The Brookings Project on U.S. Relations with the Islamic World
2011 U.S.-Islamic World Forum Papers

Enhancing Impact in the Public Square: Building Capacity and Developing Leadership among American Muslims and Their Organizations

Convened and Authored by:
Brie Loskota
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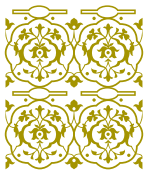
Saban Center at Brookings
August 2011



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STEERING COMMITTEE

For the first time in its eight-year history, the 2011 U.S.-Islamic World Forum was held in Washington, DC. The Forum, co-convened annually by the Brookings Project on U.S. Relations with the Islamic World and the State of Qatar, once again served as the premier convening body for key leaders from government, civil society, academia, business, religious communities, and the media. For three days, Forum participants gathered to discuss some of the most pressing issues facing the relationship between the United States and global Muslim communities.

This year, the Forum featured a variety of different platforms for thoughtful discussion and constructive engagement, including televised plenary sessions with prominent international figures on broad thematic issues of global importance; smaller roundtable discussions led by experts and policymakers on a particular theme or set of countries; and working groups which brought together practitioners in a given field several times during the course of the Forum to develop practical partnerships and policy recommendations. For detailed proceedings of the Forum, including photographs, video coverage, and transcripts, please visit our website at http://www.usislamicworldforum.org.

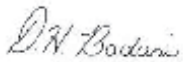
Each of the five working groups focused on a different thematic issue, highlighting the multiple ways in which the United States and global Muslim communities interact with each other. This year's working groups included: "America and the Muslim World: The Tale of Two Media," "The Roles of Muslim-Majority and Muslim-Minority Communities in a Global Context," "Higher Education Reform in the Arab World," "The Role of Entrepreneurship and Job Creation in U.S.-Muslim Relations," and "Developing Leadership and Capacity in the Muslim Nonprofit Sector as a Building Block for Sustaining Partnerships and Change."

We are pleased to share with you the fourth of our five working group papers, "Enhancing Impact in the Public Square: Building Capacity and Developing Leadership among American Muslims and Their Organizations." Please note that the opinions reflected in the paper and any recommendations contained herein are solely the views of the authors and do not necessarily represent the views of the participants of the working groups or the Brookings Institution. All of the working group papers will also be available on our website.

We would like to take this opportunity to thank the State of Qatar for its partnership and vision in convening the Forum in partnership with us. In particular, we thank the Emir of Qatar, HRH Sheikh Hamad bin Khalifa Al-Thani; the Prime Minister and Foreign Minister of Qatar, HE Sheikh Hamad bin Jassim bin Jabr Al-Thani; the Assistant Foreign Minister for Follow-up Affairs, HE Mohammad Abdullah Mutib Al-Rumaihi; and the entire staff of the Permanent Committee for Organizing Conferences at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs for their support and dedication in organizing the Forum.

Sincerely,

Dr. Stephen R. Grand
Fellow and Director
Project on U.S. Relations with
the Islamic World



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Enhancing Impact in the Public Square:
Building Capacity and Developing Leadership among American Muslims and Their Organizations

Abstract

Faith-based organizations play an important role in social service provision, advocacy, public education, community development and organizing, and other arenas within the American public square. Especially for minority faiths, faith-based organizations (FBOs) create a space for religious communities to meet the social needs of their members and work alongside individuals and organizations from different faith traditions. The arena of faith-based organizations is an important location where religious groups can negotiate their place within America's religiously pluralistic landscape.

Like other religious minorities in the United States, Muslim communities initially developed congregations, schools, and other bodies to meet the religious needs of the faithful. However, in an environment of increased hostility toward Muslims, especially after the September 11, 2001 attacks, Muslim organizations and those who lead them have been forced to undergo a process of rapid development in response to external factors. As a consequence, many of these organizations have not fully evolved to effectively address the broad demands being placed upon them as they attempt to find their place as full and equal participants in the United States.

This paper addresses the development of faith-based organizations and the roles they play in the American public square, and looks at how other religious minorities, specifically the Jewish and Mormon communities, have navigated this space. The authors then examine the current state of affairs among Muslim FBOs in the United States, and conclude by offering recommendations for how to increase the capacity of Muslim organizations to be more effective public actors. While this paper does not explicitly address the role of Muslim FBOs internationally, it will offer some possible areas of inquiry to broaden this conversation about the public role of religious organizations abroad.

During the 2011 U.S.-Islamic World Forum, practitioners from North America and global Muslim communities who work on leadership and capacity building with Muslims and their FBOs were convened to discuss lessons learned, outline potential ways to leverage experiences, and explore areas for collaboration. The working group's objective was to identify programs and methods to strengthen Muslim nonprofit leaders and organizations, so that they can work more effectively in the public square and participate as full partners with non-Muslim groups on issues of shared concern. Over the three days of the forum, the group addressed many of the topics presented in this paper. Although the paper reflects the views and research of the authors, the working group identified several common themes and trends in this field that warrant additional research and opportunities for practitioners to explore in greater detail. A summary of the working group's discussion is included at the end of the paper.

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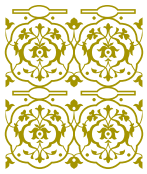

Authors

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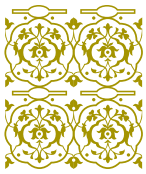
Nadia Roumani is the Co-Founder and Director of the American Muslim Civic Leadership Institute, housed at the University of Southern California. As the Principal of Roumani Consulting, Nadia is working with a range of universities, multilateral organizations, foundations, and think tanks to develop structural solutions that address Muslim communities' needs in America, and addressing ways to improve relations between the U.S. and predominantly Muslim countries. She has consulted for the UN Alliance of Civilizations, World Bank, UN Development Program, Chicago Council on Global Affairs, Four Freedoms Fund, Asian Americans/Pacific Islanders in Philanthropy, Jewish Funds for Justice, and the Rothschild Foundation, among others. For the past four years, Nadia has also served as the Consultant Program Officer for the Doris Duke Foundation for Islamic Art's Building Bridges Program. Prior to launching Roumani Consulting, Nadia was a Senior Associate at the Carnegie Council on Ethics and International Affairs, the Assistant Director of the Initiative for Policy Dialogue, and a Junior Associate in Economics Nobel Laureate Joseph Stiglitz's office at the World Bank. She is a term member of the Council on Foreign Relations. Nadia received her master's degree from Columbia University's School of International and Public Affairs and her bachelor's degree in Economics and International Relations from Stanford University.



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The Important Role of Faith Communities in the Public Square

A healthy society consists of a responsible government, a dynamic business sector, and a robust civil society. These three sectors must operate in balance for a society to flourish and serve the diverse needs of its citizens. Religious institutions in the United States are an important part of civil society (the so-called third sector). In many cases, they have ensured that needs unmet by the state are addressed. From Jane Addams to the Salvation Army to Jewish Federations, individuals and groups grounded in faith-traditions have worked to provide for the needy, educate and advocate on human rights issues, develop community resources, all the while consciously or unconsciously adding to the public understanding of the role of religion in America.

The United States is one of the most religious countries in the western world, with three-quarters of the population identifying themselves as Christians. More than half of Americans (56 percent) say that religion is "very important in their lives" and 39 percent attend religious services at least once a week.[1] Although Jews and Mormons each represent approximately 2 percent of the population, they exercise an important role in national politics, oftentimes on opposite ends of the political spectrum. Muslims are less than 1 percent of the population, but politicians can no longer refer to Americans as only Protestant, Catholic, or Jewish—they now inevitably include Muslims and, sometimes, other faith-traditions as well.

While religious organizations and congregations are often perceived as places of personal and communal reflection, religious expression, and moral grounding, they also serve beyond a purely spiritual realm. Religious communities around the world, whether through congregations or through other faith-based nonprofit organizations, have become key actors in the public square. According to the National Center for Charitable Statistics, there are over 1.6 million nonprofit organizations in the United States, of which over 200,000 fall into the "religion" category.[2] Religious groups provide a host of social services, work to quell violence during moments of crisis, help in long-term community resilience after disasters strike, engage in popular education on important issues, support economic development efforts, advocate on behalf of their constituents, and remind public officials about the need to serve disenfranchised communities. Indeed, religious groups can and do play important and varied roles in strengthening civil society, helping citizens engage their governments, and envisioning a more equitable world. According to Donald Miller, a

[1] The Pew Forum on Religion and Public Life, "U.S. Religious Landscape Survey" (The Pew Forum on Religion and Public Life, Washington, DC, February 2008), http://religions.pewforum.org/pdf/report-religious-landscape-study-full.pdf.

[2] "Nonprofit Organizations: Overview," National Center for Charitable Statistics, accessed July 29, 2011, http://nccsdataweb.urban.org/PubApps/nonprofit-overview.php.

professor of religion and Executive Director of the Center for Religion and Civic Culture at the University of Southern California:

> Religious institutions bring many assets to civil society. They have physical space, leadership, volunteers, and material resources, such as equipment and money. They are able to mobilize people around important social policy issues. They provide forums for debating as well as articulating the moral basis for civic responsibility. They also may attempt to fill a gap in the social safety net when government response is inadequate. And, on occasion, they create innovative programs that serve as models for social reform.[3]

These activities are not limited to the United States, but reflect the role of religious communities and institutions in countries around the world. From small networks of cooperation among the poor in remote villages to multi-billion dollar non-governmental organizations working in multiple countries, religious actors live the values of their traditions as they engage the world.

[3] Donald E. Miller, "Religion and Civil Society," in *The Oxford Handbook of Civil Society*, ed. Michael Edwards (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011).

Development of Other Minority Faith Groups and Their Institutions

The United States, while having freedom of religion enshrined as a core constitutional value, has struggled with religious pluralism. Some minority religious groups have developed unique trajectories as they navigate the complicated landscape of American religious life. Societal and government responses have ranged from banal disinterest to explicit lack of accommodation to outright persecution, and these experiences have shaped the ways in which religious communities respond to their particular situations in the United States. The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints and Judaism provide two examples of the evolution of minority religions grappling with organizational development, one placing greater emphasis on religious development and the other creating a robust infrastructure that engages the public square.

Mormons and the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints

There is perhaps no more indigenous religion in the United States than the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (LDS), founded in New York in 1830. Persecuted upon inception, church members moved westward as teachings were revealed through Joseph Smith. With an initial focus on building religious institutions, evangelizing, and developing their doctrine and governance structure, Mormons have focused primarily on spiritual issues in order to build a New Jerusalem on earth. Largely as a reaction to the cultural upheaval of the 1960s, the church turned inward and focused even more so on family, church-life, and missionary work.

The church's organization is highly centralized, and many of its programs operate under the organized structure of the church. Many of its social welfare programs (initiated during the Great Depression), along with its system of higher education and libraries, were founded to serve the community's needs. However, the church also operates a global relief organization, LDS Humanitarian Services, which provides assistance to those in need, without regard to race or religion.

Jews and Judaism

The Jewish community's roots in the United States are centuries old, and begin with the 1654 arrival of Jewish refugees from Recife, Brazil to New Amsterdam. The first congregation was established in 1730 in Lower Manhattan, as Jews looked to create institutions to meet their religious needs.[4] Jews appear on the first American census in 1790 with a population of 3,000.[5] After a period of about a hundred years, the population exploded to estimates of

[4] "Timeline 1492-1695 (From Haven to Home: 350 Years of Jewish Life)," The Library of Congress, accessed July 29, 2011, http://www.loc.gov/exhibits/haventohome/timeline/haven-timeline_0.html.
[5] William Pencak, *Jews and Gentiles in Early America: 1654-1800* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2005).

300,000, many immigrants from Central Europe. In the next few decades, an influx of Jews emigrated from Eastern Europe, and the Jewish population in the United States was approximately 3.5 million in 1920, shortly before restrictive immigration measures were passed. Today, between six and seven million Jews live in the United States, or approximately 2 percent of the population.

American Jews founded groups that ranged from aid and community organizations, like B'nai B'rith (1843), to advocacy and defense organizations operating to counter anti-Semitism—the American Jewish Committee (1906) and Anti-Defamation League (1913)—to Zionist groups like Hadassah (1912). The Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organizations was founded in 1956 and now has fifty-two member organizations.[6] And the 157 Jewish Federations across North America currently raise more than $3 billion a year.[7]

Jews developed these organizations to meet the needs of a new population immigrating to the United States, defend against bigotry and discrimination, advocate on political issues, and collectively create a voice in the public square for their community. On one hand, Jews worked to create structures to meet their internal community needs. Yet at the same time, many Jewish groups participated in larger issues, including the labor and civil rights movements. According to a recent report on the growth in Jewish social justice activities:

> Through most of the 20th century, the American Jewish community advocated for social justice issues alongside other minority groups and disadvantaged populations. Later in the century, tensions around Israel, anti-Semitism, and affirmative action frayed these alliances; these concerns, alongside the anxiety around rising rates of intermarriage, shifted the communal focus to Jewish identity and continuity. As the major organizations retreated from social justice advocacy, new Jewish social justice groups emerged to address these universal issues, as Jews.[8]

Currently, Mormons and Jews each make up about 2 percent of the United States population. Mormons are overwhelmingly politically conservative, while Jews tend to be liberal. Mormons and Jews are also on opposite ends of social issues like abortion and homosexuality, but line up very closely on the desire for the United States to be active in world affairs. Jews have somewhat higher levels of education and financial attainment, but lower rates of marriage and fewer children on average than Mormons.[9]

Although two of the candidates in the upcoming presidential primaries are Mormon, the community has tended to be fairly insular. Mormons have focused enormous attention on the integrity of the family unit and personal well-being. Mormons also emphasize missionary activity, which for their young people is interesting training for later global, entrepreneurial business activity. In contrast, Jews do not generally engage in evangelizing outside of their own fold, but are concerned with their dwindling numbers in the United States because of their low birth rates and the high rates of intermarriage of their young people. Despite their ongoing challenges and their humble origins in the United States, both groups have been remarkably upwardly mobile in American society.

Jews and Mormons, while both subject to persecution and discrimination in the United States (and globally), have developed important religious and

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[6] "Member Organizations," Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organizations, accessed July 29, 2011, http://www.conferenceofpresidents.org/content.asp?id=55.
[7] "About Us," The Jewish Federations of North America, accessed July 29, 2011, http://www.jewishfederations.org/about-us.aspx.
[8] Shifra Bronznick and Didi Goldenhar, "Visioning Justice and the American Jewish Community" (The Nathan Cummings Foundation, New York, March 2008), 12, http://www.nathancummings.org/jewish/vj_final_0428.pdf.
[9] "Religion in American Culture," The Pew Forum on Religion and Public Life, accessed July 29, 2011, http://religions.pewforum.org.

civic institutions during the last century and a half. The two groups followed markedly different paths, yet each demonstrates the ability of religious minorities to navigate the American landscape to meet their religious and social needs, to contribute to the public square, and to see their discrimination diminish over time as they integrate into American society. Though Muslim communities face increasing scrutiny and hostility, not unlike other minority groups, their institutional development does and will continue to play an integral role in how the communities will operate in the American public square. They could follow a more insular and highly centralized path, develop a plurality of competing and complimentary organizations, or a different trajectory altogether.

Taking Stock of the Current State of Muslims in the American Public Square

Diverse and Decentralized Muslim Communities

While Muslim Americans have had a presence in the United States that predates the country's founding, robust Muslim organizational development is a relatively new occurrence. The landscape of Muslim communities in the United States is complex. The Muslim population is relatively young, with two-thirds under the age of forty. There are over five million Muslims in America, from eighty different countries, and they have varying cultural backgrounds, are ideologically diverse, and are from all socio-economic groups.[10] A rough ethnic breakdown is 30 percent African American, 33 percent South Asian, 25 percent Arab, and the remaining 12 percent drawn from other ethnicities, including Latino, European, Turkish, Iranian, Southeast Asian, African, and Caribbean. Many Muslims were initially brought to the United States as slaves. Expressions of Islam in America were developed in African American communities and reached a peak in the 1960s under the Nation of Islam. Immigrant groups came largely after 1965 as refugees, as upper-class elites, and as blue-collar workers seeking upward mobility for themselves and their families. Geographically, Muslim Americans are concentrated in major urban areas, such as New York, Chicago, and Los Angeles, but there are also large pockets in other areas of the country, including Tennessee, Minnesota, and Michigan.

Mosques serve as places of prayer and religious life for Muslim communities across the United States, and some scholars have estimated that there are over 1,200 in the country. There were Muslim prayer spaces recorded in American history as early as the 1730s on a plantation in Maryland.[11] The call to prayer was heard in New York City in 1893 in the Union Square Bank Building,[12] and there are records of mosques being built in Highland Park, Michigan (1921), Ross, North Dakota (1929), and Cedar Rapids, Iowa (1934). Yet, despite the long-standing presence and the development of Islam led by African Americans, Muslims did not factor into the American public imagination with the same prominence as they have following the attacks of September 11th.

Mosques, unlike churches and synagogues, do not provide the same formal organizing and convening structures within Muslim communities. A research

[10] Therefore, approaching the Muslim community as a homogenous entity is ineffective and misleading. Though this is a common conceptual framework, it reifies the false notion of a homogeneous community and entrenches the positions of power and privilege of communal elites.
[11] Thomas Bluett, *Some Memoirs of the Life of Job, the Son of Solomon, the High Priest of Boonda in Africa* (London, 1734; University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, Rare Book Collection, 1999), 22, http://docsouth.unc.edu/neh/bluett/bluett.html.
[12] "New-York's First Muezzin Call," *New York Times*, December 11, 1893, http://query.nytimes.com/mem/archive-free/pdf?res=9501E1DB173EEF33A25752C1A9649D94629ED7CF.

project conducted from 2004 until 2006 by this paper's authors showed that few Muslims, especially those who are American-born, attend mosques with any regularity.[13] Mosques generally lack organizational structure, formal leadership, and clear membership. Many function more like prayer drop-in centers where people can conduct some or all of their five daily prayers and seek life cycle services (e.g., marriage, burial, etc.), with less emphasis on building social capital. Furthermore, many American-born Muslims feel disconnected from the leadership and authority in mosques. In interviews across the country, Muslims in their 20s and 30s told the authors that they did not attend a mosque regularly because, while imams and scholars provide religious knowledge, they did not feel engaged or welcome in the mosque. They often felt judged and were not provided with examples of "how their faith can be translated into action." Therefore, unlike the role that churches and synagogues have played in the United States for centuries, mosques have not generally played a central role for Muslims in America as places where they can build community, discuss social issues, and organize on behalf of their interests. There are some mosques that are playing this role, especially in predominately African American mosques, but it is not the case with the majority of immigrant-founded congregations.

The Landscape of Muslim Faith-Based Organizations in the United States

Muslim faith-based organizations, on the other hand, have begun to play a more central role in connecting with and serving the needs of Muslim communities, especially among American-born Muslims. During the 1970s and 1980s, the Muslim community in America was fairly insular; immigrant Muslim communities focused on economic advancement and living the American dream as individuals. African American Muslims underwent a leadership transition with the passing of Elijah Mohamed and confronted the realities of an Islamic community increasingly made up of immigrants unfamiliar and often hostile to their expressions of Islam. Few, if any, organizations were established enough to engage in broader discussions on policy and social justice, though this type of engagement was more present in groups created by the African American Muslim community. Most Muslim organizations worked to provide for the religious and social needs of their co-religionists, through schools and mosques, to accommodate the growing Muslim immigrant population and the exodus of African American Muslims from the Nation of Islam. But after 9/11, it became evident that the community and its leaders and organizations were not equipped to address the problems brought on by the tragic events of that day. As their civil rights were eroded in pursuit of national security, Muslim leaders and activists recognized the need to build a different set of capacities for their institutions and to prioritize engagement in American civic and political life to protect their rights.

Pioneers in Muslim communities across the United States have emerged, some prior to 9/11, to lead initiatives and organizations that engage Muslims in the fabric of American civic and political life while maintaining their distinct religious identities and sensibilities. They have developed programs that provide social services, served as first responders during times of crisis, advocated on behalf of the community's needs, and developed innovative and sustainable solutions to social problems. They have pushed their communities, despite fears, to actively engage and work in conjunction with others to address social issues that they have not previously addressed, including fair housing, healthcare for all, immigration reform, and rising rates of criminal recidivism. These issues, which affect segments of the Muslim community and a much broader cross-section of Americans, are serving as focal points for coalition building. Through collaboration, pioneering leaders

[13] Tobin Belzer, Richard W. Flory, Nadia Roumani, and Brie Loskota, "Congregations That Get It: Understanding Religious Identities in the Next Generation," in *Passing On the Faith: Transforming Traditions for the Next Generation of Jews, Christians, and Muslims*, ed. James L. Heft (Bronx, NY: Fordham University Press, 2006).

have demonstrated that creating partnerships can empower Muslims and provide a constructive voice in the democratic process in America.

According to research conducted in 2005 for the Four Freedoms Fund—a consortium of eleven foundations that seek to secure the full integration of immigrants as active participants in America's democracy—the majority of Muslim, Arab, and South Asian (MASA)[14] organizations are less than twenty-five years old, and they are focused on three primary areas of work: meeting religious needs (e.g., schools, congregations, etc.), service provision (e.g. food, clothing, etc.), and advocacy and defense (e.g., civil rights, media relations, responding to anti-Muslim incidents, etc.).[15] The majority of the interviewed leaders and MASA organizations in the study, who were working at the local, regional, and national levels, had less than three full-time staff. And most of the organizations did not have a diversified resource base, with the majority of their funds coming from individual donors. Due to the increasing external pressures in the aftermath of 9/11, these organizations were primarily reactive, moving from crisis to crisis without the opportunity to strategically select the issues and policies they wanted to address.

Furthermore, in the post-9/11 era, many Muslim FBOs were (and are) asked not only to meet urgent requests from within their constituencies but are also expected to serve as spokespeople who represent their communities to the broader public. A variety of religious communities, government agencies, nonprofit organizations, and media outlets have struggled to identify credible spokespeople and partners from Muslim communities who can provide insight into their communal needs, as well as develop long-term partnerships aimed at achieving common goals.

A comprehensive research study that has quantified or documented the full list of Muslim nonprofit organizations across the United States does not currently exist. Due to the nascence of the nonprofit landscape within Muslim communities, no single Muslim organization represents the diversity of Muslims in America, or bridges schools of thought and differences based on racial and ethnic, immigrant/indigenous, and class divides—nor, some would argue, is that even possible or desirable. The relative newness and diversity of organizations, coupled with the lack of clear structures challenge both the ability of Muslim communities to coordinate their activities and the ability of external audiences to understand the communities and identify interlocutors.

The Challenges Facing Muslim Faith-Based Organizations

Muslim FBOs have played an important role in serving the needs of their communities, especially in the post 9/11 climate. However, based on research and the subsequent convening of Muslim nonprofit leaders from across the country that contributed to the development of the American Muslim Civic Leadership Institute,[16] it has become clear that these Muslim nonprofit leaders, despite their commitment, energy, and potential, are burning out because they are overburdened and underresourced. Forced to continually respond to external requests and crises, most have not been able to obtain a broader understanding of how their work relates to the broader civil society landscape, and identify potential partners they could work with to achieve common goals.

Some of the most pressing needs articulated by leaders of Muslim FBOs include:

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[14] The MASA category is largely comprised of Muslims, but also includes Sikhs, Jains, Hindus, and Arab and Indian Christians.

[15] Nadia Roumani, "Muslims Communities in the United States: A Report for the Four Freedoms Fund" (March 2006).

[16] The American Muslim Civic Leadership Institute was founded in 2006 and launched in 2008, as the first national capacity-building institute for Muslim nonprofit leaders in the country. Over the past three years, AMCLI has graduated sixty-four fellows from fifty-nine organizations and seventeen states. The fellows are leading nonprofit organizations or are in political office. The goal is to both build the capacity of the individual leaders and their respective organizations, and to build a dynamic network of organizations that are working in consultation with one another to build a more coordinated movement.

- Leadership and nonprofit management skills;
- A better grounding in the tenets of social justice and social change within an Islamic framework;
- A network of American Muslim civic and FBO leaders that can exchange ideas, programs, campaigns, and best practices;
- Case studies of American Muslim civic leaders and their organizations that can be shared with the broader American Muslim community;
- An in-depth understanding of current policy issues, campaigns, and potential community and organizational partners (at the local, regional, and national levels);
- Access to resources and assistance in developing relationships with foundations and other funders that are interested in engaging with Muslim communities; and
- An increased ability to assess and address the needs and sensitivities of increasingly ethnically and religiously diverse American Muslim communities.[17]

Due to several other factors, there has been minimal targeted investment in Muslim FBOs by foundations and by Muslim communities themselves. According to a foundation landscape analysis conducted in 2010, few foundations are actively funding Muslim, Arab, and South Asian (MASA) communities, and those that are, are providing limited resources to overall capacity and leadership development.[18] The report states that:

> U.S. terrorism finance laws and policies have led to a chilling effect on charitable giving by foundations and individual charitable gifts to AMEMSA [Arab, Middle Eastern, Muslim, and South Asian] organizations. Soon after the events of September 11th, President Bush expanded the Treasury Department's authority to freeze the assets of institutions it considered terrorist organizations. Through the use of secret evidence and non-transparent procedures, the Department of the Treasury has closed six U.S.-based, American Muslim charities to date by designating them as terrorist organizations. In addition, at least six Muslim organizations have been raided. Although these charities have not been designated as terrorist organizations or had their assets frozen pursuant to a Treasury Department blocking order, they have suffered as a result of publicly announced investigations, law enforcement raids, and intrusive surveillance. The U.S. government's actions of seizing assets and conducting law enforcement raids of Muslim nonprofits have created a climate of fear that has chilled the Muslim communities' charitable giving and foundation support of AMEMSA nonprofit organizations. Because of the new Treasury Department guidelines, some foundations went so far as to incorporate clauses in their award documents that require recipients to agree or certify that they do not engage in, support, or promote terrorism or support terrorist organizations or activities. Other foundations commented that they feel uncomfortable inserting such clauses in their award letters, but remain uncertain about how best to address this issue.

The report also states:

> Representatives from various foundations interviewed noted a heightened fear of funding [MASA-related] issues. Despite

[17] This list of needs was collected during a series of meetings organized by Brie Loskota, Nadia Roumani, and Edina Lekovic prior to the establishment of AMCLI.

[18] Nadia Roumani, Archana Sahgal, and Molly Schultz Hafid, "Philanthropic Efforts Aimed at Improving Relations between the U.S. and Muslim Societies" (June 2010).

the interest of many funders in this field, as indicated by packed rooms during foundation briefings, there is a higher level of scrutiny imposed upon philanthropic support of MASA organizations. This scrutiny impedes philanthropic engagement in this field and the flow of resources to MASA organizations. This higher level of scrutiny takes place during the due diligence phase. Some of the foundations interviewed said that they feel pressured to include an extra layer of due diligence of MASA organizations, when compared to their foundation's other funding areas. Furthermore, Web sites such as Campus Watch and the Anti-Defamation League have been created by individuals and organizations outside of the MASA communities and often allege anti-Zionist or anti-Israel messages by MASA organizations. Although the information on these websites is not verified and largely unfounded, inaccurate information surfaces quickly when philanthropic staff conducts internet research to obtain information about MASA organizations. Philanthropic staff, many of which are unfamiliar with these organizations, find it difficult to navigate between allegations and facts. Furthermore, there is tension around the statements made by MASA leaders and organizations about foreign policy, specifically related to policies around the conflict in Israel and Palestine. Because of the political sensitivity surrounding this foreign policy issue, many philanthropic staff members are reluctant to engage in funding MASA organizations. Often, philanthropic staff do not have the expertise or time to engage on the issue and are apprehensive of taking a lead for fear of pressure from organizations and interest groups that take strong positions about this conflict.

Therefore, the rising pressures and demands on Muslim FBOs in the post 9/11 environment, coupled with the chilling effect on contributions to Muslim FBOs by individuals and foundations, have led to a challenging and stressful situation for Muslim FBO leaders. There are a few examples of foundations that are breaking this trend and providing targeted funding to MASA organizations,[19] and a few Muslim FBOs that have been able to leverage funds from individuals and foundations, but the aforementioned challenges have created a difficult environment for Muslim FBOs to effectively serve their communities and function as reliable interlocutors to domestic and international partners.

[19] Ibid.

Recommendations for Increasing the Effectiveness of American Muslims in the Public Square

Despite the many efforts of existing organizations and their leadership, most Americans have never met a Muslim and hold unfavorable views of Muslims and Islam.[20] There is also evidence that the number of Americans who have negative perceptions of these communities is on the rise. According to a *Washington Post*/ABC News Poll conducted in late 2010, 49 percent of Americans have negative views of Islam (as compared to 22 percent in early 2002).[21] These negative perceptions have led to a rise in discrimination and hate crimes against Muslims in some cities.

More than a public relations campaign is needed to address these issues. Instead, an intentional investment in building the human capital, organizational capacity, and networks of Muslims civil society leaders is required to bring the community more fully into the American public square as equal participants. In addition, the environment in which Muslim organizations operate must also be addressed. The recommendations below are proposed as achievable steps toward moving American Muslims more effectively into the public square.[22]

Redefine and Invest in Leadership

Muslim communities have a plethora of religious and political leaders, but there is a dearth of civil society and public leaders who are both rooted in their Islamic faith and able to address issues of relevance to their own communities and the broader public. Religious leaders can provide spiritual guidance, but they often lack the ability to connect religious teachings to the local context and to contemporary issues, or lack the skills and knowledge of how to build sustainable organizations with clear succession strategies. Political leaders, while addressing the local or national context, are often mistrusted. Within Muslim nonprofit organizations and civil society groups, self-appointed spokespersons abound. These individuals claim to represent Muslim communities, but they often lack religious knowledge or relationships with communities that would make them credible leaders. These factors leave a tremendous gap, with community members searching for trusted and authentic leadership that can provide them with guidance rooted in a religious perspective, and that can also operate in a pluralistic environment, thus helping them make their faith relevant in a contemporary context.

[20] There is also a small and vocal fringe whose vitriolic messages advocate against full Muslim participation in the United States. Although campaigns seeking to point out the negative impact of these groups are important and complimentary work to the steps outlined here, the authors believe that the current approach of Muslim communities places too much emphasis on these fringe groups.

[21] "Washington Post/ABC News Poll," *Washington Post*, September 7, 2010, http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-srv/politics/polls/postpoll_09072010.html.

[22] The conversations during the working group sessions highlighted these recommendations as universally applicable, though with context-specific nuances in each country or society.

As a result, the definition of Muslim leadership needs to be expanded beyond political and religious leaders to include those working in the public square and on behalf of and with the support of their communities. There should be more effort to expand this definition to include those with authentic roots in their communities. Efforts to reach out to these leaders are critical, as is an investment in building up their leadership capacity and skills. Often these leaders are working in faith-based nonprofit organizations at the "grass-tops" level, but they are not correctly identified as "Muslim leaders" because they do not serve in congregations or perform religious rituals. Reaching out to authentic community leaders would be more effective than simply focusing on supporting self-appointed spokespersons, self-proclaimed thought-leaders, or imams and scholars with few followers.

Develop Capacity and Operational Diversity among Muslim Faith-Based Organizations

There is a dire need to build the capacity of Muslim civic leaders and their organizations so that they are equipped to lead their respective communities toward greater civic engagement and away from their current political isolation. While new nonprofits and leaders are emerging, this field is nascent and under-resourced. Developing grand strategies to address broad policy issues is irrelevant if the organizations that represent these communities and the leaders who staff them cannot sustain their work or participate in campaigns on issues of importance to their constituents. Capacity building is needed and fits neatly into the cross-section of interests among and between government agencies, foundations, Muslim communities, and non-Muslim partner groups.

It is important to invest in a generation of Muslim leaders who possess a unique ability to navigate secular and religious environments, and effectively build partnerships and consensus within both the Muslim community (especially across different ethnicities, schools of thought, and socio-economic statuses), and with non-Muslim organizations addressing similar concerns. It is imperative that this emerging generation is equipped with the skills and visibility needed so that it can serve as a model for American Muslim communities and as a source of education for non-Muslim Americans.

Investing in emerging leaders will not only increase their effectiveness in their daily work, but also equip them to build strategic and sustainable institutions that last well beyond the work of the individual leaders within this sector. A common and oft-repeated mistake is to build institutions around charismatic leaders and specific personalities, such that the organizations disintegrate when that leader passes away or is no longer involved. Instead, institutions must be built that can serve the needs of their communities, and that ensure a leadership succession that can sustain these institutions and the important needs that these institutions are addressing. The generation that is striving to build institutions of excellence that will serve both Muslim and non-Muslim communities must be empowered, while simultaneously ensuring that the community does not feel it is compromising its ethnic, religious, or cultural identities. Finally, the sector must be professionalized so that it is not seen as an afterthought or as just an entertaining hobby for the wealthy, but as part of the very fabric of well-rounded and dynamic societies.

This model not only strengthens individual leaders, but also aims to build a healthier ecosystem of leaders and organizations working in tandem, rather than in individual silos. This model is not specific to Muslims in America, but can be applied to Muslim communities around the world in which there are emerging Muslim civic leaders who are under-supported and over-burdened. If these unsung heroes are not actively supported and recognized in their communities, they will be overlooked and the existing void in leadership will continue to widen. Enhancing Muslim faith-based leaders and their organizations through capacity-building initiatives is

just beginning to be undertaken by a few groups in the United States and abroad.[23]

Build Knowledge-Sharing Networks

An important first step in building these networks is to conduct a study that analyzes the landscape of organizations that are already building the human capital of Muslim leaders and civil society groups, and evaluates their work and impact. This baseline study would aid the formation of a "community of practice" in which Muslims can share information about curricula, programs, and lessons learned based on their engagement with the public square. Additional opportunities are needed for trainers and educators to come together and discuss how they can partner and leverage their work around the world. Muslim leaders and their organizations operate under constant pressure. There is a need for safe, closed-door environments for frank discussions about community issues, challenges, and problems. The current, media-saturated environment forces Muslims into a constant reactive state with little space for self-criticism. Muslim FBO leaders need safe spaces for deliberation, training, mentoring, and community building, which are necessary steps to supporting vibrant networks that encourage collaboration.

Turn Down the Pressure Cooker

There is also a need to address the climate of fear around the funding of Muslim organizations so that legitimate organizations can compete for resources that are available to other communities. Despite the role that faith plays in many peoples' lives, fear about Muslims and Islam abound. The dominant paradigm links religiosity with extremism, and therefore makes average Muslim religious observance suspect. Furthermore, in the current climate, the fear of contributing to Muslim organizations in the United States by Muslim communities and by organized philanthropy has compounded the resource scarcity that hampers the ability of Muslim organizations to contribute to society. Inhibiting the free-flow of resources into Muslim organizations hinders the ability to build stable and fair environments for Muslim organizations and leaders to do their work around the globe.

Civic engagement should not be synonymous with countering violent extremism. Moreover, security offices and law enforcement should not be the only groups reaching out to Muslim communities. Muslim communities should be part of discussions on issues that affect all segments of society, rather than just narrowly proscribed issues like national security. Muslim organizations and leaders can be partners on food banks, disaster relief, neighborhood watches, economic development, and other social policy and service programs that enhance the connectedness of Muslims to their larger communities. This would help change engagement with Muslim groups to not be solely based on national security issues, and would serve as a powerful message that Muslims can be—and indeed must be—part of larger communal issues.

[23] For examples of how to implement capacity building and leadership development programs targeted at Muslims working in the public square, see AMCLI (http://www.usc.edu/amcli) in the United States, the Canadian Muslim Leadership Institute (http://www.canadamuslimleaders.ca) in Canada, and Bayan for Human Development (http://www.facebook.com/group.php?gid=2382308503) in the Middle East, with a focus on Egypt.

Thinking Globally about Muslims as Faith-Actors in the Public Square

The role of Muslims in the public square is a topic that is not limited to the United States, but is of global concern. With approximately one and a half billion Muslims globally, the role that Muslim communities can play in both Muslim-majority countries and as minorities in other countries is important to address. The degree to which civil society has been formally developed and institutionalized in the United States makes it unique, especially when compared to civil society structures in Muslim-majority countries. Therefore, it is not effective to compare Muslim FBOs across countries. However, this should not lead to the mistaken assumption that Muslim organizations, whether formal or informal, are not powerful actors in the public square in other countries around the world. It simply means that there must be other ways to record and assess their structures, contributions, and impact.

Although most people have come to the realization that religion remains an important facet of people's lives in many societies, there is still a general discomfort with religion in the international arena and in international affairs. Especially as it relates to Muslim communities, religion is either ignored or viewed with suspicion. Going forward, developing the capacity of Muslim organizations and their leaders will become increasingly important, especially as parts of the Arab world begin transitioning to democracy. Independent civil society groups play an important role in democracies as they balance the interests of business and the power of government and political parties. Indeed, civil society groups are where individual citizens can best work collectively to give voice to social issues. However, in many Muslim societies around the world, there is an imbalance among these three sectors. The civil society sector is severely under-resourced, and in many Muslim-majority countries, it is confined to the narrow category of "charities," with little investment in the strategic development and expansion of this field, and encouragement of those working in it. The narrow definition of the sector limits development in areas such as social enterprise, community development, education, advocacy, and a host of other activities.

Furthermore, in many societies, there are complex and cumbersome regulatory policies to establish nonprofit organizations. Funding incentives and infrastructure may also be lacking or inhibit the free-flow of resources to legitimate organizations. This leaves civil society groups, in some cases, unable to operate legally and without government interference, which creates challenges for funding and resource development.

Faith is an important component of this third sector, yet in many countries, political engagement by Muslims that invokes religion is viewed with suspicion, especially since 9/11. In many countries, a false dichotomy between pure secularism on one hand and religiously based extremism on the other has created little space for average Muslims to express their faith-inspired values. Therefore, many

citizens fear faith-based institutions that provide broad-based social services as a means to garner political power. The legal regulations and structures that oversee the civil society sector must ensure that organizational mandates, activities, and objectives are transparent, and they must create an environment of independence, ensuring that civil society groups will not be exploited by political parties or business interests.

Muslims outside the United States live in a varied landscape that ranges from monarchic rule to secular states with Muslim-majority and minority populations. In each instance, the issues facing Muslim communities are unique and defy simple generalization. Therefore, a country-by-country study of Muslim communities, faith-based civic leadership, and civil society is needed to assess the specific capacity-building needs of Muslim NGOs.

The role that religion will play in Muslim communities globally is an area that also needs attention. People in non-Muslim western nations should abandon the secularism versus extremism divide that drives their understanding of Islam and Muslims. They need to adopt a "lived religion" framework that seeks to understand the way that everyday Muslims negotiate their religious identities and mandates, especially in the civic arena.

Not only do Muslim organizations need to be in discussion with each other, but the capacity-building initiatives that work to build them up also need to begin to share more work across geographic boundaries. The U.S.-Islamic World Forum working group was an important first step in this direction. The group's recommendations included the following:

Identify and fill the information void

- Conduct a landscape analysis of initiatives aimed at supporting the development of human capital of Muslim leaders and civil society organizations.
- Connect those already working in this field to share information.

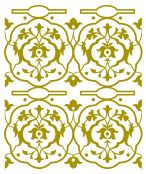
Create an enabling environment in which faith-based Muslim nonprofit organizations can flourish

- States and societies need to ease the burden of these organizations so that they can be formally recognized and more easily access resources, including funding, to implement their programs.
- Build relationships between civil society, government, and the private sector.

Work to build more effective and impactful Muslim leaders and nonprofit organizations

- Expand the definition of Muslim "leader" to include those working in the social and civil society sector.
- Provide trainings that professionalize the sector.
- Properly recognize and integrate the sector into the culture in Muslim societies and communities.
- Improve coordination and alliances with non-Muslim organizations and leaders.

Future efforts to convene civil society groups are needed to delve more deeply into issues such as information sharing, curricula, and operational challenges. Supporting this "community of practice" will go a long way toward enhancing the ability of these groups to create outstanding programs and initiatives that, in turn, enable emerging Muslim voices in civil society around the globe to have a bigger impact and be better equipped to work as partners on issues of mutual concern.



Conclusion

There is tremendous opportunity and interest in developing partnerships with Muslim organizations and communities in the United States and abroad. The need for these partnerships increases daily, but much work is required to bring these potential partnerships to their full fruition. Muslim leaders of faith-based nonprofits must be included in the discussions of "religious leadership," and in outreach work with more traditional religious leaders, like scholars and imams. These leaders and the organizations they represent, if supported with capacity building, leadership development, safe spaces for discussion, and an environment that is not solely focused on national security issues, have the potential to contribute to projects, programs, partnerships, and policy initiatives that advance the social good of all. In doing so, they also can serve as a powerful example of the potential of both Muslims and the Islamic faith to be sources for social transformation.

About the Brookings Project on U.S. Relations with the Islamic World

The Project on U.S. Relations with the Islamic World is a major research program housed within the Saban Center for Middle East Policy at the Brookings Institution. The project conducts high-quality public policy research, and convenes policy makers and opinion leaders on the major issues surrounding the relationship between the United States and the Muslim world. The Project seeks to engage and inform policymakers, practitioners, and the broader public on developments in Muslim countries and communities, and the nature of their relationship with the United States. Together with the affiliated Brookings Doha Center in Qatar, it sponsors a range of events, initiatives, research projects, and publications designed to educate, encourage frank dialogue, and build positive partnerships between the United States and the Muslim world. The Project has several interlocking components:

- The U.S.-Islamic World Forum, which brings together key leaders in the fields of politics, business, media, academia, and civil society from across the Muslim world and the United States, for much needed discussion and dialogue;

- A Visiting Fellows program, for scholars and journalists from the Muslim world to spend time researching and writing at Brookings in order to inform U.S. policy makers on key issues facing Muslim states and communities;

- A series of Brookings Analysis Papers and Monographs that provide needed analysis of the vital issues of joint concern between the U.S. and the Muslim world;

- An Arts and Culture Initiative, which seeks to develop a better understanding of how arts and cultural leaders and organizations can increase understanding between the United States and the global Muslim community;

- A Science and Technology Initiative, which examines the role cooperative science and technology programs involving the U.S. and Muslim world can play in responding to regional development and education needs, as well as fostering positive relations;

- A Faith Leaders Initiative which brings together representatives of the major Abrahamic faiths from the United States and the Muslim world to discuss actionable programs for bridging the religious divide;

- A Brookings Institution Press Book Series, which aims to synthesize the project's findings for public dissemination.

The underlying goal of the Project is to continue the Brookings Institution's original mandate to serve as a bridge between scholarship and public policy. It seeks to bring new knowledge to the attention of decision-makers and opinion-leaders, as well as afford scholars, analysts, and the public a better insight into policy issues. The Project is supported through the generosity of a range of sponsors including the Government of the State of Qatar, The Ford Foundation, The Doris Duke Charitable Foundation, and the Carnegie Corporation.

The Project Conveners are Martin Indyk, Vice President and Director of Foreign Policy Studies; Kenneth Pollack, Senior Fellow and Director, Saban Center; Bruce Riedel, Senior Fellow in the Saban Center; Stephen R. Grand, Fellow and Director of the Project on U.S. Relations with the Islamic World; Shibley Telhami, Nonresident Senior Fellow and Anwar Sadat Chair for Peace and Development at the University of Maryland; and Salman Shaikh, Director of the Brookings Doha Center.

About the Saban Center for Middle East Policy at Brookings

THE SABAN CENTER FOR MIDDLE EAST POLICY was established on May 13, 2002 with an inaugural address by His Majesty King Abdullah II of Jordan. The creation of the Saban Center reflects the Brookings Institution's commitment to expand dramatically its research and analysis of Middle East policy issues at a time when the region has come to dominate the U.S. foreign policy agenda.

The Saban Center provides Washington policymakers with balanced, objective, in-depth and timely research and policy analysis from experienced and knowledgeable scholars who can bring fresh perspectives to bear on the critical problems of the Middle East. The center upholds the Brookings tradition of being open to a broad range of views. The Saban Center's central objective is to advance understanding of developments in the Middle East through policy-relevant scholarship and debate.

The center's foundation was made possible by a generous grant from Haim and Cheryl Saban of Los Angeles. Ambassador Martin S. Indyk, Vice President of Foreign Policy at Brookings, was the founding Director of the Saban Center. Kenneth M. Pollack is the center's Director. Within the Saban Center is a core group of Middle East experts who conduct original research and develop innovative programs to promote a better understanding of the policy choices facing American decision makers. They include Bruce Riedel, a specialist on counterterrorism, who served as a senior advisor to four presidents on the Middle East and South Asia at the National Security Council and during a twenty-nine year career in the CIA; Suzanne Maloney, a former senior State Department official who focuses on Iran and economic development; Daniel Byman, a Middle East terrorism expert from Georgetown University; Stephen R. Grand, Fellow and Director of the Project on U.S. Relations with the Islamic World; Salman Shaikh, Fellow and Director of the Brookings Doha Center; Ibrahim Sharqieh, Fellow and Deputy Director of the Brookings Doha Center; Shadi Hamid, Fellow and Director of Research of the Brookings Doha Center; and Shibley Telhami, who holds the Sadat Chair at the University of Maryland. The center is located in the Foreign Policy Studies Program at Brookings.

The Saban Center is undertaking path breaking research in five areas: the implications of regime change in Iraq, including post-war nation-building and Gulf security; the dynamics of Iranian domestic politics and the threat of nuclear proliferation; mechanisms and requirements for a two-state solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict; policy for the war against terrorism, including the continuing challenge of state sponsorship of terrorism; and political and economic change in the Arab world, and the methods required to promote democratization.

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