brotherhood became popular in Senegal from 1895-1912 in reaction to the French colonization and the rapid changes in the economy. In 2002, it became the fastest growing Muslim brotherhood in Senegal with 3 million followers (Babou 151-152).

As a result of hostile French immigration laws and drought in Senegal, a small group of Murids came to New York City in the late 1970's (158). They returned to

Senegal and spoke of the great opportunities available in New York. As a result, larger numbers of Mourides emigrated to the U.S. from Senegal in the following decade. This group consisted of men in their 30's who lived collectively and worked as cab drivers and street vendors (Babou 159). By the 1990's, these men became successful and opened businesses in Harlem in shipping, travel, and transferring remittances mainly for other immigrants. As the number of Mouride and Senegalese immigrants increased, a community emerged in Harlem known as "Little Senegal" where large numbers of craft stores, restaurants, and halal food stores were located (Babou 160). Due to the location of the Mouride community in Harlem, the movement attracted African American converts (Babou 161; Hecht 12-13). The first *dahira* was founded in New York in the mid-1980's which, "was first conceived as a sort of prayer circle where disciples from the same town or neighbourhood would meet on a weekly basis to read from the Koran, chant Amadu Bamba's religious poems and socialize" (Babou 154). By 2001, there were thirty *dahiras* in New York which provided a support system for Mourides living in the area (Babou 165). The Mouride Islamic Community of America was founded in 1989 and located in New York City ([www.toubamica.org](http://www.toubamica.org)).

Islam has attracted converts not only from the African American community, but from the Latino American community as well. In the 1970's, first generation Puerto Ricans living in New York City began converting (Smith 66). One of the oldest Latino-Muslim organizations Alianza Islamica, was founded in 1975 as an outgrowth of Darul

Islam. Operating mainly in East Harlem and the Bronx, it is a religious organization which provides social services for the community (Smith 67). A *New York Times* article explains:

The call of Islam comes in many ways to Hispanics, and as their numbers and visibility grow, so does the likelihood that more converts will follow. Some are women who convert because they are marrying Muslims; some come to Islam in prison; some are influenced by the growth of Islam among blacks in the neighborhoods they share; others are Latinos looking for cultural pride or a new spiritual path. Many are in rebellion against the Roman Catholic Church. (Wakin)

Missionary efforts in New York City also resulted in the creation of PIEDAD (Propagacion Islamica para la Educacion la Devocion a Allah el Divino), an organization seeking to reach out to Latina Americans who have recently converted, are interested in converting to Islam, and those who have married Muslim men (Smith 67). They also actively practice *dawa* in the Latin American community ([www.piedadislam.org](http://www.piedadislam.org)).

In addition to the Sufi and Sunni sects of Islam, Shia Islam is the third prominent branch of Islam. Shia Muslims began emigrating to the U.S. in large numbers in the 1970's. They originated mainly from Lebanon and Iraq, but to a lesser extent from Iran, the Indian subcontinent, Gulf states, and East and North Africa (Takim 219). Some African Americans also converted to Shia from Sunni movements and the Nation of Islam (Takim 219; Kayyali 94). Followers of Shia Islam account for 20% of the U.S. Muslim population (Kayyali 94). The Shia who reside in New York, New Jersey and Connecticut are of Indian and Pakistani descent and are followers of the Daudi Bohra,

Twelver and Nizari Ismaili factions of Shia Islam (Ferris 221; Mohammad 33,52,150). A

Shia seminary was established in Medina, New York in the 1980's (Takim 219).

### **Community Building**

The initial efforts in community-building were directed towards establishing a mosque. As groups of family and friends, usually from the same country, began praying together they would buy, or more often rent, a small store front to hold prayers. As the number of members increased and became wealthier, they would form a board of trustees, apply for tax-exempt status and offer Friday prayers. The group would then hire part time staff for fundraising and other tasks and offer instructional classes on Islam. In the next stage of development, full time staff would be hired and extensive social services would be offered. In the final phase of development, the mosque would establish a school (Cristillo and Minnite 136-137; Lovell 106). Most attempts at establishing a mosque only succeed in gathering a prayer group and renting a small store front. Only 12% of mosques in New York City reach the final phase of development (Cristillo and Minnite 137).

The leadership of mosques varies. Some are led by an Amir who possesses control over all the affairs of the community and the interpretation of Islam. Both the community and its mosque are dominated by one leader (Nyang *Islam* 43). Other mosques are led by a board of directors similar to American associations. Satellite

mosques are part of a larger national or international Muslim group and represent that movement in the area. Lastly, mosques led by *shuras* (councils) are more egalitarian since they are led by persons accountable to all members of the mosque (Nyang *Islam* 43). After the 1970's, Muslims began establishing mosques in the U.S. because they recognized that they would not be returning to their native countries and by the end of the decade there were six mosques in New York City (Nyang *Islam* 22; Cristillo and Minnite 136).

Women were more involved in American mosques than those in the Muslim world and the mosque was a locus of social activities and services (Mohammad 127).

However:

In the 1970s, the sectarian violence in Lebanon and the Islamic movement in Egypt forced some Muslims with an Islamist revivalist outlook to flee the Arab world. Some sought refuge in the United States. Upon seeing the way Islam was practiced in the United States, many expressed their dismay, believing that the innovations to the role and the character of the mosque in the United States was not in keeping with their faith. They sought to restore the mosque as a place devoted exclusively to prayer and preaching and to limit the role of women in the mosques. (Kayyali 93)

To accomplish these goals, these immigrants would seek leadership positions in the mosques. They would install a foreign-born imam who agreed with their more conservative point of view and in turn influence the congregation. These foreign imams attended seminaries in Muslim countries and did not understand American society. Others received funding from foreign governments and served as a mouthpiece for their interests (Mohammad 126). These efforts brought the newer immigrants into conflict

with earlier immigrants who were less conservative in their practice of Islam (Kayyali 93).

Although mosques provided a meeting place for prayer and social activities, one of its chief objectives was to provide religious education for Muslim children (Mohammad 124). To this effort many Islamic schools were established both housed in mosques and standing alone. By the 1990's, twelve full time Islamic day schools existed in New York City certified by the New York Board of Education and attracting students of diverse ethnicities and socioeconomic backgrounds. Some provided instruction through elementary school and others until junior high and high school (Cristillo and Minnite 138).

By 1999, there were 28 mosques in Queens, 27 in Brooklyn, 20 in the Bronx, 17 in Manhattan and 8 on Staten Island, the largest being Masjid al-Farouq in Brooklyn Heights, Masjid Musaab bin Omayer in Bay Ridge and the Brooklyn Islamic Center in Bensonhurst (Cristillo and Minnite 136). The most significant mosque in New York is the Islamic Cultural Center of New York. In 1952, the United Nations moved its headquarters to New York City, bringing with it numerous Muslim diplomats and dignitaries who helped plan what became the Center (Mohammad 129; Ferris 214). The Center's planning began in 1966 and construction lasted until 1991. It was built with the help of U.N. Muslim ambassadors, individual contributions and funding from the Libyan, Kuwaiti and Saudi Arabian governments (Haiek 240-241). After \$17 million in construction, it

contained a mosque, school, library, lecture hall, museum and housing for visiting imams (241). It could also hold 1,000 people for prayer services (Adler et al).

Beginning in the 1960's, Muslim Americans began establishing organizations and associations to perpetuate Islamic values (Ferris 224). The social milieu of the 1960's and 1970's encouraged people to speak out as members of groups and to embrace their identities (Kayyali 105). The South Asians who arrived during this period:

Were particularly energetic in setting up community structures: the Pakistanis because Islam is the *raison d'être* of their home country, and the Indian Muslims because they are used to negotiate a space and legitimacy in a non-Muslim environment [sic]. (Mohammad 125)

The first of these organizations was the Muslim World League or *Rabatah al-Alam al-Islami*, which was founded in Mecca in 1962. It had an international presence and was active in the United States, with its American headquarters operating in New York City. The League distributes Qurans and Islamic materials, assists incarcerated Muslims, provides approximately \$5 million of funding to other Islamic groups and supplies imams to American mosques (Haddad "Century of Islam" 3; Haddad "Inventing" 114). The Muslim World League sponsored the first Islamic Conference of North America in Newark, New Jersey in 1977 (Nyang *Islam* 52). Until this point no Muslim umbrella organization existed and the League provided a, "framework for inter-organizational cooperation" (Nyang *Islam* 52). The League is recognized by the United Nations as a non-governmental organization and supplies a diplomat to the U.N. (Haddad "Inventing" 114).



An important offshoot of the Muslim Student Association is the Islamic Circle of North America (ICNA) which was founded in New York in 1971 (Leonard "South Asian" 237). Its members were mainly South Asian, young, well educated men from the tri-state area who had immigrated since the early 1970's. They frequently maintained their affiliations to Muslim organizations in their home countries including Jama'at Islami in Pakistan (Leonard "Leadership" 144 & Mohammad 171-5). The leader of the Jama'at Islami, Mawlana Abu Ala al-Mawdudi , preached:

That Muslims go beyond the personal transformation of the individual to the transformation of society...The Jama'at-e Islami seeks to create 'a corps of disciplined, morally upright, ideologically sound persons who might occupy the crucial positions in the future Islamic state Mawdudi hoped to bring into being. (Sanyal 142-143)

It is argued by some that Mawdudi taught more radical anti-Western and anti-modern beliefs (Sanyal 143). Dr. Usha Sanyal found through her research that the ICNA:

Attempts to differentiate itself from the host culture, rather than assimilate with it. Many reasons are given for this: among them the fact that the facility of communications worldwide enable immigrants to simultaneously participate in, or at least be influenced by, the culture and politics of their home country (and, for Muslims, the wider Muslim world) while in America. In view of the larger number of Muslim immigrants in the US, moreover, no radical break is required with the past, and assimilation into American culture can be more selective than it once was. These immigrants are likely not only to pride themselves on standing apart from the host country and its culture but also from earlier Muslim immigrants. (Sanyal 144-145)

By 1999, the ICNA had 3,600 members and supporters and had branches in cities throughout the U.S. and Canada (Sanyal 142). The Muslim Student Association also spawned the Islamic Society of North America (ISNA) in 1981 which subsumed the MSA

two years later. The ISNA is the largest Muslim organization in the U.S. and aims, “to propagate the message of Islam by injecting Islamic values into American political and social institutions” (GhaneaBassiri 29).

Many organizations were founded in New York that had both local and national influence. Senator James Abourzek founded the American-Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee (ADC) in 1980 to counter Arab American stereotypes and located one of its headquarters in New York City (Kayyali 133). The National Council on Islamic Affairs was founded in New York City by Dr. Muhammad Mehdi and The Young Muslims, an organization affiliated with the ICNA, is based in Jamaica, Queens (Nyang *Islam* 24). The Islamic Shura Council of New York was formed by a small study group of Muslim leaders to promote Islam, improve conditions for Muslim inmates, and encourage drug control and community service in their communities (Smith 123, 172).

Several important trends are evident in the formation of Muslim organizations. In the 1960’s an effort toward pan-Arabism and a focus on ethnic identity emerged. This is apparent in the names of organizations of the time such as the Arab-American University Graduates, Arab Community Center for Economic and Social Services and the National Association of Arab Americans (Kayyali 106, 133). In the 1980’s, this trend was supplanted by pan-Islamism which is evident in the names of the organization mentioned above, such as the Islamic Circle of North America and the Islamic Society of North America (Kayyali 108; Mohammad 198).

With greater numbers of organizations, American Muslims became more involved and conspicuous in American culture and politics. The Muslim Foundation of America created the Muslims' Day Parade in 1985 to celebrate the culture and beliefs of Muslims in New York (Haiek 148; Ferris 223). The *maharajans* that had begun in the 1920's continued into the 1990's with the most popular being the *Maharajan al-Fan* which was held at the Ethnic Folk Arts Center in New York City (Kayyali 123). The John F. Kennedy Airport, along with other public buildings in the city, displayed a Muslim crescent and star on one of its outdoor flagpoles (Smith 163).

The Muslim American community was politically galvanized by the Arab-Israeli and Gulf Wars. Muslim Americans became increasingly involved in politics and gained public office (Orfalea 212-213; Haddad "Inventing" 123). Muslim Americans were politically active on the local level in the New York area. In 1974, Edward Hanna was elected Mayor of Utica, New York and to the New York State Assembly and in the following year Mansour Alwan was elected Mayor of Chesilhurst, New Jersey (Haiek 45, 48). Keith Ellison in 2006 became the first Muslim U.S. Congressman and other Muslim politicians serve on the state level such as Saqib Ali, Larry Shaw, and Rashida Tlaib (MacFarquhar).

Recognition of Muslim religious practices has emerged in both local and national laws. In New Jersey, the Council of Mosques and Islamic Organizations produced a handbook which was circulated in New Jersey's public schools on Islamic religious practice. The Patterson County School Board in New Jersey agreed to close public

schools on the two Eids, the major Muslim holidays (Nimer 174). New York City suspended alternative side of the street parking during these two holidays as well (Pipes 159). Several school districts in New York City also permit students to be absent on Islamic holidays (161). The New Jersey state legislature passed a Halal Food Consumer Protection Act which ensured that anyone selling halal food met the necessary guidelines (159). The U.S. Supreme Court ruled that Muslim police officers in Newark, New Jersey were permitted to wear beards despite the department's "no beard" policy (Nimer 173). In 1991, Imam Siraj Wahhaj, the head of the Council of Muslim Leaders of New York City and vice president of the Islamic Society of North America, was the first Muslim cleric to give the opening prayer in Congress (Nimer 176; Pipes 124).

### **Tensions within the American Muslim Community**

The different waves of immigrants varied greatly in the way they responded to American culture and society. The earlier immigrants became peddlers or opened businesses. Their primary goals were to survive and provide for their families. Their children attended public schools, enlisted in the military and sought to assimilate. These immigrants were:

Eager to belong and in the process interpreted American culture as compatible with Arab concepts of virtue and honor; the Muslims among them emphasized the similarities between Islam and Christianity and the respect Islam has for Jesus and his mother, Mary. (Haddad "Inventing" 116)

They integrated successfully into American society while maintaining ties to their homelands. They spoke English with an accent and were unfamiliar with American politics and institutions. They were concerned with U.S. immigration policies and foreign policy in the Middle East.

Their children had poor Arabic skills and their heritage was more a social or religious tie than a political one. Consequently, they had little concern with foreign policy and instead concentrated on U.S. domestic politics (Kayyali 109-110). Second generation Muslim Americans faced great difficulty in negotiating their dual-identities. Some chose to mimic the success of their parents and others chose to rebel against it (Mohammad 87). Some of the children of the early immigrants excelled in their studies and became very successful in their chosen fields and others were unable to reach the level of success achieved by their parents (84). These generational differences caused tension within the Muslim community.

A significant trend is Muslim outreach to incarcerated individuals. Statistics showed that in 1992 17% of the New York state prison population was Muslim and in 2000 32% of the African American population in prison was Muslim. This has resulted in increased focus of Muslim organizations on incarcerated individuals both in proselytizing and providing social services (Leonard *Muslims* 8).

The Muslims who came after the 1960's were no longer the poor or unskilled, but were the highly educated elite of the Muslim world. They earned their visas based on

their skills and education and because of these differences underwent a different socialization process than their earlier counterparts (Haddad "Inventing" 116). These immigrants enjoyed:

... America's economic opportunities and freedom of religion, association, and speech, they flinch from what they perceive as its concomitant social and spiritual problems. A significant number of these more recently arrived Muslims have no patience for the kind of accommodation and compromise earlier generations of Muslim immigrants made, accusing them of diluting the importance of Islamic traditions, rituals, and distinguishing characteristics...Rather than stressing commonalities with American culture and religion they put the emphasis on the differences. Confident that Islam is the perfect way, they promote it as having a solution to America's ills. (Haddad "Inventing" 116-117)

Some of the later immigrants, specifically those who came as refugees or relatives of earlier immigrants, were forced to take low paying jobs even if they had earned higher degrees in their homelands. Many became disillusioned and disappointed with their situation in the U.S. (Mohammad 33, 48). These differences, "can lead to tensions in the community, as the earlier immigrants blame the more recent ones for being a burden on the community, or 'worse', that they give a bad impression of the community to American society at large" (Mohammad 50).

Muslim Americans describe their ethnic and religious identities differently according to generation and wave of immigration. For first generation Muslim Americans, ethnic identity is valued higher than religious identity whereas the second generation values religious identity higher than ethnic, national or cultural identities (Peek 228-229). A trend has emerged wherein younger Muslims, both second generation and newly

arrived immigrants, have become more religious than their parents and increasingly rigid and conservative in their practice of Islam (Mohammad 119; Peek 220). This can be attributed to an identity crisis some young Muslims experience and as a result attempt to demonstrate their “otherness” and opposition to American society (Mohammad 103-104). This is evident among new immigrants who:

Have more contact with the home country, and in general are more highly protective of their religious identity. The more recent the immigrant, the greater the tendency to ascribe a great deal of the suffering in the Arab world to American politics that are shaped to empower Israel at the expense of the Arab people. Hence, the process of Americanization is impeded by a profound feeling of an American double standard that dismisses Arab sentiment and rights. (Haddad “Inventing” 115)

Since 1965, new immigrants have reacted in three ways to moving to the United States. Some resist assimilation and live in homogeneous neighborhoods isolated from American society. Others create a boundary between the private and public spheres of their lives, integrating into American society in their public lives but organizing their home and family as they did in their homeland. Still others fully integrate their native culture and customs into their lives in the U.S. (Kayyali 67-68). Zia Asali, head of Arab-American Anti-Discrimination Committee said in 2003:

We have Arabs in America who live in a self-imposed ghetto with little contact with other citizens of their community. They watch *Al Jazeera* and know more about Gaza than they do about their own school districts, or the names of their congressman. Then, we have Americans of Arab heritage who have a vague familiarity with *kibbeh*, *debkeh* and Arabic music with dim memories of their immigrant grandparent’s accents. Then there are Arab Americans who share affection for both America and the Arab world and are trying to play an active role as a bridge between two cultures. (Kayyali 110)

The Pew Research Center released a study in 2007 titled, “Muslim Americans: Middle Class and Mostly Mainstream,” which revealed the beliefs, practices and statistical data pertaining to the Muslim American community. The Pew study discovered that Muslim Americans are:

Largely assimilated, happy with their lives, and moderate with respect to many of the issues that have divided Muslims and Westerners around the world. Muslims Americans are a highly diverse population, one largely comprised of immigrants. Nonetheless, they are decidedly American in their outlook, values, and attitudes. Overwhelmingly, they believe that hard work pays off in this society. This belief is reflected in Muslim American income and education levels, which generally mirror those of the general public. (Pew 1)

The study found that of the Muslim American population, 65% were foreign born and 35% were native-born. Of those born outside the United States (65% of the total population), 24% were from Arab region, 18% from South Asia, 8% from Iran, 5% from Europe, 4% from Africa and 6% other. Of the Muslim Americans born in the United States (35% of the total population), 20% were African American and 15% of other ethnicities. Of this native-born Muslim population, 21% were converts and 14% were born Muslim (Pew 1). The Muslim American population is defined by a large number of converts, mainly from Christianity and the African American race (21). Of all the foreign-born American Muslims, 18% arrived from 2000-2007, 21% from 1990-1999, 15% from 1980-1989, and 11% arrived before 1980 (15). Respondents listed the reasons for emigrating in order of descending frequency: education, economic, family, and political



motivations (15). Of the 2.35 million Muslims in the U.S., 65% are first generation Americans, 7% are second generation and 28% are third generation (15). The U.S. Muslim population is 54% male and 46% female and is significantly younger than the general population (16-17). Muslims in the U.S. have the same level of education and income as the general population but have a lower divorce rate (16, 18). Muslim Americans are also, “more likely than the general public to believe that hard work is the path to success: 71% of Muslim Americans say that ‘most people who want to get ahead can make it if they work hard’” (Pew 30). Muslim Americans are more likely to identify as Democrat than Republican but are socially conservative (7).

The U.S. Muslim population is 50% Sunni, 16% Shia, and 22% nonspecific (Pew 21). The level of religiosity among Muslim Americans is comparable to American Christians:

For example, U.S. Muslims are a little more likely than American Christians to say religion is ‘very important’ in their life (72% and 60%, respectively) but a little less likely to say they pray every day (61% vs. 70%). The two religious communities are about equally likely to attend religious services at least weekly (40% for Muslims vs. 45% for Christians.) Thus in terms of the broad patterns of religiosity, American Islam resembles the mainstream of American religious life. (Pew 27)

## **Chapter 5: The Roots of Fundamentalist Islam in the United States**

However, the survey found that Muslim Americans under the age of 30 were more religious and accepting of Islamic extremism than older Muslims. Younger Muslims attended mosques more frequently, thought as themselves first as Muslims than Americans and were twice as likely as their older counterparts to believe suicide bombings are justified in defense of Islam (Pew 6). Identifying oneself first as Muslim or American can predict one's acceptance of Islamic extremism (32). Although the study found that the vast majority of American Muslim condemned the use of suicide bombings under any circumstances, fewer than half of Muslim Americans believe that Arabs carried out 9/11 (Pew 7, 32). The study highlighted that American Muslims reject Islamic extremism much more frequently than European Muslims (2-3). However, Gunaratna points out that:

Most American Muslims – both Arab and non-Arab- do not support political violence, especially terrorism, but there is widespread resentment of the perceived influence of the Jewish lobby in shaping US foreign policy and America's role in the Middle East, especially its political, economic and military support for Israel. (Gunaratna 111-112)

The Pew Study shows that the majority of Muslim Americans are similar to other immigrants who came to the United States in their pursuit of greater opportunities for themselves and their families. However, an undercurrent of radicalism paralleled the growth of the Muslim community in the U.S. Although this trend is exemplified by only a

small percentage of American Muslims, their activities have become conspicuous over the last fifty years.

Fundamentalist Islam can be traced back to the activities of the Muslim Brotherhood, an organization established in by Hassan al-Banna in Egypt in 1928. Al-Banna began the Brotherhood in reaction to the end of the Islamic caliphate in the Ottoman Empire. Al-Banna strove against the secular current in Egyptian society and sought to establish an Islamic state in Egypt (Spencer 15; Wright 15-16). Al-Banna wrote in 1934 that:

It is a duty incumbent on every Muslim to struggle towards the aim of making every people Muslim and the whole world Islamic, so that the banner of Islam can flutter over the earth and the call of the Muezzin can resound in all the corners of the world: God is greatest! (Spencer 14)

In the 1940's the Brotherhood's membership reached 100,000-500,000 and operated branches internationally. The Brotherhood had two faces, one where it worked peacefully toward political aims and provided social services to the community, and a more secretive one in which it provided paramilitary training and weapons to its members (Spencer 15). In 1948, the Egyptian government disbanded the Brotherhood which then began operating clandestinely in small cells. The group became increasingly violent and committed bombings and assassinations (Wright 25). In 1952, the Brotherhood assisted Gamal Abdul Nasser in ousting King Farouk in hopes that he would establish an Islamic caliphate in Egypt. Instead, Nasser established a modern welfare

state (Wright 26). In response, the Brotherhood made an assassination attempt on Nasser's life.

After membership in the Brotherhood became illegal in Egypt, many members immigrated to the U.S. and founded Muslim schools, mosques and organizations (Emerson *Jihad Inc.* 346). In 1991, the Muslim Brotherhood issued a statement titled, "An Explanatory Memorandum on the General Strategic Goal for the Group in North America," which outlined a six point plan for the spread of Islam in North America (Spencer 17). The memorandum advocated not a confrontational strategy but one of slow absorption, recommending increasing the number of observant Muslims, unifying Muslims' efforts, presenting Islam as a civilization alternative and supporting the establishment of a global Islamic state (Spencer 17, 19). It stressed the importance of well-run and strong organizations to gain influence in American politics and media. It listed organizations in which to focus including, the Islamic Society of North America, Muslim Student Association, North American Islamic Trust, Muslim Arab Youth Association, Islamic Association for Palestine, Islamic Circle of North America, International Institute for Islamic Thought and the Council on American-Islamic Relations (Spencer 20-25).

One of the most significant members of the Muslim Brotherhood was the Egyptian writer Sayyid Qutb (Wright 8). He came to the U.S. in 1948 for graduate studies and was disgusted by Americans' boldness, overt sexuality and hedonism (10). He saw

the West as one great monolith against Islam and the East and became staunchly anti-American (9-10). Qutb wrote that:

Modern values- secularism, rationality, democracy, subjectivity, individualism, mixing of the sexes, tolerance, materialism- had infected Islam through the agency of Western colonialism. American now stood for all of that. Qutb's polemic was directed at Egyptians who wanted to bend Islam around the modern world. He intended to show that Islam and modernity were completely incompatible. (Wright 24)

Qutb returned to Egypt and wrote, Milestones, his seminal work on Islam. For his efforts to overthrow Nasser's government in Egypt he was jailed, which radicalized him further and strengthened his resolve against the West (Wright 31). He was eventually executed for his opposition to Nasser to which he replied, "Thank God, I performed jihad for fifteen years until I earned this martyrdom" (Wright 31). Qutb's writings were wildly popular within and outside the Arab world and became a rallying cry for Islamic radicals.

Qutb's is an extreme case of a common trend. Many Muslims have come to the United States as foreign students since the 1950's. Some have a similar reaction as Qutb to American culture, and become hostile to Christianity and the West (Haddad "Century of Islam" 11). Most come only seeking greater educational opportunities, but this population has become a frequent source of radicals in the U.S. Some Muslim students in the U.S., "have been recruited into a variety of Islamic organizations, covering a spectrum running from moderate groups to radical groups banned in many Muslim countries, including *Jihad, Takfir wal Hijra, and Hizbullah*" (Haddad "Century of Islam"

10). A highly educated and intelligent group, they form a network of leaders residing in the U.S. (10).

The 1960's and 1970's were a volatile time both within and outside the U.S. In the U.S., Americans of all religions and nationalities were becoming more politically active. In the Arab world, the 1967 Arab-Israeli War, the oil crisis, the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, and the Iranian Revolution increased religious consciousness among the populace (Leonard *Muslims* 10). During this period many radical Islamic organizations emerged in the U.S. including, Islamic Party of Muzafaruddin Hamid, Hanafi Muslims of Hamas Khelifa, Abdul Khalis, Federation of American Muslims, Ikhwan al-Muslimun, Hizb al-Tahrir, and Jamaat-i Islami. They were enthusiastic in their beliefs but lacked knowledge of Islam (Haddad "Century of Islam" 22). They sought isolation from the American political and social system and recruited recent immigrants:

To maintain the boundaries between what is perceived as a sinful culture and the faithful Muslim community. They seek to eschew any pollution that would accrue through participation in a corrupt system. They believe that any effort to reform America is futile since the whole system is corrupt and grounded in human law that is constantly changing according to public opinion. (Haddad "Inventing" 120)

### **Al Qaeda in the United States**

The Soviet invasion of Afghanistan in 1979 was a turning point in world history. The Afghan struggle against the Soviets became a symbol to the Muslim world of pure

and righteous Islam against perverse modernity (Wright 94-98). It was also the event which drew the attention of the wealthy Saudi, Osama bin Laden, to the cause of jihad. Bin Laden was introduced to the Afghan cause by Abdullah Azzam, a Palestinian scholar who preached that, "Jihad and rifle alone; no negotiations, no conferences, no dialogue" (Wright 95). Azzam served as the operational and logistical leader of the nascent group and Bin Laden provided the funding for the growing following of *mujahideen* (holy warriors) (Wright 95). Azzam and Bin Laden established an office in one of Bin Laden's houses in Peshawar, Pakistan which served as the headquarters to aid the fight in Afghanistan and a way-station for the *mujahideen* en-route to Afghanistan (Wright 98). The office was known as *Makhtab al-Khadamat* (MAK) or the Services Bureau (Wright 103). In 1984, Bin Laden called on all Muslims to be more involved in the Afghan cause and funded camps to train the arriving *mujahideen*. He would pay wages and travel expenses for every man and his family if they were willing to fight (Wright 100-101).

During this period, Azzam traveled extensively in the United States collecting donations from mosques and Islamic centers. He told incredible stories of divinely inspired victories of the Afghan resistance against the Soviet occupation. These sermons were the beginning of, "The pageant of martyrdom that Azzam limned before his worldwide audience [and] created the death cult that would one day form the core of al-Qaeda" (Wright 106-107; Gunaratna 101). The Soviet withdrawal from Afghanistan was seen a triumph against the unbelievers in the name of Islam and as a great victory

for the *mujahideen* (Wright 134). After the withdrawal, Azzam, Bin Laden and their *mujahideen* established a group to carry on the call of jihad, *al-Qaeda al-Askariya*, the military base (133).

By the end of the 1980's, Al Qaeda was operating globally with a presence in Germany, the United Arab Emirates, Malaysia and the United States (Gunaratna 101-103). The Afghan cause had created a network through the Services Bureau in the United States. Its headquarters, the Al-Khifa Refugee Center, was located in Brooklyn and other large offices operated in Jersey City and Tucson (Emerson *Jihad Inc.* 436). At the conclusion of the Afghan-Soviet conflict, tension emerged among the leaders of Al Qaeda. Azzam sought to continue jihad in Israel but Bin Laden wanted to conduct a global jihad. The conflict ended when Azzam was mysteriously killed by a roadside bomb in Peshawar in 1989 (Wright 143). Azzam's death was a turning point. Soon after, Al Qaeda assumed control of the MAK's American offices and turned its focus to jihad against the United States (Bernstein 61; Emerson *American Jihad* 38). Mustafa Shalabi served as the emir of the Al-Kifah Refugee Center, located in the al-Faruq Mosque. It became the center of the Al Qaeda network, providing *mujahideen*, funds and weapons (Bergen 62, 133).

Throughout the 1980's, members of Al Kifah participated in suspicious activities. In 1987, the Al-Faruq Mosque was reported to have firearms, explosives and counterfeit money and passports which was being shipped overseas (Emerson *American Jihad* 28). A



member of Al Kifah purchased a satellite phone from Ogara Satellite Networks in Deer Park which was later used by Bin Laden to communicate with Al Qaeda operatives (Gunaratna 102). In 1989, the FBI observed several Al Kifah members, Mahmoud Abouhalima, Mohammed A. Salameh, and Nidal A. Ayyad, visiting the Calverton Shooting Range on Long Island for shooting practice (Bernstein 59). The office held the First Conference for Jihad in 1988 and published a monthly magazine called *Al-Jihad*. The magazine was received by 25,000 people and called for jihad against the infidels and encouraged attacks on Jews in the U.S. (Emerson *American Jihad* 129, 131).

In the 1990's, Mustafa Shalabi began to fall out of favor with his followers and his aides Jamal al-Fadl and Mahmud Abouhalima accused him of financial misconduct (Bergen 134). In 1990, Shalabi sponsored Sheikh Omar Abdul Rahman's visa to the United States, also known as the Blind Sheikh, who was fleeing house arrest in Egypt (Gunaratna 101; Bernstein 63). The Sheikh lived in Jersey City and Bay Ridge and assisted Shalabi in leading the MAK network. He travelled throughout the United States and Canada calling for young Muslims to join the jihad against America (Bergen 134; Wright 177). The Blind Sheikh and Shalabi differed in their desired goals for Al Qaeda and its MAK offices. Shalabi believed that their focus should remain on Afghanistan and the Sheikh asserted that their main concern is the United States and global jihad. In 1991, Shalabi was found bludgeoned, shot and strangled at his home near Coney Island. El Sayyid Nosair, Billal Alkaisi, and Mohammed Salameh were the prime suspects but

were never charged and the murder remains unsolved (Jo. Miller et al. 64-65). Shalabi's death cemented Al Qaeda's dedication to global jihad and its struggle against the United States.

From the Al-Faruq Mosque radiated a network of agents and cells throughout the United States operating under the auspices of Al Qaeda. The cells functioned with varying degrees of interaction with the Al Qaeda leadership. Some received direct commands while others were merely inspired by Al Qaeda's ideology and operated independently (Church 4). A New York Police Department study found that, "Al-Qaeda has provided the inspiration for homegrown radicalization and terrorism; direct command and control by Al-Qaeda has been the exception, rather than the rule among the case studies reviewed..." (NYPD 7). Frequently, cells are only privy to information pertaining to their own roles and strict security is maintained among the cell members (Gunaratna 103).

### **American Al Qaeda Operatives**

Al Qaeda members have been discovered operating in the United States. Gunaratna expands on this idea:

Although there is some degree of sympathy with Al Qaeda's objectives, most Muslims living in the West abhor the tactics adopted to advance its aims. However, Al Qaeda's American support base is significant because it is well established and of high caliber. Unlike their Canadian and European counterparts, Al Qaeda's American supporters are mostly wealthy and influential professionals, concentrated largely in New York-New Jersey and to a lesser extent in Chicago. Because many American

Muslims are well-educated and goal-oriented, Al Qaeda values them highly. (Gunaratna 111-112)

The individuals frequently use authentic travel documents and have no past terrorist records (Gunaratna 103). Khosrokhavar found that a large percentage are Western nationals and converts. It should be noted that, "There is a link between immigration and terrorism: although the overwhelming majority of Muslim immigrants are not terrorists, most terrorists are immigrants" (Khosrokhavar 9).

A significant trend is Muslim outreach to incarcerated individuals. Statistics showed that in 1992 17% of the New York state prison population was Muslim and in 2000 32% of the African American population in prison was Muslim. This has resulted in increased focus of radical Muslim organizations on incarcerated individuals both in proselytizing and providing social services (Leonard *Muslims* 8).

Jamal al-Fadl was the first individual interrogated by the FBI to mention Al Qaeda. In November 1996, when he was interviewed by the FBI and U.S. Attorney's Office he described Al Qaeda sleeper cells and training camps. Al Fadl had lived in Brooklyn and worked under Mustafa Shalabi at the Al-Kifah Refugee Center. He had traveled to Peshawar, attended Al Qaeda training camps in Afghanistan and fought against the Soviets (Wright 5). He later testified at the New York trial of the men who bombed the African embassies (Burke 79).

Wadih El-Hage was born in Lebanon, grew up in Kuwait and as a teenager converted to Islam. He moved to Louisiana in 1978 and during the Afghan war traveled

to Pakistan and trained in Al Qaeda's camps. He returned to the U.S. and was granted citizenship in 1989 (Khosrokhavar 217). During the late 1980's and early 1990's, El-Hage visited the Al Kifah center in New York and even briefly assumed leadership of the Center after Shalabi's death (Bergen 135). In 1992, he moved to Sudan and became Bin Laden's private secretary. In this position, he aided Bin Laden in establishing African Al Qaeda which eventually perpetrated the attacks on the embassies in Tanzania and Kenya (Emerson *American Jihad* 32; Khosrokhavar 217; Bergen 135-136). He told authorities, "...that because he had an American passport, Usama bin Laden wanted him to work for him because he could travel more freely and buy things for bin Laden" (Emerson *American Jihad* 32). El-Hage also provided support to Ramzi Yousef and Ahmed Ajaj from the Tuscon branch of the Services Bureau (133-134). In 2001, El-Hage was convicted for his role in the U.S. embassy bombings and is currently serving a life sentence (Khosrokhavar 217; Bergen 136).

Ali Mohammed is a disturbing case of an Al Qaeda agent who was able to penetrate deep into the heart of American society. Mohammed was born in Egypt in 1952 where he earned degree from Alexandria University. He was an intelligence officer with the Egyptian Special Forces and a skilled linguist (Jo. Miller et al. 140). While living in Egypt he attended the Blind Sheikh's sermons and became a member of Rahman's group, Egyptian Islamic Jihad (EIJ) (Jo. Miller et al. 141).

In 1986, Mohammed immigrated to the U.S. and married an American woman. In the same year he enlisted in the Army and was assigned to Fort Bragg. He became a lecturer at the John F. Kennedy Special Operations Warfare School (Jo. Miller et al. 141). In the following year he contacted Mustafa Shalabi at the Al Khifa Refugee Center to offer his expertise and services. He began traveling to Brooklyn and Jersey City to meet with Shalabi and Rahman (Jo. Miller et al. 143). Ali Mohammed provided paramilitary training to many Al Khifa members including El-Sayyid Nosair. Found among Nosair's possessions were classified documents, weapons and field survival manuals from Fort Bragg (Bergen 131-132). When the EIJ formed an alliance with Al Qaeda, Mohammed began travelling to Afghanistan and Pakistan organizing security arrangements for Bin Laden and Ayman al Zawahiri (Jo. Miller et al. 144). He also trained Bin Laden's bodyguards and *mujahideen* in Al Qaeda's camps in Afghanistan (Gunaratna 112). When Mohammed was arrested in 1998 for his connection to the African embassy bombings, he told authorities, "In 1992, I conducted military and basic explosives training for al Qaeda in Afghanistan", and in 1999, "I conducted intelligence training for al Qaeda. I taught my trainees how to create cell structures that could be used for operations" (Bergen 133; Jo. Miller et al. 145).

## **Radical Muslim Organizations and Charities**

Research reveals that American Muslims involved in terrorist activities are frequently affiliated with Islamic charities and non-profit organizations. El Hage exemplifies this trend because, “He traveled extensively in many parts of the world, leading a dual life: that of a worker and leader of charity associations within the United States and that of a Jihadist who helped the cause of the holy war” (Khosrokhavar 218). In the 1980’s, a group of Muslim scholars, businessmen and scientists in the United States created the SAAR Foundation which they incorporated as an NGO. The foundation was part of a network which included up to 100 NGO’s operated by the same individuals. These organizations collected millions of dollars which were circulated among the organizations, sent to offshore accounts and then funneled to terrorist organizations such as Al Qaeda, Hamas, Palestinian Islamic Jihad and the Muslim Brotherhood (Emerson *Jihad Inc.* 382-388).

This trend continued in 1996 when seven Islamic organizations met and established the Council of American Muslim Charities (CAMC) (Emerson *Jihad Inc.* 309-310). These seven organizations included the Holy Land Foundation for Relief and Development (HLF), the Global Relief Foundation (GRF), The Benevolence International Foundation, Islamic African Relief Agency (IARA), The International Relief Association (IRA/LIFE), Mercy International, and The International Relief Organization. The HLF was established in the late 1980’s and was found to be connected to Hamas (Emerson *Jihad*

*Inc.* 310). The GRF, founded in 1992, had its assets frozen in 2001 and its president arrested and deported for ties to terrorist financing (311). The Benevolence International Foundation was also founded in the same year by a Saudi Arabian citizen to aid the *mujahideen* in Afghanistan and provided funds to Al Qaeda (311). The IARA, with a largely Sudanese membership, was found to have ties to Al Qaeda, Osama Bin Laden, Hamas and the Taliban (311). The IRA was established in 1992 and focused its efforts on providing aid to Iraq (312). Mercy International was founded in the same year to support the Afghan jihad (312). Finally, The International Relief Organization which was established in 1991, funded Al Qaeda and promoted Wahhabism (312-313). Of the seven charities, four were designated as terrorist financiers after 9/11 and all were determined to have links to terrorism (*Emerson Jihad Inc.* 309-310). The propensity for terrorist organizations to use charities as fronts to launder money and mask the travels of operatives is incredibly problematic. It casts suspicion on legitimate Islamic charitable organizations and diverts funds donated in good faith to terrorist activities.

With the outbreak of the Gulf War in 1990 western NGO's flooded into Iraq. Many Islamic relief organizations were funded by Gulf states to counter this trend. They focused on Wahhabi belief systems and proselytizing. Their:

Aid to orphans and widows was made contingent on attendance at the mosque and at Qu'ranic study groups and the wearing of the veil. For a student to receive a subsidy, free food or a room in a free dormitory, his whole family had to abide by strict rules. In the hundreds of mosques built by the groups, the mullahs were paid according to how many converts to Wahhabism they made. The charities even offered bounties to anyone prepared to give up membership of secular

political parties. Subsidised Wahhabi literature was widely disseminated. (Burke 201-202)

The presence of Western NGO's and civilian contractors in Iraq and Saudi Arabia angered Bin Laden. It offended him that infidels were occupying Islam's most holy sites. At this time, Bin Laden became an outspoken critic of the Saudi royal family (Jo. Miller et al. 158; Clarke 39).

Al Qaeda also took advantage of the increasing capabilities of technology. Since the rise of Khomeini in Iran, audiotapes were used to spread Islamist ideas and unify Muslims according to a fundamentalist ideology. Audiotapes were highly attractive means of dissemination because they were marketable, mobile and inexpensive (Sivan 1). The individuals on the tapes were lauded as spiritual leaders who were the virtuous few interpreting the true Islam (3). The same can now be said of digital video discs (DVD) (Sivan 1-3).

The internet has arisen as a powerful and ubiquitous tool for radical Islam. The internet is an important source of terror financing. Sites will solicit online donations and engage in identity theft, fraud, and phishing scams (Emerson *Jihad Inc.* 470-471). Since 1997, the number of extremist Islamic websites has increased exponentially (468-469). Radical Islamic organizations and charities have used the internet as a tool to achieve their goals. They have utilized it to increase cohesion and curry favor among supporters (Mohammad 211; Haddad "Inventing" 123). Evidence has shown that plotters use the internet to exchange emails and instant messages using coded and encrypted language,



to make travel arrangements, to hack and to gather physical target information and general information on flight schools, bomb-making and hand-to-hand combat (Emerson *Jihad Inc.* 469). Extremist Islamic sites have used the internet to disseminate propaganda including claiming responsibility for attacks online and posting beheading videos (470-471).

Babar Ahmad, served as the webmaster for Abdullah Azzam's publications and on his site Ahmad provided instructions on jihad and corresponded with Americans intent on waging jihad (Emerson *Jihad Inc.* 473-476). Sami Omar al Hussaiyin was the webmaster for the Islamic Assembly of North America (IANA) which was later tied to Hamas. On his site Al Hussaiyin solicited funds, lauded jihad and martyrdom and posted martyrs' videos (476-477). As terrorist cells becoming more operationally independent, they become more dependent on the internet for communication and cohesion (Emerson *Jihad Inc.* 479).

### **Terrorist Attacks in New York City**

In 1973, members of the terrorist organization Black September planted car bombs throughout New York City during Israeli Prime Minister Golda Meir's trip to the city. Explosives were placed in front of the First Israel Bank and Trust Company, Israel Discount Bank and El-Al's cargo terminal at John F. Kennedy International Airport.

Intercepted communications by the National Security Agency revealed the plot, and the bombs were located and disabled (Goldman and Herschaft; Tolchin).

Many regard El Sayyid Nosair's murder of Rabbi Meir Kahane on November 5, 1990 in New York City as the first warning sign of the presence of radical Islam in the United States and, "...in any attempt to understand the events of September 11, 2001, it makes sense to begin with El Sayyid Nosair..." (Jo. Miller et al. 47). Rabbi Kahane was the founder of the Jewish Defense League and former member of the Israeli Parliament. He believed that Israel should annex the Palestinian territories and asserted that the Arabs should be forced out. Kahane was radical in his beliefs and was disliked by both Muslims and Jews. His right wing political party, Kach, was outlawed in Israel and he was shunned by New York's Jewish community (Jo. Miller et al. 38-41).

El Sayyid Nosair was born in Egypt in 1955. His family had been displaced by the 1967 Six Day War. Nosair grew up in Cairo and studied industrial design and engineering at Helwan University. He came to the U.S. in 1981 and lived in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania (Jo. Miller et al. 47). Nosair worked as a diamond cutter and at this time began exhibiting some anti-Western and anti-American sentiment. Roger Stavis, Nosair's lawyer, stated, "It was nothing special for him to be Muslim in Egypt. But when he came here, his religion defined him" (Jo. Miller et al. 48). However, his activities showed that overall he had embraced American culture. He had a vibrant social life and married Carrie Ann Mills, an American woman (48). Steven Emerson describes:

El Sayyid Nossair, the militant Egyptian who shot radical Rabbi Meir Kahane in 1990 and who was connected to the World Trade Center bombing conspiracy, had actually come to the United States as a westernized immigrant. He initially wore western clothes, dated women and tried to assimilate. Yet, he was lured into a radical Islamic fundamentalist orbit in Pittsburgh... (Emerson "Statement" 11).

In 1983, Nosair's life began to fall apart. He was evicted from his apartment, fired from his job, estranged from his wife and accused of rape by two women. He moved to Jersey City, New Jersey where he became an electrician's aid. In 1986, he was involved in a power plant accident which left him impotent which resulted in depression. He began attending Masjid al-Salaam, a radical mosque whose founder, Sultan el-Gawli, had been convicted of conspiring in terrorist plots in Israel. Nosair also became a full time employee at Al Kifah Refugee Center where he met Abdullah Azzam and Sheikh Rahman (Jo. Miller et al. 49-50). His cousin, Ibrahim el-Gabrownny, resided in Brooklyn and was president of a mosque in the area (Morganthau and Masland).

At this time, Nosair embraced Islamic fundamentalism and became vehemently anti-Western, anti-American and anti-Semitic. He assembled a group of like-minded friends including Mahmoud Abouhalima, Mohammed Salameh and Billal Alkaisi. Alkaisi had been a trainer at Al Qaeda camps in Afghanistan (Jo. Miller et al. 50). Nosair organized paramilitary camps, target practices and survival and surveillance courses with Ali Mohammed. In 1989, a Connecticut state trooper pulled over a vehicle containing Middle Eastern men near a shooting range carrying numerous firearms and out-of-state license plates which were registered to Nosair (Jo. Miller et al. 50; Emerson *American*

*Jihad* 28). Audiotapes later recovered, “suggest that Nosair had been assembling an Islamic terror cell, arguably the first in the U.S., with Abdel-Raman’s blessing and encouragement” (Jo. Miller et al. 50-51).

Rabbi Meir Kahane was giving a speech at the Marriot Hotel in midtown Manhattan concerning the immigration of Jews to Israel and the expulsion of Palestinians from the Jewish state (Jo. Miller et al. 38). Nosair and Alkaisi had been attending Kahane’s speeches for over a year to surveil security. At this speech, Nosair approached Kahane and shot him twice in the neck and chest, yelling, “It’s Allah’s will.” While fleeing he shot 70 year-old Irving Franklin who attempted to impede his escape. Abouhalima was supposed to be Nosair’s getaway driver but had been told he could not wait in the area by hotel security. Nosair fled the hotel and got into a cab he believed was driven by Abouhalima, but instead belonged to a Hispanic man from the Bronx. The cab sped off but soon became stuck in traffic. Nosair left the cab and ran to the Grand Central Station Post Office where he was confronted by Carlos Acosta, a U.S. postal police officer (Jo. Miller et al. 38-39). Both men fired at each other. Nosair’s shot was deflected into Acosta’s shoulder by his bullet proof vest and Acosta’s shot hit Nosair in the neck and chin. Nosair was rushed to Bellevue Hospital where Kahane had earlier been pronounced dead. Alkaisi had successfully escaped to a waiting car driven by Salameh (Jo. Miller et al. 40).

Initially, investigators believed Nosair to be a lone, crazed gunman. However, upon searching his New Jersey apartment they found numerous boxes of documents written in Arabic which described a complex international terrorist network. The papers were evidence of the Blind Sheikh's involvement in the Kahane plot and the existence of terrorist training camps in the United States (Emerson *American Jihad* 44 & Jo. Miller et al. 44). Among the papers in Nosair's apartment, were training manuals and classified documents from the Army Special Warfare School at Fort Bragg, copies of teletypes to the Secretary of the Army and the Joint Chiefs of Staff, bomb-making manuals, maps of the Statue of Liberty, Times Square, Rockefeller Center, and the World Trade Center with notes in Arabic. Also found was a list of other intended assassination targets including local Jewish leaders and politicians (Emerson *American Jihad* 55-56). In 1991, a jury found Nosair innocent of Kahane's murder but guilty of shooting Acosta and Franklin and of criminal possession of a weapon. For his crimes, Nosair received a sentence of 7 ½ to 22 ½ years in prison (Jo. Miller et al. 67).

As time passed it became increasingly apparent that Kahane's murder was not the work of a lone gunman but a small part of a greater effort (Emerson *American Jihad* 50; Jo. Miller et al. 36). Even from prison, Nosair continued his involvement in jihad and sought revenge against those who had imprisoned him. He had clout among radicals because he had successfully carried out a mission (Jo. Miller et al. 72). While in prison, Nosair was visited by several of the plotters of the 1993 World Trade Center bombings

(Emerson *American Jihad* 50). It was later revealed that Wadih el-Hage, Osama Bin Laden's personal secretary, had provided Nosair's weapon and Bin Laden himself had contributed \$20,000 to his defense fund (Emerson *American Jihad* 33-34; Jo. Miller et al. 66). What is most disturbing is, "when Nosair arrived in America nine years before the Kahane shooting there was little in his background to distinguish him from countless other Middle Eastern men who had come to the U.S. in the 1970s and early 1980s" (Jo. Miller et al. 47).

In 1992, Ramzi Ahmed Yousef arrived in New York from Peshawar, Pakistan. He would later perpetrate the most horrific terrorist attack on U.S. soil since Pearl Harbor (Bernstein 64). Yousef has 40 known aliases and his true identity and background is debated. The majority of scholars believe his real name is Abdual Basit Mahmud Abdual Karim and he was born in 1968 in Kuwait City to a Pakistani father and Palestinian mother (Reeve 112; Wright 178). Yousef was raised in an immigrant community outside of Kuwait City whose population was nearly half Palestinian. When Yousef was a teenager his father radicalized and became affiliated with Wahhabism and subsequently moved his family to Baluchistan, Pakistan (Reeve 113; Wright 178). Yousef attended West Glamorgan Institute in Swansea, Wales where he studied engineering. While earning his degree he joined the Muslim Brotherhood and in 1988 he attended Al Qaeda's training camps where he met Mahmoud Abouhalima (Jo. Miller et al. 78; Reeve 116, 120).

Yousef came to the U.S. to plan the attack on the World Trade Center (Reeve 123). He arrived with Ahmed Mohammed Ajaj who was detained for carrying fake passports, Al Qaeda bomb-making materials, weapons and surveillance manuals (Jo. Miller et al. 77; Clarke 79). Ajaj was arrested and served 6 months in prison for passport fraud (Jo. Miller et al. 77). Yousef left the airport and met Abouhalima who brought him to Ibrahim el-Gabrownny's home, the cousin of El-Sayyid Nosair. Through Abouhalima he met Mohammed Salameh and Nidal Ayyad. Another of Yousef's co-conspirator, Eyad Ismoil, was a former computer science student at Kentucky University and Yousef's childhood friend (Reeve 114,151). Nidal Ayyad was a chemical engineer with a degree from Rutgers University and a steady job with an engineering firm (145). Salameh and Abouhalima had also been Nosair's co-conspirators (143). Yousef frequently visited Al Kifah and the Center's security chief arranged training for Yousef and the other plotters (Jo. Miller et al. 82-84). The FBI later found that the five men met often in Jersey City to listen to the sermons of Sheikh Raman, "... who would urge his congregation, '...hit hard and kill the enemies of God in every spot, to rid it of the descendants of apes and pigs fed at the table of Zionism, communism and imperialism' ...." (Reeve 60).

The Blind Sheikh was born in Egypt in 1938. He was an avid student of Islam and by the age of 11 had memorized the Quran and before his 30<sup>th</sup> birthday he became the Sheikh of Al-Azhar University in Cairo. During his studies at al-Azhar, he befriended Abdullah Azzam who also attended the university. The 1967 Arab Israeli war and

Nasser's secular government in Egypt radicalized Rahman (Jo. Miller et al. 53). He was suspected of encouraging the assassination of Anwar Sadat and spent most of the 1980's in an Egyptian prison which further radicalized his beliefs. In 1990, he escaped house arrest in Egypt and sought asylum in the U.S. (Jo. Miller et al. 54).

On February 26, 1993 a Ford Econoline yellow van left Jersey City and made its way to southern Manhattan (Reeve 6). The van parked in the basement parking garage near the support columns for Tower One of the World Trade Center (Reeve 24; Wright 177). Ramzi Yousef ignited the bomb contained in the 295 cubic feet of space in the rear of the van and fled in the cars that had trailed him (Reeve 6-10). The van contained 20 foot long fuses:

Encased in surgical tubing to limit smoke, [which] were burning down at the rate of an inch every two and a half seconds. The critical moment came at 12.17 and 37 seconds. One of the fuses burnt to its end and ignited the gunpowder in an Atlas Rockmaster blasting cap. In a split second the cap exploded with a pressure of around 15,000 lbs per square inch, igniting in turn the first nito-glycerine container of the bomb, which erupted with a pressure of about 150,000lbs per square inch- the equivalent of 10,000 atmospheres. In turn, the nitro-glycerine ignited cardboard boxes containing a witches' brew of urea pellets and sulphuric acid. (Reeve 10)

The bomb had incredible destructive force, was the largest improvised explosive device the FBI had seen up until that time and cost the perpetrators \$400 (Wright 177). When the bomb exploded it claimed the lives of six individuals working in Tower One and injured 1,042 people, the largest number of hospital casualties caused by an event in the U.S. since the Civil War (Reeve 15). The blast created a 180 foot by 12 foot hole and was felt at Ellis Island (Reeve 10-12; Wright 178). Inside the Towers was chaos, there



was little communication, the electricity was out and smoke belled upward into the offices causing complete panic (Reeve 13). Yousef's intention had been to topple one tower into the other hopefully bringing both down and causing in excess of 250,000 casualties (24).

A combined FBI and NYPD task force recovered the van's frame from the wreckage. On the frame the VIN (Vehicle Identification Number) was found and tracked back to the DIB rental agency where the perpetrators had rented the van. Salameh had actually reported the van stolen and the FBI lured him back to the rental agency under the guise of picking up his deposit (Jo. Miller et al. 105-107). Salameh was arrested and from evidence found on his person and information from his interrogation, Abouhalima, Ayyad and Ajaj were apprehended (Jo. Miller et al. 108). The four were convicted in 1994 and were each sentenced to 240 years in prison (Reeve 63).

After leaving Tower One, Yousef had gone directly to a safehouse in Jersey City and on to John F. Kennedy International Airport where he boarded a Pakistani International Airlines flight to Karachi (Reeve 25). After his escape, Yousef continued to participate extensively in terrorist activities, "recruiting cells, planning and executing operations, and moving around the globe with seeming ease" (Jo. Miller et al. 119). In 1994, he travelled to Bangkok, Thailand and lived with militants, plotting attacks and fostering closer ties between Al Qaeda and Abu Sayyaf (Reeve 71). In December, he boarded a Philippines Airlines Flight carrying liquid nitroglycerin in a contact lens case and a 9 volt

battery. In the plane's bathroom he assembled those components into an explosive which he placed underneath his seat. On the next leg of the flight, the incendiary exploded under a 24-year old Japanese engineer killing him (Jo. Miller et al. 118). Yousef was finally apprehended in Islamabad, Pakistan by a team of Pakistani police and FBI and CIA agents (Burton; Wright 203). He is currently serving a life sentence plus 240 years in the Florence Correctional Institute prison. He holds the highest level of security status in the entire American prison system (Reeve 251-253; Wright 376).

The attack on the World Trade Center in 1993 stands as proof of the far-reaching and interconnected network of terrorists within American borders. Steve Emerson asserts that five different terrorist groups participated in the attack including Jamaat Islamiya, the Sudanese National Islamic Front, Hamas, Islamic Jihad and Al Fuqra (Emerson "Statement" 10). It has been verified that Ramzi Yousef is the nephew of Khalid Sheikh Mohammed, the mastermind of the September 11<sup>th</sup> attacks, and had established contacts with Al Qaeda through the Al Kifah Refugee Center (Emerson *Jihad Inc.* 46; Burton).

In the summer of 1993, "the beta cell" was uncovered in New York comprised of individuals seeking to detonate explosives at major New York landmarks including the Holland Tunnel, the United Nations, Jacob Javits Federal Building, Lincoln Tunnel and FBI headquarters (Emerson *Jihad Inc.* 30-31; Gunaratna 102). The cell consisted of Siddig Ali, a 32 year old Sudanese immigrant, Fares Khalafallah, Fadil Abdelghani, Tarig Elhassan,

Mohammed Saleh, Victor Alvarez and Clement Rodney Hampton-El and was connected to Sheikh Rahman (Morganthan and Masland; Reeve 61). Raman and 9 co-conspirators were arrested and later found guilty of seditious conspiracy. Rahman was sentenced to life in prison plus sixty-five years for his role in the Landmarks Plot (Gunaratna 102; Jo. Miller et al. 147).

In March of the following year, livery driver Rashid Baz opened fire on a van containing Jewish high school students on the Brooklyn Bridge killing one and injuring three (Emerson *American Jihad* 29). Baz was a 28 year-old Lebanese immigrant who had come to the U.S. in 1988 on a student visa (Rogers and Sparkman). He attended the Islamic Center of Bay Ridge in Brooklyn before the attack. At the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebration of the mosque, the imam told his audience that Jews hate Muslims and had killed Mohammed. He told his followers that they must support jihad against the Zionist entity. The Center also distributed pro-Hamas literature (Heilman 2). Baz was enraged by attacks on Palestinians in Israel specifically, Baruch Goldstein's shooting in the Hebron mosque at Cave of the Patriarchs, and sought revenge for the violence (1). Baz later testified, "Jews were not good people, they deserved to die and get out of Israel" (Heilman 3). Acting on information from callers, the NYPD was able to track Baz's car to a car repair shop in Brooklyn. A 9mm Cobra machine gun, Glock 9mm semi-automatic handgun and a 12 gauge Street Sweeper shotgun were found in Baz's possession

(Heilman 5-6). Baz was arrested and convicted of second degree murder and fourteen counts of attempted murder for which he was sentenced to 141 years in prison (5-6).

In February of 1997, Palestinian schoolteacher Ali Abu Kamal opened fire on the observation deck of the Empire State Building, killing one and injuring six others before shooting himself (Emerson *American Jihad* 30). His suicide note was recovered which accused the U.S. of using Israel as an instrument against the Palestinians. There is evidence that he received assistance from members of a Florida mosque who provided him with a gun and target practice (Pipes 137-140).

In the summer of 1997, Ghazi Ibrahim Abu Mezer's apartment was raided by the NYPD before he was able to carry out his plan of bombing the New York subway system (Emerson *American Jihad* 30). He intended to place a pipe bomb on the B subway line, which ran from Manhattan to Coney Island, because he believed there would be a large number of Jews riding on the line. He stated that he had come to the U.S. to inflict harm on the country because of its support of Israel. Mezer was convicted of conspiring to use a weapon of mass destruction and possessing the weapon and was sentenced to life imprisonment (Pipes 202).

## Chapter 6: Radicalization

It is a complex process to distinguish the individuals who perpetrate these attacks from the general Muslim community. The process of radicalization begins with ideology. These individuals view the United States as hyper-secular and morally corrupt. They believe that by imposing secular American laws, the U.S. inhibits their ability to practice Islam and represses Muslims (Khosrokhavar 246-248). Radicals view the humiliation of Muslims in other parts of the world as their own suffering and:

Complex disputes like the Arab-Israeli conflict and Kashmir are diluted into one large conflict between 'believers' and 'non-believers.' This power and simple 'one-size fits all' philosophy resonates with the younger diaspora Muslim populations in the West who are often politically naïve. (NYPD 17)

Some feel that they must compensate for living in the West and do so by waging jihad (Khosrokhavar 254). They eventually conclude that, "Living in the West within a diaspora makes it impossible to practice the laws of Islam that are the only valid ones. Jihad is the only means of imposing Islamic law" (Khosrokhavar 247). Caught between their interpretation of Islam and the West, they seek something to reconcile the two and they find fundamentalist Islam (NYPD 6, 8). This ideology becomes the filter, inspiration and justification for their actions:

It guides movements, identifies the issues, drives recruitment and is the basis for action... This ideology is proliferating in Western democracies at a logarithmic rate. The Internet, certain Salafi-based NGO's (non-governmental organizations), extremist sermons/study groups, Salafi literature, jihadi videotapes, extremist-sponsored trips to radical madrassas and militant training camps abroad have served as 'extremist incubators' for young, susceptible Muslims – especially ones living in diaspora communities in the West. (NYPD 6, 8)

The NYPD study traces the process of radicalization using several case studies. The first stage, “pre-radicalization,” evaluates life situation, specifically, pedigree, lifestyle, religion, social status, neighborhood, education, environment, ethnicity, gender and age. It was revealed that most terrorists at this point are unremarkable. They are typically 15-35 years old and middle class students (NYPD 6). Marc Sageman points out:

There’s really no profile, just similar trajectories to joining the jihad and that most of these men were upwardly and geographically mobile. They came from moderately religious, caring, middle-class families. They’re skilled in computer technology. They spoke three, four, five, six languages including three predominant Western languages: German, French and English. (Telvick)

During the second stage, “self-identification,” the individual explores the personal and external reasons for affiliating with Salafi ideology. Some turn to radical beliefs because they are seeking a new religious identity and others have an economic catalyst such as losing their job. There can be a social dimension like real or perceived racism, a political motivation such as international conflicts, or personal difficulties like family turmoil (NYPD 6-7). Jihadis will radicalize individuals by exploiting their feelings of victimization and humiliation. They hearken back to a golden age of Islam which contrasts sharply with the present. These feelings are translated into aggression and hostility toward the West and specifically the U.S. The individual is encouraged to use jihad as a means to seize control of their lives and develop dignity and pride (Khosrokhavar 198). The individual relinquishes their former identity and is consumed by radicalism. At this point the extremist becomes part of a group of like-minded

individuals who radicalize each other. They regularly attend an extremist mosque and become alienated from former friends. They give up former vices such as smoking or drinking, begin wearing traditional Islamic clothing and grow a beard (NYPD 31). It has been found that:

Most often the vehicles for these exposures include family ties or old friendships, social networks, religious movements like the Tablighi Jamaat, political movements like the Muslim Brotherhood, or extremist-like discussions in halal butcher shops, café, gyms, student associations, study groups, non-governmental organizations and, most importantly, the Internet. (NYPD 30)

Recruiters will use “moral shock” tactics through literature, speeches, television, websites and chatrooms to cause outrage (NYPD 30).

At the third stage, “indoctrination,” the individual’s beliefs intensify. Their group affiliation has the utmost importance as radicalization is encouraged and motivated by others. Violence is justified as the world is simplified into a struggle between “believers” and “non-believers” (NYPD 7, 36). The individual may withdraw from the mosque he previously attended because its beliefs are not radical enough or to maintain a low profile (36). A prison or jail provides an ideal environment for stage 3 because, “The prison’s isolated environment, ability to create a ‘captive audience’ atmosphere, its absence of day-to-day distractions, and its large population of disaffected young men, makes it an excellent breeding ground for radicalization” (NYPD 36).

In the final stage, “radicalization,” the individual has accepted the identity of *mujahideen* and their part in holy war. He begins planning and preparing for terrorist

activity. During this phase, the radical isolates himself and only associates with the group. He may attend training camps, conduct internet research and surveillance on potential targets and procure materials needed for the attack (NYPD 43-45). The other stages may occur over several years but the fourth stage is usually short in duration (NYPD 7). Prior to 9/11 the radicalization process took longer, but the attacks galvanized a new generation of *mujahideen* (NYPD 10). The successful progression through these stages is largely dependent on the ability and dedication of the leader of the cell (10).

The groups advancing through these stages most commonly are not recruited but self-recruited and self-radicalized which make this form of terrorism incredibly difficult to prevent (Emerson "Statement" 9, 11; Khosrokhavar 243). Prevention is further complicated by the fact that:

The structure of militant Islamic groups tends to be amorphous with non-intersecting circles of like-minded supporters who subscribe to the same core ideology of doctrinal Islamism but who act independent and without any strategic coordination. (Emerson "Statement" 9)

The improved counterterrorism efforts after 9/11 have increased the diffusion and independence of these cells to avoid detection (Khosrokhavar 244).

### **Profile of a Terrorist?**

A disturbing fact noted by the NYPD study is that Western radicals are unremarkable and there is no profile of individuals who will become terrorists (NYPD 8). This has not deterred scholars from attempting to identify predictors of terrorist involvement. A



large number of radicals are children of immigrants who feel dislocated from their native countries and detached from their family, friends and the host society (Abrahms 97; NYPD 57). It is not the politically downtrodden, but the socially marginalized, that are prone to radicalization (Abrahms 104). The NYPD study asserts that:

The transnational phenomenon of radicalization in the West is largely a function of the people and the environment in which they live. Much different from the Israeli-Palestinian equation, the transformation of a Western-based individual to a terrorist is not triggered by oppression, suffering, revenge or desperation. Rather, it is a phenomenon that occurs because the individual is looking for an identity and a cause and unfortunately, often finds them in extremist Islam. (NYPD 7-8)

These are not destitute individuals, more commonly they are financially comfortable and have an advanced education (Pipes 56, 61). A greater intellectual capacity and the availability of leisure time provide the means and opportunity to embrace a radical ideology (Pipes 56, 61). Many hide behind Islam but have no knowledge and do not adhere to the tenets of the faith. This fact is demonstrated by the behavior of many terrorists (9).

Although perpetrators do not share many personal characteristics, they do engage in similar activities that can serve as warning signs of radical behavior. The following are examples of these behaviors: arrival from countries where militant Islamic groups operate, long unexplained absences, travel to countries where Muslims are engaged in conflict with non-Muslims or where militant Islam rules, study of technical subjects including engineering or computer science, engaging in para- or military training without sufficient cause, purchase or possession of explosives or biological or chemical weapons,

surveillance of government, military or public buildings, support for or membership in militant Islamic groups and close friends or family who are members of these groups, hostility toward the American government and legal system, and fraudulent or multiple personal identities (Pipes 152-154). The use of these activities to identify terrorists can be problematic because they can also characterize the average Muslim living in the United States. Consequently, these activities must be viewed cautiously when used as investigative tools.

Although no single terrorist profile exists, scholars have identified individual archetypes which commonly exist in terrorist groups. Khosrokhavar provides an inventory of the five types of jihadi individuals. The “missionary” seeks to expand Islam through jihad and asserts its superiority over all other religions. The “macho” individual rejects Western sexual and gender roles and aims to restore familial and social bonds according to a patriarchal system through jihad (Khosrokhavar 234). The “justice seeker” strives against the injustice of American hegemony and sees his jihad as a fight against oppressors and Western imperialism. The “adventurer” views jihad as an opportunity for world travel and to achieve notoriety (Khosrokhavar 235). The “existential man” is in a crisis of dual identities because he is accepted neither as a Muslim nor as an American and seeks a sense of belonging among jihadi individuals (Khosrokhavar 236).

The NYPD study expands the list of jihadi archetypes. They add the “convert” who is zealous in his devotion because he must prove himself and considers the group his

surrogate family (NYPD 29). The “spiritual sanctioner” is a self-taught Islamic scholar who gives religious justification to the actions of the group saying that jihad is a compulsory religious duty (NYPD 38). Finally, the “operational leader” is charismatic and provides training, motivation and cohesiveness. The group’s success hinges on his leadership ability (NYPD 50).

The coalescence of these individuals can vary from group to group. Some are formed around a cult figure and depend on global or domestic events to push the group to violence. This type of group was more prevalent before September 11<sup>th</sup>. A second type of group is more egalitarian consisting of a group of friends with no established hierarchy. Marc Sageman is well-known for bringing this organizational structure to the fore of research because of its more common existence after 9/11. Researchers at West Point have found that knowing an Al Qaeda member is a better predictor of terrorist activity than belief in jihad (Abrahms 98). A third kind of group is formed along familial ties, consisting of fathers, sons, uncles and sometimes wives and daughters (Khosrokhavar 232). The final group is comprised of several charismatic and passionate individuals who each specialize in one useful and pertinent skill. There is a hierarchy but no formal leader (Khosrokhavar 233).

Radicals have become conspicuous in general American Muslim communities. Sheikh Kabbani of the Islamic Council of America said in January 1999 at a State Department Open Forum:

The most dangerous thing that is going on now in these mosques...is the extremist ideology. Because [Islamic jihadists] are very active they took over the mosques; and we can say that they took over more than 80 percent of the mosques that have been established in the U.S. And there are more than 3000 mosques in the U.S. So it means that the methodology or ideology of extremist [sic] has been spread to 80 percent of the Muslim population, but not all of them agree with it. (Gunaratna 103; Spencer 54-55)

Shamsi Ali, the imam of the Jamaica Muslim Center in southeast Queens echoes

Kabbani's belief asserting that extremism exists in American Muslim communities and must be addressed (Shabazz 3).

### **Terrorist Groups in the United States**

Oliver 'Buck' Revell, the former Associate Deputy Director of the FBI pointed out that, "the United States is the most preferred and easiest place in the world for radical Islamic groups to set up their headquarters to wage war in their homelands, destabilize and attack American allies..." (Reeve 232). Evidence exists that many radical Islamic groups have established themselves in the U.S. including, Hamas, Islamic Jihad, Hezbollah, Hizba-Tahrir (the Islamic Liberation Party), the Algerian Islamic Salvation Front, the Armed Islamic Group, En-Nahda of Tunisia, the Muslim Brotherhood, Egyptian Ga'mat Islamiya, Abu Sayyaf Group, the Afghan Taliban and Jamaat Muslimeen (from Pakistan and Bangladesh) (Reeve 232). There is no hierarchy or central coordination of, "the activities of the myriad militant networks, [but] the intelligence and law enforcement communities agree that the entire spectrum of radical groups from the

Middle East has been replicated in the U.S.” (Emerson “Statement” 8-9). A brief description of the groups’ activities exhibits the scope of this vast network.

Hamas maintains the largest presence in the U.S. dating back to the 1980’s. The Islamic Association for Palestine (IAP) was founded by Dr. Mousa Abu Marzook, Ghassan al-Ashey and Bassam al-Ashey in 1981. They used the association to disseminate anti-Western and anti-Semitic literature. In 1989, Marzook became President of the United Association of Studies and Research (UASR), an Islamic think tank with a purposefully ambiguous name. The UASR sponsored a meeting of militant Islamic leaders in Washington D.C. in 1991. The attendees included leaders from Islamic Jihad, Hizba-Tahrir, al-Jihad, Hizbollah, and Jamaat Muslimeen. The IAP had an established presence in Brooklyn and Patterson, New Jersey where the group fundraised, disseminated propaganda, and rallied support against Israel and pro-Western countries (Emerson “Statement” 11-12). In an interview on Lebanese television Marzook took responsibility and lauded a Hamas attack on a Jerusalem mall which killed two and injured eighteen.

He said:

(The) (d)eath is the wife of every Muslim, and every fighter hopes to die for the land of Palestine. This is not the first time the heroes of Izz Al-Din Al-Wassam (i.e. the military wing of Hamas) undertook suicide and sabotage missions...We took suicide and sabotage missions...We perpetrate these activities for a noble cause: to fully reinstate the rights of the Palestinian People. (Emerson “Statement” 17)

In 1995, Marzook was stopped at JFK airport and extradited to Israel by the Deputy U.S. Attorney to stand trial for murder (Emerson “Statement” 16-17).

The Palestinian Islamic Jihad, a designated terrorist group after 9/11, operated extensively in the Tampa, Florida area. Sami Al-Arian, a professor at the University of Florida, “proceeded to set up a series of front organizations in order to raise money, spread propaganda, and win recruits for PIJ” (Emerson *Jihad Inc.* 242). Al-Arian had contact with a Sudanese diplomat in New York who was later implicated and expelled for his involvement in 9/11 (Emerson “Statement” 12, 34).

Hizballah is notorious for its terrorist activities overseas which include the bombing of the Khobar Towers in Saudi Arabia and the American embassies in Nairobi and Dar es Salaam. Hizballah orchestrated the kidnappings of Americans journalist Terry Anderson, several employees and students of the American University of Beirut, Father Lawrence Jenco and mostly notoriously, William Buckley, the CIA station chief who died in captivity (Emerson *Jihad Inc.* 208-215). In the U.S., Hizballah takes part in a variety of criminal activities such as cigarette-smuggling, money laundering, credit card and bank fraud and intellectual property crime (Emerson *Jihad Inc.* 219-224). Hizballah is also known to have formed an alliance with Al Qaeda (Emerson *Jihad Inc.* 225). The presence of Hizballah cells in New York and New Jersey has been uncovered (Emerson “Statement” 12).

Many other terrorist organizations are operating in the New York area. Sheikh Omar Abdul Raman, the head of the Gamat Islamiyah, was involved in the Kahane murder, the 1993 World Trade Center bombing and other terrorist plots. Abu Sayaff had ties to

Ramzi Yousef and has had a history of cooperating with Al Qaeda. Jamaat Muslimeen has a large following in Brooklyn, Queens and New Jersey (Emerson "Statement" 12). Al Muhajarun, a British based group, has financial ties to Bin Laden and has a presence in Queens (Emerson "Statement" 13). The Muslim Arab Youth Association (MAYA) has significant connections to the Muslim Brotherhood and holds annual conferences in which radical speakers and leaders attend. MAYA holds paramilitary training sessions, chapter meetings and conferences in Jersey City.

Seif Shmawi, an Egyptian American newspaper publisher who resides in New Jersey wrote, "Radical Islamic groups have now taken over leadership of the 'mainstream' Islamic institutions in the United States and anyone who pretends otherwise is deliberately engaging in self-deception" (Emerson "Statement" 9).

### **American-born Terrorists**

Evidence demonstrates that converts to Islam are welcomed into radical groups. They are important to the success of the group because they have greater freedom of movement due to their American citizenship. They also attract the attention of the media, give the group a symbolic weight, and lend legitimacy to jihad as former Christians (Khosrokhavar 206). Some converts come to Islam as lost individuals seeking a sense of purpose and others seek to gain superiority over other Americans (Khosrokhavar 204, 210).

Notable examples of native Americans engaging in jihad are Jose Padilla, Adam Pearlman Gadahn, and Earnest James Thompson. Jose Padilla is an American citizen born in Brooklyn, New York in 1970. He is a Puerto Rican and Catholic and was a member of the Latin Kings gang. Padilla was incarcerated as a juvenile offender and while in jail converted to Islam. After his release, Padilla began attending a radical mosque in Fort Lauderdale where he met Adham Amin Hassoun. Hassoun was a representative of the Benevolence International Foundation who was later arrested in 2001 for involvement in terrorist activities. Padilla married an Egyptian Muslim woman who was a close friend of Hassoun, took the Arabic name Abdullah al Mujhair and began travelling to many countries in the Middle East and Southeast Asia. Padilla was eventually arrested in 2002 and found guilty of conspiring “to kill people in an overseas jihad and to fund and support overseas terrorism” (Khosrokhavar 214-215). Padilla provides an example of the common phenomena of an extremists’, “passage through juvenile delinquency, the meeting of a charismatic person (an imam or strong personality), and, above all, finding a group of people ready to engage in a common action...” (Khosrokhavar 215).

Adam Pearlman Gadahn, also known as Yahya Gadahn and Azzam al Amirki, was born in 1978 to Jewish parents. He converted to Islam at the age of 17. He began studying Islam at the Islamic Society of Orange County and eventually moved to Pakistan and married an Afghan woman. He later appeared in Al Qaeda videos with Ayman al



Zawahiri. On the videos he provided English translations and added his own comments on the immorality and corruption of the West and righteousness of Islam and, “praised the echo of explosions and the slitting of the throats of the infidels” (Khosrokhavar 215-216).

Earnest James Thompson was born in Denver in 1966. He converted to Islam and changed his name to James Ujaama. In 1999, Ujaama traveled to England where he met Abu Hamza al Masri, a radical cleric currently serving a prison sentence for inciting murder and racial hatred. In the same year Ujaama visited Afghanistan where he offered support to Al Qaeda. In 2002, he was arrested and charged with attempting to create terrorist training camps in the U.S. and raising funds for terrorist activities. For these charges he served a two year sentence (Khosrokhavar 216-217).

The radicalization of individuals in the United States is unique. Some researchers argue that radicalizing Americans is easier due to their lack of knowledge of Islam and its traditions (Khosrokhavar 187). Others debate it is precisely American Muslims’ lack of knowledge of Islam and Arabic that make the transmission of jihad more difficult. Consequently, jihadis must turn to other means such as radical clerics and the internet (186). Others assert that it is more difficult because American Muslims are more successful and integrated in American society (NYPD 8). Studies have shown that there are fewer cases of American radicals than European radicals because, “‘white’ American Muslims are middle class and mostly share the American dream; they enjoy a high

education level, whereas European Muslims are mostly from the lower classes with less education” (Khosrokhavar 220).

What American Muslim radicals might lack in numbers, they compensate for with zeal and unflagging devotion to their cause. Many immigrants that come to the U.S. harbor resentment and hostility toward the U.S. and its Western values but do not hesitate to exploit the freedoms afforded them to engage in terrorist activities (Pipes 195; Jo. Miller et al. 100). It is imperative that the radicalization process in the United States is analyzed. Without a broad and accurate understanding, it is impossible to formulate counterterrorism strategies. These efforts have, “special importance for the NYPD and the City of New York. As one of the country’s iconic symbols and the target of numerous terrorist plots since the 1990’s, New York City continues to be among the top targets of terrorists worldwide” (NYPD 5).

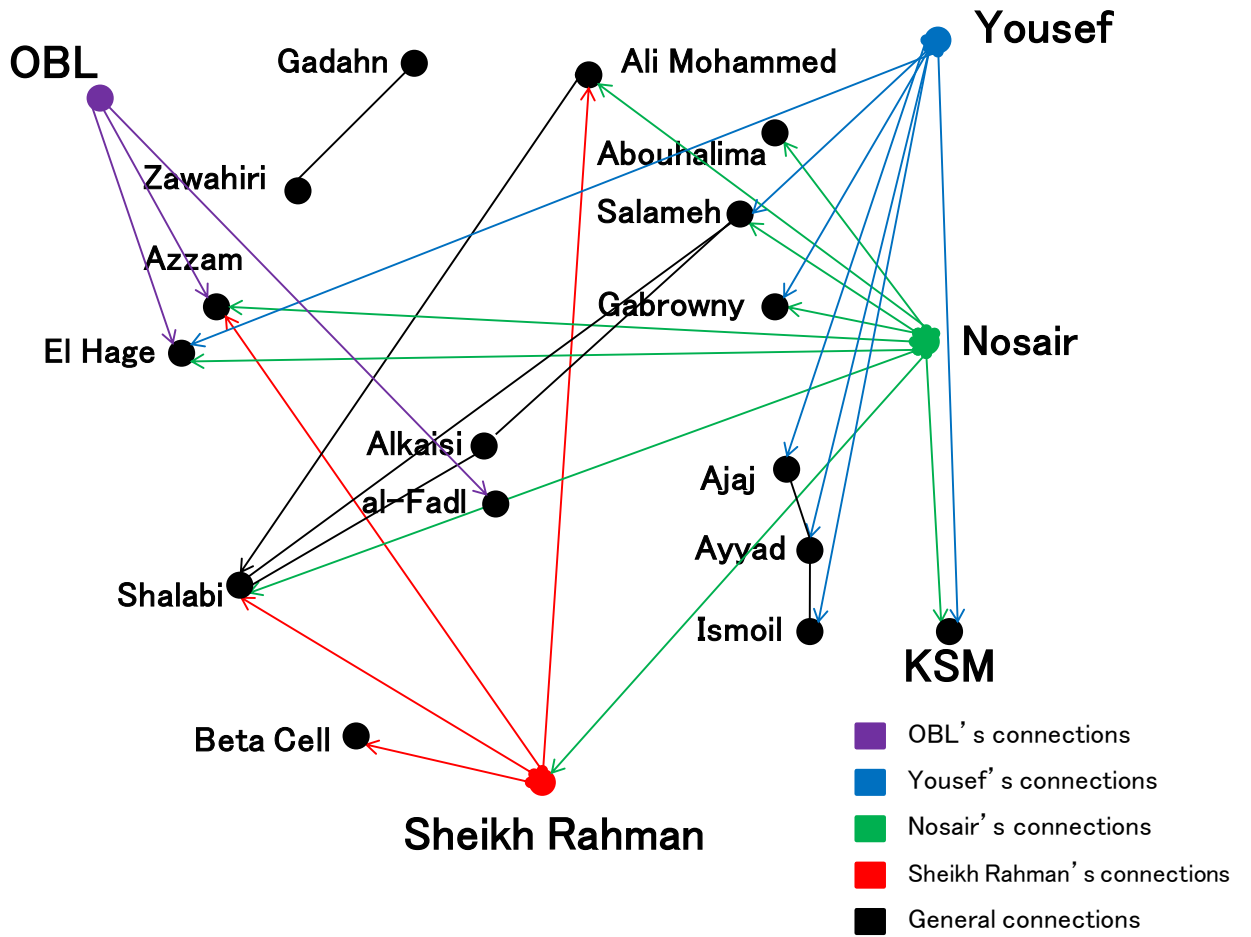
## **APPENDIX A**

### **Note on transliteration**

The spelling of Arabic words when transliterated into English varies greatly. An attempt was made to keep the spellings of a word uniform throughout this document but in some instances the spellings are interchangeable, such as Moslem and Muslim. Also, when quotations included transliterated Arabic words, the spellings of the source document were used.

APPENDIX B

Figure 1: Social Network of Radicals in New York City



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