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Muddled Loyalty: A Study of Islamic Centers in Boston Area

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Abstract: This thesis is a further study of Peter Skerry's 2011 article, "the Muslim-American Muddle," in which he argues that not only non-Muslim Americans are worrying about Muslims' loyalty issue due to the fear of radical Islamism and terrorism, but also Muslims are confused. My basic argument is that Muslims are still suffering from their muddled loyalty. It is not because they are disloyal but because, in light of Grodzins, their organizations guide them in different directions which are not always en route to national loyalty as non-Muslims expect. Inspired by Morton Grodzins's theory on social structure and national loyalty in liberal democracies and James Q. Wilson's insightful study on political organizations, this research has sought to understand the Muslim muddle with an in-depth inquiry and examination on one of the most common and important Islamic organizations—Islamic centers and mosques with an ethnographical method. The evidence of this thesis was collected between April 2016 and December 2017.

In fact, I almost visited every mosque in Massachusetts. However, I was not always lucky to build strong connections with many centers for various reasons. In this thesis, I only select those mosques that I had visited more than three times. And I try my best to interview as many leaders as possible. I also manage to keep a geographical and sectarian balance in my sample. I hope to cover all types of mosques in Boston area. My findings are interesting, though of course often confusing and may contradicting with each other but I am duty-bound to report them even if it may had negative impact on the generalization power of my argument. I find that Islamic centers have different goals and offer different incentives to overcome collective actions problems. Both solidarity and political engagement are valued by Islamic centers in general, but individual organizations have different preferences which are results of divergent immigrant experiences. So the organizational aspect of Muslims community is fragmented. However, the increasing external political pressure in the post 9/11 period did not overcome the problem but aggravated it by simply empowering purposive mosques like ISBCC in public sphere.

Introduction

"Who is our friend? Who is our enemy?"[1] Political theologian Karl Schmidt, by citing the first sentence from the first essay from *Selected Works of Mao Tse-tung*, declares that a clear identification of friend-enemy relationship is the first task of politics.[2] In the light of Schmidt, all forms of politics can be reduced to politics of identity. However, in real politics, it is much easier and more feasible to identify "our enemy" than "our friend." This lesson is still alive in the era of War on Terror. President Donald J. Trump, like President George W. Bush, divides Muslims in two groups: "with us" and "against us."[3] "With us" Muslims are good, moderate, assimilated, and loyal to this country while "against us" Muslims are nothing but the opposite. Both presidents agree it is necessary to deal with "against us" Muslims with tough tactics.

The most efficient and easiest convenient political choice was to ban the entry of Muslims who are suspected of being "against us." Since January 27, 2017, President Trump had issued three controversial executive orders, what the media call "Muslim travel bans," in succession. The bans stopped citizens from seven Muslim-majority countries entering the United States and their visa would be denied or suspended

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[1] Mao, Zedong, and United States. Joint Publications Research Service. Issuing Body. Collected Works of Mao Tse-tung (1917-1949)., 1978.

[2] Schmidt claims that "the specific political distinction is that between friend and enemy." See Schmidt, Carl *The Concept of the Political.* Expanded Edition (1932), trans. by G. Schwab, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2007, 26.

[3] "Over time it's going to be important for nations to know they will be held accountable for inactivity...You're either with us or against us in the fight against terror." See "You are either with us or against us"

because "the United States must ensure that those admitted to this country do not bear hostile attitudes toward it and its founding principles."[4] A week after, one of my interviewees who is a board member of a local mosque near Boston told me that his wife's H-1b visa extension was denied though she is not from any of the listed countries. The guiding principle behind Trump's Muslim bans is clear that the United States is not tolerant of all religious and ideological doctrines. Not surprisingly, leading domestic Muslim organizations such as the Islamic Society of North America (ISNA) and the Council of American-Islamic Relations (CAIR) soon publicly condemned the "anti-Muslim" orders and organized protesting activities. Civil right organizations such as American Civil Liberty Union (ACLU) also joined and criticized the orders of being unconstitutional and racist that politically discriminate and persecute Muslims because these orders were driven by the Islamophobic ideology held by the Trump's Administration and the Republican party. The civil rights organizations sought to challenge the order via legal means and gained several injunctions and a restraining order from multiple federal Judges at different district federal courts and appellate courts.[5]

These cases went to the Supreme Court in June 2017. The Court, surprisingly, ruled in a complicated way. It only stopped the government from banning the entry of foreign nationals who have "bona fide [relationships] with a person or entity in the United States." But the Court stood with the Administration on that it was

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[4] Exec. Order No. 13769, 3 C.F.R. 2 (2017).

[5] "Timeline of the Muslim Ban" *American Civil Liberties Union of Washington* https://www.aclu-wa.org/pages/timeline-muslim-ban Accessed Jan, 19, 2018.

"Government's interest in preserving national security against the hardships caused to respondents by temporary denials of entry into the country."[6] The Court's opinion echoed its unanimous opinion with regard to Mormons' religious right over polygamy more than a century ago in the case *Reynolds v. United State (1879)*, that recognized government's power can "interfere…with [religious] practices" and the freedom of religious practice cannot be superior to the common good.[7]

Trump's Muslim bans reveal the Administration's suspicion toward Muslims. Following political debates on the bans echo political scientist Peter Skerry's observation seven years ago that on one hand "America has reached a political and intellectual stalemate regarding the Muslims in its midst," on the other hand "[Muslims'] loyalty to this nation is muddled."[8] There are three main reasons for the muddled loyalty, argues Skerry: political institutionalization of "cosmopolitan values," "America's apparent unwillingness to place serious demands on its citizens," and most important but also subtlest, "lingering influence of Islamist leaders, institutions, and ideology."[9] That non-Muslim Americans are so concerned with American Muslims' loyalty is out of the fear of domestic terrorist activities.[10] Skerry

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[6] *Trump v. Hawaii*, No. 16-1540 (U.S. Aug. 24, 2017), 11.

[7] *Reynolds v. United States*, 98 U.S. 145, 25 L. Ed. 244, 25 L. Ed. 2d 244 (1879).

[8] Skerry, Peter. "The Muslim-American Muddle." *National Affairs* 9 (2011): 14-15.

[9] Ibid, 15.

[10] Saifuddin Ahmed and Jorg Matthes conducted a multiple-method analysis of a sample of 345 published studies between 2000 and 2015 on media's impact on construction of Muslim American identities. The two scholars in communication find that most academic researches trapped with paradigms adopted in public discourse on Muslims that often link Muslims and Islam with fundamentalism and terrorism. In addition, they find that Islamophobic sentiment is mainly triggered by "acts of terrorism." See Ahmed, Saifuddin, and Jörg

acknowledges that many of the fears are not reasonable and "too alarmist." Instead of overreacting on Muslims' loyalty issue, he warns, the more desirable goal for non-Muslims is to "to exert constructive pressure, in different ways and to different degrees, on Muslim Americans — leaders and ordinary citizens alike — to "deal with their baggage."[11] Both Muslims and non-Muslims are responsible to collaborate to reconcile tensions between Muslims and non-Muslims in reasonable ways.

It has been seven years since the article got published. Is there any improvement on the relationship between Muslims and non-Muslims? The answer is complicated. The political integration of American Muslims is successful. According to Irene Bloemraad, a full political integration consists of two standards: "acquisition of legal or formal citizenship and engagement in the political system of the adopted country."[12] With regard to the first one, over eighty percent of Muslims are either naturalized or American born. As to the second standard, American Muslims now are the most active religious minority group in the Democratic coalition. Not to mention that many Muslims have been elected to important political offices. Take Representative Keith Ellison who is now also the deputy chair of the Democratic National Convention for instance.[13] In addition, over seventy percent of registered Muslim voters voted for Democratic candidates like Hilary Clinton and Bernie

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Matthes. "Media Representation of Muslims and Islam from 2000 to 2015: A Meta-analysis." *International Communication Gazette* 79, no. 3 (2017): 219-44.

[11] Skerry, "the Muslim-American Muddle," 15.

[12] Bloemraad, Irene. Becoming a Citizen : Incorporating Immigrants and Refugees in the United States and Canada. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2006, 5-6.

[13] Wikiquote contributors, "Keith Ellison," Wikiquote, , https://en.wikiquote.org/w/index.php?title=Keith_Ellison&oldid=2356111 (accessed Feb 2, 2018).

Sanders in the last 2016 presidential election.[14]

However, the tension between Muslims and non-Muslims is intensified in public sphere. In July, 2017, Pew Research Center published their recent survey on American Muslims that indicates a majority of American Muslims concerned their position in the American society because they think "the media is unfair to Muslims and that other Americans do not view Islam as part of mainstream U.S. society."[15] On the other hand, many Muslim leaders are more politically aggressive than before. At the Community Service Recognition Luncheon of ISNA's 54th annual convention in June 2017, Muslim feminist activist Linda Sarsour, wearing a green hijab, delivered a high controversial speech against the rising Islamophobia in the Trump's administration. She said:

> "What I believe…is that you can be unapologetically Muslim…hold strong conviction, have a strong ideology of politics, and still become a mainstream American who can inspire and resonate with people outside of the Muslim community…that Muslim community should standing up for any and all communities were oppressed in this country because not only that is the right thing to do, it is the Islamic thing to do…Dissent is the highest form of patriotism."[16]

The framework in Linda Sarsour's speech, resounding with Howard Dean's address on ISNA's convention in 2003 that "there is nothing more American than protest," is identical with that of identity politics and politics of social justice, the basic political

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[14] Pew Research Center, July 26, 2017, "U.S. Muslims Concerned About Their Place in Society, but Continue to Believe in the American Dream." http://www.pewforum.org/2017/07/26/findings-from-pew-research-centers-2017-survey-of-us-muslims/ Accessed Aug, 2, 2017.

[15] Ibid.

[16] "Linda Sarsour addressing at 54th Annual ISNA Convention," https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=k0tr0CFik2k Accessed Aug, 5, 2017.

assumption of which is "[minorities] always lose"[17] The rhetoric, of course, did not help to reconcile the tension because it proposed a more aggressive strategy to directly fight against political discrimination and persecution. It is not surprising that Sarsour's aggressive speech soon received a lot of critiques from the political conservative side. It stirred a new round of heated public debate on potential threats from Muslims. Cases on both sides not only betray an intensifying relationship between Muslims and non-Muslims in public sphere, but also show that the Muslim loyalty issue has become so important that it directly participate in polarizing American politics. How should we explain the complicated Muslim loyalty issue? It is the focus of this thesis.

Political Loyalty and Social Structure. Despite ideological and partisan difference, almost every American values national loyalty and despises disloyalty, especially in the age of war. National loyalty connects individuals' emotional attachment with national interests: it's the foundation of national identity. However, in liberal democracy like America, national loyalty is also conditional because it does not require absolute and unconditional submission to political and social authorities as do traditional despotic regimes and modern authoritarian states. On the contrary, national loyalty in liberal democracy, as political scientist Morton Grodzins defines,

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[17] About Howard Dean, see Ahmed, Leila. *A Quiet Revolution : The Veil's Resurgence, from the Middle East to America.* New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2011. About the "always lose" statement, see Robert Park: "I am not quite clear in my mind that I am opposed to race riots. The thing that I am opposed to is that the Negro should always lose." Cited by Peter Skerry, "The Racialization of Immigration Policy," in Keller, Morton., and Melnick, R. Shep. *Taking Stock : American Government in the Twentieth Century.* Woodrow Wilson Center Series. Woodrow Wilson Center Press and Cambridge University Press, 1999. 119.   Also see Amaney Jamal "The Racialization of American Muslims" Sinno, Abdulkader H. *Muslims in Western Politics.* Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2009.

follows a reciprocal principle as it is often found in voluntary associations that "one is loyal to the groups that provide gratifications because what serves the group serves the self."[18] Therefore, national loyalty in liberal democracy is fluid and unstable because it is inevitably in competition with other types of group loyalties.

So what can we do to guarantee loyalty and to dispel disloyalty? Grodzins reminds us of that most citizens "are loyal because they are not disloyal." So instead of focusing on finding out who are loyal citizens, he suggests that we should turn our attention to what may cause disloyalty: "Persons are disloyal because the entire weight of society repels them from open acts of national disloyalty."[19] After all, if loyalty to a given group is built on reciprocal relationship between the group and individual members, triggers to loyalty and disloyalty will be many because different individuals have different preferences and interests. Grodzins points out that social structure matters more than ideological and religious convictions. The function of social structure is to channel "satisfactory private life" and "loyalties to voluntary group" to national loyalty.[20] After an elaborated and in-depth analysis on many cases of disloyal Japanese Americans during the World War II, he finds that loyalty is sustained by various multiple-step nation-individual ties, including direct ties and

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[18] Grodzins, Morton. *The Loyal and the Disloyal : Social Boundaries of Patriotism and Treason.* Chicago, Ill., U.S.A.: University of Chicago Press, 1956, 7.

[19] Ibid, 30.

[20] Ibid.

indirect ones, which depends on "life-situation."[21] He concludes that when a group find itself alienated and marginalized by the mainstream society and persecuted by the national government, it is likely to call for disloyalties because the nation, in this case, would be meaningless to them. In chapter ten of his book Grodzins continues his analysis on dynamics between (dis)loyalty and the social structure. He gives a three-step test for national loyalty as responding to three levels of collective loyalties. The first step is to examine if the micro-level relationship between individual members and a given group are positive, the second step is to investigate the medium-level relationship that whether and how these group-individual connections can be linked with the nation, and the last is to ask that at macro-level if there is an alternative national loyalty. In sum, social structure of a given group matters because it plays a pivotal role in identifying the group's position in the society.

Two Images of American Muslims as Minority. Group identity, in light of Grodzins's work, matters in determining someone's national loyalty. Before discussing the loyalty issue of American Muslims, a general introduction of American Muslims is necessary. There are two images of American Muslims: one is public and another as statistic. The public image of American Muslims tells us that American Muslims are a highly solidary, moderate, and homogeneous faith-based immigrant race-like minority group. American Muslims are, in the word of Amaney Jamal, "racialized."[22] The racialization of American Muslims is not something novel to

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[21] Ibid, 128.

[22] See Jamal, "Racialization of American Muslims"

Americans who like to discuss and examine immigrants as if they are racial minorities like Black Americans, it is because political definitions of majority and minority changed in the post-civil right era. When the Founders deliberated on the Constitution they wanted to protect minority from the "tyranny of majority." But they assumed both majority and minority as fluid and short-term factions who were united because of shared temporary pulses for interests.[23] To the founders, both majority and minority are up to personal choice: people associated in groups not because they have to but they choose to. Therefore, the American polity must be designed as a political apparatus to prevent majority to institutionalize their majority status through democratic procedures. However, in today's politics, the minority's status is institutionalized through racialization. According to Skerry, the conception of "minority" in the American context cannot be separated from racial terms and often has nothing to do with "a group's numerical size."[24] In political discourse, racial and immigrant groups are interpreted as "involuntary minorities" who "understood that the American system was based on social class and minority conditions."[25] Causes behind the formal and informal institutionalization of racialization are too complicated to be clearly and comprehensively addressed here. But one thing is certain that racialization is a strategy widely adopted by immigrant leaders because

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[23] See James Madison, "Federalist Papers no. 10," in Hamilton, Alexander, Madison, James, Jay, John, Rossiter, Clinton, and Kesler, Charles R. *The Federalist Papers.* New York, N.Y.: Signet Classic, 2003.

[24] See Skerry, Peter. *Mexican Americans : The Ambivalent Minority*. New York : Toronto: New York: Free Press ; Maxwell Macmillan Canada ; Maxwell Macmillan International, 1993.

[25] Ogbu, John U., and Herbert D. Simons. "Voluntary and Involuntary Minorities: a Cultural‐Ecological Theory of School Performance with Some Implications for Education." *Anthropology & Education Quarterly 29*, no. 2 (1998): 145-146.

by defining their groups as racial minorities in the post-civil right era, their political assimilation process can be accelerated and they, as leaders with political ambition, will be politically empowered. The public image of American Muslims as a race-like minority group is a result of empowerment of American Islamists who constitute "a minority of a minority" among American Muslims. [26] The Islamists are now representing American Muslims before the non-Muslim public because they were the only "visible segment" of American Muslims in public discourse.[27]

But, the statistic image tells an opposite story. Few non-Muslims appreciate facts that American Muslims are a highly diverse group and hence deeply divided. According to the very recent Pew Research Center's survey on American Muslims, there are estimated 3.35 million of Muslims crossing all age ranges in the Untied States, which approximately represent 1.1 percent of the whole American population, and more than half of Muslims (58 percent) are reported foreign born immigrants. Muslims are also the fastest growing immigrant religious group in the United States who will soon represent over two percent of the whole American population. [28] Majority of Muslim immigrants are from at least seventy-seven different countries. Let alone the high level of ethnic, racial, cultural, and religious diversities. In addition, the 2017 Pew's survey reports a surprising fact that more than half of foreign-born

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[26] Ahmed, Leila. *A Quiet Revolution : The Veil's Resurgence, from the Middle East to America.* New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2011, 265-306.

[27] See, Cesari, Jocelyne. When Islam and Democracy Meet : Muslims in Europe and in the United States. 1st ed. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004, 124.

[28] Pew, "U.S. Muslims Concerned About Their Place in Society" 22.

Muslims (56 percent) come to this country after 2000, and few foreign-born Muslims came to this country before 1970s.[29] In sum, American Muslims barely share an uniformed American Muslim identity due to their high diverse and rich immigrant backgrounds and experience.

Multiple Dimensions in Muddled Muslim Loyalty in a Dynamic Time. Grodzins's three-level paradigm of disloyalty test is useful because he emphasizes the importance of social structure in encouraging disloyalty. For sure, different groups have different incentives to be disloyal. The case of Mexican Americans in the twentieth century is different from that of Irish Catholics in the middle of nineteenth century and the case of racial groups is reasonably assumed to be different to that of religious groups because they have different concerns, history, and paths of Americanization.

So in the case of American Muslims, one can safely assume that if relationship between Muslim and the mainstream American society continues to be intensified, more Muslims will be more likely to commit disloyalty than remain loyal to the Untied States. Partisan politics in the contemporary polarizing American political context plays as a significant role in triggering the intensification. As opposed to the Republican's hard-power tactics, the Democrats' agenda sounds more acceptable to Muslim leaders. Many Democrats publicly express their willingness to cooperate with "moderate" Muslim leaders and organizations who are affiliated with "the mainstream Islam" in many times.[30] Despite of their ideological differences with the

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[29] Ibid, 33.

[30] Seek Rascoff, Samuel J. "Establishing Official Islam? The Law and Strategy of Counter-radicalization." *Stanford*

Republican, Democrats share the same policy goal with the Republican: preventing oversea terrorist organization recruiting domestic Muslims. What is different is that the Democrats prefer preventive policies that targeting at de-radicalizing theological ideologies and religious beliefs of domestic Muslims. The basic strategy is to promote "the mainstream Islam." Samuel J. Rascoff, a law school professor from New York University, elaborately reviews the Counter-Reformation policy strategy adopted by the Obama Administration. He observes that the archetype of the American Counter-Reformation policy is from the European model of Counter-Reformation. The European model includes two parts: 1. "institutionalizing representative Islamic bodies and empowering designated Muslim interlocutors;" 2. "facilitating the construction and maintenance of Islamic spaces."[31] It requires the government to publicly claim its theological preference with respect to the nature of Islam and true characteristics of Muslim communities. As a result, Rascoff concludes, the establishment of an "Official Islam" is inevitable. He is correct. There is a rising "Official Islam" in the Untied States. The official Islam proposed a de-culturalized (therefore it can be compatible with American culture), ahistorical, reductive, and more universal version of Islam which, in the words of Yvonne Yazbeck Haddad and Adair T. Lummis, "[crystalizes] the faith into its simple and basic constituents" by "[removing] the accretions of centuries of commentary and dogmatic formulation and

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Law Review 64, no. 1 (2012), 149.

[31] Haddad, Y. Y., and T. Golson. "Overhauling Islam: Representation, Construction, and Cooption of "Moderate Islam" in Western Europe." *Journal of Church and State* 49, no. 3 (2007): 487-515.

stressed what they understand to be the essential rational nature of man."[32]

The external political and social pressure for de-radicalization keeps increasing after the 9/11. On the other hand, Muslims' loyalty is still suffering. The high immigrant diversity of American Muslim community suggests that American Muslim community may have multiple causes for their muddled loyalty. After my one and half years of interviewing over a hundred Muslims around the Untied States, I find there are three dimensions in public sphere that may lead Muslim to conflict with the American society.

The first is the political identity. Muslims are ambiguous about the relationship between their identification with Muslim *Ummah* and their liberal democratic citizenship. Muslim scholar Mohammed A. Muqtedar Khan summarizes that there are four sources of collective Islamic identities in the United States. The first one is "shared understandings and collective memories of groups." Members of all kinds of Muslim organizations, for example, often share similar experiences and similar understandings towards Islam and American society. The second is "ideal" that seeks to build an "acontextual and ahistorical" Islamic identity that connects Muslims with other co-religionists. Fundamentalism like salafism is a case. The third one is structural and political identity. With this identity Muslims are often view themselves as a diaspora of a particular nation-state rather than Americans. The last one is historical and traditional. This type of identity is defined by historical experience of a

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[32] Haddad, Yvonne Yazbeck, and Lummis, Adair T. Islamic Values in the United States : A Comparative Study. New York: Oxford University Press, 1987, 20.

given group and it often overlaps with theological, sectarian, and ethnic elements. Take Shi'ite Muslims as for instance.[33] In the post-9/11 era, the Islamic ideal has become the most important and salient identity source to American Muslims.[34] The Islamic ideal merges into the uniformed public image of American Muslims. However, it also befuddles Muslims because Muslim leaders gives no clear guidance on the relationship between Islamic ideal and American identity.

In the word of Ayatollah Khomeini, "Islam is politics."[35] A Shi'ite Muslim I met at Boston College told me that though he disagrees with Khomeini in many aspects, he agrees with the statement. Since its inception, Islamic identity has been fused with political identity. The Muslim *Ummah* that the Prophet Muhammad sought to establish is not just a religious body like *congregation fidelium*, a voluntary gathering of the faithful that Protestantism values, but a theocratic body that demands absolute divine sovereignty. The history of Islam proves that it was the competition over political authority and leadership that divided Muslim *Ummah* rather than religious and theological divergence. The UCLA Islamic law professor Abou El Fadl elaborates in his book on the genealogy of the conception of legitimate rebellion in Islamic legal tradition. He finds that the legitimacy of rebellion as a form of political disloyalty to

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[33] See Mohommed A. Muqtedar Khan, "Muslim and Identity Politics in America," in Haddad, Yvonne Yazbeck, and Esposito, John L. *Muslims on the Americanization Path?* South Florida-Rochester-Saint Louis Studies on Religion and the Social Order ; v. 19. Atlanta, Ga.: Scholars Press, 1998. 108-110.

[34] See Skerry, Peter "America's Muslims Never Had to Unite – Until Now," https://www.brookings.edu/articles/americas-muslims-never-had-to-unite-until-now/ Accessed Apirl 13, 2016.

[35] "Islam is politics or it is nothing," cited by Lewis, Bernard. *Islam in History: Ideas, People, and Events in the Middle East.* New Ed., Revised and Expanded (2nd Ed.). ed. Chicago: Open Court, 1993, 262.

temporary political authority had been the central concern for Muslim jurists and theologians. Three types of disloyalties were illegal and illegitimate according to traditional Muslim jurists: apostasy, brigands, and political rebellion. Despite fragmentation and inconsistence found in a thousand years of Muslim legal scholarship and practices on the issue of political disloyalty, one guiding principle is clear that general political loyalty to Muslim *Ummah* is widely recognized as necessary and important in Islamic tradition. Similar concerns also befuddle American Muslims. After all, the United States has been described as an un-Islamic country defined by Judea-Christian heritage. In fact, before the 9/11 event, as Skerry observes, leading Muslim jurists such as Muzammil Siddiqi discouraged American Muslims to stay in the United States and warned them of "real danger of assimilation to a non-Islamic culture."[36] Ihsan Bagby, another influential American Muslim scholar, also frankly admitted that Muslims would never be "full citizens in the Untied States…because there is no way we can be fully committed to the institutions and ideologies of this country"[37] In addition, Islamic ideal is more attractive among American-born Muslim youth than their foreign-born parents. It is often interpreted as an anti-American political identity. Marcia Hermansen notes that "quite a number of Muslim youth in America are becoming rigidly conservative and condemnatory of their peers (Muslim and non-Muslim), their parents, and all who are not within a

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[36] Skerry, "The Muslim-American Muddle," 20.

[37] Steven A. Johnson, "Political Activity of Muslims in America," in Haddad, Yvonne Yazbeck. The Muslims of America. Religion in America Series (Oxford University Press). New York: Oxford University Press, 1991, 115.

narrow ideological band of what I will define as internationalist, 'identity' Islam."[38]

Many non-Muslim scholars also noticed the loyalty competition between Islam and the liberal democracy. It can be traced back to the Enlightenment era. To these western observers and scholars, Islam is not referred as a modern religion but a political body. Jean Jacque Rousseau, for example, praised Islam as the perfect model of theocracy of high extent of political unity because the Prophet Muhammad "[linked] his political system well together."[39] Alexi de Tocqueville, the greatest observer of American polity ever, also thought Islam was incompatible with America's democracy because "Mohammed had not only religious doctrines descend from Heaven and placed in the Koran, but political maxims, civil and criminal laws, and scientific theories."[40]

In an article published in 1990, a Princeton history professor Bernard Lewis first coined the term to explain Muslims' hatred against the west as "perhaps irrational but surely historic reaction of an ancient rival against our Judeo-Christian heritage, our secular present, and the worldwide expansion of both."[41] His theory was later developed and moderated by the late Harvard political scientist Samuel Huntington in 1993. Huntington seeks to interpret the shifting global political order in the post-

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[38] Safi, Omid, and EBSCOhost. *Progressive Muslims : On Justice, Gender and Pluralism*. Oxford: Oneworld, 2003.

[39] Jean-Jacques Rousseau 1712-1778 G. D. H Cole (George Douglas Howard), 1889-1959 translated G D H ColeLondon : J.M. Dent ; New York : E.P. Dutton. 1913

[40] Alexi de Tocqueville, "Religion Makes use of Democratic Instincts" in Tocqueville, Alexis De, Mansfield, Harvey C., Jr., and Winthrop, Delba. *Democracy in America*. Chicago, Ill ; London: University of Chicago Press, 2002, 419.

[41] Lewis, Bernard. "The Roots of Muslim Rage." *The Atlantic Monthly* 266, no. 3 (1990): 47-60.

Cold War era. Cultural and religious identities, warns Huntington, have replaced ideology as sources of mass mobilization. He predicts that the conflicts between Islam led by the Middle East countries and the Judeo-Christian West led by the Untied States are inevitable because there are so many cultural and historical differences between the two civilizations, though he disagrees that those conflicts are destined to violence.[42]

The second dimension of the confusion is religious. Muslims confuse with the relationship between Islam and American religious pluralism. As argued above, Islamic identity mixes religion with politics, which is exotic to Americans. To many ordinary Muslims and Muslim jurists Islam is the perfect and only true way of life that needs no reformation and change. "Islam is not a religion," an imam working in a local mosque near Newton Massachusetts explained it to me during an interview, "it is *Ad-Dyn*, which means the way of life for Muslims." But in the public sphere one may also find that Islam is identified as a faith-centered religion and Muslims are thus a faith-based group. Muslim leaders and activists restlessly advocate for more protection of religion freedom and civil rights of American Muslims. In addition, for decades many prominent American Muslim leaders such as Sayyid M Syeed have been advocating that Islam should be absorbed in the American mainstream religious platform. America, according to Syeed, should not be only a Judeo-Christian society but it should strive to be the Judeo-Christian-Islamic country.[43] In one word, Muslims are

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[42] Huntington, Samuel P. The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order. Simon & Schuster Hardcover ed. New York: Simon & Schuster, 2011.

[43] Sayyid M. Syeed, https://drive.google.com/file/d/0B7Zj1c2HfBmvS0NiNGxacmNNN0k/view Accessed Nov 1,

still struggling to assimilating in the American religious pluralist society.

According to sociologist Peter Berger, religious pluralism does not refer to a platform which welcomes all religions unconditionally. Instead, religious pluralism comprises two implications: the state-religion relationships and inter-religion relations.[44] In the United States, the two implications are relating with two social structures: civil religion and political liberalism. The civil religion is not an American invention. It was the French political philosopher Jean Jacques Rousseau who first conceptualized the term. According to Rousseau, civil religion is not a true religion as Christianity because it concerns little of spiritual salvation. It is a social and political apparatus that settles state-religion conflicts over political jurisdiction. However, with the spread of Max Weber's secularization thesis that argues religion is doomed to decline with development of modernization, the term lost its popularity. In 1967 American sociologist Robert Bellah revived the term because he observed that Americans embraced "a collection of beliefs, symbols, and rituals with respect to sacred things and institutionalized in collectivity."[45]

The American civil religion sanctifies the American state through rituals and taboos.[46] The sanctification manifests in President Eisenhower's statement: "our

2017.

[44] Berger, Peter L. *The Many Altars of Modernity : Toward a Paradigm for Religion in a Pluralist Age*. De Gruyter, 2014, 79.

[45] Bellah, Robert N. "Civil Religion in America." *Daedalus* 134, no. 4 (2005): 40-55, 48.

[46] Marvin, Carolyn., and Ingle, David W. *Blood Sacrifice and the Nation : Totem Rituals and the American Flag.* Cambridge Cultural Social Studies. Cambridge, U.K. ; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1999.

form of government has no sense unless it is founded in a deeply felt religious faith, and I don't care what it is."[47] In addition, it requires a new state-religion relationship marked with Judea-Christian tradition. Political theorist Charles Taylor summarizes the American pattern in his book *A Secular Age* that "the population broke up into a host of churches, unity was nevertheless recovered by seeing all of these as part of a broader "church."[48] Taylor categorizes three types of state-religion relationships: paleo-Durkheimian, neo-Durkheimian, and post-Durkheimian. The paleo-Durkheimian is embodied in the Middle Age Catholicism "where the social sacred is defined and served by the Church."[49] The post-Durkheimian model represents the ideal of secularization in which religion utterly quits from public and political sphere. The neo-Durkheimian model is the American model of civil religion. In new-Durkheimian society citizens are able to choose their own preferred religious affiliation freely "but that in turn connected me to a broader, more elusive "church", and more importantly, to a political entity with a providential role to play."[50] To some extent one can argue that all religions in the neo-Durkheimian America can be viewed as denominations of a broader American civil religion.

The other source of American religious pluralism is political liberalism. Political

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[47] Eisenhower, Dwight, "Remarks at the Dedicatory Prayer Breakfast of the International Christian Leadership." http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/?pid=9851. Accessed, Apirl, 2016.

[48] Taylor, Charles, and EBSCOhost. *A Secular Age*. Gifford Lectures ; 1999. Cambridge, Mass.: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2007, 528.

[49] Ibid, 454.

[50] Ibid, 486.

liberalism concerns the ethic aspect of America's liberal democratic identity because it views political body as essentially a body of free and equal individuals with a shared ethic system. The Harvard political theorist John Rawls is the leading scholar on political liberalism. Like Taylor, Rawls admits the necessity of religious diversity but they have different agendas. How can diverse religious groups, Rawls asks, who hold different "theological and philosophical doctrines" that are believed to be true to achieve an "consensus" which can endorse goals of and strengthens the shared ethics in a liberal democracy?[51] Rawls invents a conceptual platform called "overlapping consensus" which is a political apparatus to settle down conflicts caused by religious differences. As a legacy of Enlightenment movement, political liberalism suggests a reductive conceptualization of religion in which religion is deprived of cultural and ritual meanings and thus degrades to a system of beliefs and doctrines. Therefore, if American Muslims seeks to join the platform of political liberalism, their valued Islamic beliefs and doctrines must be modified in accordance with existing political ethics of the American society.

The third is cultural dimension. Acculturation befuddles American Muslims because traditional Islamic practices are frequently at odds with American cultural norms and practices. American Muslims, like other religious groups, are divided on cultural issues. [52] With the deepening and extending modernization, religious pluralism, and multiculturalism in the American society since the Civil Right

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[51] Rawls, John. *Political Liberalism*. Expanded ed. Columbia Classics in Philosophy. New York: Columbia University Press, 2005.

[52] See Hunter, James Davison, and Wolfe, Alan. *Is There a Culture War? : A Dialogue on Values and American Public Life*. Brookings Institution Press, 2006. Also see Wuthnow, Robert. America and the Challenges of Religious Diversity. Princeton, N.J. ; Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2005.

movement, old social divisions along with "theological and ecclesiastical" differences no longer make sense in public sphere. Muslims, as other religious groups, are culturally reconstructed in two competing groups: one is conservative and another progressive.[53] The progressive-conservative divisions, for the record, are the major cause for today's polarizing politics.

Only a very small segment of Muslims, most of who are either faculty members in American academia or college students, embrace progressive version of Islam. As opposed to conservative Muslims, some progressive Muslims advocate "social justice, gender justice, and pluralism." According to Omid Safi, "being a progressive Muslims means not simply thinking about Qu'ran and the life of the Prophet but also about thinking the life we share on this planet with all human beings and living creatures…our relationship to the rest of the humanity changes our way to think about God, and vice versa."[54] In addition, Progressive Muslims propose a unique but more abstract theological construction of "American Islam" that they believe "Muslims believe in the same values for which [the United States] was founded… They feel closer to the founding fathers than what America had become."[55]

On the other hand Muslims' political association with the liberal/progressive coalition does not mean that Muslims are acculturating in the liberal and progressive political culture of the party: they remain culturally conservative. As Skerry cites in

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[53] Ibid.

[54] Omid, *Progressive Islam*, 3

[55] Athar, Shahid. 1994. *Reflections of an American Muslim*. Chicago: KAZI publications., 7.

his 2011 article, leading Muslim jurists keep reminding American Muslims of that the American society is "a corrupt and ungodly society where the fabric of daily life is completely at odds with the teachings of Allah."[56] Many ethnographic researches on American Muslims also show how Muslims feel alienated from the American culture. According to his in-depth ethnographic study on Muslim community in Los Angeles, for example, Kamibiz GhaneaBassiri points out that Muslims' attitudes toward American culture are "ambivalent."[57] He lists six widely shared main moral and cultural complaints about American society: "alcohol, drug addiction, nudity on television and in movie, homosexuality, sexual intercourse outside of marriage, and the constant drive for wealth." In another research that covers Muslim communities in five different states, Yvonne Yazbeck Haddad and Adair T. Lummis give us a more detailed list that includes "usury, loan and interests," "welfare," "inheritance and will," "dietary restriction," "alcohol consumption," entertainment, gender and sex relations, female dressing code, "marriage," and "divorce and child custody."[58]

Furthermore, family violence still exists among new immigrant families, intermarriage rate between Muslim female and non-Muslim male is low, sex segregation is still observed in most Islamic centers and many of Muslims' public gatherings, and "leisure activities such as drinking alcohol, gambling and lotteries"

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[56] Skerry, "The Muslim American Muddle," 21.

[57] GhaneaBassiri, Kambiz. *Competing Visions of Islam in the United States : A Study of Los Angeles.* Contributions to the Study of Religion, No. 50. Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1997, 9.

[58] Haddad and Lumis, *Islamic Values*, 98-155.

are still criticized as "mirage…like weapons production and marketing."[59] At the 2017 ISNA's annual convention some leading Islamic jurists are still discouraging female Muslims should avoid physical interaction, including shaking hands, with males in working places. Let alone ISNA' paradoxical attitudes toward LGBTQ rights: when two panels on the 2017 ISNA convention were assigned to topics about intergroup collaboration between Muslims and LGBTQ groups, a pro-LGBTQ Muslim organization was asked to quit the conference and its booth was cancelled by ISNA because "[ISNA] were not okay with…that gays should find unrepentant inclusion with the Muslim community."[60] Many conservative symbols also regain popularity in the midst of Muslims. One of the most salient case is the widely observation of hijab code among American Muslim females. According to the Harvard Islamic Studies scholar Leila Ahmed, the hijab dress code for sure is of an Islamist origin. However, it also gains a new American meaning: as a symbol of public protesting for social justice and gender equality.[61]

Research Question, Method, and Plan of this Thesis

So how do American Muslim organizations react to these challenges under the political and social pressure? As it said, the American Muslim community is a highly diverse community. The diversity not only prevents Muslims from accepting a uniformed homogeneous American Muslim identity but also causes fragmentation of

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[59] "Overdue to Restore Humanity to Humanity," *Islamic Horizon* November/December 2017.

[60] "An ally of LGBT causes headlines a homophobic event." https://spectator.org/pro-lgbt-muslim-group-says-it-was-kicked-out-of-muslim-conference-where-linda-sarsour-spoke/ Accessed July, 20, 2017.

[61] Ahmed, *A Quiet Revolution,* 300.

Muslim organizations, for different Muslim sub-groups may have different expectations, demands, experiences, and understandings with respect to Americanization. Political scientists, political sociologists, and political anthropologists on American Muslims have contributed many valuable researches on domestic Muslim organizations. However, most of them are concentrating on the national level organizations. Relationships between national organization and local Islamic centers and between local Islamic centers and corresponding Muslim communities are seldom examined in academia. This research aims at filling the gap. The target organization in this research is Islamic centers. which are in general locally based and managed. In addition, Islamic centers and para-mosque organizations bear different social and political functions and they outreach and interact with Muslims differently. This thesis is concerned with a hitherto understudied question about the political disloyalty issue of American Muslims: what is the role of Islamic centers/mosques (in this thesis I use them interchangeably) in contributing Muslims' (dis)loyalty?

My theoretical analysis method employed in the research is inspired by the scientific study of organizational actions, a social science subfield focusing on understanding the incentive dynamics within formal voluntary organizations. The origin of organizational studies can be traced back to Mancor Olson's work *The Logic of Collective Action*, who conceptualizes formal institutions as a collective action apparatus serving self-interested rational members.[62] Rational individuals form and

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[62] Olson, Mancur. The Logic of Collective Action. Harvard Economic Studies ; v. 124. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1965.

join organizations because they have shared common interests. But, according to Olson, rational individual members will not automatically promote group goods if they find their personal cost for public good is higher than interests they receive. Therefore the function of organization is using different incentive/coercive measures to channel individuals' interests to collective interest. At the last chapter of his book Olson frankly admits that though his theory can be applied to all kinds of groups in principle, his analysis limits on groups for material goods such as business associations.

James Q. Wilson finds that even when group goals are not material, the collective action problems still exist.[63] He improves Olson's model by adding two more incentives that can be assumed rational: solidary and purposive incentives. Wilson argues that rational individuals are also self-interested and calculating as pursuing non-material goods. Most importantly, he observes that a purposive organization not only passively receives its members' common interests as its own goals, but also is able to redefine the common interests in some cases. In the case of local Muslim organizations, I follow Wilson's group theory that I not only view Muslim organizations as task bearer agents but also as goal setting and defining bodies. Islamic centers, not only help individual Muslims' to achieve their collective Islamic interests but also guide, educate, and change Muslims' understandings of Islam. My basic hypothesis of this research is that the muddled Muslim loyalty is a result of fractural and unsystematic organizational actions so that Muslims' loyalties are

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[63] Wilson, James Q. Political Organizations. Princeton Studies in American Politics. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1995.

channeled in different, and often opposite, directions. In other word, Muslims are confused because their Islamic organizations act inconsistently.

My data is collected by participant observation. Under the supervision of Professor Peter Skerry from the Political Science Department at Boston College, I select twelve centers in Massachusetts to visit, most of them are within one hour driving distance from downtown Boston, Two of them are Shi'ite centers and the rest are Sunni ones. And I interviewed with seven imams and twenty-three leaders including board members and administrative officers between April 2016 to December 2017. I also attended ISNA's annual conventions twice, in September 2016 and June 2017 where I informally interviewed some leaders from the organization and other types of Muslim organizations across the country. And I also examined the relationship between ISNA and Muslim community in Boston area.

My major findings support my hypothesis. By an in-depth analysis on organizational behaviors and actions of local Islamic centers in and near the city of Boston, I find that different Islamic centers have different organizational structures and relationship with corresponding Muslim communities and they have different, conflicting goals, tasks, strategies in maintaining mosques.

The plan of the rest part of thesis is as followed. It is divided in three chapters. The first chapter is in two sections. In the first section, I briefly review and introduce researches on American Islamic organizations. And the second section is about an introduction of organizational action theory. The chapter ends with the introduction of my basic assumption. The second chapter is detailed case studies to test my hypothesis. It is of three sections. In the first section I briefly review the history of

national mosque building and that of Muslim community in Boston. The second section I will also categorize Islamic centers according to the group theory that I discussed in the first chapter. Then I will mainly address to how the Boston Muslim organizations react to the three challenges and interact with both local and national Muslim communities and why. The last chapter comes with my conclusion and some further discussion.

I. Logic of Muslim Organizations' Actions

Though the focus of this thesis is on locally based Islamic centers, a brief discussion of the history of American Muslim community as a whole in terms of suiting my thesis with a broader and historical and social context. Broadly speaking, the power structure of American Muslim community dramatically changed after 9/11. Empowerment of Islamist organizations is one result. As Skerry observes:

> "however much Muslim leaders and their organizations express genuine outrage at inaccurate and unfair characterizations of their faith, they have nevertheless grown dependent on such attacks, not only to sustain themselves and their organizations, but even more critically to pull together a disparate assortment of individuals, many of whom identify more with their countries of origin than with Islam."[64]

According to Yuting Wang, there were in total five major immigrant waves from Muslim world since the end of nineteenth century. The first three waves of immigrants were of almost Arab Muslims. The first wave came during 1875 till 1912, most of who were "uneducated, rural, young Arab men from Lebanon and present-day Syria." The second wave, of who "were mostly the relatives of the first wave," came after from 1918 to 1922. It was during this period when Muslims started to

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[64] Skerry, Peter, "Clash of Generations," *Weekly Standard*, Dec, 18, 2015.
http://www.weeklystandard.com/clash-of-generations/article/2000284. Accessed Jan, 15, 2016.

settle down in Boston area. The third wave came after the WWI, between 1930 to 1938: political and social chaos destroyed the economy in the Middle East and it forced some Arab Muslims to come to reunite with their family members and relatives. The fourth wave came after the end of WWII. In 1965 President John F. Kennedy abolished the national origin quotas provision which was passed in the 1924 Immigration Act and since then large number of Muslim immigrants from all over the world chose to come to the Untied States. Many Muslim-majority countries also sent many students to study in the United States. Many Arab Muslims came during 1960s and 1970s, many South Asian Muslims from Pakistan, India, and Bangladesh was also recorded in 1970s, as well as many Afghanis after 1979, when Soviet Union invaded Afghanistan. And the fifth wave continues till today.[65] A super majority of Muslim immigrants came to the Untied States for secular and personal causes: better education, more economic opportunities, reunion with their family members. In fact, as Skerry observes, many of the fifth wave immigrants were not certain if they would stay or go back to the Muslim world when they arrived.[66]

The pre-1965 generations were different to the post-1965 generation in the sense that the former generation had very limited attachment with Islamic identity and they were tepid at building their own Muslim organizations to preserve their cultural and religious traditions. To them, Islam was a religion which was more a matter of personal choice rather than a source of collective identity, given centuries of political quietism that had dominated Islamic world since the Mongol Conquest in

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[65] Wang, Yuting. *An Uncertain Future: Negotiating Multiple Identities in a Racially and Ethnically Diverse Mosque in the post-9.11 United States*. University of Notre Dame, 2009.

[66] Skerry, "The Muslim-American Muddle"

the thirteenth century.[67] They were more identified with their own ethnic groups or home countries rather than with Islam. The post-1965 generation was different because they assumed "Islam [as] a central element of collective identity."[68] It was also the post-1965 generation who started a rising national-scale movement to build their own Islamic organizations.[69]

Generally speaking, Muslims are a group of high religiosity. According to the 2017 Pew Survey on American Muslims, estimated sixty-five percent of Muslims think their religion "is very important to them" and about forty percent report that they do *salat*, Islamic prayer, five times everyday.[70] However, high religiosity does not necessarily attract Muslims to have their own independent public worship places. Attendance rate of mosques remains low. Only four in ten Muslims report they regularly attend Islamic center activities on weekly basis. In traditional Islam, mosque is nothing but a physical space for public worshipping and social gatherings. Many Muslims, including both ordinary Muslims and mosque leaders, told me that praying in mosque is not obligatory in Islam. For early generation of Muslim immigrants who were mostly uneducated and economically disadvantaged, having their own mosques was expensive and unnecessary. They preferred to pray at someone's house(s). To their children, they were tolerant to intermarriage with non-Muslims and even okay with that if some chose to leave the religion. It is because they came to the United

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[67] Abou El Fadl, Khaled. Rebellion and Violence in Islamic Law. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006.

[68] Haddad, Yvonne Yazbeck, and Smith, Jane I. The Oxford Handbook of American Islam. Oxford Handbooks. Oxford University Press, 2014, 65.

[69] Ibid, 65-70.

[70] Pew, "U.S. Muslims Concerned About Their Place in Society," 8.

States for more economical opportunities rather than to become more pious Muslims. And what stood between their expectation and the reality was not Islam but their poor English language ability and cultural alienation from the dominating American society. Instead of building their own religious organizations first, the early generations would rather to have their own organizations to help them to assimilate into the American society.

Things changed with the population of Muslims growing in the Untied States. At the beginning, having their "own church" gradually became necessary for the second generation of immigrants who were much better acculturated with the American society than their parents. It was because in the post-WWII era, religion instead of ethnicity was the new American norm to separate Americans in different groups. Sociologist William Herberg discussed about the phenomenon in his widely read book *Protestant, Catholic, Jew.* He argued at the very beginning of his book: "there is every sign of a notable 'turn to religion' among the American people today."[71] During this period Muslims were often asked with questions like "what church do you go to" or "why don't [you] have a church?"[72] Under the social pressure, the second generation of the pre-1965 generations started to build their own Muslim organizations. The second generation also built an Islamic organization at the national level, the Federation of Islamic Associations (FIA). FIA was built in 1952 by some second generation Arab immigrant leaders to "[form] a national organization that could bring

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[71] Herberg, Will. Protestant, Catholic, Jew : An Essay in American Religious Sociology. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1983., 1.

[72] Haddad, Yvonne Yazbeck, and Smith, Jane I. Muslim Communities in North America. SUNY Series in Middle Eastern Studies. Albany, N.Y.: State University of New York Press, 1994, 298.

together the Muslims of America and coordinate their activities."[73] Additionally, at the time of the construction of FIA many of the American born Lebanese Muslims were of low loyalty to the United States. On the contrary, their loyalty was associated with "the form of love for family and sect, and when expressed in inanimate terms, love for the unexcelled scenery of Syria with its glorious sunshine and invigorating air."[74] However, as GhaneaBassiri observes, FIA gradually ceased to exist since the mid-1970s because it cannot reconcile conflicts between the second and third Lebanese generations.[75]

The latecomer Muslim students from Muslim majority countries in the 1960s chose to have their own religious organizations in universities instead of merging with existing American Muslim communities of early generations. It was somewhat because they had not decided whether they would go home after they finished their education. Besides, coming from *Dar-al Islam* (the House of Islam) gave them a sense of religious privilege that they represented the "orthodoxy" form of Islam while the American Muslims did not. Though it was widely recognized that the first Muslim student organization was Muslim Student Association (MSA) at the University of Illinois at Urban-Champaign in 1963, I find that the Harvard Islamic Society (HIS) was built earlier, in 1958.[76] Unlike HIS and FIA, MSA was both politically and religious ambitious and obviously identified with oversea Islamist organization. Its leaders

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[73] Haddad, Yvonne Yazbeck. *The Muslims of America*. Religion in America Series (Oxford University Press). New York: Oxford University Press, 1991,12.

[74] Cited in Kambiz GhaneaBassiri. *Competing Versions*, 25.

[75] Ibid.

[76] "Islam in Greater Boston," Harvard Pluralism Project, http://pluralism.org/timeline/islam-in-boston/. Accessed Feb, 2018.

were passionate to the idea of global Muslim *Ummah* and actively, even aggressively, advocating against Americanization. At its thirteenth annual convention in 1975, for example, a leader criticized American Muslims of being corrupted by western civilization: "if Islam cannot be established in an area of hardly six feet we would fool ourselves by talking about *an Islamic State*."[77]

MSA was unable to control its internal division along with ethnic lines gradually. With increasing number of Muslim students who decided to stay and work in the United States after graduation, from MSA separated two national Islamic umbrella organizations: Islamic Circle of North America (ICNA) in 1971 and Islamic Society of North America (ISNA) in 1983. Initially ICNA was under the influence of South Asian Islamist organization *Jamaat-e-Islami* and mainly served South Asian Muslims. ISNA was more Arab-oriented and affiliated with Muslim Brotherhood. However, in spite of their political connections with oversea Islamist organizations and political parties, ICNA and ISNA were both registered as religious organizations and their by-laws explicitly regulated their goals were primarily religious such as *Da'wah* (Islamic missionary activity). About ten years after ISNA's establishment, another Brotherhood associated Islamic organization at national level appeared in 1992, Muslim American Society (MAS). According to Skerry, the reason why MAS was built was similar to ICNA that "when immigrant Brothers from various countries realized that not only were they unlikely to be returning home but that they also needed to

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[77] Kambiz GhaneaBassiri. *Competing Versions*, 27.

cease operating in the United States."[78] As opposite to ISNA without "a clear mission," MAS and ICNA focus on doing *Da'wah* to non-Muslims and converting Muslims to Islamist ideas.[79] According to Harvard political scientist Jocelyne Cesari, the 9/11 event was a watershed for American Muslim community because it shifted the strategy and focus of Muslim organizations. "After 9/11," Cesari observes, "the Islamic factor…has been increasingly more influential in public perception of Muslims and in a way that Muslims has presented themselves in social and political interaction on the American public scene."[80] Since 9/11, American Muslims have been facing political pressures of assimilation from two sources. The first is from without—non-Muslims who want Muslims to be assimilated in the mainstream American society and thus to become loyal and trustworthy American citizens. The other is from within—Muslim leaders who, under influences of Islamism and Islamic ideals, prefer a high solidary, united, and mobilized Muslim body.

Besides the political force mentioned above, other external forces are from public presentation and misrepresentation of Muslims before non-Muslims. Recognition from non-Muslim matters because, as Charles Taylor argues, identity is a dialectical process.[81] The public discourse with respect to domestic Muslims is systematically and routinely trapped with "simplistic dualisms:

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[78] Skerry, "American Brotherhood: The Muslim Brothers Are Present in the United States, But Not a Threat," *Foreign Affair*, April 8, 2017, https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/united-states/2017-04-08/american-brotherhood. Accessed May 1, 2017.

[79] Skerry, "The Muslim-American Muddle"

[80] See Jocelyne Cesari, "Islamic Organizations in the United States," in Haddad, Yvonne Yazbeck, and Smith, Jane I. The Oxford Handbook of American Islam. Oxford Handbooks. Oxford University Press, 2014, 64.

[81] Taylor, Charles, and Gutmann, Amy. *Multiculturalism, Examining the Politics of Recognition*. Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1994.

assimilated/unassimilated; moderate/immoderate; tolerant/intolerant; good/bad." [82] These dichotomies reveal that in public opinion Muslims are constructed as a potential deviant group that may jeopardize existing political and social orders in the United States, that is to say Muslim identity is perceived to be different to American identity. I agree with Skerry that Muslims are in general misrepresented in American public discourse, mass media, and political context. However I disagree with the liberal argument that Muslims have assimilated in the American society—in the word of President Obama: "99.9 percent of Muslims who are looking for the same thing [Americans]'re looking for."[83]

The American government's willingness to collaborate with moderate Islamic leaders encouraged and then empowered American Islamists. The leaders work hard to overcome in-group fragmentations after the 9/11 and their efforts manifest in the construction of an uniformed American Muslim political identity. However, as Mohamed Nimer observed, "the Muslim immigrant organizational environment in America is [still] fractured, competitive and frequently unruly" at both national and local levels. [84] Yuting Wang, with her detailed ethnographic research on how a mosque locating in Indiana made of internal conflicts within its congregation, argues that ordinary Muslims differ dramatically not only in interpretation and practice of Islam but also in understanding of Americanization. [85] In the eyes of politically

82 Skerry, "Clash of Generations"

83 Obama http://www.weeklystandard.com/obama-99.9-of-muslims-reject-radical-islam/article/836303

84 Nimer, Mohamed. "The Americanization of Islamism." The American Interest (2011).

85 Wang, Yuting. *Between Islam and the American Dream : An Immigrant Muslim Community in Post-9/11*

ambitious Islamist leaders who seek authoritative status among American Muslims and policy influence in American politics, it is the weakness of American Muslim community. Some Muslim leaders intentionally constructed the conception of "American Islam" since the 9/11 in order to "to bridge the gap between Islam and the West and to dispel misconceptions about Muslims and Islam."[86] Their achievement is remarkable. According to Leila Ahmed, though "Islamists and their heirs and children are for the present no more than a minority of a minority…they constitute the most influential and most publicly visible segment of this minority. And they are also quite visibly and publicly the most socially and politically committed and activist segment of the Muslim community."[87] In addition, "the Islamist form of Islam steadily became the normative form of Islam, increasingly accepted now by many Muslims as well as non-Muslims as the one 'true' and 'correct' form of Islam."[88]

Categorization of American Muslim Organizations

The brief history review betrays another fact that there is never a "central and national administration" organization representing all American Muslim community. The concept of a united American Islam is a post-9/11 creation.[89] Different groups build Muslim organizations for their own causes that may conflict with each other.

America. Routledge Advances in Sociology; 119. Routledge, 2014.

[86] Ibid, 39.

[87] Ahmed, *A Quiet Revolution,* 269.

[88] Ibid, 175

[89] Skerry, "America's Muslims Never Had to Unite – Until Now"

Analysis of Muslim organizations demands a categorization of American Muslim organizations. Many scholars on Muslim organizations have proposed multiple ways of categorizing American Muslim organizations. In sum, their theories are in two branches. The first group evaluates Muslim organizations by the cause they serve and the second divides organizations by internal structure. They offer us a rich, valuable, and indispensable literature on the history of American Muslim communities. Karen Isakson Leonard, for example, is a leading scholar in the first group. She categorizes American Muslim organizations in two general groups: "American Islamic organizations" and "American Muslim political organizations." The former, Leonard argues, "are chiefly groups of immigrant that emphasize religious education, spiritual regeneration, and [*da'wah*] activities" while the latter "are also chiefly immigrant groups but ones that emphasize political activities…[and] advocate the participation of Muslims in American Muslims in the electoral politics."[90] Leonard's categorization is insightful and simple enough. Following her, Jocelyne Cesari offers a work titled "Islamic Organizations in the United States." Cesari discussed two types of Islamic organizations: religious and civic. With religious organization, she mainly refers to national level Islamic organizations such as FIA, ISNA, and ICNA. As to civic organizations, She only talks about Council of American-Islamic Relations (CAIR). Though her definition of religious organization is clear, her use of "civic" is confusing, especially given her background in political science. There is no doubt that civic and political actives in social science suggest two independent dimensions in public

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[90] Leonard, Karen Isaksen. *Muslims in the United States : The State of Research*. New York: Russell Sage Foundation, 2003, 17.

sphere. Civic activities generally refer to "actions citizens take in order to pursue common concerns" while political activities have a much narrower implications which in general mean activities relating to government. [91] In social science researches civic and political activities are also analyzed separately. For example, in a research on the relationship between Mosque attendance rate and political engagement of American Muslims, Princeton political scientist Amaney Jamal finds that high mosque attendance may not necessarily increase political participation of American Muslims but it is associated with high level of civic engagement.[92] Besides, there are many Muslim civic organizations that aim at social welfare, education, and human rights issues such as ICNA-Relief, an organization that right now primarily focuses on offering humanitarian aids to Syrian refugees. Not to mention there are over 250 full-time Islamic schools scattering around the country.[93] To sum it up, despite of their different focuses, the first group of scholars generally categorize Muslim organizations in the Untied States are serving three goals: religious, social (or civic), and political.

The method of the first group is inspiring and insightful. However, it tells us little about how to evaluate these organizations. The first group of scholars also cannot answer questions such as why FIA failed but ISNA succeed whereas the two organizations may have similar goals and why ISNA, ICNA, and MAS are independent

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[91] Skoric, M. M., Zhu, Q., Goh, D., & Pang, N. (2016). Social Media and Citizen Engagement: A Meta-Analytic review. *New Media & Society*, 18(9), 1817–1839. https://doi.org/10.1177/1461444815616221

[92] Jamal, Amaney. "The Political Participation and Engagement of Muslim Americans." American Politics Research 33, no. 4 (2005): 521-544.

[93] Haddad, Yvonne Yazbeck, Senzai, Farid, and Smith, Jane I. Educating the Muslims of America. Oxford ; New York: Oxford University Press, 2009.

organizations instead of merging into one, they also give us little guidance why, though ISNA claims to be the leader of the American Muslims, only about ten percent of mosques choose to associate with it. The second group of scholars make some improvements. The second group pays off attention on the organizational structures of American Muslim organizations. Larry Poston, a professor in Theology teaching at Nyack College in New York state, is a representative scholar of this group. In his frequently cited research on how American Islamists practice *Da'wah* in the United States. Inspired by the classification of Christian organizations in the Untied States, Poston offers us two types of Islamic organizations: one is locally based mosque organizations and another is para-mosque organizations. Poston's contribution is that he observes the Islamist origin of the para-mosque organization in the United States. Almost all Muslim national organizations are para-mosque organizations with one exception—FIA. Like para-church organizations in Christianity, leaders of para-mosque organizations enjoy a lot of discretion and receive very few constraints from local religious authorities. Poston traces the origin of the para-mosque back to the early period of Islamist movement. Both Hasan al-Banna and Abul A'la Mawdudi, founders of Muslim Brotherhood and Jamaat-e-Islami respectively, "deliberately bypassed the mosque and founded agencies of their own."[94] The merit of para-mosque organization as opposed to mosque is that the former can avoid "excessive competition" among the latter that will divide the internal unity of an organization. In addition, unlike mosques which must have physical locations, a para-mosque

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[94] Poston, Larry. *Islamic Da'wah in the West : Muslim Missionary Activity and the Dynamics of Conversion to Islam.* New York: Oxford University Press, 1992, 93.

organization does not need a fixed place to be its headquarter. The example Poston gives is when Al-Banna perceived that "sermons of the mosque would not suffice to curb the ever-growing evils in Cairo," he asked his Brothers to "preach fundamentalist Islam in coffee house."[95] And this particular un-mosqued organization form later evolved to be the Muslim Brotherhood.[96]

Compared to mosques, para-mosque organizations have another virtue, which is small-sized and energetic leadership that is needed for political participation. Islamists believe Islam should be the principal foundation to "every Muslim society whatever the particular form of political order."[97] To achieve the goal, existing Muslim institutions such as mosques and *Ulema*, a collective body of Islamic religious-legal scholars, were not ideal to Al-Banna because those institutions represented the parochial and defensive sentiments and too lazy to mobilize individual Muslims. Unfortunately Al-Banna failed to offer a clear organizational framework. Mawdudi filled this gap. For Mawdudi, institutionalized approach of proselytization is necessary because he conceptualized Islamist movement as a political movement that aimed at reform the whole society in accord with Islamist ideas. He imagined "the creation of a small, informed, dedicated, and disciplined group who might work to capture social and political leadership."[98] He proposed to build "Islamic societies" controlled by the small groups of leadership. Unlike mosques which offer all kinds of religious services such as worshipping and ceremonies of marriage and funeral, the

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[95] Ibid, 67.

[96] Ibid, 68.

[97] Ibid, 72.

[98] Ibid, 75.

ultimate goal of Mawdudi's Islamic society should be "the awakening of the masses."[99]
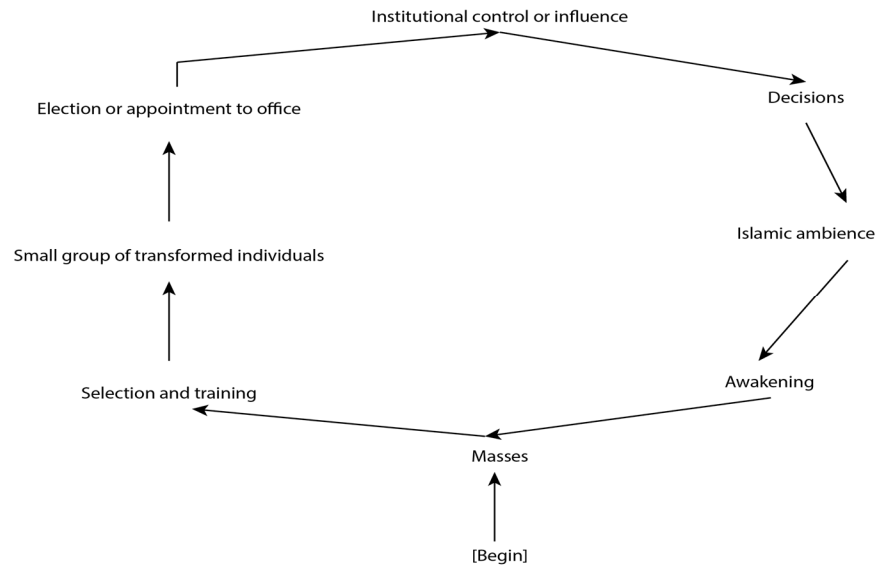
Mawdudi's framework is shown in Figure 1.[100]

FIGURE 1. Mawdudi's later missiological strategy.

According to Poston, Mawdudi's small group of awakened Islamists is pivotal in this strategic loop because it is the only place where internal religious awakening can be transferred to external Islamist institutional goals. In addition, this model explicitly announces its political goals and is adopted by many Islamist organization, including *Jamaat-e-Islami*. The para-mosque model also influenced the national Muslim institution-building in the United States. Some founding members of MSA, ISNA, and later founded Muslim American Society (MAS) were members of Muslim Brotherhood and some who found ICNA were members of Jamaat-e-Islami. They

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[99] Ibid.

[100] Ibid, 76.

followed the small-sized leadership model and their leadership teams were not selected from the mass of American Muslims whom they claim to represent nor from local Islamic centers associated with them.

Poston's para-mosque/mosque dichotomy is insightful because he suggests that there is a mutual connection between the goals that Islamic organization would like to achieve and their organizational structures. Peter Skerry has similar findings. In his article "The Muslim-American Muddle" Skerry mentions four leading para-mosque Muslims organizations: ISNA, ICNA, MAS, and CAIR. He observes: "These so-called paramosque organizations were both founded to overcome the inevitable parochialism of mosques."[101]

In sum, compared to the first group, the second group of scholars are more "political realistic" in the sense that they not only are aware of Muslims may share different goals and experience with non-Muslims, but mostly importantly, they implies that the differences are also a choice made by Muslim leaders through their organizational actions. However, this model also has flaws. It fails to appreciate the diversity in organizational structures of mosques and it takes for granted that the para-mosque organizations only exist at national level, which according to my research is an over-generalization. In addition, as I have argued above, most scholars put their attention at the national level of Muslim organizations and ignore there is also a diverse organizational structures at the local level. These theoretical limitation

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[101] Skerry, "The Muslim American Muddle," 23.

demands a better analysis model.

Purposive v Solidary Incentives and Organizational Action

Majority of Muslims are immigrants. It means that Muslims have voluntarily come to the United States for multiple different causes. It also suggests that we should treat Muslims as rational agents who are not only self-interested but also should be responsible to their own actions.[102] Since the 1990s, American Muslim organizations gradually cut their financial connections with oversea Muslim country governments and organizations and thus became true American voluntary associations. Like other voluntary associations, Muslim organizations are after some common goals that were shared either by their members or by Muslims the organizations claim to serve. To be sure, the collective action problem is inevitable. If Muslim organizations want to achieve the goals they seek to promote, they have to find their own ways to make of these problems.

The academic inquiry on collective action problems started from Mancur Olson in 1962. In his book *The Logic of Collective Action*, Olson, for the first time in history, applied economic models in analysis of intra-group relation. He challenged then leading group theorists such as David Truman who assumed that groups always act

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[102] Skerry, "Comprehensive Immigration Confusion," *National Affairs*, Fall, 2016

as if their members would automatically contribute to the shared goals. Old group theory was wrong because it did not see individual members as self-interested and rational calculating agents. When the personal share of cost to common goods is higher than the personal share of benefits one receives, collective action will not be possible and free riders are inevitable. Olson's model is simple and convincing. But as he admits, the model explains material interest organizations better than other organizations because material interests are easy to calculate. Besides, Olson also assumes that an organization will always honestly understand and translate public interests as its members do.[103]

Olson's model, because of its simplicity, only argues that the size of the group matters. And it also fails to appreciate the importance of organizational structure. The late Noble prize winner Elinor Ostrom solved the problem by extending the application of the theory to social dilemma problems. Social dilemma problem assumes that without properly designed institutions, self-interested rational individuals will be little more than free riders who only want to enjoy the benefits at the minimum level of cost but often act against the group goods. Collective cooperation is more a result of institutional design. Therefore, Ostrom proposed a framework called Institutional Analysis and Development (IAD), in which she listed a three-step evaluation process to evaluate an institutional action from three mutually connecting but independent dimensions: Action situation, action arena, and interactions and outcomes of actions. The framework is powerful in terms of that it

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[103] Olson, *The Logic.*

can be used to evaluate all kinds of organizational behaviors and actions. And based on the evaluation results one can improve and reform institutions. In addition, Ostrom's contribution is twofold. First, she reminds us of how important a properly designed internal institutional structure can be. And second, she suggests to us that the basic function of institutional structure is to channel and influence individual behaviors and interests. However, because the primary mission of the framework is more problem solving than problem explaining and understanding, and we cannot have a systematic categorization for Muslim organizations according to her three-step evaluation, her framework still does not exactly fit the need of this thesis. And as Olson's model, IAD may of limited range of application to institutions that pursue non-material goals.[104]

Now we turn to James Q. Wilson's theory of organizational action. Unlike Ostrom's framework Wilson's model is more problem-understanding oriented. And unlike Olson, Wilson has a more comprehensive as well as analytical understanding of organization actions. The basic argument of Wilson's theory is twofold. First, "organizations…are not neutral devices for transmitting citizen preference to public officials."[105] Second, organizations can solve collective action problems by "appeals to" solidary and purposive incentives, especially the purposive one.

Wilson's theory fits in the analysis of Muslim organizations because the goals that Muslim organizations are looking for are "intangible." In addition, as will discuss in the next chapter, Wilson's theory is of great explanatory power in cases of local-

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[104] Sabatier, Paul A., Weible, Christopher M, and Ebrary, Inc. *Theories of the Policy Process.* 3rd ed. New York: Westview Press, 2014.

[105] Wilson, *Political Organizations,* vii.

level Muslim organizations. It may also work for religious organizations in general. According to Wilson four types of incentives matter: material, selective solidary, collective solidary, and purposive. By selective solidary incentive Wilson refers to societal prestigious status in a given group that includes "offices, honors, and deference." For example one may rationally join a political party for the goal of holding an office or simply because he or she enjoys political power. By collective solidary incentive Wilson means some pure forms of public goods that are available for everyone without exclusiveness in ownership and rivalry in consumption. Group identity is a perfect example. By purposive incentives Wilson suggests "intangible rewards that derive from the sense of satisfaction of having contributed to the attainment of a worthwhile cause."[106] Take charity or social justice activities for instance. Both solidary and purposive incentives can motivate individuals to pursue public goods. The two types of incentives demand different incentive mechanisms and generate organizational action patterns. Solidary organizations will work on strengthening intragroup relationships and organizations while purposive organizations will mobilize their followers by appealing to "larger purposes."[107] That is to say, to become a member of a purposive organization one does not need to know where and who co-members are. In addition, organizational structures change with different types of incentives. In general solidary organizations will be more likely to value democratic procedures than purposive organizations because the former rely on mutual connections among members while the latter do not. In return, the

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[106] Ibid, 35.

[107] Ibid, 45

purposive one may act more energetically than the solidary one because of its anti-democratic structure. Therefore it is more accurate to argue that purposive organizations avoid collective action problems than saying they "overcome" the problems. Finally, Wilson is concerned more about purposive organizations than others because he observes that purposive organizations often depend on "threat appeals" that they may exaggerate the threat to organizations and "demonize [their] opponents." To be sure, Wilson's model fits the context here. It not only ask us to classify Muslim organizations by the collective goods they offer but also remind us to evaluate the dynamics within the organizations because organizations not only offer public goods, they may also manipulate and redefine it. Therefore, a classification of Muslims' goals in the light of Wilson's theory is the key.

It is obvious that national para-mosque organizations are more purposive incentive oriented while locally based mosque organizations rely on solidary incentives more. As it discussed, in the post 9/11 era, Muslims accept a united, solidary, Islamically ruled, and highly respected Muslim community as the ideal goal and they do not want to compromise the ideal when assimilating in the American society. One can find that both solidary and purposive goods are involved here. Though in Islamic ideals the two goals can be achieved synchronically and harmoniously so long as *inshallah,* if God wills, in practice and real world it is not that easy. Pursuing both at the same time will inevitably demand coalition between solidary organizations and purposive organizations but it is hard because the collective action problems the solidary organizations try hard to conquer is what purposive organizations struggle to avoid.

The purpose of this thesis is not to judge whether Muslims' goals are naive, utopian, or, "lacking of sense of reality,"[108] but to understand how their organizations work. In light of this chapter's discussion, I repeat my corresponding hypothesis here: the muddled Muslim loyalty is a result of fractural and inconsistent organizational actions in the American Muslim community so that Muslims' loyalties to Islamic ideal and local Muslim communities are channeled in different, and often opposite, directions. And the next chapter is of case studies by which the hypothesis will be tested.

II. Case Studies

When I started my research by interviewing American Muslims and visiting their organizations I was ambitious. I was looking for some sort of "general patterns" to explain Muslim behaviors. However, soon I realized it impossible because majority of Muslims are invisible in public sphere. It is very hard to target American Muslims by only visiting their organizations because they do not go to there. Most of American Muslims are not affiliated with any Muslim organizations nor majority of them attend public activities held by the organizations regularly. At national level, take ISNA for example. The capacity of ISNA's annual convention is now about over 30,000 people, many of who are not ISNA's members, which represents less than one percent of Muslim population. In a 2009 Gallup survey, only 12 percent of Muslims reported that they thought CAIR representing their interests.[109] And most of the ordinary Muslims

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[108] Berlin, Isaiah, and Hardy, Henry. *The Sense of Reality : Studies in Ideas and Their History.* London: Chatto & Windus, 1996.

[109] Skerry, "The Muslim American Muddle"

I met never attend national level activities by these organizations. The performance of Islamic center is a little better. According to the 2017 Pew's survey, only four in ten of Muslims report that they attend mosque regularly. So if one wants to examine the dynamics between Muslim organizations and Muslim communities, Islamic center is more ideal choice than the national level organizations.

The purpose of this chapter is to test the theoretical hypothesis mentioned above with data and evidence collected by myself in a one-and-half-year-long ethnographic research on Muslim community in the Boston area. I try to present a complicated but real picture of the urban area community. In this community, I find that both solidarity and purposive incentives matter to local Islamic centers and conflicts and tensions do exist in the pursuit of these goals. I do not pretend to claim that the Muslim community in Boston is representative of the American Muslim community. I chose to study the community initially because I study at Boston College and it is convenient for me to visit nearby Islamic centers at low cost. I also realize that sampling bias damages this thesis's power of generalization. After randomly and informally visiting mosques in other metropolitan areas such as Houston, San Francisco, and Philadelphia out of my personal curiosity, I find that Islamic centers in Massachusetts act not identically to these in Houston, and Houston is different from San Francisco and Philadelphia. However, I also observed some similar patterns in terms of interaction with local Muslim congregations. So I am convinced that my findings contain some valuable information that is ignored in existing literature on American Muslims.

The plan of this chapter is following. There are two sections. I started with a brief review of the broader picture of American mosque-building movement. Then I will do a brief discussion on how the Boston community can be view as an epitome of the American Muslim community. I then introduce my sample of mosques. In the second section I will apply Wilson's organizational theory to my cases and analyze how and why these organizations act in the three dimensions that may intensify tensions between Muslims and non-Muslims.

American Mosque Building Movement

Islamic center were the first Islamic organization that Muslims built in the United States.[110] I use Islamic rather than Muslim because there were some other secular organizations, such as ethnic club and cultural center, established by early generation of Muslim immigrants with little religious purpose. For example, Turkish Cultural Center Boston. Though most of its members are Muslims, the goal of the center is purely secular. There are approximately over two thousand Islamic centers across the country according to a 2011 U.S. mosque survey by CAIR.[111] Most of them are self-organized by local Muslim communities. Ihsan Bagby, who now is an authoritative scholar on American mosques, argues that most mosques "follow the congregational patterns" in the sense that local Muslim congregations govern and manage their own mosques, fund their activities, offer religious and social services to congregational members, and teach Islam to next generations.

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[110] Haddad, Yvonne Yazbeck, Senzai, Farid, and Smith, Jane I. Educating the Muslims of America. Oxford ; New York: Oxford University Press, 2009.

[111] Bagby, Ihsan. "The American Mosque 2011." *Washington, DC: Council on American Islamic Relations. Google Scholar*(2012).

The primary goal that Muslims build their own organizations is twofold: religious and social. Muslims hope that by having their own Islamic organizations they can fully protect their Islamic cultures and traditions from the pressure of assimilation and acculturation in the un-Islamic American society. At first they thought all they needed were fixed physical locations to hold *salat* and Friday *Jummah* (weekly Islamic sermon). In Islamic tradition the mosque is nothing but a physical space for public worshipping and meeting.[112] To many American Muslims today, this traditional way of understanding is still popular (For example, when I asked a school president of a full-time Islamic school in Rhode Island how many mosques does the state have, he answered me by counting in the recreation center of his school because students and teachers at the school practice daily *salat* there). Later Muslim immigrants realized that social gathering with co-religionists was necessary. To be a good Muslim, an imam told me, it is necessary to attend *halaqa*, Islamic lectures for the study of Islam because continuous learning Islam is encouraged by the Prophet Muhammad, "seek knowledge even unto China." In practice, meeting friends and enjoy free food after *halaqa*, which is usually held on Saturday evening, is another good reason that attracts many Muslim attendees.

In his in-depth review of American Islamic centers, Bagby argues that there have been two periods of mosque-building movements in the Untied States: the first was between 1890-1964, and the second started from 1965 till now. For pre-1965 generation of Muslim immigrants, Bagby observes that they were very rigorous and

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[112] Turner, Harold W. *From Temple to Meeting House : The Phenomenology and Theology of Places of Worship.* Religion and Society; 16. The Hague ; New York: Mouton, 1979.

traditional in defining mosques as only a place for religious activities. So the early

Islamic centers always came with two parts: one is mosque for religious gathering,

and another is social center for social activities. The first Islamic center built by

Muslim immigrants was in Highland, Michigan in 1921, when and where a lot of male

Muslims worked in the rising car industry in Michigan. The center only lasted one

year because "internal disputes sapped enthusiasm."[113] Internal disputes happened

everywhere in the early period of mosque building because the early generation of

Muslim immigrants were uneducated as well economically incapable to sustain their

own center. Until 1960 there were estimated 120 mosques across the nation, and

many of them were mosques associated with Nation of Islam, the black American

Islamic movement since the early twentieth century. The Black movement was

criticized by post-1965 generation of immigrants of teaching "unorthodox" Islam.[114]

Furthermore, the post-1965 generation from oversea Muslim majority countries

brought about a new wave of mosque building. They tended to have their own Islamic

centers because "they were more confident in their desire to practice and not

compromise their Islamic tradition, more resistant to assimilation, and more critical

of American culture and politics."[115] In spite of their persistence on their "true" Islam,

mosques built between 1965 to 2001 still performed as "ethnic religious

institutions."[116] Local Muslims hoped their own Islamic center to preserve their

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[113] Bagby, "Mosques in the Untied States," in Haddad, Yvonne Yazbeck, and Smith, Jane I. The Oxford Handbook of American Islam. Oxford Handbooks. Oxford University Press, 2014, 226.

[114] Ibid.

[115] Ibid, 229.

[116] Min, P. G. and J. H. Kim, *Religions in Asian America: Building Faith Community*. Walnut Creek, CA: Altamira Press, 2002.

ethnic-religious identities and pass them to posterity. In addition, they had no ambition for aggressive proselytization as Islamists from the national organizations. The local Islamic centers were culturally and religious conservative and defensive as well as ethnically and racially exclusive. When Haddad and Lummis, for example, conducted a research on Islamic centers in 1987, they were able to reach out "liberal and moderate" Islamic centers only.[117] Additionally, in-group solidarity in local congregations was more important to these mosques than high religious commitment in practice. It is not surprising that in the 1990s many American Islamist leaders complained that those centers were "ethnic country clubs" and "Islamic fortresses."[118]

The isolationist and anti-assimilation sentiments prevailing at American Islamic centers in the twentieth century were responsible for the long-time invisibility of Islam and Muslims before mass Americans. But so Muslims learnt that strangeness cultivates xenophobia. The 9/11 forced many Islamic centers to open their door to general American public and seek a broader coalition with other Muslim organizations and groups. Increasing numbers of invitations for interfaith events, of non-Muslim visitors, of Muslims from different ethnic, cultural, and sectarian backgrounds, and of social, media, and political outreach activities change the behavior patterns of many Islamic center: now they are more vocative than before.

Islamic Centers in Boston

Muslim community in Boston is in many ways an epitome of the American

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[117] Haddad and Lumis, *Islamic Values*.

[118] Skerry, "The Muslim American Muddle."

Muslim community for four reasons. First, in Boston there is one of the most historic Muslim communities in the United States. The earliest settlement of Muslim immigrant in Boston can be traced back to the 1900s. At the beginning, seven families emigrated from Lebanon and Great Syria area and settled down near the Quincy point, Massachusetts, two of whom were Shias and the rest are Sunnis. They built the first local self-governed Islamic center in Quincy in 1963, ICNE, and posterity of the seven families had contributed a lot to build many local Islamic centers including Islamic Center of Boston in Wayland and Islamic Society of Greater Lowell. Second, the institutional diversity of Islamic centers in Boston is high. There are over twenty Islamic centers and mosques in Boston, serving different congregations and subgroups. Third, the ethnic diversity in the Boston community is representative. Boston is a city of universities and high tech industries, which attracts educated Muslims from all over the world to study and work here. Fourth, some Boston Muslim leaders are also active on the national stage. For example, Muzamil Saddiqi, the leading American Muslim jurist, used to serve as the president for Islamic Center of New England in 1970s after his graduation from the Divinity School at Harvard university. In addition, ISBCC'S Senior Imam Yasir Fahmy has been invited to speak at ISNA's annual conventions since its assumption of the position in 2015, and its Executive Director Yusuf Vali is also nationally acknowledged for his devotion to civil rights activities.

Since the earliest settlement in 1910s, Muslims had not built their own mosques for almost five decades. The earliest Muslim immigrants were all workers at local ship industry near the Quincy port and they were not economically capable to build a new

mosque. Besides, they concerned about the preservation of their own culture heritage and nationality more than religious faith because the first association they established was not religious at all. Bearing the name of Sons of Lebanon, the association was established "to teach children the Arabic language, help immigrants learn English, collect funds for charity, and discuss common concerns."[119]   The second generation, however, wanted a mosque. According to Mary Lahaj who was a descendant of the earliest seven Lebanese families, a member of Islamic Center of New England (ICNE) replied: "this generation wanted to relate to a church...The kids would come home and say to their parents, 'How come we don't have a church?'"[120] It is until the early 1960s the first Boston Muslim community decided to have their own mosque. King Saud of Saudi Arabia donated $5000. And right after the foundation of ICNE, the mosque was affiliated with FIA until 1981 when FIA ceased to exist.[121]

Since the late 1960s, there are in total three major sub-waves of mosque building in Boston. The influx of Muslim students from Middle East, South Asia, and other main Muslim majority countries started the first wave. The first wave was between 1965-1990. Arabs, Turkish, and North African Muslim immigrants were core ethnic groups who built their own mosques. Among many centers built in this period, there were two most influential ones that successively served as the most important mosques in the New England area. The first one is ICNE in Quincy by 1964. And the second one is

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[119] Mary Lahaj, "The Isalmic Center of New England," in Haddad, Yvonne Yazbeck, and Smith, Jane I. Muslim Communities in North America. SUNY Series in Middle Eastern Studies. Albany, N.Y.: State University of New York Press, 1994, 293-317.

[120] Ibid.

[121] Ibid

Islamic Society of Boston in Cambridge by 1981. The ISB was built by former members of Muslim Students Associations at Harvard University, Boston University, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, and Northeastern University. However, it was not primarily built for religious purposes but for social ones. I interviewed a board member of ISB who has served the center over three decades. I asked him why ISB is independent to ICNE, he replied: "we have different concerns…we as international students needed more resources for English training, but they, [ICNE], concerned with their congregation more."

The second wave was in the 1990s. At this period, South Asian Muslims became more actively in mosque building than before. In general, the South Asian immigrants from Pakistan, India, and a few Bangladesh in this period were with high education background and worked in technological, scientific, and medical area. Not only were they financially capable to build their own centers but also they had religious reasons. Majority of South Asian Muslims belong to the Hanafi sect of Sunni Islam and their shared language is Urdu rather than Arabic. ICNE also noticed the growth of South Asian community in south suburban area of Boston, soon in 1994 the ICNE Sharon center was built, about twenty miles away from the Quincy mosque. Shias from Pakistan and India also built the first Shia Islamic centers, Islamic Masumeen Center of New England in Hopkinton by 1995. Mosques during first and second waves were more or less ethnicity, race, and sect defined organizations. They were more like cultural centers than religious institutions. Their congregations were small in size, usually less than a thousand households. In addition, with few exceptions, mosques built in this period were also invisible among local neighborhoods. It was partly

because they intentionally avoid obvious Islamic symbols such as minarets or crescents, partly due to their absence in local interfaith communities.

After 9/11 came the third wave. Many mosques appeared during this period. Unlike centers from early waves which were more "cultural clubs," most of the new centers embrace "American Islam" and social justice oriented. In addition, they are more friendly to non-Muslim visitors. The most representative center is Islamic Society of Boston Cultural Center. The building of ISBCC embodied the idea: "It's not just a mosque—it's a symbol. It's more than just a building, it's a place that holds a community together."[122] In addition, the Iman Islamic Center, a shia center in Quincy established in 2007, was initially a charity organization helping Syrian and Iraqis refugees.

I frequently and regularly visited twelve Islamic centers between April 2016 and December 2017. The detail of the twelve mosques is shown in Table 1. below. The basic method of data collecting is by participant observation and unstructured interview. According to a survey of Hartford Institute for Religion Research in 2015, there are in total 39 Islamic centers in Massachusetts so my sample covers almost one third of MA mosques and about half of Boston mosques.[123] The twelve Islamic centers that I visited are affiliated with eleven independent Muslim organizations and they all built by Muslim immigrants. The name of these centers are: Islamic Center of New England in Quincy (ICNE Quincy), Islamic Society of Greater Worcester (ISGW),

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[122] Kuhn, P. D., & Seo, H. K. (2007, October 1). Muslims celebrate mosque opening; Harvard Islamic Society delegation attends inaugural prayer session at the Islamic Society of Boston Cultural Center [Electronic version]. The Harvard Crimson. from http://www.thecrimson.com/article.aspx?ref=519770. Accessed Apirl 2, 2016.

[123] See Rozen, David, "American Congregations 2015: Thriving and Surviving," Hartford Institute for Religion Research. 2015.

Islamic Society of Boston in Cambridge (ISB Cambridge), Islamic Center of Boston in Wayland (ICB Wayland), Islamic Center of New England in Sharon (ICNE Sharon), Islamic Masumeen Center of New England in Hopkinton (IMCNE), Islamic Society of Greater Lowell (ISGW), Outreach Community & Reform Center in Malden (OCRC), Islamic Center of Burlington (IC Burlington), Iman Islamic Center in Quincy (IIC), Islamic Society of Boston Cultural Center in Roxbury (ISBCC), and Yusuf Masjid in Brighton. In my sample the most historic one is ICNE Quincy, the largest one is ISBCC whose construction was finished in 2007. And the very recent one, Yusuf Masjid, opened its door in 2009. In my sample two Shi'ite mosques are included and the rest eleven are Sunni centers.

Table 1. Sampled Islamic Centers

Center Name by Abbreviation	Time to Location	Sect	Location	Jummah Size	Imam	Members	Part-time/Full Time
ICNE Quincy	1963	Sunni	Quincy	400-600	Yes	Yes	F
ISGW	1979	Sunni	Worcester	400-600	No	Yes	F
ISB Cambridge	1981	Sunni	Cambridge	400-600	No	No	F
ICB Wayland	1987	Sunni	Wayland	<100	No	Yes	P
ICNE Sharon	1991	Sunni	Sharon	400-600	Yes	Yes	F
IMCNE	1995	Shite	Hopkinton	<50	Yes	Yes	P
ISGL	1995	Sunni	Lowell	400-600	Yes	Yes	F
OCRC	1999	Sunni	Malden	400-600	Yes	Yes	F
IC Burlington	1999	Sunni	Burlington	400-600	Yes	Yes	F
IIC	2007	Shite	Quincy	No	No	Yes	P
ISBCC	2007	Sunni	Roxbury	>1000	Yes/3	No	F
Yusuf	2009	Sunni	Brighton	100-200	No	Yes	F

Time line data is from *Harvard Pluralism Project*: http://pluralism.org/timeline/islam-in-boston/ Accessed on Jan 9, 2017

Solidary Mosque vs Purposive Mosque

In this section I categorize my sample in two groups: solidary and purposive mosques. In reality, like Wilson argues, no organizations can survive with only one incentive. Solidary organizations often appeal to purposive incentives as

complimentary measures to strengthen the in-group solidarity, while purposive organizations may appeal to selective solidary incentives to recruit members with high commitment. But, given all mosques are legally registered as religious organizations, one thing is certain that they have very limited measures to offer material incentives to motivate its members.

It is difficult to find a general pattern for solidary mosques in terms of organizational structure but some guiding principles. Solidary mosque is in general geographically based and governed, its congregation is of clear geographical boundaries, the management follows democratic procedures, the executive board has short terms, the internal structures tends to be simple and direct democratic, and its outreaching patterns tend to be moderate, defensive, and conservative. Purposive mosque is the opposite. It has no membership, it often has life-long board members, the range and boundaries of its congregation are unclear, the management is more hierarchical and bureaucratic, the internal structure tends to be complicated and issue-oriented, and its outreaching patterns are more aggressive and progressive. Ironically, purposive mosque adopts the para-mosque model that Poston discusses. So as it sounds like an oxymoron, my cases will show a para-mosque mosque can exist. Among the twelve mosques in my sample, only ISB and ISBCC can be categorized as purposive organizations, and the rest are still mainly relying on solidary incentives.

It is very hard to find a consistent way to measure the size of Muslim congregation because different centers may have different ways of identifying their congregations. Congregation and membership of a given center often refer to two

things. Scholars like Bagby on American mosques are wrong that they overly generalize congregation as the basic self-government unit of a center. On the contrary, congregants will not automatically enroll as mosque members who have true legal rights to participate mosque management. In addition, to local mosque leaders, congregation refers to whom their mosques serve whereas membership suggests who will be more likely to donate money to the institution. In fact, members affiliated with a mosque only compose a very small proportion of the congregation the mosque serve. And there are two exceptions, ISB and ISBCC, because they only have congregations but no membership. For different mosques in the list, leaders gave me at least three different standards to define their congregation. The first standard is territory-based. Mosques were built for mainly serving Muslim communities in given specific geographic areas. For example, Islamic Center of Burlington, as the only mosque in the location, mainly serves Muslims who lives near the town of Burlington, Massachusetts. However, this standard works better in suburban areas than urban areas. In urban district, mosque congregations often overlap with each other's. The second standard is by the size of *Eid* Prayer after Ramadan, the month of fast. It is a tradition that mosque will offer free food for Muslims who attend the *Eid al-Fitr*, the feast after evening *Eid* prayer. "Some congregants," a board member from ISGL told me, "would like to travel from tens of miles away to participate the *Eid al-Fitr* [here]…because they know someone here." The third standard of congregation is the number of Friday *Jummah* attendees. In average, the size of Friday Jummah varies from 100 to 600 in Boston area. The only outlier is ISBCC, due to its location at the vicinity of downtown Boston, the size of its Friday Jummah varies from 700 to over

1000. In this thesis, due to the limitation of my research that I cannot show up at 12 mosques' *Eid al-Fitr* at one night, I choose to the *Jummah* standard to measure the size of congregation.

On acquisition of membership, there are also two main modes adopted by Boston mosques. One is paid membership and anther is free membership but registry is required. Few mosques adopt the free membership, and the average price for paid membership is about $100 per person per year and no more than $300 per household per year. Membership is a necessary requirement to participate in mosque management. Only members can vote for and be elected to board of directors, the governing body of a mosque. Election of board members is in general held on between October and December every year or on every other year. For some mosques, members enjoy some privileges. For example, Islamic Center of Boston, Wayland has a capacious and nicely decorated common room with nice and comforting sofas and a multimedia Television, and even a billiard table only but all of these are only available for its members. And the membership fee is as high as $700 dollars a year. The small size membership of local mosque has several reasons. First, it was because of the low attendance of Muslims. There are also an unknown number of Muslims identified themselves as "cultural Muslims" who do not observe most of Islamic obligation but still identify themselves as Muslims because "Islam is a large part of the world I grew up in; it is inseparable from home."[124]   Second, ordinary Muslims will not buy membership unless they have some social connections with core

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[124]   http://www.chicagotribune.com/news/opinion/commentary/ct-muslims-islam-trump-religion-culture-perspec-0223-20170221-story.html Accessed Jan 2, 2018.

members, such as founders, of a mosque. Being a member requires more involvement with the mosque affairs. However, for many Muslims who attend mosques irregularly, mosque is no more than a place to observe personal Islamic duties and an institution from where one can purchase religious service if he or she needs to. Besides, organizational affiliation is not required in Islamic traditions.

On management there are two modes adopted by self-governed mosques in Boston. One is the management by a board of director generated from members. And the second is a co-management by a full-time imam and a Board of Directors elected from members. Financial reason is the key concern for the selection of management. Majority of mosques will select the first mode. With few exceptions, almost every Islamic center is suffering from financial difficulties. Major financial recourses are limited: donation from local congregation, incomes from paid religious services, and tuition income from affiliated part-time Islamic schools. Membership fees only constitute a small portion of mosque's income. Hiring a full-time imam will no doubt increase the financial burden of a mosque. As the table shows, barely half of the mosques can afford their own full-time imams.

Local centers care more on the part-time Islamic schools. It shows an ambivalent attitude towards the relationship between Muslim identity and American identity. For local mosques, offering paid after-school programs to teach school-aged Muslim youth is a stable and profitable income resource. For Muslim parents, they want their children to be raised up in an "Islamic environment," to know some basic knowledge of the religion and Arabic language, and to be good but also secularly successful Muslims. Comparing to private full-time Islamic schools which often charge over five

thousand dollars a year and may not do well on academic performance, the part-time Islamic schools is a good choice. For the mosque leaders, cost for maintaining a part-time Islamic school is low because almost every teacher is voluntary and their rewards are no more than free lunch and tuition discount if they also send their children to the school they teach. The principal of a part-time Islamic school in a mosque in Malden, Massachusetts said the school's money often support maintenance of the mosque not otherwise.

Solidary mosque as "cultural club." The organizational diversity of solidary mosques is a result of diverse solidary incentives. Functionally, what may increase solidarity within a Muslim congregation? As Khan argues that Muslim identity sources includes shared group experience and memory, Islamic ideal, ethnicity and nationalism, and religious sectarianism and conservatism. Khan ignores, in practice, that socio-economic elements maybe another identity source because gap between rich and poor is also salient among American Muslims. On one hand, to be sure, these identities may divide American Muslims into different groups. On the other hand, functionally, these identities are also important to survive and maintenance of group solidarity within a given Muslim congregation.

In practice one often observes that sectarian identity and ethnic identity fused together. "Why are there so many independent Islamic centers here," I asked during my first interview with the imam from Islamic Center of Burlington on a Friday in the late October 2016, "Isn't it just one Islam?" "It's Allah's test," he replied. He is about my age and recently graduated from a six-year program at an Islamic seminary located in Queens, New York City, where hundreds of thousands of Bangladeshi

immigrants reside, according to sociologist Nazli Kibria at Boston University.[125] Before his religious education, he got his undergraduate degree in Psychology from the City University of New York. Obviously the question I asked was a little bit awkward for him given that he just relocated to Burlington two months ago. I apologized to him for my intrusiveness immediately. But he smiled and said it was okay. "In New York," he continued, "there are a lot of mosques built unnecessarily and arbitrarily. When some rich men felt they disliked a mosque's environment, they would have their own."

The Burlington's center is about thirty-minute driving distance from downtown Boston. Unlike other mosques in Boston area, this one is heavily marked by South Asian cultures and the *Hanafi* school. In 1999 "49 brothers" registered the organization as a 501(c)(3) religious organization. Most of them were Indian-Pakistani Sunnis. Initially they rented a place at the Burlington Plaza Shopping Center where they also established a part-time Islamic school to educate their children about Islam after school. Many of the founders were in lucrative professions such as medical doctor, IT programmers, and engineers. The congregation grew soon. In 2004, the center bought the property of its current location from a Catholic organization *Knights of Columbus* and relocated after. Having their own mosque had been a dream of the Burlington communities for years, besides the plaza had been complaining that there was no sufficient parking space for them during Friday *Jummah* because the congregation was over five hundred families by the time. Most importantly, they

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[125] See Kibria, Nazli. Muslims in Motion : Islam and National Identity in the Bangladeshi Diaspora. New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers University Press, 2011.

could afford the cost.

The center had no imams for two years before they decided to hire the one that I talked with. One of the primary reasons is that they wanted to hire an imam trained in Hanafi tradition. They wanted to hire an imam who could manage the center as administrator in accord with their *Hanafi* ways.

I was allowed to observe Friday's *Jummah* when the interview was over. The room was soon so occupied that I had to curl myself up at a corner, and, as I later known, there is another same-sized room on the back of the building for *salat* and it was also crowded. By my calculation the size of the Jummah was over five hundred. I immediately recognized by skin color that most of the attendees were South Asians because their skin is a bit darker than me, and the rest were blacks and White Muslims. The *Jummah*'s topic was about the absurdity of Darwin's evolution theory. Realizing that many of the attendees were medical doctors who were working at hospitals nearby, the imam criticized Darwin's theory "untrue" because the Holy *Qu'ran* has said that it was Allah who created everything. After the *Jummah,* the imam introduced me to an attendee who came from Quincy, Massachusetts, where is about one hour driving away from Burlington on weekdays. After I introduced myself and exchanged cards, the guy rushed back to Quincy. Burlington's center is a perfect example for what I call "solidary" mosque because the center depends on and shapes a highly identical ethnic and sectarian identity shared by the congregation.

Another example for solidary mosque shows that common group memory matters, which is ICNE in Quincy. Unlike Burlington's center, the Quincy mosque is

ethnically mixed.[126] Serving one of the most historical Muslim congregations in the United States, the center also relies on solidary incentives of shared experience. The Quincy mosque was different from Burlington in the sense that one can sense no affiliation with any of Islamic *fiqh* schools. Many families in the congregation of the Quincy mosque, as the president of the center told me, had been here for two or three generations. I randomly chatted with an elderly African American Muslim when I was waiting for the imam's office hour. I thought he was also waiting for the imam, but I was wrong. He was a volunteer janitor of the center and he had attended the center since his early twenties. He grew up in a Black Baptist tradition and converted to Islam after high school. "Everyone here was nice and everyone here was of good characters," he said, "[and] no one here did drugs and alcohols so I converted." After sharing his personal story of conversion with me, he talked about the imam and the center: "He (the imam) has been here many years and he knows everybody's problem." Later I learnt from the imam that he had served the center over fifteen years since he left Egypt. When he started his job here ICNE had already opened its chapter in Sharon, where is about 20 minutes of driving from Quincy on weekdays, and since he was the only full-time imam of the center at the time he had to serve at both centers. But his hard-working pays, because right now he is one of the known imams in Boston area.

I visited the center four times and I observed *Jummah* twice. In general, the culture inside the center was highly conservative and the traditional dressing code

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[126] However, in some case multi-ethnic congregation is not always a good thing because it will elevate a bar of hiring a imam. For example, in the ICNE Quincy chapter, the imam told me that he uses three languages: Arabic, Urdu, and English to communicate with different segments of local community.

was rigorously observed. Most attendees were seniors with gray and white hair. Some of them dressed traditionally so that one can easily tell their Arabic background. Before the sermon began, a young man took off his coat and uncovered his arms because it was hot and occupied inside the prayer hall. The president immediately approached him and asked him to put his coat on because "the shirt is too short" and it maybe "offensive to others."

To some mosques, socioeconomic status matter. Take ICB Wayland and OCRC in Malden for examples. Wayland mosque was the second mosque that I visited in Boston and it is also one of the most historical Muslim centers in Boston area. The mosque was built by some descendants of the early Lebanese families. Unlike other Sunni mosques, it is the only part-time Sunni mosque in my sample: it only opens on Friday and weekend. The Wayland mosque has a very handsome building and a very large parking yard. Its building, in fact, is bigger than most full-time Islamic centers that I have visited in Boston, with exceptions of ISBCC, and Worcester Islamic Center which for some reason I did not get an opportunity to interview its leaders. Congregation of Wayland mosque is multi-ethnic that there is no dominant racial or ethnic group. The two biggest ethnic segments are Arabs and South Asians, each of which takes about forty percent of the congregation. In many ways Wayland center is an "elite" mosque for majority of its attendees are with graduate degrees and working in prominent professions such as doctors and engineers, and many of them are graduates from elite universities such as MIT and Harvard. The high socio-economic status limits the size of the congregation. During a regular Friday *Jummah* I observed, less than one hundred attendees, though "the prayer hall can contain more than seven

hundred and fifty persons at a time," according to the president of the center. The Wayland mosque is also a "multiculturalist" mosque. Inside the building one can find decent Arabic calligraphies by a Chinese Muslim who I am quite familiar with and paintings with Arabic styles. Dressing code and gender separation were not rigorously observed: Hijab is not required, though encouraged, and both male and female can pray in the same room. At the basement I was amazed to find a billiard table and a small entertainment room but "only members can enjoy these." I asked the president of the center why the center, given its wealth, chose not to hire a full-time imam. "We don't need one because it is not required in Islam," immediately he replied, "plus we often invite many good Islamic scholars from universities in Boston to lead the prayers." Then he continued, "volunteerism is the tradition of the mosque, me, other board members, and teachers in our Sunday school are all volunteers. We don't need to hire a full-time employee."

As opposed to the Wayland's elite mosque, Malden's OCRC serves mainly for blue-collar and lower-middle-class Muslims. Many of the congregants are cashiers at grocery stores, workers at local restaurants, small business owners, and perhaps Uber drivers. The center rented the third floor of a five-floor business building as its location, which is about five minute walking distance from the MBTA station at Malden Center. The congregation is big but a majority are recent immigrants from Arabic speaking countries. So the Friday *Jummah* is divided in two parts: one in Arabic around 12:45 pm and another in English one hour later because whereas many attendees do not understand Arabic and many do not know English well. However, unlike the Wayland center, this mosque is a full-time one so that "our congregants

working around can fulfill their duty of *salat* everyday," one of its board members told me. On one hand, I was told that almost everyone works at the mosque is paid, though not well. On the other hand the center is short of money to buy a new mosque building. "So why so many full-time employees", I asked, "if you have no money, but some other mosques like the Wayland's center can rely on volunteers?" The principal of its part-time Islamic school who was the imam of the center years ago explained to me: "most of our congregation are blue-collar families and they are very busy. If we don't pay, no one will work here." Another staff in the office added "we are not as rich as Wayland."

Few Shi'ites choose either to pray at Sunni mosques many do not attend any mosque at all because they observe different theological principles and tradition. In general Shiite Muslim are more rigorous in terms of ritual observation. For example, Shi'ite Muslims always pray on stones or small-sized clay blocks because, according to the Shi'ite teaching, a true prayer must be on "pure materials." Therefore, at both Shiite mosques I visited there are boxes of clay clots locating by the entrances of prayer halls. However, Sunni Muslims believe the prayer on stone is "worshipping idols," which is a sin in Islam. So if a Shi'ite Muslim want to pray in a Sunni mosque, he or she must take his or her own stone with. Even so, many Sunni Muslims are not happy with Shi'ites' presentation in their mosques. So as long as there are sufficient numbers of Shiite families in a neighborhood, Shi'ites would rather like to have their own mosque. Both Shi'ite centers in my list, IIC in Quincy and IMCNE in Hopkinton, are part-time. They are part-time because there are not many Shi'ite Muslims in Boston. According to the 2017 Pew surveys, Shi'ites only represent 16 percent of

Muslim population in the Untied States. However, we have no estimate with respect to their percentage in the Boston Muslim community. The two Shiite centers are very far away from each other, one is in Quincy and another is in Hopkinton, a small town near Worcester, about half-and-hour driving distance from downtown Boston.

Sectarian minority-ness alone cannot maintain a mosque: it has to be fused with ethnicity. The super majority of IIC's congregation are Iraqis Shi'ites, while most congregants of IMCNE's center are Indian-Pakistani South Asians. Congregations of the two centers are so small that most of their congregants are their members. However, the two centers are different in many ways dramatically. The first is dress code and sex separation. IMCNE is very strict with these rules that not only wearing hijab is required inside the center, male and female Muslims pray in different spaces and the female Muslims cannot even see but only hear the imam. IIC is the opposite. Gender separation is not followed at all and wearing hijab, like the Wayland mosque, is only encouraged. As to the Friday *Jummah,* IIC holds no Friday *Jummah* because the size of the prayer is so small that many of its members think a Jummah is unnecessary. But IMCNE holds *Jummah*, though the size is very small too—no more than twenty attendees.

Solidary mosque is also troubled by many collective action problems. Take a small case in ISGW as example. I visited the ISGW, the second most historical Islamic center in Boston built in 1970s, on a Friday by the end of February, 2017 and there was a snowstorm on last Thursday. When I arrived at the parking lot next to the center's building about 12:30 pm, about half a hour before the *Jummah* began. However, the parking lot was so covered with snow that I could not even drive in. So

I spent another twenty minutes looking for a street parking space. After the *Jummah*, the board member stayed and had a small meeting discussing who should be responsible for snow cleaning. To my surprise, they could not even reach an agreement. The president and some members wanted to hire someone to do the job but others disagree because it would spend extra money. As a result, the president himself had to be the volunteer and he cleaned the parking lot later alone. The reason why I am so surprised is that ISGW is in many ways of high in-group solidarity. The center demands no membership fees and mainly relies on volunteers for maintenance. No one is paid here, even the imam. The acting imam of the center is also a volunteer who is working at a university in Worcester. Though he is not paid, he leads the *salat* and Friday *Jummah* regularly of his choice. "We know each other well," the president said, "and we can trust each other."

Purposive Mosque: Para-mosque mosque ISBCC and ISB represented a new type of mosque what I call "purposive mosque," which can avoid many collective action problems that solidary mosques have to confront. Instead of serving a particular congregation, ISBCC is ambitious by claiming it serves the whole Boston community, both Muslims and non-Muslims. Structurally they adopt para-mosque organizations. ISB and ISBCC have no membership and their governing bodies are not democratically elected either. ISB have two governing bodies: one is Board of Trustee and another is the Board of Directors. The former nominates the latter. And the tenure of former is life-long. The leadership of ISBCC is complicated. Its property and land belongs to ISB while ISB hires MAS Boston chapter to manage the mosque. Therefore, hardly can one view the two mosques as true representative bodies of Muslim

community in Boston. As mentioned above, MAS is an Islamist-related para-mosque organizations. The connection between MAS and Muslim Brotherhood is still unclear because, according to Nimer, "the group has been testing the waters of American politics without deciding how to integrate their organization into the fabric of American civil society."[127] Meanwhile, as Skerry points out, MAS has a very small-sized membership who are highly committed to the MAS's cause.

ISB has a good relationship with MAS for years and some MAS members attended ISB. According to Stephen Young's dissertation on ISB, there was an often ignored competition between ISB and ICNE before ISBCC was built. To non-Muslims at the time, ICNE was the literal representative of Boston Muslims and maybe the whole New England Muslim community. After the 9/11 attack, "The sum total of words in the article concerning the ICNE was 368; the summary of the ISB's statement and plans for a blood drive consisted of 65 words. Moreover, the length of direct quotes alone from the sophisticated and well-experienced public speaker Imam Eid of ICNE surpassed the entire reference to the ISB."[128] ICNE soon lost it status representing Boston Muslims before the media after ISBCC opened its door to the public. Both ISB and ISBCC are now managed by professional teams of administrators because both of them now put their focus on outreaching Muslim youth, interfaith, social justice, and sometimes political activities. Though the two centers are legally independent from each other, they collaborate together. The Senior Imam at ISBCC, for example, attended ISB's annual fundraising event in 2017. On the other hand, ISB often send its

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[127] Nimer, "Americanization of Islamism"

[128] Young, Stephen Wesley. *Islamic identity in the Islamic Society of Boston*. ProQuest, 2008, 175.

attendees to ISBCC if they need to talk with an imam while ten minutes of driving away from Cambridge, at OCRC there is a full-time imam.

"Social Justice is the first mission of ISBCC because God is merciful and justice who forgave Adam immediately when he acknowledged his sins," Mr. Yusuf Vali, the Executive Director of ISBCC, thus told me when we first met in April 2016 at his office." As an alumnus of the Class' 05 of Princeton University, Vali has a wonderful profile in political and civic engagements. He "learned community organizing on the streets of Minneapolis when he worked on President Barack Obama's 2008 campaign."[129] Last year, after Trump issued the Muslim bans, he, with many MAS members, helped the establishment of the first Muslim civil rights organization in Boston, The Muslim Justice League (MJL), that "educates, organizes and advocates for human and civil rights that are violated or threatened under national security pretexts."[130] MJL and ISBCC have a close relationship. An executive director from the Muslim Justice League is also a board member of Boston Muslim Young Professionals, a sub-organization affiliated with MAS Boston.[131]

Compared to other Islamic centers in Boston, ISBCC is different at its activeness to outreach Muslim youth, especially students in universities and colleges in Boston area. Solidary mosques have been ignoring the needs of Muslim students. It is understandable because many Muslim students will finally leave Boston, even the United States once they received their degrees. On the other hand, university students

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[129] https://paw.princeton.edu/article/yusufi-vali-%E2%80%9905-reaching-out Accessed June 5, 2017.

[130] https://www.muslimjusticeleague.org/our-work/ Accessed June 5, 2017.

[131] https://www.muslimjusticeleague.org/our-people/#post-582 Accessed Feb 20, 2018

also have different requirements for mosques to local communities. When I ask a member of ISB why did they think that having their own mosque was necessary, he answered me that a different center was needed partly because in the late 1970s and early 1980s many Muslim students need English help to assimilate in to their university while ICNE had been a mosque to local families and gave little response. Right now, since many MSAs have their own Muslim chaplains so Muslim students and ISB turned its congregation from Muslim students to the local Muslim community in Cambridge, not many Muslim students will choose ISB.

ISBCC often holds activities for Muslim Students Associations in Boston area. One obvious reason is that ISBCC is capable of accepting many students: it has three imams. The senior imam is in charge of the "philosophical direction" and offer "spiritual guidance" for "the whole community," Vali explained to me, and the third imam is responsible for leading five prayers a day. The second imam, or the associate imam, meets the public and is responsible for public affairs of the mosque. The associate imam is also offer free psychological consulting service to Muslims who needs the help and he is active in participating MSAs' activities. It even outcompetes ISB over the youth outreaching because ISB has no imam now. "What if students nearby, say, from Harvard or MIT, come to your center and looking for spiritual guidance?" I asked the question to both an administrative officer and a board member of ISB. They answered identically, "I will send them to ISBCC because we could not offer help without an imam." For example, I interviewed an international student from Saudi Arabia who studied in a post-graduate program in architecture at Harvard. Despite Saudi's extremist attachment with Wahhabism, she and her family

are relatively moderate Hanafis. She told me that Saudi graduate students have their own "club" at Harvard to have their own activities. She attended one Friday *Jummah* at ISB once when she just arrived at the United States, but she "disappointedly" found that the sermon is "as boring as Saudi mosque." But for ISBCC, she gave a better comment: "they have a variety of actives for youth, which are fun."

Politics, Religion, and Culture: a Complicated Picture. Both solidary and purposive mosques have their own strength and weakness. The division exists because of the diverse experience of American Muslims and it proves that there is no uniformed Americanization path for American Muslims. When the external social and political pressure for assimilation is low, the fragmented organizational network is not a problem, and often positive to many local communities because they can govern their own mosques in their own ways. However, when external pressure for assimilation is high, fragmentation is a problem, that the fragmented organizations will channel Muslim's attachment with Islam in different directions.

As mentioned above, Muslims are often confused in three dimensions: political, religious, and culture. But in real world the three are interwoven. To be sure, because of activeness of ISBCC in social justice and outreaching activities and their effort to dispel irrational Islamophobic rhetoric, the situation of Muslims in Boston improved a lot. Increasing number of new Muslim immigrants to Boston are more likely to go to ISBCC than other mosques. Under the influence of MAS's Islamist ideology, leaders at ISBCC advocate that it's an Islamic duty to participate in politics and civic activities because Muslims is duty-bound to save the humanity. Because of it, ISBCC has now defeated other mosques: it is now the most vocal Islamic center in New England and

its Senior Imam is frequently invited to speak before the public representing Muslims in Boston.

But the political unity is unstable and often illusory partly because the rise of purposive mosques like ISBCC does not overcome the fragmentation issue, and partially because politics befuddles solidary mosque leaders. In some cases, sizes of membership shrank after the 9/11 because many Muslims fear that by enrolling with a Muslim institution they will be targeted and under surveillance by the federal government. "They are more willing to donate cash which is more than the membership fee than to be registered as a member," said the board member of ISGL. In addition, shifting political environment and pressure for being more active in outreaching activities may conflicts with needs for their congregations. Some solidary mosque leaders are often lingering on the issue of political participation. One imam explained to me that Islam disagreed with the principle of separation of religion and politics because "Allah is almighty." However, he also rejected that Muslims are duty-bound for political engagement: "it is up to personal choice. If some leaders think they are capable of leading the whole *Ummah*, so be it. Only Allah knows." In addition, more than one Sunni leader from solidary mosques told me that they were unhappy with Shiite because "Shiites are politically crazy," while they remained silent on ISBCC's political engagement.

After Trump's election, the invitation from interfaith organizations and local public schools flooded Burlington center's and INCE Sharon center's mailboxes. Imams became so busy even they had already politely refused most of the invitations. What soon followed was increasing numbers of complaints from congregants because

the imams had no time to pick up their phones and answered their problems. On the other hand, the two centers remain highly reluctant on commenting politics. Without notice in advance, I revisited the Burlington's center the Friday of the election week for *Jummah*. I am surprised because the sermon barely mentioned the election. On the contrary, Burlington's young imam eloquently educated his audience of the importance to observe five pillars during sermon: "no matter who sits in the office, a good Muslim needs to pray five times a day!" And it was the only time he mentioned the election. Similarly, I also talked with the imam of ICNE in Sharon in the following week. The Sharon imam is a young South Asian. He is also from New York but received his Islamic education overseas. I asked him if the center had some measures to "pacify" the local congregation or maybe support some protest activities. He replied negatively. "There were no big changes in the congregation" because "Muslims has been marginalized for decades." With respect to political reactions, he said: "We are a religious institution and we should not participate in politics…if someone who really [have] problems I will send them to ISBCC. They can take care of it well."

The rise of ISBCC also intensified what Skerry argued "Clash of Generations." On the one hand, the Muslim American identity is more attractive to the American born Muslim youth than their first generation parents because they has less cultural burden nor social psychological attachment with oversea relatives and friends. Accepting the cosmopolitan values from the American society, they often criticize their parents' ethnically defined Islam of "fake Islam." Despite a super majority of them answer that their religion is very important, those young generation Muslims are less likely to attend mosques that their parents go. On the contrary, the

exceptional ISBCC put youth program on the top of its agenda, and successfully gain popularities among MSAs in Boston area and attracts many Muslim students to participate its youth programs as well as its political activities. Even Muslim students who grew up in Boston are more likely to participate ISBCC. For example, I interviewed a Muslim student at Boston College whose family were members of ICNE Quincy. As opposed to her parents, she preferred ISBCC more because ISBCC is active in civil engagements and, more importantly, "I always find helps at ISBCC."

ISBCC's policy in public exposure and activeness in media and public sphere is not always a good thing to many Muslims, including many of its attendees. For example, I met a white convert at ISBCC's café told me that he was very uncomfortable about the occupied schedule of the Senior Imam. He said as a convert he often had many religious and spiritual questions with respect to Islam and religion. He admired Imam Yasir Fahmy very much because the imam is very knowledgeable. "But it is harder to make an appointment with him after Trump," the convert complaint, "I haven't seen him and Brother Vali here as often as usual."

Like other immigrant groups, new Muslim immigrants are often suspicious of African Americans. So African American Muslims were less likely to attend mosques where many immigrants go. At the MSA session on ISNA's annual convention in 2017, Imam Khalid Latif from Islamic Center at New York University reminded hundreds of Muslim students who attended the session: "If you live in an any city in this country and there is only one masjid where all immigrants go, I will tell you without any doubt and hesitation that there is probably a second one where black people go."[132] It still

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[132] "MSA Session - 54th Annual ISNA Convention,"

happens at ISBCC. A South Asian Muslim I met in ISBCC complaint about the changing environment in the mosque to me because sometime "some black Muslims were not friendly to him." In addition, ISBCC's rise intensified inter-mosque competition. In Roxbury there are four Islamic centers: ISBCC, Mosque for Praising Allah, Masjid Noor, and Boston Islamic Center. Except ISBCC, the rest are all Black mosques. Unlike ISBCC, they are often lack of resources because the communities they served are lower-middle-class. Many of their attendees now, a leader from the black mosques subtly hinted me, were not going to ISBCC. And "it is harder to raise money."

Back to the hypothesis that I raised in the introduction part of this thesis that Muslims' loyalty is muddled because of their confusing and fragmented organizational life. I think my evidence proves the test. Though the idea of a united Muslim community is attractive for many Muslim leaders, a purposive mosque opens to everyone is not always good for Muslims because purposive mosque cannot solve the fragmentation problem but sometimes worsens it. And compared to purposive mosques, solidary mosques are more likely to suffer from difficulties and confusions. It is a fact that more Muslims attend to solidary mosque than these to purposive ones and it is reasonable. After all most Muslims who come to this country is neither for anti-American and terrorist causes, nor for assimilation. They came here, stay here, and wanted their traditions to be preserved and respected. Functionally speaking, by maintaining and participating different solidary mosques, they can find their own ways to balance Americanization with their own Islamic identities. It is not saying

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https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qIqWW_rUJf4&list=PLAqEgNeiPAEul_vYxAKNIU5nuQ_Of62XR&index=14, accessed Oct 30, 2017.

they are not assimilating. They are, but in a very slow pace.

III. Conclusion and Discussion

Here comes the conclusion, this thesis is a further study of Peter Skerry's 2011 article, "the Muslim-American Muddle," in which he argues that not only non-Muslim Americans are worrying about Muslims' loyalty issue due to the fear of radical Islamism and terrorism, but also Muslims are confused. My basic argument is that Muslims are still suffering from their muddled loyalty. It is not because they are disloyal but because, in light of Grodzins, their organizations guide them in different directions which are not always en route to national loyalty as non-Muslims expect. Inspired by Morton Grodzins's theory on social structure and national loyalty in liberal democracies and James Q. Wilson's insightful study on political organizations, this research has sought to understand the Muslim muddle with an in-depth inquiry and examination on one of the most common and important Islamic organizations—Islamic centers and mosques with an ethnographical method. The evidence of this thesis was collected between April 2016 and December 2017. In fact, I almost visited every mosque in Massachusetts. However, I was not always lucky to build strong connections with many centers for various reasons. In this thesis, I only select those mosques that I had visited more than three times. And I try my best to interview as many leaders as possible. I also manage to keep a geographical and sectarian balance in my sample. I hope to cover all types of mosques in Boston area. My findings are interesting, though of course often confusing and may contradicting with each other but I am duty-bound to report them even if it may had negative impact on the

generalization power of my argument. I find that Islamic centers have different goals and offer different incentives to overcome collective actions problems. Both solidarity and political engagement are valued by Islamic centers in general, but individual organizations have different preferences which are results of divergent immigrant experiences. So the organizational aspect of Muslims community is fragmented. However, the increasing external political pressure in the post 9/11 period did not overcome the problem but aggravated it by simply empowering purposive mosques like ISBCC in public sphere. But ISBCC cannot speak for all Muslims, it only speaks for itself, no matter how much I praise its leaders' devotions to civic engagement. To be sure, Boston Muslims are more united than before, especially to non-Muslims, but fragmentation and division still exist, as they should exist.

The research stemmed from my personal interests in the assimilation and loyalty issue of American Muslims. When I started my first research on American Muslims in November, 2015, the first question came to my mind is "why don't Muslims abandon their old Islamic way of life if they claim their desire to be part of the American society?" As an international student from communist China who chose to pursue graduate degrees in the Untied States, It was hard for me to appreciate religious, ethnic, and cultural attachments that I found from other immigrants. Both my parents and professors back to China, who encourage and support me to study in the United States, taught me that I should "try my best" to "assimilate in the American culture," and more importantly, "not to hang out with Chinese too much!" However soon I learnt that not all immigrants came here with the identical assimilation mission with me, not even my Chinese friends and school-mates. In addition, I found that ethnicity,

racial, and cultural differences make sense in the United States, the most pluralist liberal democratic society in the world: no matter how hard I tried to assimilate with "white circles" in the universities I went and go to, my language ability, unintentionally cultural habits, and values that I think important are three main obstacles to convince my "White American" friend to accept me as part of their group. I have to make choice: either to be marginalized by both groups or to accept my Chinese/Asian identity. My personal experience let me be empathetic to my research subject—Muslims. Even though they choose to come to the United States and struggle to be a part of the American community, it is utterly rational, reasonable, and necessary to stay with their original identities.

At last, what the muddled Muslim loyalty can teach us is that we should not expect American Muslims to be one political community, even if their leaders desire political unity so much. We should keep in mind what Aristotle taught about two thousand years ago: "there is a point at which a polis, by advancing in unity, will cease to be a polis, but will nonetheless come near to losing its essence, and will thus be a worse polis."[133]

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[133] Cited in Crick, Bernard. *In Defence of Politics*. 4th ed. Chicago, Ill.: University of Chicago Press, 1993, 17.