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Presented by S. Kaazim Naqvi, BA, MA.

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BUILDING AN AMERICAN URBAN UMMA:

AFRICAN AMERICAN AND IMMIGRANT MUSLIMS

IN CHICAGO, 1965-1980

By

S. KAAZIM NAQVI, B.A., M.A.

DISSERTATION

Presented to the Faculty of the College of the Mariana Brown Dietrich College of Humanities and Social Sciences of Carnegie Mellon University in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements For the Degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

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During my graduate study, I had the opportunity to learn from a truly exceptional collection of faculty members here at CMU and over at the University of Pittsburgh. I will always be grateful to have taken classes offered by Kate Lynch, Lisa Tetrault, Jay Aronson, Joe Trotter, John Soluri, Donna Harsch, Wendy Goldman, Judith Shacter, Sy Drescher, and Evelyn Rawski.

No discussion of the faculty would be complete without particular note of the influence Kate Lynch has had on my development as a historian and as a writer. Entering graduate school fancying myself a strong writer, Kate disabused me of such notions during my first semester. Painstakingly guiding me in how to become a stronger writer, Kate helped me find my narrative voice and enabled me to realize my love for writing. As Graduate Director, Kate greatly enabled me to complete the dissertation by placing me in teaching assignments and fellowships that allowed me maximum ability to do my own research and writing. Furthermore, her tireless advocacy on behalf of us graduate students resulted in long overdue upgrades to our office space, making my cubicle a much more tolerable place to write and reflect.

In order to complete this manuscript, a number of institutions and archivists helped grant me the ability to research this topic. Along with Carnegie Mellon University and the library collections at University of Pittsburgh, the archivists at the Islam in America Depository at DePaul University as well as those at the Woodson and Washington branches of the Chicago Public Library helped me acquire the key materials that shaped the narrative in my dissertation. For their help, I am truly grateful.

Helping navigate coursework, exams, and shaping the dissertation topic, I am

deeply grateful for my classmates. In particular, my cohort of Maroon David, Michael Gallen, Rob Hutchings, Dawn Winters, and Christina Strellec, all provided important insights and encouragement in my time at CMU. Along with them, being in class with Rachel Oppenheimer, Russell Pryor, Lisa Seibert, John Weigel, Drew Simpson, Andrew Ramey, Jay Roszman, Andy Masich, Jiacheng Liu, and Willie Watson, greatly shaped my intellectual development in the early stages of my time at CMU.

Although starting out as simply a good way to eat pizza and ice cream on the GSA's dime, my Dissertation Writing Group proved to be an invaluable aid in drafting the manuscript. Helping me fight through the deadly combination of writer's block, procrastination, confusion, and self-doubt, Rachel Oppenheimer, Andrew Ramey, Jay Roszman, and Cassie Miller graciously poured over my sloppy prose and mangled thoughts. Their insights and suggestions played a significant role in shaping the arguments and order of the final manuscript. Having learned more about prisons, outrages, environmentalists, and Catholics, than could possibly be healthy, I eagerly await the opportunity to read their soon to be completed dissertations.

Beyond those that worked with me in the classroom and in drafting the dissertation, my friendships with Rob Hutchings, Andrew Ramey, and Flip Velgach left a profound effect on my growth as a person and as a scholar. Entering with me in 2008, through the countless hours we spent playing basketball and talking, Rob became my first adulthood friend. More than anyone, my friendship with Rob forced me to become more mature and introspective. Joining CMU the following year, Andrew and I have spent more time driving to football games, and have eaten more

flavors of Doritos, than likely anyone in the country. His intellect knowing no equal, Andrew, more than any other peer, helped me see my dissertation in the grandest terms and motivated me to be willing to take risks and believe in my own abilities. Only getting to be a part of my last two years working on the dissertation, Flip is a friend who I have the utmost certainty will be a part of the rest of my life. Graciously allowing my wife and I to stay with him for months after our apartment caught fire, I have never met a more generous and loving person.

Perhaps no part of graduate school will I miss more than the time I spent with the Baker Hall Bullies. Competing in basketball, hockey, softball, soccer, football, and volleyball with the Bullies, I received a much-needed escape from the drudgeries of work, as well as greatly appreciated camaraderie. Along with the early leadership and guidance of Pat Zimmerman and Cian McMahon, the core group of Andrew Ramey, Mark Patterson, Eric VanEpps, Jonathan Stepp, Flip Velgach, and Larry Burke, will forever be part of my most cherished memories of CMU.

During my years in Pittsburgh, I have been lucky to have developed many dear friends who have made my time in graduate school so special. Along with many of the people mentioned above, Alissa Bellotti, Kevin Brown, Kate Blashford, Jessie Northrup, Emily VanEpps, J.P. Lindsay, Matt McGrath, Jamie Calhoun, Avigail Oren, Kevin Seal, and Jay Rickabaugh, all provided me with encouragement and kindness.

Through the process of writing this dissertation, my siblings played a critical role in helping me understand and become the person that I am today. During my many trips to D.C., Minneapolis, and Fort Collins, Kulsoom, Akbar bhai, Sakina apa,

Erin, and J.D., reminded me of what is truly important in life. Without their love and support, I would not have been able to finish this project.

For the last ten years, no one has spent more time shaping my personal, emotional, and intellectual, development than my wife Caitlin. Supporting me in everything I do, Caitlin repeatedly put an end to any feelings of self-doubt and concern over my ability to complete the dissertation. In sharing countless conversations and moments together, Caitlin has filled my life with love and joy. No matter what difficulties or struggles I had to deal with, I remained positive because of the knowledge that she was in my life. Taking care of me in so many different ways, I undoubtedly would have starved to death without her.

Helping me better understand the idea of family and community, my wife's parents have done much to allow me to finish this dissertation. Through many heartfelt conversations, Scot and Julie have become like a second set of parents to me. Their confidence in me, and support for Caitlin and my wishes, has given me significant peace of mind during an uncertain part of life.

In many ways this project is fundamentally about my parents. Immigrating to the United States, and eventually Chicago, during the 1960s and 1970s, I often relied upon them for insights and ideas. If not for my father's insistence, I likely never would have attended graduate school, much less written about the Muslim community. Over the course of writing the dissertation, I have come to understand and relate to my father in more complex and meaningful ways. This change has largely been the most fulfilling aspect of writing this manuscript.

Finally, I dedicate this work to my mother. Having cared for me since the day I was born, her unwavering love and affection has given me the self-confidence to take on and complete the challenges of life, including writing this dissertation.

ABSTRACT

"Building an Urban Umma:
African American and Immigrant Muslims in Chicago, 1965-1980"

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Beginning with the changes to American immigration policy enacted in the 1965 Immigration and Naturalization Acts, the composition and character of Islam in Chicago underwent a dramatic upheaval. Originally dominated by the presence of African American members of the Nation of Islam and the Ahmadiyya Movement, the waves of immigrants from the Muslim World created new communities of Sunni Muslims that came to dominate the American Islamic scene. I argue that in this era, Chicago, with its combination of a large number of immigrants and the central headquarters and demographic stronghold of the Nation of Islam, established itself as the "Mecca of American Islam." Becoming more like the rest of the Muslim World demographically and ideologically, over the course of the 1960s and 1970s, Chicago Muslims looked abroad in order to establish connections with and build an international community. While scholars of American Islam have often focused on communities within the United States, I attempt to add a transnational lens through highlighting the importance of Arab assistance to fostering the growth of community institutions.

Domestically, in exploring the influence of federal and local governments on the trajectory of Muslim communities in Chicago, I argue that Chicago Muslims played an important role in shaping their interactions with government agencies, helping them alter their communities' fates. Specifically for African American

Muslims, I break with most historians of Black Islam by placing the story of FBI interference and cooperation within larger narratives of the Black Freedom Struggle. Furthermore, in highlighting the decline of black Islamic institutions during the period of integration with immigrants in the 1970s, I argue that the story of Muslim integration mirrored that of the process between whites and blacks in the aftermath of the Civil Rights Movement. Increasingly coming together across racial and ethnic lines, Chicago's diverse set of Muslims encountered the numerous misunderstandings inherent in interracial and intercultural cooperation. That, coupled with the shifting political meanings of integrating into mainstream Islam for African American Muslims, resulted in the eventual fracturing of the budding Muslim unity of the 1970s.

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Introduction:
The Dream of a Unified Islamic Chicago

Gathering at the Islamic Foundation of Villa Park in Chicago's west side suburb on September 11, 2008, more than 8,000 Muslims from around the country attended the funeral service for Imam Warith Deen Muhammad. Beyond simply the number of attendees, the Muslims of numerous ethnic, linguistic, and national backgrounds, who put aside their differences in order to honor the legacy of the man who came to be known by his followers as, "Brother Imam," made the occasion particularly special. As described by Margaret Ramirez and Noreen Ahmed-Ullah of the *Chicago Tribune*, "By the time their leader's body had been laid to rest, the diverse crowd of Muslims said longtime divisions felt healed and they had been united, at least for one day, by the man who spent his life trying to connect them." Credited with bringing over 100,000 separatist Black Muslims into the mainstream Islamic community, Muhammad's legacy of building Muslim unity seemingly lasted his whole life, and even in his passing. Noting the great feat in bringing divergent Muslim groups together, one attendee, Samia van Hattum, proclaimed, "It just makes me happy, no, overjoyed, to see everyone come together."[1]

The presence of Louis Farrakhan, symbolized Imam Muhammad's ability to bring disparate Muslim groups together. Having broken away from Imam Muhammad and his decision to bring the Nation of Islam into the mainstream of worldwide and American Islam, Farrakhan had revived the discarded separatist

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[1] Margaret Ramirez and Noreen Ahmed-Ullah, "Thousands gather in Villa Park for funeral of Imam W. Deen Mohammed," *Chicago Tribune*, September 12, 2008. Margaret Ramirez, "Daughter of Imam W. Deen Mohammed urges Muslims to unite and continue his vision," *Chicago Tribune*, September 11, 2008.

beliefs of the organization and brought many of its followers back into the reconstituted organization in 1979. Remaining bitter enemies with Muhammad for almost twenty-five years, the two leaders had reconciled in the early 2000s, helping ease years of tension and estrangement between the NOI and black orthodox Muslims. Attending the funeral, Farrakhan instructed the community to, "Hold fast to the rope of Allah and not be disunited," noting that Imam Muhammad, "Gave us a lot."[2] In praising the deceased Imam, Farrakhan helped mark how much times had changed in the Muslim community and worked to continue W.D. Muhammad's legacy, in spreading cooperation amongst divergent ideological strains of black Islam.

Having spent the majority of his life and career attempting to build unity amongst Chicago's Muslims, as well as Muslims across the country, the overwhelming sense of joy Muslims attending his funeral expressed at the sight of diverse and divergent Muslim groups coming together should come as a surprise. After all, if Muhammad had succeeded in his goals, would not this occurrence be commonplace? In fact, despite the many ways Imam Muhammad and like-minded Muslims met success in their efforts to unify the Muslim community, the legacy of such Muslims over the course of the second half of the twentieth century is rather mixed.

This dissertation attempts to trace the development of Chicago's multiple Muslim communities from 1965 through 1980, as immigration patterns, ideological shifts, growing transnational connections, and creeping government interference, radically altered Muslim groups across the city. I argue that the demographic changes

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[2] Margaret Ramirez and Noreen Ahmed-Ullah, "Thousands gather in Villa Park for funeral of Imam W. Deen Mohammed," *Chicago Tribune*, September 12, 2008.

brought by new immigration laws in the mid-1960s, led to an increase in interaction and cooperation between previously disparate Muslim communities, resulting in attempts to build a unified urban community as the 1970s came underway. Believing in and utilizing the Arabic idea of "Umma," a religious community that encompasses the idea of unity of religious and social thought and action, many of the city's Muslims attempted to create such a construct within the urban setting of Chicago. Although these attempts largely succeeded in increasing the short-term and long-term frequency of interracial and inter-ethnic cooperation, the goal of a unified Muslim community failed to be realized as the misunderstandings created by increased interaction led to disillusionment with the idea and practice of forming a singular urban Umma. As a result, the end of the 1970s found Chicago Muslims moving away from greater unity and instead witnessed the separation of Muslim groups and organizations, reaffirming the strength of distinct ethnic, national, racial, and linguistic Muslim communities.

By examining the interaction between Chicago Muslims belonging to different organizations, and part of different ethnic and national communities, this study hopes to deliver the most complete history of Islamic community development in Chicago during the 1960s and 1970s. By highlighting the issues and events that helped bring Chicago Muslims together, I aim to demonstrate the important cleavages that prevented African American and immigrant groups from better integrating during a turbulent era despite the numerous people, on both sides, devoted to the idea of equality.

Historiography

In this work, I aim to connect with and add to three largely distinct historiogoraphies. First, through an examination of African American Muslims, I attempt to locate my dissertation within the historiography of African American Islam. Specifically, through my focus on the NOI, as well as on splinter groups and mainstream African American Muslims, I aim to highlight the way Black Islam fits within a larger urban African American context. In particular, the dissertation will examine Black Muslims as not just followers of a religion, but as political and social actors in the city. Next, my work aims to intercede in debates existing in the historiography on the Civil Rights Movement. Specifically, I will place the story of Black Muslims within the framework of black urban politics during the Civil Rights and Black Power Movements. By integrating immigrants into the narrative on Civil Rights, I highlight little discussed complexities to the role of race in the decline of black institutions during this era. Finally, my focus on immigrant Muslims in Chicago situates my work squarely within the historiography of American Immigration History. As the field of Immigration History has blossomed to include new groups of immigrants from Asia, Africa, and South America, the emergence of scholarly works examining Muslim immigrants has greatly altered the field. Although immigration scholars have begun writing more on once ignored groups like Asian and Middle-Eastern immigrants, my work aims to contribute to this wave of literature by crossing ethnic, linguistic, and national boundaries that have often defined the parameters of such studies. By exploring Muslim immigrants from a variety of locations and attempting to see their points of interaction and cooperation, I

hope to widen the lens of immigration history to analyze people in different contexts, like religious and ideological groupings. To follow will be a more detailed examination of the multiple historiographical contributions of this dissertation.

Within the historiography of African American Islam, I aim to return to many of the themes apparent in the seminal work on the Nation of Islam, *Black Muslims in America*, written by C. Eric Lincoln in 1961. In his sociological study of the organization, Lincoln argued that the rise of the Nation of Islam was a form of social protest against the racism of 1960s America. Largely dismissing the religious aspects of the movement, Lincoln focused on the way the NOI built racial pride through advocacy of Black Nationalism and economic self-sufficiency.[3] Along similar lines, in the following year, E.U Essien-Udom's, *Black Nationalism: The Search for an Identity*, built on Lincoln's ideas through an examination of the daily life of NOI members. Essien-Udom argued that the NOI flourished due its ability to provide poor urban blacks a sense of identity, racial consciousness, and vehicle for economic empowerment.[4] In this dissertation, I aim to work within the frameworks set by these two scholars in order to highlight the social uses of Islam for black Chicagoans as a way to help explain the popularity and growth of the movement, as well as its eventual turn towards mainstream Muslim organizations as the politics of the 1960s and 1970s evolved. By doing so, I hope to look beyond the religious aspects of the movement and instead place it squarely within the confines of the sorts of on-the-ground Black Power politics that had begun to take shape in urban areas throughout

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[3] C. Eric Lincoln, *Black Muslims in America*, (Boston, MA: Beacon Press, 1961).
[4] E.U. Essien-Udom, *Black Nationalism: The Search for an Identity*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1962).

the American North and West.

Moving beyond the original studies of the Nation of Islam, my dissertation will attempt to complicate many of the prominent organizational investigations of the NOI and splinter groups. For example, Claude Clegg III, in his 1997 study, *An Original Man: The Life and Times of Elijah Muhammad*, argues that Elijah Muhammad can be credited with playing a central role in the development of a Black Nationalist ideology amongst working-class African Americans in Postwar United States. In his study, Clegg concentrates on Muhammad's leadership of the NOI in order to understand how and why the organization transformed and changed policy. As a result of this approach, Clegg concludes that much of the transformation in NOI policy was a result of Muhammad's personal politics and his attempts to maintain power.[5] While his study offers much information on economic and social organizations under the control of the NOI, my dissertation hopes to build on this foundation by providing a more bottom-up approach to understanding changes within the organization. Focusing on the experiences of the membership, I add important perspectives to the understanding of the organization's changes. Furthermore, I add to Clegg's account of the organization's shift towards mainstream Islam by incorporating the influence and actions of foreign Muslim leaders and organizations, as well as important interactions with immigrant Muslim groups.

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[5] Claude Clegg III, *An Original Man: The Life and Times of Elijah Muhammad*, (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1997). For more studies on the NOI leadership and structure see: Mattias Gardell, *In the Name of Elijah Muhammad: Louis Farrakhan and the Nation of Islam*, (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1996). Herbert Berg, *Elijah Muhammad and Islam*, (New York: New York University Press, 2009). Malu Halasa, *Elijah Muhammad: Religious Leader*, (New York: Chelsea House, 1990). Dennis Walker, *Islam and the Search for African-American Nationhood: Elijah Muhammad, Louis Farrakhan and the Nation of Islam*, (Atlanta: Clarity Press, 2005).

Perhaps the most complete recent work on the NOI, Manning Marable's 2011 biography of Malcolm X, entitled, *Malcolm X: A Life of Reinvention*, is a work I build upon, through a continuation of his focus on the international dimensions of the NOI. Although Marable continues a top-down methodology, he does much to correct the inward focus of many organizational and "great man" histories. Along with arguing that Malcolm X continually adapted to changing conditions, Marable demonstrates that the Nation of Islam had a far more complex relationship with the larger Muslim world than previous scholars have suggested. Specifically, Marable claims that the NOI actively coveted support from Middle-Eastern countries in order to gain legitimacy and access to foreign monetary support. According to Marable, what complicated the NOI's relationship with these foreign governments was the increasing independence and influence of Malcolm X. In highlighting the heresy and ills of the NOI, Marable argues that Malcolm drove a wedge between the NOI and its Middle-Eastern allies.[6] While my work attempts to build on Marable's, it differs in his conclusions with regards to the NOI's relationship with foreign governments. Despite the assassination of Malcolm X, I will argue that the NOI continued to develop and build its relationship with foreign governments through a variety of programs. Furthermore, where Marable's study ends in the mid-1960s, by focusing on the following decade I highlight the importance of interaction with immigrant Muslim groups in maintaining and furthering ties with mainstream Muslims at home and abroad.

With a significant faction of scholars writing on the Nation of Islam, focusing

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[6] Manning Marable, *Malcolm X: A Life of Reinvention*. (New York: Viking Press, 2011).

on the ideology and religious doctrines of the group, I add to this portion of the historiography through my emphasis on the importance of the federal government. Mostly written by scholars of religion, this portion of the historiography is best exemplified by the work of Edward Curtis IV. In his book, *Islam in Black America* (2006), Curtis investigates the tension between universalism and particularism that has kept the Nation of Islam on the fringe of the Muslim world. In doing so, Curtis highlights ritual, practice and tradition in order to better situate the NOI within broader notions of Islam. Curtis's work is particularly striking due to its illustration of how different leaders within the NOI worked to broaden the universal appeal of the organization by adopting elements of Sunni Islam.[7] While works like Curtis's do much to situate NOI ideology into a broader Islamic context, my study aims to add to these works by incorporating the interactions with local immigrant Muslim groups as the 1970s progressed, but also placing the role of the federal government more prominently in the narrative. Through my use of the COINTELPRO records, I show the importance of government interference, as well as the ways in which differing groups within the NOI utilized the agents and resources of the FBI in order to help reshape the organization with an ideology acceptable to both the government and reform-minded leaders.

In methodology, my study most closely resembles those of ethno-historians, who emphasized the experiences of the membership of the NOI within the

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[7] Edward Curtis IV, *Islam in Black America Identity, Liberation, and Difference in American Islamic Thought*, (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 2002). For more on the African American religious ideologies and experiences in Islam, see: Richard Brent Turner, *Islam in the African-American Experience*, (Bloomington, Indiana: University of Indiana Press, 2003). Martha Lee, *The Nation of Islam, an American Millenarian Movement,* (New York: The Edwin Mellen Press, 1988).

organization, while importantly differing in many of their conclusions. Best exemplified by Robert Dannin's 2002 work, *Black Pilgrimage to Islam*, Dannin traces the long history of African American conversion to orthodox brands of Islam. Taking a national approach, Dannin shows the variety of different orthodox African American Muslim communities and links them to the Islamic revival in the Middle East during the 1960s. Furthermore, his work is important in demonstrating the way the NOI and the Ahmaddiya movement were often gateway organizations for African Americans to eventually join mainstream Islam. This strand in the historiography provides a great deal of insights into the ideological and political motivations of African American members of orthodox Muslim organizations, providing interesting examples and anecdotes.[8] Where my work differs from Danin and many ethno-historians, is in our interpretations of the ideological draw of the NOI. Emphasizing the similarities to many of the actions of Black Power organizations, I argue that the move away from the NOI's original beliefs also involved a move away from a particular set of ideologies within the Black Freedom Movement, which created significant dissatisfaction among a sizeable portion of the NOI's membership.

In addition to the historiography on Black Islam, this work aims to contribute to the literature on the Civil Rights Movement. In particular, recent works on Black Power in urban settings have demonstrated the important ways that the successes of the Civil Rights Movement also brought many negative repercussions for urban, northern, African Americans. In his work, *Up South: Civil Rights and Black Power*

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[8] Robert Dannin, *Black Pilgrimage to Islam*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002). For similar works, see: Aminah McCloud, *African American Islam*, (New York: Routledge Press, 1995). Sherman Jackson, *Islam and the Blackamerican: Looking towards the Third Resurrection*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 2003).

in Philadelphia, Matthew Countryman highlights the way black residents of Philadelphia moved beyond advocating for greater integration, in favor of stronger control over community institutions. In doing so, he shines a light on the way integration often times resulted in the loss of control for African Americans as they gained greater access and acceptance into white society.[9] Building on such arguments, my work extends the integration narrative beyond the white/black dichotomy in order to demonstrate the ways it extended across less well-documented racial lines, during the 1960s and 1970s. In particular, the integration of black Muslims into immigrant Muslim organizations also entailed similar struggles to maintain control over institutions directly catering to the needs of black Muslims. By shining a light on the process of integration and Black Power within the immigrant-black racial dynamic, my dissertation aims to broaden the scope of our understanding of the consequences of the Civil Rights Movement.

The final historiography this dissertation attempts to intervene in is that of Immigration History, specifically connecting with and adding to the work on Muslim immigrants in the United States. Aiming to provide an in-depth examination of the multiple Muslim immigrant communities in Chicago, my dissertation follows the model created by scholars who have taken the urban case-study approach. The works of Yvonne Haddad and Jane Smith best represents this set of studies on immigrant

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[9] Matthew Countryman, *Up South: Civil Rights and Black Power in Philadelphia*, (Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2007). Clarence Lang, *Grassroots at the Gateway: Class Politics and Black Freedom Struggle in St. Louis, 1936-1975.* (Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press, 2009). For similar works on Black Power in urban settings, see: Komozi Woodard, *Nation within a Nation: Amiri Baraka (Leroi Jones) and Black Power Politics*, (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 1999). Jeffrey Ogbar, *Black Power: Radical Politics and African American Identity*, (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2004).

Muslims in America. These studies, by sociologists and cultural studies scholars, explore the communities that immigrant Muslims formed in America and place them within their urban context. In Haddad and Smith's 1994 collection of essays entitled, *Muslim Communities in North America*, Islam in America is represented as a multi-faceted and varied religious tradition that encompasses a number of divergent ethnic and ideological communities. The studies highlight the challenges Islamic communities face in preserving cultural and religious traditions in the face of a larger society that often homogenizes culture. A major contribution of this set of work is the way they emphasize the experiences and struggles of non-elite Muslims. As a result, these works demonstrate the importance of changing economic and social conditions for everyday people, which in turn allows for the exploration of the differences between ideology and practice. The majority of these works focus on contemporary issues but often stretch backwards into the 1960s and 1970s.[10] While this dissertation will similarly tackle issues surrounding preservation of culture and religious practice, I will go into greater detail on the formation of cultural and religious organizations. Providing in an in-depth look at the functioning of these groups, I aim to explore further the political and economic goals of Muslim immigrants within the city.

Beyond the urban case-study model, my dissertation engages with the work of scholars of American Islamic organizations through my focus on the economic,

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[10] Yvonne Haddad and Jane Smith, *Muslim Communities in North America*, (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1994). For similar studies, see: Yvonne Haddad and Jane Smith, *Muslim Minorities in the West: Visible and Invisible*. (New York: AltaMira Press, 2002). Jane Smith, *Islam in America*, (New York: Columbia University Press, 1999). Garbi Schmidt, *Islam in Urban America: Sunni Muslims in Chicago*, (Philadelphia, PA: Temple University Press, 2004).

political, and social lives of immigrant Muslims. Best exemplified by Akbar Ahmad's, *Journey into Islam*, many scholars of American Islam have helped chronicle the major Muslim figures and organizations that have shaped the religion's character and presence in America today. Noting the importance of immigrant Muslim mosques in building and spreading unity within American Muslim communities, Ahmad's work lays the foundation for the study of the interaction between Muslims of various, often competing, organizations.[11] Following such a model, this dissertation aims to demonstrate the high-degree of cooperation between multiple Chicago Muslim organizations and communities in order to argue that religion allowed immigrants of differing backgrounds to interact with one another to a much greater degree than previously thought. Where my work attempts to build on that of Ahmad and similar scholars, is through a more in-depth examination of the economic, political, and social lives of immigrant Muslims. Through such an examination, this dissertation demonstrates how the major concerns and problems of Muslim life in America helped shape the future direction of religious organizations and attempts to build community amongst Chicago Muslims.

Outside of works on Islamic communities and organizations in the United States, my dissertation engages with the burgeoning field of scholarly work examining the connections and cooperation between people of color in the United States and abroad. These more recent works are best exemplified by the writings of Laura Pulido, Neil Foley, and Nico Slate. In his 2012 work, *Colored*

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[11] Akbar Ahmad, *Journey into Islam The Challenge of Islam*, (Washington, DC: Brookings Institution Press, 2010). For similar study, see: Aminah McCloud, *Transnational Muslims in American Society*, (Gainesville, FL: University of Florida Press: 2006).

Cosmopolitanism: The Shared Struggle for Freedom in the United States and India, Nico Slate demonstrates how African Americans built solidarities across racial and national lines well before the 1960s and 1970s. Through his examination of Indian anti-colonialism and its connections to the Black Freedom Movement, Slate shows the way African Americans conceived of themselves as part of a global community of color.[12] Building on his work, my dissertation notes the way members of the Nation of Islam, immigrants, and Muslims abroad believed themselves to be part of such a global community of color through their shared Islamic identity. Domestically, Neil Foley's, *The White Scourge: Mexicans, Blacks, and Poor Whites in Texas Cotton Culture* (1999), chronicles Texas agricultural labor during the first half of the twentieth century. In doing so, Foley challenges the white-black racial dichotomy in American race relations, noting how blurred lines between black and brown Americans helped conceptions of racial place change over time for non-white and white Americans.[13] Similarly, in *Black, Brown, Yellow, and Left: Radical Activism in Los Angeles* (2006), Laura Pulido shines a light on the interracial and, often, transnational connections between African American, Chicano, and Japanese American radical groups, during the 1960s and 1970s. Looking at these connections through a political lens, Pulido places emphasis on the way the third world left worked to bridge divides between these communities.[14] While less radical in conclusion than Pulido, the formation of a common culture and the subsequent

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[12] Nico Slate, *Colored Cosmopolitanism*: *The Shared Struggle for Freedom in the United States and India*, (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2012).
[13] Neil Foley, *The White Scourge: Mexicans, Blacks, and Poor Whites in Texas Cotton Culture,* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1999).
[14] Laura Pulido, *Black, Brown, Yellow, and Left: Radical Activism in Los Angeles,* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2006).

blurring of racial identities between immigrant and African American groups is explored throughout this dissertation. Specifically, I argue that Islamic culture in the city transformed to include a larger, more universal, understanding of community as a result of increased black and immigrant interaction.

In complicating the "model minority" myth, my dissertation adds to the works of Scott Kurashige and Vijay Prashad. In his 2008 book, *The Shifting Grounds of Race: Black and Japanese Americans in the Making of Multiethnic Los Angeles*, Scott Kurashige brings to light the shared consciousness of African American and Japanese Americans in Los Angeles during their joint struggle against de jure and de facto discrimination. Kurashige details the eventual breakdown in solidarities between Japanese Americans and African Americans, as changing politics in the Postwar era led to many Japanese Americans to embrace the status of a "model minority" in contrast to African Americans.[15] Along similar lines, Vijay Prashard's, *The Karma of Brown Folk* (2000), explores the notion of the "model minority" conceptualization of Asian immigrants in the American conscious. While critiquing the S. Asian community for accepting their place in opposition to African Americans, Prashad also complicates this picture. In his later work, *Everybody was Kung-Fu Fighting* (2002), he highlights the the fusion of Asian and African American culture around concepts arising in the Black Power Movement during the 1960s and 1970s in the United

[15] Scott Kurashige, *The Shifting Grounds of Race: Black and Japanese Americans in the Making of Multiethnic Los Angeles*, (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2008).

States and abroad.[16] Where my work diverges from Prashad's and Kurashige's is through the use of Islam as a lens that complicates the model-minority myth dynamic. While many scholars have seen Asian and blacks as forming wholly distinct communities, through the prism of Islam, African Americans and Asian immigrants struggled with difference while often professing to be part of a shared religious and ideological community. In this way, my dissertation attempts to dig deeper into these contradictions and show the way the model-minority myth could simultaneously be rejected rhetorically while still factoring prominently into the psyche of Muslim immigrants to the United States.

Sources

This dissertation draws upon a diverse collection of archival, published, oral, and secondary source material. I utilize the university archives of DePaul University and the Bentley Historical Library at the University of Michigan, along with the archival collections in the Washington and Woodson branches of the Chicago Public Library. At the DePaul archives, the Islam in America Depository provided the bulk of the archival documents in the dissertation. With holdings of organizational documents of various Muslim groups in the city, along with copies of published works from these groups, the Islam in America Depository provided critical information on the internal developments of the Muslim community in Chicago. With its strongest holdings consisting of internal documents, constitutions, plans for

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[16] Vijay Prashad, *Everybody was Kung-Fu Fighting: Afro-Asian Connection and the Myth of Cultural Purity*, (Boston, MA: Beacon Press, 2002). Vijay Prashad, *The Karma of Brown Folk*, (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2000).

funding and construction of buildings, and correspondence from members of the MSA, MCC, and smaller Muslim organizations, these collections allowed me to explore the motivations and goals of the leadership of Muslim organizations in the city, along with the thoughts and concerns of many of its members. Furthermore, with its vast collection of published works from the NOI and small Muslim newsletters and journals, I was able to glean insights into the conditions and changes that were underway in the NOI during the leaderships of both Elijah Muhammad and his son Wallace. At the Bentley Historical Library, important information on the Federation of Islamic Organizations, made a significant impact on my account of the early history of mainstream Muslim immigrants to Chicago. Despite housing an incomplete collection of organizational documents and programs from the FIA's annual conventions during the 1950s and 1960s, through their records of convention programs and summaries my dissertation was able to better trace the trajectory of the Chicago Islamic community from its nascent stages into its rapid expansion and changes in the 1960s and 1970s.

Through the archives of the Chicago Public Library, I gained important background information that helped place the actions of the Muslim community into the broader context of Chicago in the 1960s and 1970s. At the Washington Branch of the CPL, neighborhood records allowed me to better understand and contextualize the racial and ethnic changes in Chicago's south side communities during the immigration and migration patterns in the years just before and after the 1965 Immigration and Naturalization Acts. From the archives of the Woodson branch of the CPL, a mixture of Chicago newspapers and published government reports

provided valuable demographic and regional data for the dissertation. With its variety of Chicago newspapers, I utilize information on local politics, organizing, and gatherings led by and affecting Muslims throughout the city. Through published government reports on job creation, income and housing disparity, migration, and demographic changes in American cities I am able to situate the larger trends in Muslim Chicago into the context of a changing America.

Apart from the archival sources influencing my dissertation, I also utilize a broad selection of published journals and newsletters from a host of Muslim organizations in and around Chicago. Playing the largest role in the dissertation, the MSA's monthly journal, *MSA News*, later known as *Islamic Horizons*, provided much information into the actions of Muslim organizations around the city, as well as providing much needed voices from Muslims living in the city and throughout the nation. Through these voices, along with the information available in archival sources, I attempted to highlight the experiences and beliefs of everyday Muslims in Chicago. Despite only providing a window into the voices of Muslims who had the investment and opportunity to share their perspectives in these journals, these added voices provide a valuable glimpse into the ideas of Muslim immigrants outside of leadership roles within Chicago's Muslim communities. Furthermore, with the immigrant Muslim community consisting of a disproportionately high number of educated members, I argue that these voices can be seen as reasonably representative of everyday members of these communities. For the Nation of Islam, I use their daily newspaper, *Muhammad Speaks*, in order to provide my dissertation valuable insights into the day-to-day happenings within their movement. Along with its focus on daily

life, *Muhammad Speaks* provided important information regarding the interconnectedness of the NOI with Muslim groups abroad and inside the city. Although *Muhammad Speaks* offers less opportunity to hear the voices of the rank-and-file, it provides invaluable information on the everyday events and actions of members of the organization in their personal and professional lives. Finally, adding important insights into the early history of Islam in Chicago, the Ahmadiyya movement's monthly newspaper, *Muslim Sunrise*, stands as the largest source on the actions and ideas of the Ahmadiyya inside the dissertation.

Helping fill in gaps created by the shortcomings of written sources, I use oral histories to provide important information regarding the history of Muslim organizations in Chicago. Along with interviews I conducted with the former leaders of the MSA and MCC, I take advantage of interviews conducted by others for use by researchers. In particular, the oral history project of *HistoryMakers* greatly aided in supplying the perspectives of former Nation of Islam members during the end of Elijah Muhammad's life and the changing nature of the organization during the tenure of Wallace Muhammad as the group's leader. While these oral sources allow me greater instight into the perspectives and actions of many influential and prominent figures within multiple Muslim communities, the views of the rank-and-file of these organizations are not well represented by these sources. With the NOI remaining a relatively closed community this work is limited by the difficulty in finding voices from everyday members of the organization. Furthermore, in tracing the development of immigrant Muslim organizations, the oral sources within this dissertation primarily come from leaders of the community.

While mitigated by the presence of community voices in Muslim periodicals and journalist accounts in Chicago newspapers utilized in this dissertation, this work focuses primarily on the ideas and actions of those that were visible and active members of Chicago's many Muslim communities. Despite privileging the accounts of this vocal minority of Muslims, I argue that as the shapers of their communities' actions and ideologies, examination of these Muslims is vital to understanding the changing relationship of their communities to one another and to the larger Muslim world.

Chapter Outlines

In chapter one, I chronicle the various Muslim communities that lived in Chicago from the early 1900s up until the effects of the 1965 Immigration and Naturalization Acts radically altered the demographics of the Muslim community in the city. I argue that the size and diversity of Chicago's Muslim population, along with its location and relationship with the NOI made it the Mecca of American Islam. Setting the stage for the chapters to follow, I pay particular attention to the early foundation of Islamic organizations while grounding the work in urban history by tracing population shifts within various Chicago neighborhoods and highlighting the professional and familial lives of Chicago Muslims.

Chapter two focuses on the organizational and institutional development of Islamic life in the city from the late 1960s through the 1970s. Noting the transformation in demographics in the city's Muslim population, I argue that the 1970s marked an important moment in the history of American Islam, as population

and institutional changes helped remake the Chicago Muslim community to be much more in keeping with the rest of the Muslim world. Highlighting the creation and growth of new Islamic organizations in the city, I emphasize the growing geographical and ideological diversity in the city's Muslim population.

Chapter three explores the growing integration of the Chicago Muslim community into the larger Islamic World during the late 1960s and 1970s. Highlighting the proliferation of educational and financial arrangements between Chicago Muslims and Islamic countries and their leaders, the chapter explores the motivations and results of this increased interaction and cooperation. In the chapter I argue that through looking abroad for legitimization and support, Chicago Muslims hoped to join and be seen as part of a larger, global, Islamic community.

In chapter four, I chronicle the relationship between Chicago's Muslim communities and both the federal and local government during the late 1960s through the end of the 1970s. Through an exploration of the federal government's attempts to control and harass various Chicago Muslim communities, I shine light on the ways Chicago Muslims increasingly indentified themselves as citizens of the United States, leading them to new strategies, goals, and tactics to influence their treatment and status within the city and country. In this chapter, I argue that while the federal government was relatively successful in its efforts, Chicago Muslims responded to these external pressures through forging solidarities that allowed them greater control and influence in American politics.

Chapter five delves deeper into Islamic life in Chicago during the 1970s. Exploring increases in interaction and cooperation between disparate parts of the

Chicago Muslim community, I highlight the different avenues in which solidarities and senses of community changed the identity of Muslims in the city. Specifically, I argue that these increased cites of interaction and cooperation resulted in the partial realization of many Muslim activists' dreams to construct a unified urban Umma in Chicago.

Complicating the largely optimistic narrative in chapter five, chapter six focuses on the ways in which the dream of an urban Umma failed to be realized during the late 1970s. Focusing on issues pertaining to marriage, conversion, representation in organizations, leadership, and gender relations, I explore emerging sites of conflict in an increasingly mixed Muslim community. In the chapter, I argue that misunderstandings related to race, nationality, language, and gender, weakened initial optimism towards cooperation between different groups of Muslims, resulting in the failure to realize a unified Islamic community in Chicago.

Finally, in the conclusion to the dissertation, I explore the results of the fracturing of the Chicago Muslim community as the 1980s began. Noting the re-emergence of the NOI under the leadership of Louis Farrakhan, I place the migration of many Black Muslims back into the fold of the NOI by linking it to their disenchantment with their experience as part of the mainstream Muslim community. Furthermore, by highlighting the rapid expansion and proliferation of ethnic and national Muslim organizations, along with larger universal groups like the MSA during the decade, I reinforce the central argument of the dissertation that the 1970s oversaw the building of unity while also carrying within it the seeds of its own destruction. In concluding the dissertation, I pose the question of the viability of

ethnic, national, linguistic, and racial harmony among any organized individuals within a major city like Chicago, much less a religious community already facing the contradictions of the immigration experience and substantial class differentiation.

Chapter 1:
Coming to Chicago: Islam's American Mecca, 1900-1965

During the summer of 1979, a small religious sect of Islam, calling themselves the Ahmadiyya, purchased the Zion Hotel and community center located in the oldest section of the Chicago suburb, Zion, Illinois. With the structure in disrepair, the Ahmadiyya scraped together the funds to take on the project of restoring the building instead of letting it be condemned and replaced. According to Hasan Hakeem, the President of the Ahmadiyya Mission in Chicago- Zion, "It would be tragic if we allow the Dome to be obliterated."[1] For most people of Zion, the importance of the building is unknown and the Ahmadiyya's purchase of the property was hardly noticed. For the Ahmadiyya, however, the move stands as the concluding chapter to a century-long story about their religions entrance into the American conscience.

In 1900, an Australian immigrant to the United States, John Alexander Dowie, a faith healer claiming to be the forerunner to Christ's return to Earth, who had gained prominence through his treatment of a relative of Abraham Lincoln, gathered a community of nearly 10,000 of his followers to found a Utopian society. The location Dowie chose for his town was a rural outpost forty miles north of Chicago that he christened Zion, Illinois. Along with establishing a puritanical Christian social order that outlawed saloons, theatres, circuses, brothels and other houses of vice, Dowie published his religious and social ideologies in a number of newspapers

[1] "Ahmadiyya Perspective on the Grand Prophecy," *Muslim Sunrise* 90, no. 2 (2010).

and in the town's newsletter. Highly critical of Islam, Dowie predicted the ultimate demise and eternal damnation for all Muslims upon Christ's return.[2]

While Dowie's thoughts largely escaped the eyes and ears of Muslims around the world, Mirza Ghulam Ahmad, the founder and leader of the Ahmadiyya Muslim sect, responded to his attacks against the religion. Writting from Qadian, India, to thirty-one different American newspapers, including the *New York Times*, Ahmad challenged Dowie to a prayer duel.[3] The duel stipulated that both men would pray for God to strike down the fraudulent religious leader. Ahmad wrote, "Whether the God of Muhammadans or the God of Dowie is the true God, may be settled… he should choose me as his opponent and pray to God that of us two, whoever is the liar may perish first… I am an old man of 66 years and Dr. Dowie is eleven years younger; therefore on grounds of age he need not have any apprehension… if the self-made deity of Dr. Dowie has any power, he shall certainly allow him to appear against me and procure my destruction in his lifetime."[4]

Unwilling to engage Ahmad, Dowie responded in his publication, *Leaves of Healing*, "There is a Muhammadan Messiah in India who has repeatedly written to me that Jesus Christ lies buried in Kashmir, and people ask me why do I not answer him. Do you imagine that I shall reply to such gnats and flies? If I were to put down my foot on them I would crush out their lives. I give them a chance to fly away and

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[2] S. Nasir Ahmad, "A Vindication of Islam in America," *Moslem Sunrise* 22, no. 2 (1950).
[3] "Ahmadiyya Perspective on the Grand Prophecy," *Muslim Sunrise* 90, no. 2 (2010).
[4] Hasan Hakeem and Aasim Ahmad, "Dr. John Alexander Dowie: A Man Who Would Be King," *Muslim Sunrise* 90, no. 2 (2010).

live."[5] Although he did not participate in the duel, when Dowie fell victim to a stroke in 1905 and was discredited and removed from power by many of his own followers, Ahmad claimed victory. Despite being much younger than Ahmad, Dowie died, in 1907, one year before Ahmad, further proving to the Ahmadiyya that God had intervened on behalf of their leader.[6]

Although it would be fifteen years before the first Ahmadiyya missionary would step foot in the United States, the prayer duel in Zion has become an important story about the power of Ahmad and his message to members of the Ahmadiyya Movement in Islam. With a vibrant community existing in Zion and in Chicago, purchasing the town center building was an easy decision for Chicagoland's Ahmadiyya. Two decades after purchasing and renovating the center, the Ahmadiyya held a centennial celebration in 2000, commemorating Ahmad's great triumph and the beginning of the Ahmadiyya's foray into the American public conscience.[7]

By the start of the 21st century, Islam had spread across America, establishing a significant presence in most major cities from coast to coast. In the early part of the 20th century, however, to most Americans, the religion remained a relative unknown, as it had few practitioners anywhere in the country. As Islam began to grow in the United States, Chicago grew in importance to a wide-range of Muslim ideologies and

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[5] Hasan Hakeem and Aasim Ahmad, "Dr. John Alexander Dowie: A Man Who Would Be King," *Muslim Sunrise* 90, no. 2 (2010).

[6] Despite being antagonists in the prayer duel, Ahmad and Dowie shared much in common. Both men represented major world religions but remained outcasts from the mainstream of them. Claiming to be messengers from and of God, both men led large followings and attempted to reinterpret the religion of the region to build new societies based on faith. Although their social and religious ideologies diverged dramatically, they shared the ability to rapidly spread their message to an American public receptive to new ideologies.

[7] "Ahmadiyya Perspective on the Grand Prophecy," *Muslim Sunrise* 90, no. 2 (2010).

movements. Through Islamic missionaries like the Ahmadiyya, the internal migration of homegrown Muslim groups like the Nation of Islam, and the explosion of immigration from the Muslim world, by the middle of the 1960s, Chicago established itself as the most important site of American Islam. Within the city and its suburbs, Chicago boasted not only the largest Muslim population in the country, but also the most diverse array of Islamic ideologies, intermingling within shared, and sometimes contested, spaces.

The Ahmadiyya Islamic Mission in America and its journey to Chicago

In 1889 Mirza Ghulam Ahmad, a man from a wealthy Indian family in Qadian India,[8] began to preach a new form of Islam. Modernizing the religious doctrine of his upbringing, Ahmad emphasized a move away from traditional understandings of many Islamic concepts, and preached new theories regarding foundational events in the religion's history. For most Muslims, Ahmad's claim to be God's chosen messenger, the second coming of Jesus, the Mahdi of Islam, and the "reformer of the age," also known as "Mujaddid," broke "the seal of the prophet," which directly violated a central tenet of Islam. Furthermore, in preaching that, contrary to previously held beliefs, Jesus did not die on the cross but instead survived and migrated to Kashmir before dying many years later, Ahmad drew the further ire of mainstream Sunni and Shi'a Muslims. Finally, by combining, in his person, the belief in the return of Jesus Christ with the return of the Mahdi, Ahmad also elevated

[8] Located in the Punjab region of India, during the time of British rule.

himself to a status above that of simply a prophet, creating greater grounds for rejection and ridicule from other Muslims.[9]

In his religious doctrines, Ahmad's most radical reinterpretation of traditional Islamic teachings centered on the Islamic concept of Jihad. Understanding Jihad to be a doctrine imploring Muslims to fight intellectual injustice and search for self-improvement, Ahmad subdivided Jihad into a number of components. He preached that Jihad meant to strive for inner purification, to spread the religion through the pen, and fighting in self-defense against persecution. In response, many Indian Muslims, who had taken up arms to end the British occupation, accused Ahmad to be an agent of the British Empire, aiming to weaken the Muslim resistance. As part of his interpretation of Jihad, Ahmad engaged in strident religious debates with leaders of other schools of Islam and other religions.[10] As was the case with John Alexander Dowie and the town of Zion, these debates were not limited to just India, but extended across the globe.

After Ahmad's death in 1908, his followers elected Al-Hajj Maulana Hafiz Hakeem Noor-ud-Din to become the Khalifutal Masih (caliph) of the religion. Leading the sect until his death in 1914, Noor-ud-Din successfully kept Ahmad's followers from splintering into smaller groups. Upon his death, however, the Ahmadiyya engaged in a sectarian conflict that resulted in the dividing of the religion into two distinct groups, one centered in Lahore,[11] the other in Qadian. Worried by their increasing isolation and criticism from the Muslim World, the Lahore sect of the

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[9] Richard Brent Turner, *Islam in the African American Experience*, (Bloomington, IN: University of Indiana Press, 2004), 111-14
[10] Turner, *Islam in the African American Experience*, 113.
[11] Present-day Pakistan but at the time British India.

Ahmadiyya quickly began to move towards reconciling with mainstream Islam. By rejecting the idea of Ahmad as a "prophet" of Islam[12] but in keeping with a milder interpretation of Jihad, the Lahore-based Ahmadiyya positioned themselves as a reform movement within Islam instead of as an independent sect. In contrast, the Qadian-based Ahmadiyya, known as the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community (AMC), held fast to their belief in Ahmad as a "non-law-bearing" prophet, who embodied the prophecies of the second coming of Jesus and the return of the Mahdi. Furthermore, the AMC continued to elect individual caliphs to lead their sect, in contrast to the Lahore Ahmadiyya who granted the right to lead to a group of elders in the community.[13] Unlike their Lahore-based counterparts, the AMC remained a highly centralized and evangelical group, sending missionaries around the world to spread their gospel.

Actively engaged in proselytizing, in 1920, Ahmad's followers in the AMC sent their first missionary to America, Dr. Mufti Muhammad Sadiq. Having made his first converts on the ship to America, Dr. Sadiq proved to be an effective and tireless worker for the Ahmadiyya cause. Arriving in the port of Philadelphia, Dr. Sadiq continued his proselytizing efforts while searching for a place to establish the American headquarters for the movement.

After spending time in many of the major cities of the Urban North, including, New York, Philadelphia, Cleveland, and Detroit, Dr. Sadiq settled in Chicago in 1921, making it the center of the Ahmadiyya movement in America. Given the autonomy to chose and establish an American headquarters for the Ahmadiyya

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[12] The Lahore branch believes Ahmad to be the "reformer" of the religion.
[13] Turner, *Islam in the African American Experience*, 114.

Mission, Sadiq chose Chicago for a litany of reasons. To begin with, its large population made it an ideal location to proselytize. Furthermore, as the Ahmadiyya had found their greatest success in converting African Americans in the North, Sadiq viewed the city's demographics as ideal for his work. Finally, in an era where cross-country travel proved to be difficult, the central location of Chicago made it a model destination for coordinating with future missions within the United States.[14]

Once in Chicago, Dr. Sadiq set out to make new converts to the religion. At first, Sadiq found much success in organizing and preaching to Arabs from Syria, Arabia, Lebanon, and Palestine. Apart from his success with Arabs, Sadiq managed to make inroads within Chicago's African American community. Preaching a message of interracial unity and color blindness, Sadiq's portrayal of Islam appealed to many African Americans in Northern cities. Claiming that Western Christianity had led to the racial disharmony between blacks and whites in America, Sadiq preached that the Islamic World in the East did not have any racial segregation or discrimination. Despite numerous examples of racial disharmony and oppression in the Muslim World and India, Sadiq's message captured the imagination of many of the African Americans he preached to.[15] Undoubtedly playing a role in his success, the dislocation of the First Great Migration allowed Sadiq the opportunity to preach to a growing populace of African Americans searching for new bonds of community. For some converts, the AMC filled the social and communal voids created by migration to the North.

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[14] "Some of our Missionaries," *Moslem Sunrise* 42, no. 4 (1975).
[15] "History of the Ahmadiyya Movement in Islam in America," *Moslem Sunrise* 42, no. 4 (1975).

For others, the political and religious ideologies of the Ahmadiyya helped bring African American converts into the fold. In particular, Sadiq succeeded in drawing converts from Marcus Garvey's UNIA movement. Appealing directly to the organization's members in some of his letters, along with his general support for their position, Sadiq swelled the ranks of his Ahmadi mission with current and former UNIA members. In the *Moslem Sunrise*, Sadiq explicitly argued that the Garveyite goal of Black Nationalism could be more easily accomplished through the universal nature of the Arabic language. Furthermore, converting to Islam would greatly enhance the ability for Black Nationalists to make connections with the rest of the Colored World. By 1923, the Chicago mission had at least seven members of the UNIA in their ranks, including the prominent Brother Abdullah (James Conwell).[16]

Despite his success in growing the religion in Chicago, Dr. Sadiq's short stay there made his successors critical to the Ahmadiyya's goal of maintaining a strong presence in the city. After spending two years in Chicago, Sadiq turned over leadership of the Chicago Ahmadiyya mission to his most trusted convert, an African American man known in the community as, "Brother Yaqub." Over the next few years, Br. Yaqub, helped the community grow from a small handful to nearly fifty converts. After Sadiq secured five hundred dollars from Qadian, the Chicago Ahmadiyya established their first mission house at 4448 South Wabash Avenue,[17] in Chicago's heavily African American, Bronzeville neighborhood.[18]

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[16] Richard Turner, *Islam in the African American Experience*, 127, 130.
[17] This mosque would later be renamed "Al-Sadiq Mosque" in honor of Dr. Sadiq.
[18] "Some of our Missionaries," *Muslim Sunrise* 42, no. 4 (1975).

Although Brother Yaqub had taken over the organizational leadership of Chicago's Ahmadiyya community after Dr. Sadiq's return to India via Highland Park, Michigan, new missionaries from India would assume the group's spiritual leadership. Arriving from Qadian, Maulvi Muhammad Din served as the mosque's religious head for a period of four years. During his four years as religious leader, Maulvi Muhammad Din struggled to consistently perform the religious services that were his charge. As a result, the Ahmadiyyan headquarters in Qadian decided to replace Din with another Indian cleric, Sufi Mutiur Rahman Bengalee, in 1927. Originally supposed to be accompanied by a second Maulvi to co-lead the mission, the United States government denied Bengalee's associate, Muhammad Ibrahim Nasir, entry into the US because of questions over polygamy.[19] Leading the Chicago mosque for nearly twenty years, Bengalee effectively led the organization, helping it grow and branch out in order to make connections with Ahmadiyya groups in other cities. In one example, on January 19, 1940, Chicago's Ahmadi community celebrated Eid-ul-Adha at the Wabash Ave. mosque. Despite freezing cold temperatures that fell to ten degrees below zero, the gathering drew a larger than normal crowd to hear Bengalee preform the religious service. At the event, guests from various Ahmadi communities delivered speeches to those in attendance.[20]

Bengalee's charisma and work ethic led him to gain a degree of notoriety within the city. Continuing the tradition of Ahmadiyya leaders giving public

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[19] Nasir had four wives in India and his attempts to bring them flagged his application for immigration to the United States.

[20] Noorul-Islam, "Activities of the Ahmadiyya Moslem Mosque in Chicago," *Moslem Sunrise* 7, no. 1 (1940). Robert Turner, *Islam in the African American Experience*, 132.

speeches to publicize the religion and its ideas, Bengalee delivered over seventy public speeches from 1929 to 1930. Along with frequently being a guest lecturer at the University of Chicago and Northwestern University, Bengalee often spoke at neighboring churches and temples, sometimes drawing crowds as large as 2500, mostly black, Chicagoans.[21]

In 1949, after becoming the editor of the Ahmadiyya's official journal, *The Moslem Sunrise*, Bengalee travelled the country to set up missions, leaving the Chicago mosque to be run by Pakistani immigrant, Rashid Ahmad.[22] Staying for only a few months, the revolving door of Indo-Pakistani maulanas continued for the Ahmadiyya in Chicago. In late 1949, thirty-four year old, Chulam Yasin, from Pakistan, took over duties as the religious head of the Chicago community. Presiding over a relatively stable following of forty to fifty, mostly African American, converts in the organizations original Wabash Avenue mosque, Yasin's tenure witnessed the shift in growth of Chicago's Ahmadiyya community towards other Chicagoland locations.[23]

Despite Bengalee relocating the American headquarters and printing press of the Ahmadiyya to Washington, DC, Chicago continued to be the center of Ahmadiyya activity in the United States. Quickly spreading into the city's north side and surrounding suburbs, Chicagoland's Ahmadiyya communities rapidly grew in the post-war era. Growing from one Mosque in Bronzeville, the Ahmadiyya expanded

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[21] Richard Turner, *Islam in the African American Experience*, 132.
[22] "History of the Ahmadiyya Movement in Islam in America," *Moslem Sunrise* 42, no. 4 (1975).
[23] Helen Fleming, "A Stranger Goes to Church: Reporter Visits Moslem Service," *Chicago Daily News*, September 6, 1949. Folder 8: Churches, Moslem/Islam 1949, Box 44, George Cleveland Hall Archive, Chicago Public Library- Woodson Branch.

into Chicago's near west side, as well as Glenn Ellyn in the west suburbs, and into the far northern suburb of Zion.[24] Through setting up four distinct AMC missions, the Ahmadiyya managed to serve a diverse array of followers scattered throughout the Chicagoland area.

As the Ahmadiyya in India faced a split in their movement, partly resulting from Partition in South Asia and generational change within the sect, Chicago's Ahmadi population underwent a shift. With increasing independence from the Indian Ahmadiyya during the 1950s, black Americans began to play an even larger role in Chicago's Ahmadi community. In particular, the 1950s witnessed the rise of entertainers and musicians amongst the ranks of Chicago's Ahmadiyya. Of note, performers in Chicago's flourishing jazz scene were common converts to the Ahmadiyya during this era. Perhaps most famous, Ahmad Jamal became a prominent member of the Ahmadiyya community in Chicago during the early 1950s. Often using their money and fame to raise funds to bring over prominent Ahmadi scholars and clerics from India, musicians played a major role in helping spread religious knowledge to the rest of the community. Apart from musicians, the other dominant groups of Ahmadis in Chicago were merchants and vendors. Lacking formal education, many black Ahmadis succeeded in peddling goods, often imported from Asia.[25]

As the 1950s progressed, the Ahmadiyya movement in Chicago struggled to maintain its position in the American Islamic scene, as other Muslim groups began

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[24] http://www.ahmadiyya.us/chapters/
[25] McCloud, *African American Islam*, 20. Turner, *Islam in the African American Experience,* 139.

siphoning off their members. With the rise in prominence of the Nation of Islam, in the mid-50s, the Ahmadiyya struggled to continue recruiting amongst Black Nationalists and former Garveyittes. Increasingly drawn to the NOI's stronger racial ideology, the Ahmadiyya's appeal to interracial solidarity largely fell on deaf ears. Making matters worse, disillusionment with the interracial claims of the Ahmadiyya further accelerated the NOI's raid of black Ahmadi congregants. Many black Ahmadis complained that Indians always controlled the leadership of the Ahmadi mosques, and that Indian customs took precedent over black traditions. Finally, some members left the group in order to follow more mainstream Sunni Islam. In particular, the Ahmadi converts that began intensive studying of the Qur'an often broke from the movement in order to join more traditional Sunni groups.[26]

During the early 1960s, immigrants from the Muslim World had already begun efforts to convert Ahmadis into Sunni Islam. New organizations like the Muslim Student Association, as well as previously existing and growing Sunni mosques in the city's southwest side, made direct appeals to Muslims outside the mainstream.[27] Although the efforts of these groups found moderate success before 1965, the boom in immigration that came in the second half of the sixties played a major role in reshaping the relationship between the Ahmadiyya and the rest of Chicago's Muslim population.

Beyond their appearance in Chicago at such an early date, the Ahmadiyya represent an important group in American Islamic history due to their background and

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[26] Turner, *Islam in the African American Experience*, 140-141. McCloud, *African American Islam*, 21, 53-54.
[27] McCloud, *African American Islam*, 53-54.

composition. As the first major Muslim Missionary group from the Islamic World in the United States, the Ahmadiyya helped establish the tradition of Islamic proselytizing in the United States, furthermore, as a proselytizing group, the Ahmadiyya stand out as one of the first branches of Islam that gained the majority of their American followers from within the ranks of non-immigrant citizens. In contrast to future homegrown Islamic movements, the Ahmadiyya's ideology did not originate from within the country, however, which helped tie their American followers into an international community that crossed racial and linguistic lines. Within the United States, the faith's emphasis on proselytizing and mission work, allowed the community to form a uniquely interracial brand of Islam that mixed immigrant and American-born followers much earlier than any other Muslim organization of the time.

The Nation of Islam's Foundation and Eventual Capital in Chicago

Although emerging in Chicago more than a decade after the establishment of the Ahmadiyya Mission, the Nation of Islam quickly established itself as the most powerful and influential Muslim organization in the city. In fact, until its dissolution in 1978, the Nation of Islam stood as the largest, most lucrative, black enterprise in American history. Headquartered in Chicago, Illinois, at its peak, the NOI was an eighty-five million dollar business and religious empire with locations in over fifty cities in the United States and internationally.[28] Although its influence could be felt

[28] Barbara Reynolds, "Who are Men Directing Black America Wealth?" *Chicago Today*, May 9, 1972, 42, Hall Branch Papers [Box 31, Folder 32], Vivian G. Harsh Research Collection of Afro-American History and Literature, Chicago Public

deeply in other Northern cities like New York, Boston, and Detroit, Chicago emerged as its most significant location both in terms of membership and as the seat of power for the national organization.

The roots of the NOI lie in the history of messianic religious leaders arising out of the First Great Migration. Born in North Carolina in 1889, Timothy Drew, an African American son of two former slaves, migrated north to New Jersey during the early part of the 1910s. Believing himself to be the reincarnation of Jesus, Buddha, and Muhammad, Drew attempted to preach a new religion to other African American migrants. Changing his name to Noble Drew Ali, he travelled across many Northern cities setting up temples in New Jersey, Philadelphia, Washington, New York, and Detroit. In 1925, after a few years of organizing, Ali established Temple No. 8, in Chicago. Claiming that the Midwest was "closer to Islam," he made the city the organization's permanent home.[29]

Ali preached a religious doctrine that appealed directly to African Americans through its religious doctrines and foundational mythology. Combining many familiar aspects of Christianity, including the use of hymns and a focus on the life of Jesus Christ, with traditional Islamic practices, including referring to God as "Allah," praying while facing East, and calling their holy book a "Koran," Ali's new religion resonated with many black migrants. Furthermore, by focusing on black enterprise,

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Library-Woodson Branch. Richard Brent Turner, *Islam in the African American Experience*, 224.

[29] Turner, *Islam in the African American Experience*, 90-92.

self-help, and community involvement, Ali's organization provided strong economic motivations for membership. [30]

Preaching that African Americans could trace their roots back to the Moors of Spain, Ali drew a racial connection between African Americans, Africans, and Asians. Naming his organization the Moorish Science Temple, Ali had his followers wear the Moroccan Fez atop their heads and adopt new names, often ending in "Bey" or "El," to signify their Moorish ancestry. Ali categorized the world into two separate racial groups, Asiatics (including Africans) and Whites (Euorpeans), arguing that Asiatic people needed to work together to overcome centuries of oppression at the hands of the White race.[31]

After Noble Drew Ali's death in 1929, a power struggle ensued ultimately leading to a dramatic shift in the membership of the organization. During the factional fight for control over the organization, the leader of the Chicago Temple, David Ford-El, claimed to be the rightful successor to Ali. When the movement fractured, David Ford-El, fled to Detroit, where he began his own organization called the Nation of Islam. Having changed his name to Wallace Fard Muhammad, Fard Muhammad combined aspects of the Moorish Science Temple with a new theology to attract followers to his religion.

Significantly changing the racial foundational myths of the MST, Fard Muhammad preached a stronger brand of racial separation than his predecessors. Claiming that the original man was black, Fard Muhammad stated that White people were the result of an experiment gone wrong by the ancient scientist, Yakub. Fard

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[30] Turner, *Islam in the African American Experience,* 93.
[31] Turner, *Islam in the African American Experience*, 93-94.

Muhammad explained that the whiteness of Europeans was a result of their pure evil, and that no white man could be a follower of the true religion of man, Islam. As such, Christianity was the creation of evil whites, and therefore not a religion for African Americans to follow.[32] In contrast to the MST's encouragement of adopting Moroccan names and practices, Fard Muhammad gave his followers the last name of "X" to signify their lost ancestry that could not be recovered.[33] As a result, while Fard Muhammad did not severe the linkages between Asian and African peoples, he downplayed the connection in order to focus on the specific experience of African Americans.

Upon his disappearance in 1932, Fard Muhammad's closest follower, Elijah Muhammad (originally Elijah Poole), seized control of the organization. Fearing for his life in quarrels with his rivals, in 1935, Elijah Muhammad moved his family to Chicago, changing the NOI headquarters to Temple No. 2. Stating that Fard Muhammad was the Islamic Mahdi[34] and God reincarnated, Elijah Muhammad continued to preach the message of black self-help and entrepreneurship, along with racial supremacy, as he opened temples across the North. Following through in his teachings of complete separation and non-involvement in American politics, Muhammad refused induction into the draft and continued to preach a message critical of American government despite warnings from the federal government during World War II. After serving four years in prison for draft evasion and sedition, from 1942-1946, Muhammad returned permanently to Chicago. With the

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[32] C. Eric Lincoln, *Black Muslims in America*, (Grand Rapids, Mi: William B Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1994), 13-15. Clegg III, *An Original Man,* 64.
[33] Lincoln, *Black Muslims in America*, 15.
[34] Mahdi in Islam- In Islamic thought the Mahdi is the prophesized redeemer.

organization having established a following and solidified its membership, the NOI entered a period of rapid growth starting in the late 1940s.[35]

In the midst of the Second Great Migration, Chicago's south side neighborhoods were the perfect setting for the Nation of Islam, as they encountered dramatic shifts in demographics. As thousands of new black migrants from the South entered the city in the 1940s and 1950s, white residents moved north and west into different neighborhoods and the suburbs. In the city of Chicago, this pattern extended into the first five years of the 1960s, which witnessed an increase of over 10,000 blacks moving into the metropolitan area, making it, next to New York City, the second highest concentration of black residents in the country. The increase was the largest numerical gain of black residents of any city in the United States. As a result, by 1965, five percent of all African Americans lived in Chicago.[36]

Harnessing the demographic changes in the Urban North, the Nation of Islam entered a massive period of expansion during the Postwar era. Recruiting on the city's south side, the mass influx of black migrants into the city's southern neighborhoods created fertile grounds for proselytizing, as the NOI set up a multitude of institutions to entice new converts. Specifically in Chicago's South Shore neighborhood, the migration of blacks into the area occurred throughout the 1960s. At the start of the 1960s, South Shore's residents were 99% white, filled with Irish, Polish and other European ethnic groups. The neighborhood included multiple robust religious communities with Catholic and Protestant churches, as well as two

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[35] Lincoln, *Black Muslims in America*, 22-24.
[36] "Negro Population Here Hits 1,063,400 Mark," *Chicago Defender*, June, 19-25, 1965, Hall Branch Papers [Box 40, Folder 3], Vivian G. Harsh Research Collection of Afro-American History and Literature, Chicago Public Library-Woodson Branch.

synagogues.[37] By 1970, the neighborhood was 65% black with an ever shrinking white population.[38] Along with the radial changes in residency, the changes in South Shore were also reflected in commercial activity. Over the span of the 1960s, the majority of South Shore's two hundred fifty-three businesses left the neighborhood, replaced with new ones at a smaller rate. By 1973, when the NOI had moved into their new mosque in the heart of the neighborhood, having occupied the previously existing Greek Orthodox Church, there were ninety-six business, almost all Black-owned, many by the NOI.[39]

Beyond recruiting in the streets of Chicago, the NOI experienced success in the 1950s and 1960s through their prison outreach. Having served time in prison, Muhammad realized that the prison system could serve as a source for growing the organization's membership. During his four years of incarceration, Muhammad preached his religion and converted a number of his fellow prisoners at the Federal Correctional Institution of Milan, Michigan. Once out of prison, the NOI increased its proselytizing efforts with great success. The most noteworthy success for the NOI was the conversion of Malcolm Little (renamed Malcolm X), in 1952.

A major turning point in the early history of the Nation of Islam was the 1959 CBS aired documentary entitled, "The Hate that Hate Produced." In the

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[37] "Bryn Mawr Community Church Minister cites religious groups in South Shore," *South Shore Scene* 2, no. 2, February 1963, Folder 17, Box 4, South Shore Community Commission, Neighborhood Collection, Chicago Public Library-Washington Library.
[38] Willeva Lindsay, "South Shore: A Profile of Stability," *Breadwinner*, #24, April 1974, Folder 30, Box 4: South Shore Community Commission, Neighborhood Collection, Chicago Public Library-Washington Library.
[39] Willeva Lindsay, "South Shore: A Profile of Stability," *Breadwinner* 24, April 1974, Folder 30, Box 4: South Shore Community Commission, Neighborhood Collection, Chicago Public Library-Washington Library.

documentary, CBS portrayed the NOI as a radical anti-white hate group organized in black communities throughout the Urban North. Journalist Mike Wallace emphasized the NOI's founding mythology about the evil creation of the white race, and broadcast a piece of religious/political theatre called "The Trial." In this speech, the minister for the NOI put "the white man" on trial for all the crimes he had committed against black people in America and around the globe. The documentary went on to highlight the multitude of business, restaurants and housing projects that the NOI had in its possession. Furthermore, the program aired interviews with Malcolm X and Elijah Muhammad, where they explained and defended the positions of the organization.[40]

In showcasing the NOI's ideologies, practices, and leadership on national television, "The Hate that Hate Produced" provided the organization its first national publicity. Having always shied away from the spotlight, the NOI had remained a relatively unknown organization to the majority of the American public. After the airing of the documentary, the NOI received a spike in membership and began to enter a period of rapid growth and expansion. From 1959 to the mid-1960s, the NOI's membership grew from under one thousand to a few thousand members.[41] Along with the growth in membership, the circulation of the NOI's daily newspaper, *Muhammad Speaks*, increased dramatically. Published in Chicago, *Muhammad Speaks* featured writing on a range of issues including domestic politics, religious and life advice from Elijah Muhammad, and foreign affairs. The NOI employed a host of

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[40] "The Hate that Hate Produced," *Newsbeat*, WNTA-TV (New York, NY: WNTA, July 10, 1959).
[41] Lincoln, *Black Muslims in America*, 6.

writers for the newspaper that included ministers like Malcolm X, Pakistani-immigrant and non-NOI member Abdul Niem, and numerous "women's issues" articles written by a number of different women within the organization.[42]

Helping to build the circulation of the newspaper, the NOI required their members to sell as many copies of *Muhammad Speaks* as possible. At the end of every month, members of the organization would turn over the money they made from newspaper sales to their local ministers, in order to help grow the organizations endowment. By the mid-1960s, members of the NOI had increased the circulation of the newspaper to nearly 500,000.[43]

By the beginning of the 1960s, tough economic conditions for Chicago's growing black population helped make the ideological and economic messages of the Nation of Islam appeal to a broad range of the city's African American population. Compared to a national unemployment rate near four percent, and black unemployment at 6.5%, Chicago's black residents faced an unemployment rate of 8.8%. Furthermore, a full nineteen percent of black men and twenty-one percent of black women were unemployed for at least a portion of the year in 1969. In total, only seventy-five percent of black males and fifty-five percent of black females maintained employment throughout the entire year. With the median income of Chicago's African Americans at $7,000 per year, black residents made considerably less than their white counterparts. Although comparable to the median income for

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[42] Tynneta Deanar, "Women in Islam," *Muhammad Speaks*, January 21, 1966.
[43] Richard Turner, *Islam in the African American Experience,* 199.

African Americans nationwide in 1966, in Chicago, the considerably higher cost of living resulted in much tougher economic realities for the city's black residents.[44]

Furthermore, in reflecting the national growth in percentage of African Americans in urban areas, Chicago's rapid increase in its black population brought with it many of the problems of the urban crisis. Nationally, by 1968, fifty-five percent of African Americans lived within the central city of a metropolis due to a 2.6 million-person increase of African American residents in cities over an eight-year period. As the population of African Americans in the South dropped from seventy-seven percent in 1940 to fifty-two percent in 1969, the percentage of blacks in the urban Midwest grew from eleven to twenty-one percent. Migrating to the city in order to take advantage of increased employment opportunities, African Americans made their greatest gains in industrial jobs, clerical work, and managerial positions.[45] Despite these new opportunities, African Americans continued to face difficult economic and living conditions.

In Chicago, while only fifteen percent of the city's population in 1950, by 1967, thirty percent of Chicago residents were African Americans. Within the city, the largest increase in black residents occurred in neighborhoods that already had

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[44] *The Social and Economic Status of Negroes in The United States, 1969*, BLS Report N. 375, Current Population Reports, Series p.23, n.29, US Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, 92, 95, 96, Hall Branch Papers [Box 31, Folder 41], Vivian G. Harsh Research Collection of Afro-American History and Literature, Chicago Public Library- Woodson Branch.

[45] *The Social and Economic Status of Negroes in The United States, 1969*, BLS Report N. 375, Current Population Reports, Series p.23, n.29, US Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, 4-5, Hall Branch Papers [Box 31, Folder 41], Vivian G. Harsh Research Collection of Afro-American History and Literature, Chicago Public Library- Woodson Branch.

seventy-five percent or more black residents.[46] For many neighborhoods in Chicago, this meant increased overcrowding, high rents, competition for jobs, and further concentration of poverty. For impoverished African Americans in Chicago, the NOI provided an attractive community with their strong economic program and self-help ideology.

Having established Chicago as the headquarters for the NOI, by the early 1960s, Elijah Muhammad began directing the expansion of NOI activities and land holdings in the area. Building the organizations headquarters and temple in Hyde Park, Muhammad purchased buildings and housing throughout the neighborhood. Constructing a heavily fortified mansion, valued at $2 Million, for himself and his family on S. Woodlawn Avenue, Muhammad placed his residence in the heart of the NOI's business empire. Along Woodlawn Avenue and its adjacent streets, the NOI established and controlled a series of restaurants, stores, and business, all within a stone's throw of its Temple No. 2.[47] As the NOI continued its rapid growth in the early part of the 1960s, the community began to outgrow the physical dimensions of Temple No. 2. Established in the 1920s, the building failed to provide adequate space or facilities for Chicago's Black Muslims. Furthermore, the humble structure did not possess the impressive façade or interior befitting the NOI's National Headquarters.

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[46] *The Social and Economic Status of Negroes in The United States, 1969*, BLS Report N. 375, Current Population Reports, Series p.23, n.29, US Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, 10-11, Hall Branch Papers [Box 31, Folder 41] Vivian G. Harsh Research Collection of Afro-American History and Literature, Chicago Public Library- Woodson Branch.

[47] Barbara Reynolds, "Who are Men Directing Black America Wealth?" *Chicago Today*, May 9, 1972, 42, Hall Branch Papers [Box 31, Folder 32], Vivian G. Harsh Research Collection of Afro-American History and Literature, Chicago Public Library-Woodson Branch.

Although it would be the 1970s by the time Temple No. 2 would be replaced, Elijah Muhammad and the NOI began to actively plan for the relocation of the temple and its surrounding businesses as early as the 1960s. [48]

For Chicago, the Nation of Islam stands out as the most influential and important Muslim organization in the mid-20th century. As will be discussed in greater detail in chapter four, being both the seat of power for the organization, as well as its demographic hub, the Nation of Islam played a critical role in shaping the political and social life of Chicago's south side. Cited as one of Chicago's most influential leaders,[49] Elijah Muhammad and his organization utilized its massive resources and following to convert residents and influence politics at the neighborhood and metropolitan level. In doing so, the Nation of Islam distinguished itself as the most visible and influential Muslim organization in the United States. Far before immigrant-led Muslim organizations gained notoriety in the country, the Nation of Islam singularly represented American Islam in the public consciousness. As a result, its actions, policies, and beliefs had an instrumental role in shaping the Islamic community in America up through the 1960s.

Muslim Immigrants and the city of Chicago

The first immigrant Muslim settlers in Chicago arrived in the early 1900s. By 1910, a small pocket of Arab immigrants populated the city's Near South Side,

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[48] Clegg III, *An Original Man*, 80-81.
[49] Louis Harris, "How Black Americans Rate Their Leaders, Organizations," *Chicago Tribune*, January 13, 1972. Hall Branch Papers [Folder 12], Vivian G. Harsh Research Collection of Afro-American History and Literature, Chicago Public Library-Woodson Branch.

owning and operating stores and working as laborers. After an initial preponderance of Lebanese immigrants, Palestine became the primary country of origin for Muslim immigrants to Chicago. Mostly coming from Beitunia,[50] these new arrivals to the city also took residence in the city's Near South Side neighborhood, mostly engaging in door-to-door peddling of goods. By the end of the decade, an estimated one hundred-fifty Muslims, mostly Arabs, lived in the city, and at least fifteen Muslim-owned stores remained in existence. Notably, a number of stores and restaurants thrived on and around Michigan Avenue between 16th and 19th Streets. Along with a wholesale outlet just to the west on Adams Street, Kahwa al Ibtisan Coffee House at 18th and State Street, along with Mecca Restaurant at 1806 S. Michigan Avenue, founded by Palestinian immigrant Samhan Asad, stood as fixtures in the growing Arab Muslim community in Chicago. Without a critical mass of people, Chicago's first Muslims did not establish an independent mosque, but instead held religious services in whatever space was available. Without a full-time maulana in the Chicago area, the community relied upon the Detroit based,[51] Sheik Mohammed Yussef, who would travel to Chicago in order to hold religious services.[52] As immigration waves in the subsequent decades brought greater numbers of Muslims to America, Chicago grew to supplant Detroit and other major cities to become the predominant site of Muslim immigration to the United States.

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[50] A city just north of Jerusalem.
[51] Detroit, having a much larger Arab population had already established mosques and religious organizations by this period.
[52] Ray Hanania, *Arabs of Chicagoland*, (Chicago, IL: Arcadia Publishing Company, 2005), 12, 13. Asad Husain and Harold Vogelaar, "Activities of the Immigrant Muslim Communities of Chicago," *Muslim Communities in North America*, eds. Yvonnne Haddad and Jane Smith, (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1994), 232.

The slow but steady stream of Muslim immigrants to Chicago continued into the 1920s, but nearly came to a complete stop in the aftermath of changing American immigration laws. Since the end of World War I, the United States had enacted strict quotas on immigration from certain parts of the world based off of national origin. The 1921 Emergency Quota Act and the Immigration Act of 1924, under its "National Origins Formula," capped immigration at three percent of what the existing ethnic population in the United States already was. In other words, the Act ensured that no ethnic group in America could expand to a greater percentage than they already were within the United States. This restrictive quota system only applied to white immigrants from Europe, as the Act also carried with it an Asian exclusion policy, disallowing any Asian immigrant to be eligible for naturalization. As a result, over the next twenty-eight years, the influx of immigrants to the United States came disproportionately from Northern and Western Europe.[53] Also, without emphasis on job status, or family history, the 1924 Act continued the "Ellis Island" approach which allowed for greater migration from the European working-class. With specific policies in place to limit Asian immigration, which had been a large source of new immigrants during the 1800s, the United States government attempted to keep the US a predominately white, Christian, nation.[54]

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[53] Of note, since Mexico and Latin America were not included in the exclusionary or quota system, the fluid migration of Mexican labor between the border of the US and Mexico continued without dramatically increasing the number of permanent immigrants to the US. For more, see: Paul Spickard, *Almost All Aliens: Immigration, Race, and Colonialism in American History and Identity,* (New York: Routledge, 2007).

[54] Spickard, *Almost All Aliens,* 291.

For immigrants from the majority of the Muslim world, these changes in immigration law left them in a nebulous position. In 1920, Bhagat Singh Thind, a Sikh man who had immigrated to the United States from the Punjab province in India, applied for American citizenship. Having come to the United States in 1913, Thind had enlisted in the United States Military and served the country during World War I. After returning from the war, Thind intended to stay in the United States and applied for citizenship. With American immigration law stating that all free white males could be naturalized citizens, Thind attempted to utilize the prevailing racial theories of the time. Deeply entrenched in the Eugenics movement, the United States Supreme Court had previously ruled that whiteness was equated with being "Caucasian." Following that guideline, Thind argued that being of North Indian decent, he too was Caucasian. After a lower court agreed with Thind, granting him citizenship, on appeal, the Supreme Court ruled against Thind, redefining whiteness to be whatever the common man understood it to be.[55] As a result, beginning in the mid 1920s, Muslim immigration from the Arab world, and from South Asia, ground to a near halt.

After World War II, the United States government attempted to redo its immigration system to preserve the ethnic status quo and prevent an influx of impoverished Europeans coming to the United States. As the destruction and instability in Europe created strong push factors that led to a dramatic increase in immigration applications to the United States, the US congress feared that European social instability would soon wreck havoc on a booming US economy. In order to

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[55] Spickard, *Almost All Aliens,* 261. Ahmed, *Journey Into America*, 88.

stifle the increase of poor Europeans, Congress passed the McCarran-Walter Act, in 1952, creating a preference system based on skill level. Along with maintaining a quota system based on nationalities, the McCarran-Walter Act created three classes of European immigrants, those with special skills or families in the US, refugees, and every one else. For those immigrants who were neither refugees nor those with skills/family, the US capped the total number allowed at 251,162 per year.[56] Although the Act continued the system of "National Origins Formula," Congress did take steps to curb elements of the ethnic exclusivity in previous acts. Overturning the Naturalization Act of 1790, the McCarran-Walter Act finally removed the clause that allowed for naturalization to be granted to only "free white men" of "good moral character." In doing so, Congress removed any of the racial restrictions remaining from previous American immigration laws.[57] Despite the removal of the racial restrictions, the quota system in place continued to steer immigration towards a far greater allowance of Northern and Western Europeans.

Despite continued roadblocks to Muslim immigration in Postwar immigration policy, Muslim migration to America began to rise as an increasing number of Arabs and South Asians gained refugee status in the United States. As a result of the Indian Police Actions in the early years after Partition, a wave of Indian Muslims migrated to the United States in the early 1950s. For Arab immigrants, the decision to come to the United States was made easier by continued confusion on the part of the US

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[56] Spickard, *Almost All Aliens*, 329-331.
[57] Spickard, *Almost All Aliens*, 330.

courts. Despite the Thind court decision, Arab immigrants in the 1940s and 1950s found mixed success in court when claiming whiteness.[58]

With the end of the prohibition on Asian naturalization, immigrants from the Muslim world began to come to the United States in substantial numbers. Over the span of the first fifty years of the 20th century, the number of immigrant Muslims in America numbered in the tens of thousands. Mostly coming from Southeastern Europe and the Arab world, these Muslims were primarily laborers, farmers, and shopkeepers. Once racial exclusion ceased in American immigration law, Arab Muslims increasingly came to the United States due to political instability in the Postwar era, most notably the continued conflict between Israel and its Arab neighbors. By the beginning of the 1960s, nearly two hundred thousand Muslim immigrants, and their children, lived in the United States.[59]

One of the primary destinations for new immigrants from the Muslim World was the city of Chicago. The second largest market in the United States, and centrally located with a large number of universities and colleges, Chicago attracted immigrant Muslims from a broad array of Islamic countries. Out of a population that grew to 120,000 over the span of the 1960s and 1970s, Indo-Pakistani Muslims made up the plurality. Adding to Chicago's immigrant Muslim presence, large numbers of Syrians, Bosnian, Bangladeshi, Persian, and Turkish immigrants helped make up the majority of Chicago's Muslim community. Of particular note, Chicago's Syrian,

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[58] Spickard, *Almost All Aliens*, 260.
[59] M. Arif Ghayur, "Muslims in the United States: Settlers and Visitors," *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 454 (1981), 152-153.

Palestinian and Bosnian Muslims established the city's most thriving Muslim communities, dating back to World War II.[60]

Mostly coming from Lebanon and Palestine, new Arab immigrants often succeeded in gaining citizenship in the United States. Separating themselves along ethnic lines, Lebanese Muslims increasingly settled in Chicago's west side, while the booming Palestinian population clustered in the Englewood neighborhood, opening stores and businesses in the city's southwestern neighborhood. Of note, brothers Hassan and Abed Haleem owned and operated a number of clothing stores at 39th Street and Cottage Grove. Experiencing financial success with their stores, the two brothers began to become prominent members of the growing Arab Muslim population.[61] By the beginning of the 1960s, Chicago's Muslim Palestinian population was estimated to be 1800.[62] Finally, in 1955, a sizeable number of Egyptian immigrants began to settle in Chicago after leaving Egypt over dissatisfaction with the policies of President Nasser. Differing from Palestinian and Lebanese immigrants, Chicago's Egyptians were highly educated and worked as professionals.[63]

For Palestinians living on Chicago's southwest side, the population increases of the immediate Postwar period led them to begin the process of starting their own religious organization. In 1954, Palestinian and other Arab residents in Chicago, including the prominent Haleem family, formed the Mosque Foundation with the

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[60] Ghayur, "Muslims in the United States: Settlers and Visitors," 152, 158-160.
[61] Hananina, *Arabs of Chicagoland*, 16-17.
[62] Hananina, *Arabs of Chicagoland*, 13, 19. Husain and Vogelaar, "Activities of the Immigrant Muslim Communities of Chicago," 233-234.
[63] Hanania, *Arabs of Chicagoland*, 19-20.

express purpose of identifying a location and raising the necessary funds to build a Mosque for their community. As a mixture of recent arrivals, as well as second and third generation Arab Muslim immigrants in the Southwest portion of Chicago, the families associated with the Mosque Foundation, for decades, had met at universities, rented areas, and in members homes, in order to observe religious holidays and events.[64] In 1956, two years after forming their group, having raised over $25,000, the Mosque Foundation announced their plans to purchase a former Church at 6500 South Stewart Avenue in the middle of Chicago's Englewood neighborhood. The Foundation intended their new building to serve as a place for religious services, contain a Sunday school, and act as a community center for the nearly one hundred Muslim families that lived in the area.[65]

Although the Mosque Foundation had initially viewed the Church on Stewart Avenue as the location for their new mosque, the community utilized the building as a community center and as a Sunday school almost exclusively. As the community did not have the funds to hire a full-time Imam to act as head of a mosque, the center remained disconnected from holiday celebrations and other large religious events. In order to accommodate the large number of interested worshippers, the community would rent conference halls in the city, often in the South Shore neighborhood, in order to celebrate Eid al-Adha and Eid al-Fitr. Eight years later, in 1964, the Mosque Foundation sold their building on Stewart Avenue in order to finally purchase land on

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[64] Husain and Vogelaar, "Activities of the Immigrant Muslim Communities of Chicago," 239.
[65] "Moslems Buy Building For Use as Mosque," *Chicago Daily Tribune*, February 12, 1956, S5.

91st Street, in the southwestern suburb of Bridgeview, where they built the community's first full-service mosque.[66]

Developing at a similar pace as the city's Palestinian Muslims, one of the first immigrant groups to start their own mosque and Islamic center in Chicago were Bosnian immigrants. Initially appearing in small numbers during the early part of the 1900s, the Bosnian community mainly populated the city's western neighborhoods. As the number of Bosnian Muslims in Chicago began to increase in the Postwar period, the community raised the necessary funds to begin their own Islamic center. Having established an ethnic organization named, the Bosnian American Cultural Association, in the early 1900s, the growing organization decided to expand its offerings in order to also hold religious services for the community. In 1954, the BACA formed the community's first Islamic center, which they located on 1800 S. Halsted St. in Chicago's Lower West Side neighborhood.[67] By the end of the decade, Bosnian Muslims, along with Arab and small numbers of South Asian Muslims, had begun to establish a noticeable presence in the city of Chicago. Although the greatest wave of Muslim immigration was yet to come, Chicago's Muslim population by the late 1950s had already done much to establish the city as the central site of Islam in America.

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[66] Hanania, *Arabs of Chicagoland*, 39.
[67] Hananina, *Arabs of Chicagoland*, 53. Husain and Vogelaar, "Activities of the Immigrant Muslim Communities of Chicago," 236.

Bridging Ethnic Divides and the Creation of Umbrella Organizations

Before the 1960s, small, disconnected communities, on the whole, characterized Muslim immigration to Chicago and the United States. Mostly coming from the Balkans and the Arabian Peninsula, America's foreign-born Muslims founded small mosques in their communities but struggled to bridge regional and sectarian divides. As these communities gradually increased in size, and as a second generation of American-born Muslims began to come of age in the United States, these communities sought to create an umbrella organization to tie American Muslims together. Simultaneously, the sudden increase in Muslim foreign students arriving in the United States as a result of changes in immigration law, found a new set of Muslims eager to find coreligionists to help create, or recreate, communal bonds. As such, while Chicago's Muslim communities primarily worked to create organizations and institutions to serve their needs on a local or neighborhood level, as demographic shifts during the late 1950s and into the 1960s changed the size and scale of American Islam, increasingly, Chicago Muslims looked outside in hopes of connecting to a growing national Muslim community.

The first major attempt to bridge the disparate immigrant Muslim communities in the United States occurred in the early 1950s, after Muslims had attained a critical mass, allowing them the resources and networks to reach beyond their localities. In 1952, leaders of Arab immigrant communities, mostly from Syria and Lebanon, met in Cedar Rapids, Iowa, at the site of the first Sunni mosque in North America, to discuss the creation of an umbrella organization that would link the disparate and isolated Muslim communities. Two years later, in 1954, they

successfully put their plans into action by founding the Federation of Islamic Associations (FIA) in the United States and Canada. Having founded the organization in the city of Chicago, the FIA leadership soon chose to move the location of the headquarters.[68] Due to its large Arab Muslim population and status as a major metropolitan center towards the center of the Eastern half of the United States, the FIA chose to headquarter the organization in Detroit, specifically in Redford, Michigan, a suburb fifteen miles west of the city. Although centered in suburban Detroit, the organization drew a bulk of its membership from the greater Midwest. For the FIA, Chicago was one of the organizations most important population centers and accordingly they worked with a series of prominent clerics and leaders of Chicago's Muslim communities.[69]

Initially interested in helping Muslims from different communities in North American cities maintain cohesiveness on political, social, and educational issues, the organization engaged in charity work, youth programs, and information dissemination.[70] Publishing a journal called, *Muslim Star: Voice of American-Canadian Muslims*, as well as producing a radio program under the same name, the FIA attempted to highlight Muslim American issues and provide advice to immigrants from Islamic countries. As its members' children aged, the organization began to hold yearly conventions that also acted as important meeting grounds for

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[68] Asad Husain and Harold Vogelaar, "Activities of the Immigrant Muslim Communities in Chicago," 252. Akbar Ahmed, *Journey Into America*, 243.
[69] *Program: FIA in US and Canada, 14th Annual Convention, August 10, 11, 12, 1962,* Box 8, Imam Mohamad Jawad Chirri Papers, Bentley Historical Library, University of Michigan.
[70] "President's Message," *Muslim Star* 8, no. 28, December 1967, Box 8, Imam Mohamad Jawad Chirri Papers, Bentley Historical Library, University of Michigan.

young Muslim men and women.[71] Holding its third annual convention in Chicago, the FIA demonstrated the centrality of the city to its organization's attempts at uniting the American Muslim community.[72] Although the organization succeeded in tying together multiple communities across the US and Canada, it never gained a large enough membership, or base of influence, to inspire its members to reach beyond their localities in order to engage in shared grassroots programs in different cities around the American continent. Despite persisting as an organization up through the 1970s, the FIA quickly faded into the background of American Islamic life as it was overtaken by a new organization founded in the early 1960s.

In contrast to the FIA, the rise of the MSA highlighted how the influx of Muslim foreign students brought greater interests in forging communal bonds across local lines in an attempt to form a shared North American community. Taking advantage of America's strong university system, a large increase in the number of foreign students from Muslim countries in the United States accounted for much of the Muslim population growth in the country during the 1950s and 1960s. Enrolling in universities around the nation, Muslim foreign students attempted to create communities with those whom they shared common ground. On January 1st, 1963, a small group of students at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign founded an organization aimed at bringing Muslim students together in the spirit of Islamic brotherhood. Their organization, the Muslim Student Association, aimed to teach Islam, strengthen student bonds, provide guidance, and promote cooperation between

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[71] Ferial Abraham, "FIA Deserves Understanding," *Islamic Horizons* 8, no. 1 (1979).
[72] *Program: FIA in US and Canada, 6th Annual Convention, August 2, 3, 4, 1957,* Box 8, Imam Mohamad Jawad Chirri Papers, Bentley Historical Library, University of Michigan.

immigrant groups.[73] Above all else, the MSA's primary concern was to ensure that Muslim students had the support necessary to remain Muslims. Concerned that many bright, young, Muslims would be susceptible to the vices and lack of Muslim culture in the West, the MSA wanted to make sure that students remained attached to the Muslim community and kept Islamic morals and values in their minds and actions. In the organization's early years, it primarily attempted to achieve this goal through organizing Eid prayers, producing Eid cards and coordinating Friday prayer opportunities for students.[74]

Originally allowing membership only to Muslim university students, alumni, and faculty, the MSA allowed non-university affiliated Muslims to become affiliate members with limited benefits and rights. Reaching out to Muslim students at other campuses, the MSA held their first annual convention at the end of 1963, in Urbana-Champaign. Attending the conference were Muslim students, mostly from the region, who promised to help spread the organization to campuses across North America.[75]

By the end of the 1960s, the MSA had grown to be an organization with a number of regional branches located at colleges across the Midwest and Canada. With the founders and first generation of members having left the universities they attended when they had joined, the MSA decided to restructure and change their approach to membership. No longer restricting themselves to simply university students, the MSA included regional branches, unaffiliated with schools, while

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[73] "Constitution, standing order, policy memorandum," Folder: Constitutions and Proposed Changes to by-laws, Box 1: MSA, Islam in America Repository, DePaul University Library.
[74] Iqbal Unus, Oral history interview conducted by author, January 5, 2012.
[75] Asad Husain and Harold Vogelaar, "Activities of the Immigrant Muslim Communities in Chicago," 234.

maintaining their primary membership base within universities.[76] In order to succeed in making inroads with urban and regional Muslim communities, the MSA attempted to work with Islamic centers located in different regions. For the MSA of Greater Chicagoland, the Chicago-based branch of the MSA, partnering with local mosques played a critical role in aiding them in their efforts to serve the community.[77] As will be discussed in greater detail in chapter two, with the founding of the Muslim Community Center in 1969, the MSA found a local center with the reach and strength to work with and through. Through the foundation of the MSA, the early efforts of Chicago Muslims to create an umbrella organization to bridge disparate Muslim groups throughout North America came to fruition. Although the early attempts of established Arab Muslim communities in Chicago, and other Midwestern cities, laid the foundation for such efforts, the influx of students less anchored to particular localities proved to provide the impetus for Chicago and American Muslims to truly work together in building community on a national level.

Conclusion- Chicago as the Mecca of American Islam

By the passage of immigration reform in 1965, the Muslim community in Chicago sat at a crossroads after undergoing dramatic changes in demographics and influence. From a small population concentrated on the city's south side, the influx of black migrants and immigrants from Muslim countries helped reshape the multiple

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[76] "Constitution, standing order, policy memorandum," Folder: Constitutions and Proposed Changes to by-laws, Box 1: MSA, Islam in America Repository, DePaul University Library.
[77] "MSA Handbook 2nd Edition, August 1974," Folder: Constitutions and and Proposed Changes to by-laws, Box 1: MSA, Islam in America Repository, DePaul University Library.

Islamic communities in the city. Starting out as the first Muslim sect in the city, the Ahmadiyya found themselves strengthened by their longevity and continuity but losing members to rival religious groups. Despite its shift away from Chicago as the national headquarters for the organization, Chicago continued to be one of the sect's primary hubs of membership and influence.

Much like the Ahmadiyya, the Nation of Islam entered the mid 1960s also at a crossroads. Emerging from its most successful decade of organizing and proselytizing, the NOI faced the difficult task of continuing the growth of the organization despite its public split with its most famous and influential leader, Malcolm X. In addition, the NOI struggled to continue to dominate the African American Islamic scene with the added competition from new immigrant Muslim groups. Despite these challenges, the NOI's business empire and political influence continued to grow, making it an integral part of the city's south side. With its headquarters and business predominantly centered in Chicago, the 1960s only further cemented the Second City as the hub of Black Nationalist Islam.

Most directly affected by the changes in immigration reform passed in 1965, immigrant Muslim communities built upon the growth and development of the earlier generations of Muslim immigrants in the city. Slowly increasing their presence in the city during the 1940s and 1950s, immigrant Muslims began to make Chicago a prominent location for the growth of traditional Islam in America. Not only being home to a large and growing Muslim population made up of immigrants from the Islamic World, the early development of umbrella organizations like the Federation of Islamic Organizations and the Muslim Students Association placed Chicago on the

map as both the geographic and cultural center for immigrant Islam in the United States.

Together, the disparate and expanding Muslim organizations and communities in America found a home in Chicago. Although often in competition, the presence of multiple Islamic groups helped broaden the diversity of religious and cultural Islam in the city. Along with the conversion of African Americans to immigrant, multi-racial, Islamic movements, homegrown Muslim groups like the Nation of Islam, and immigrant Islamic organizations and communities, all played a critical part in shaping Muslim life in the city. In doing so, by 1965, immigrant and homegrown Muslims helped transform Chicago into Islam's American Mecca.

Chapter 2:
The Transformation of Islamic Chicago, 1965-1978

Shortly before the Immigration and Nationality Act of 1965 led to the dramatic increase of Muslim immigrants in the United States, the largest Muslim group in America, the Nation of Islam, assassinated its most famous former member. After the NOI expelled Malcolm X from the organization in 1964, he began to travel the Muslim world. In his travels, Malcolm rejected the teachings of the NOI and embraced mainstream Sunni Islam. Preaching that Elijah Muhammad was a false prophet and was spreading a distorted version of Islam, he drew the organization's ire. After a fiery speech by Louis Farrakhan, the new leader of Mosque No. 7, Malcolm's old Mosque in Harlem, members of the NOI devised a plan to assassinate him.[1]

Successfully killing Malcolm X in February 1965, the NOI lost credibility domestically, and in the eyes of the Muslim World, due to Malcolm's overwhelming popularity. In showing their outrage against the NOI, and support for Malcolm, American Muslims of a variety of backgrounds donated money and attended events in his honor. In one such example, Chicagoans held a rally on the 3rd anniversary of Malcolm X's assassination. At the event, the Midwestern Representative of the Arab Federation, Abdullah Hassan, gave the opening speech. Declaring his solidarity with the message and followers of Malcolm, Hassan noted that the events of Malcolm's life removed all doubts that, "we (the Arabs) and you (black Americans) are brothers both spiritually and thru the blood that flows in both our veins. We are one in this struggle for freedom." Coinciding with the speech, the Arab Federation, along with a

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[1] Marable, *Malcolm X*, 398.

litany of other groups and individuals, collected a modest sum of seven hundred dollars to donate to Malcolm's wife, Betty Shabazz, and her children.[2]

Following in the political and religious footsteps of their martyred hero, close friends and followers of Malcolm X founded the Malcolm X Black Hand Society of the World. Based in Chicago, the group's leader, WC Annas Luqman, attempted to continue Malcolm's black rights activism and Islamic proselytizing. Dedicated to spreading the teachings of Malcolm X, the society asserted the goals of survival, truth, justice, peace, self-improvement, and self-determination for people of color. Expressly expanding beyond African Americans, Luqman declared that, "Our colors (are): Black, Brown, Yellow, Red." Luqman, along with many of the group's members, had left the NOI in the mid-1960s and followed the footsteps of Malcolm X by embracing traditional Sunni Islam. Although explicitly a Muslim organization, the MXBHSW worked with a broad range of black activists and celebrities to fight for the human rights of all people of color in the United States. Exemplifying the diverse array of supporters, when the MXBHSW held a benefit for Malcolm X's family in February 1968, Sammy Davis Jr. attended to lend his support.[3]

Starting in 1965 and lasting through the 1970s, Islam in Chicago underwent a massive transformation. For forty years, Chicago's Muslim community bore little

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[2] "Chicago Rally sends Malcolm's Family $700," *West Side Torch*, March, 1-15, 1968, Folder 33: Malcolm X, 1949-1972, Box: 22, George Cleveland Hall Archive, Chicago Public Library- Woodson Branch.

[3] Phil Morris, "Malcolm X Society Plays Waiting Game," *National Insider*, March 31, 1969, Hall Branch Papers [Box 22, Folder 33], Vivian G. Harsh Research Collection of Afro-American History and Literature, Chicago Public Library- Woodson Branch. *Malcolm X Black Hand Society of the World, inc.* Hall Branch Papers [Box 22, Folder 33], Vivian G. Harsh Research Collection of Afro-American History and Literature, Chicago Public Library- Woodson Branch.

resemblance to the rest of the Islamic world due to the dominance of non-mainstream ideologies of the NOI and the Ahmadiyya. Over the course of fifteen short years, ideologically and culturally, Islam in Chicago increasingly began to be representative of the demographic and ideological trends of the greater Muslim World as a result of three major trends.

First, with the radical altering of US immigration policy, Chicago's foreign-born Muslim population rapidly grew, giving them the critical mass necessary to expand their existing organizations and create new ones. As a result, Chicago's Islamic scene increasingly came to be represented by non-black Muslim immigrant communities from around the Muslim World. Through their growth and presence, these communities helped shift the religious and cultural traditions of American Islam. Once dominated by the NOI and other predominately black Muslim groups that held belief systems unique to the rest of the world, the rise of immigrant Muslim communities in Chicago, and across the nation, helped guide American Islam closer to the forms of the religion existing in the Middle East and Asia.

Next, along with the demographic shift in the city, the internal struggles and changes occurring in the Nation of Islam played an important role in reshaping the religious identities of its followers within the city and nationally. While commonly understood to have undergone a dramatic shift away from their founding principles in the aftermath of Elijah Muhammad's passing, the NOI had already begun undertaking a substantive shift in policy and ideology by the time the post-1965 immigration waves began to alter the ethnic and ideological composition of Islamic Chicago. Through these reforms in thought and practice, the NOI increasingly positioned itself

closer to the mainstream of Sunni Islam, helping transform their community to more easily fit in with the growing immigrant communities and organizations that were becoming dominant forces in shaping Muslim life in the city.

Finally, as growing immigrant communities and organizations brought the cultural and theological doctrines of global Islamic movements to America, and the NOI increasingly altered their faith and ideologies to be more inline with mainstream Islam, increasingly these diverse groups came together in the spirit of cooperation and community. Through this underappreciated interaction between black and immigrant Muslim organizations and communities, Chicago's Muslims ceased to exist as wholly separate entities with widely divergent ideologies and practices. Instead, by the end of the 1970s, Islamic Chicago transformed into a racially, ethnically, and linguistically diverse community largely unified under a common religious identity. In combination, the forces of immigration, organizational change, and interaction, created a new Islamic Chicago, one that more closely mirrored the manifestations of Islam practiced around the world.

1965 Immigration law and the changing face of Islam in Chicago

In an effort to create a more fair and beneficial system of immigration for the United States, the Immigration and Nationality Act of 1965 radically altered the criterion for entry into the country. No longer allowing disproportional flows of immigration from Europe and Mexico, the Immigration and Naturalization Act of 1965 eliminated the old "National Origins Formula" and replaced it with a system that accounted for skill, family relations, and country of origin. With a dramatic

shortage of trained professionals in medicine and science, by the middle of the 1960s, the US anticipated that 15% of all future medical doctors and up to 750,000 new engineers, per year, would be immigrants to the country.[4]

Heavily favoring the acceptance of immigrants who possessed professional skills in high demand, and students coming to prepare for jobs in science, medicine, and technology, the new wave of immigrants were fundamentally different in character than in the past. Increasingly, immigrants to America came from middle-class backgrounds and were upwardly mobile. In exempting the families of immigrants from the quota system in place, the Immigration and Nationality Act of 1965 created a multiplier effect for immigrants in the long term.[5] As a result, many immigrants, after establishing themselves in America, applied for and were granted visas to bring over relatives from their countries of origin to join them in the United States. As a result, the slow increase of immigrants from new parts of the world quickly became a wave.

While the 1950s saw a large increase in Muslims in the United States, the Immigration and Nationality Act of 1965 led to an exponential growth. From a population of nearly 200,000 in 1965, the immigration waves of the late 1960s and early 1970s pushed the Muslim population in the US to over 1,000,000 people.[6] As a result of the scores of new Muslim immigrants to the US, the presence and visibility of Islam in major cities also grew noticeably. Establishing community organizations

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[4] "Manpower Report of the President: A report on Manpower Requirements, Resources, Utilization, and Training: Transmitted to Congress, March 1970," Hall Branch Papers [Box 34, Folder 7], Vivian G. Harsh Research Collection of Afro-American History and Literature, Chicago Public Library-Woodson Branch.
[5] Spickard, *Almost All Aliens*, 346.
[6] Ghayur, "Muslims in the United States: Settlers and Visitors," 152-153.

and institutions, Muslim immigrants across the nation altered the landscapes of many major urban areas.

As the Muslim presence in Chicago expanded, Muslim immigrants began to populate a number of neighborhoods within the city. Settling into the southwest side of the city, Palestinian and Arab immigrants began to make their presence felt, opening up stores and businesses in Chicago's Englewood neighborhood.[7] On the south side of the city, the Illinois Institute of Technology experienced a dramatic increase in the enrollment of foreign students after the Immigration and Nationality Act of 1965, including among Muslim immigrants. Of particular note, a large population of South Asian Muslims began to study and live at and around IIT's Bronzeville campus.[8] Receiving the greatest percentage increase in Muslim residents was the neighborhood of Hyde Park. With the University of Chicago nestled in the heart of the neighborhood, Hyde Park experienced a dramatic increase in Arab and South Asian residents during the middle of the 1960s.[9] With the NOI, and it's accompanying businesses and residences, already located within the neighborhood, Hyde Park only further separated itself from the rest of Chicago in terms of its large Muslim population.

By the early 1970s, Chicago's Muslim population had ballooned into a large and diverse demographic group. Although the census did not record religious affiliation in the city of Chicago, Muslim organizations and interest groups surveyed community associations to put together an estimate of the population. Taking a

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[7] US Census Bureau, 1970 Census Tract 4302, Prepared by Social Explorer.
[8] US Census Bureau, 1970 Census Tract 3506, Prepared by Social Explorer.
[9] US Census Bureau, 1970 Census Tract 4102, Prepared by Social Explorer.

survey at their Eid-Ul-Adha[10] service in 1974, the Muslim Community Center (MCC) compiled an extensive data set analyzing the composition of their community, and the Muslim population in Chicago more broadly. Ranging between 30,000 and 50,000 people, Chicago's Muslim population was spread across a wide cross-section of the Chicagoland area. Surveys estimated that fifty-nine percent of Chicago's Muslims lived in the northern neighborhoods within the city and thirteen percent lived in the city's southern neighborhoods. The remaining Muslim population was distributed throughout the suburbs, with eighteen percent in the western suburbs, six percent in the northern suburbs, and four percent in the southern suburbs.[11] With the city's Muslim population largely spatially separated, Chicago's Muslim residents formed a wide array of autonomous communities based off geographical location.

Along with their spatial separation, Chicago's Muslim population differed in occupation and class status. Professionals made up the largest percentage of Chicago's Muslim residents, accounting for forty-five percent of the population. Within that group, eight percent were medical doctors, seventeen percent were engineers, and the remaining twenty percent were a variety of different white-collar professions. Representing the next largest group were university and college students, who made up thirty-five percent of Chicago's Muslim population. Although a sizeable proportion of other immigrant groups, skilled and unskilled laborers only accounted for six percent of Chicago's Muslim residents. Finally, fourteen percent of

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[10] The first of the two major Islamic holidays, Eid-Ul-Udha marks the end of the month of Ramadan.

[11] "Table II. Summary of Survey Data: Chicago Area Muslim Population Estimates ~ 30,000-50,000" *The Masjid and Community Development Project: 1977*, p. 10, Folder: Muslim Community Center, Pamphlets Box 8, Islam in America Repository, DePaul University Library.

Chicago Muslims did not disclose their professions. Added together, surveys estimated that the mean gross annual income of Chicago's Muslim population was $12,600.[12]

In examining the geo-political origins of the city's Muslim community, Chicago's Muslims largely originated in the same region of the world. Coming from Asia and Africa, eighty-two percent[13] of Chicago's Muslims had emigrated or traced their origins from what is commonly thought of as the "Muslim World."[14] Of the remaining Muslim population, three percent were from Europe, three percent were of American heritage, and twelve percent did not disclose their geo-political background.[15]

Before the wave of South Asian immigrants dramatically altered the composition of immigrant Islam in the United States, American Muslims predominantly emigrated from the Middle East and Southern Europe. As a result, through the mid-1970s, the growing population of South Asian immigrants paled in comparison to the total number of American Muslims from those two regions. From the beginning of Muslim immigration to the United States in 1820 through 1974,

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[12] "Table II. Summary of Survey Data: Chicago Area Muslim Population Estimates ~ 30,000-50,000" *The Masjid and Community Development Project: 1977*, p. 10, Folder: Muslim Community Center, Pamphlets Box 8, Islam in America Repository, DePaul University Library.

[13] The figure of eighty-two percent included African Americans who identified their origins as being of African descent.

[14] The Muslim World: Is the connected area of land from West Africa through Pakistan via the Middle East along with Indonesia. Across that geographic region, almost all countries are Muslim-majority, often Islamic states.

[15] "Table II. Summary of Survey Data: Chicago Area Muslim Population Estimates ~ 30,000-50,000" *The Masjid and Community Development Project: 1977*, p. 10, Folder: Muslim Community Center, Pamphlets Box 8, Islam in America Repository, DePaul University Library.

381,253 Turkish, 103,166 Yugoslavian, 31,253 Lebanese and Syrian, 27,735 Jordanian and Palestinian, and 24,221 Persian Muslim immigrants settled in the United States.[16] Dwarfing the number of Muslim immigrants from other parts of the world, the large numbers of Arab Muslims in the US helped set up the strongest initial Muslim communities around the country and in the city of Chicago. This heavy presence was reflected in the membership of the MCC, as well as in the number of Arab mosques throughout the city.

Although South Asian and African Muslim immigration lagged behind in comparison to the healthy growth in the Arab Muslim population, and already established presence of European Muslims, the demographic trends of the 1960s and 1970s helped further shift Chicago's Muslim population towards becoming more representative of global demographics. Through the dramatic increase in immigrant Muslims, Islamic Chicago came to be less dominated by just the NOI and black Muslim groups, and instead became a diverse patchwork of ethnic and linguistic Muslim communities from around the Muslim World.

Creation and growth of new immigrant organizations

As Muslim communities in Chicago grew and diversified in the wake of the immigration boom of the late 1960s, they began to create a myriad of new religious organizations throughout the city that helped establish immigrant Muslims as a visible and influential presence in Islamic Chicago. Apart from the Ahmadiyya and a

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[16] "Immigration into US (1820-1974) from a few countries," *The Masjid and Community Development Project: 1977*, p. 8, Folder: Muslim Community Center, Pamphlets Box 8, Islam in America Repository, DePaul University Library.

broad array of small Muslim mosques, the first large-scale community center in Chicago appeared in 1969. Founded by a group of Yugoslavian, Arab, and South Asian immigrants, the Muslim Community Center sought to provide a range of services for Muslims in the city. Performing weddings, funerals, informational service for school visits, selling books, conducting Islamic classes, and hosting lectures, the MCC also provided facilities for Muslims of all ages to meet and spend time. As a membership organization, the MCC differed from many local mosques by collecting fees along with donation drives. Through these two methods, the MCC grossed an annual income of around $31,000 by the mid-1970s.[17]

By the middle of the 1970s, the booming Muslim population, coupled with MCC's successes in attracting new members, forced it to begin plans for a massive expansion of the organization's facilities. Having proven to be successful in fundraising efforts in the past, including raising $13,000 for renovations of their facility through a dinner held in November 1973, the MCC anticipated the further growth of the organization and facilities.[18] Swelling to four hundred members, along with a larger number of non-members who attended functions at the Center, the MCC began to increase its services to include housing a library, providing permanent meeting rooms for a women's committee, giving legal aid, and hosting planning for cooperative housing. In order to properly accommodate the community's growing

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[17] "Table III. Some Data Reflecting MCC Activities, January 1975 to December 1976," *The Masjid and Community Development Project: 1977,* p. 11, Folder: Muslim Community Center, Pamphlets Box 8, Islam in America Repository, DePaul University Library

[18] "Chicago Muslim Community Center Arts Renovation Work," *MSA News* 2, no. 10-11 (1973).

needs, the MCC began to raise funds for a new facility in the northwest neighborhood of Irving Park.[19]

Under the leadership of Atiqur Rahman, an Indian immigrant and co-founder of the organization, the MCC put together a development plan that allowed for the organization to have space for a large prayer room, a religious archive/library, residence for an Imam and caretaker, dorms for traveling guests, classrooms that could accommodate up to four hundred students for adult and youth education, a summer school for children, a cooperative store, a credit union, a mail room, a nursery/day care, a funeral preparation room, as well as a gymnasium. With nearly two hundred students registered for schooling at the MCC, the planned facilities would include a number of classrooms in order to meet the demands of Muslim families. Furthermore, anticipating their membership to reach nearly 1000 active members by the end of the 1970s, the MCC made plans for a building that could accommodate gatherings of over 1500 followers.[20]

Just as the Sunni Muslims' immigrant population rapidly expanded throughout the 1960s and 1970s, the first mass wave of Shi'a immigrants entered Chicago in this era. Prior to the arrival of these immigrants, no organized Shi'a mosques existed in the city, and the few Shi'a in Chicago either attended Sunni mosques or held gatherings in their own homes. By the beginning of the 1970s, however, the critical mass necessary to form a community had been reached.

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[19] "Purpose of MCC," *The Masjid and Community Development Project: 1977,* p.11, Folder: Muslim Community Center, Pamphlets Box 8, Islam in America Repository, DePaul University Library

[20] "Purpose of MCC," *The Masjid and Community Development Project: 1977*, p. 11, Folder: Muslim Community Center, Pamphlets Box 8, Islam in America Repository, DePaul University Library

Opening within three years of each other, Shi'a immigrants founded two different Islamic centers beginning in 1972.

The first and largest Shi'a organization in Chicago, the Husaini Association of Greater Chicago, opened their first center in February 1972. Purchasing a building at 3109 N. Washtenaw Avenue, on the city's north side in the Avondale neighborhood, the Husaini Association consisted of a community of mainly South Asian immigrants with a small percentage of Persian-speaking followers. Governed by a Board of Directors, the organization catered to the Shi'a community with a mixture of regular religious services, observances of Muharram,[21] Eid prayers, an annual Hajj trip, and a Sunday school for children.[22]

Shortly after its establishment, a series of disagreements within the leadership of the Husaini Association resulted in the formation of a breakaway group. Founding their own congregation in April 1975, the Midwest Association of Shi'a Organized Muslims (MASOM) purchased a building at 6111 W. Addison Street in the northwest neighborhood of Dunning. Along with performing services similar to those of the Husaini Association, MASOM organized and led a yearly procession, open to all Shi'a, in downtown Chicago to commemorate Muharram.[23]

Through the establishment of mosques and community centers, immigrant Muslims began to rival the presence of older more established Muslim religious organizations within the city. With the emergence and strength of the MCC and of

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[21] Muharram observances in Shi'a Islam commemorate the anniversary of the slaughter of the Prophet Muhammad's grandson's family and followers at the hands of the army of the caliph Yazeed.
[22] Asad Hussein and Harold Vogelaar, *Activities of the Immigrant Muslim Communities of Chicago*, 242.
[23] Hussein and Vogelaar, *Activities of Immigrant Muslim Communities*, 242.

Shi'a community mosques, traditional Sunni and Shi'a Muslim organizations, run by new immigrants, presented to Chicagoans an alternative face of Islam in stark contrast to the Ahmadiyya and NOI. Through their presence and continued growth, these new Muslim organizations helped reshape the Islamic presence of Chicago to be more in line with global forms of Islam.

Suburbanization

While new immigrant Muslims helped reshape the character of Islam in Chicago, they also expanded its geography. As Muslim immigration to Chicago continued to grow in the early 1970s, the increasing trend of suburbanization occurring in the city extended to both new and established Muslim immigrants. Beginning in 1970, Chicago's population began a dramatic shift that would continue into the present day. Over a twenty-year span, Chicago saw its population drop by seventeen percent, while its surrounding suburbs experienced a population boom, growing twenty-four percent in the same era.[24]

With Muslim immigrants moving to the suburbs in larger numbers, they looked to create new religious communities in the areas that they took residence in. By the middle of the 1970s, one study indicated that twenty-seven percent of Chicago's Muslims lived in the suburbs, with the percent growing every year.[25]

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[24] Michael H. Ebner, *Suburbs and Cities as Dual Metropolis*, as appearing in Ann Durkin Keating ed., *Chicago Neighborhoods and Suburbs: A Historical Guide*. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2008). 31.
[25] "Muslim Community Center, Chicago: Survey of Chicago Muslim Community," *MSA News* 4, no. 4 (1975).

Keeping in continuity with the trends in the city of Chicago, suburban Muslims tended to build their religious communities roughly along ethnic and cultural lines.

In the Chicago suburb of Northbrook, primarily Bosnian immigrants founded one of the city's first suburban mosques in the early 1970s. A mixture of new immigrants, and those moving from Chicago's north side who had previously been part of the MCC, broke ground on their new facility in September 1974. By the end of March 1976, the first phase of the facility was completed. Opening for use, the Islamic Cultural Center of Greater Chicago (ICC) included administrative offices, a library, weekend school classes, a nursery, and a social hall. Primarily drawing attendance from the Bosnian Muslim community, the ICC also drew many Arab members along with a smaller population of Turkish, South Asian, and African Muslims.[26]

The Board of Directors, consisting of Bosnian and Arab immigrants, appointed the ICC's first Imam, Kamil Avdich, from Bosnia, to be the first leader of the center. Serving until his death in 1979, Avdich played an important role in bridging the ethnic divisions of the center's membership, paving the way for the center's eventual expansion in the 1980s.[27]

Following a similar pattern, non-Sunni sects of Islam started to build new organizations and communities in the Chicago suburbs during the late 1970s. Within the Shi'a community, a small but closely-knit offshoot known as the Dawoodi Bohras

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[26] "Laying the Foundation for a North Chicago Suburban Islamic Center," *MSA News* 3, no. 11 (1974). Asad Hussein and Harold Vogelaar, *Activities of the Immigrant Muslim Communities of Chicago,* 240.
[27] ICC Greater Chicagoland, "About us," Last modified, September 4, 2014, http://www.icc-greaterchicago.com/index.php/about-us/

founded an Islamic center in 1977. Purchasing land for their center, Al-Markaz-us-Saifee, at 7009 W. Madison Street in the northwest suburb of Forest Park, the small religious community had a total membership just over one hundred followers in the late 1970s. Coming almost exclusively from South Asia, members of the community had deep connections to the sect's headquarters in Bombay, India.[28]

For the Ahmadiyya community, the late 1970s also brought about a demographic shift away from the city and towards the suburbs. Having two Ahmadiyya chapters already in the city (one in Bronzeville and one in the Loop), the increasing immigration of Ahmadis from South Asia, coupled with a growing black Ahmadi community in the north suburbs, led to the creation of a suburban Ahmadiyya Mission. With many historic buildings in the northern suburb of Zion falling into disrepair, including John Dowie's Zion Hotel, the Ahmadiyya community seized the opportunity to expand by laying claim to an important place in American Ahmadiyya history. Purchasing the Zion Hotel and community center in 1979, the Ahmadiyya in Chicago converted the buildings into the third Ahmadiyya mission in the metro area. The Ahmadiyya Mission in Chicago- Zion, led by South Asian immigrant, Hasan Hakeem, started off with a mixed membership of black and South Asian Ahmadis, countering the trend of increasing separation along ethnic lines that would begin in the Chicago Muslim community in the 1980s.[29]

Through the migration of Muslim immigrants within the greater Chicagoland area, immigrants played a critical role in expanding the geographical presence and

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[28] Asad Hussein and Harold Vogelaar, *Activities of the Immigrant Muslim Communities of Chicago,* 243.
[29] "Ahmadiyya Perspective on the Grand Prophecy," *Muslim Sunrise* 90, no. 2 (2010).

character of Islam in the region. At first concentrated within the city, immigrant Muslims mostly remained contained to many of the same sections of the city as the existing black and Ahmadiyya Muslim populations. Moving into the north side and into suburban locations, immigrant Muslims expanded the reach of Chicago's Muslim communities. In doing so, immigrant Muslims further cemented themselves as the most visible Muslim presence for many white, non-Muslim, Chicagoland residents who had, years earlier, abandoned the increasingly black portions of the city.

MSA: Changes in a Shifting Muslim Landscape

While newly created immigrant Muslim organizations played a significant role in Chicago's Muslim communities during this period, the MSA continued to be the largest and most influential immigrant Muslim organization in the city and country. Having transformed from their early years as a student run organization concentrated in a few colleges in the United States and Canada, by the mid 1970s, the MSA had a diverse and robust membership making it the largest immigrant Muslim organization in the United States. Conducting a survey of half of the organization's 3,300-person membership,[30] the MSA produced a profile of their membership for the readers of their monthly publication, *Islamic Horizons*. In terms of age, forty-two percent of members were between twenty and thirty years old, forty percent were between thirty and forty years old, and eighteen percent of the membership was over the age of forty. As for educational attainment, the MSA concluded that seventy-nine percent of members had a college degree, twenty percent had only a high school

[30] "MSA Memberships New Record," *Islamic Horizons* 6, no. 2 (1977).

diploma, and just one percent of members finished just elementary education. Of the members that were affiliated with universities, forty-seven percent were working on a graduate degree, thirty-seven percent were in undergraduate study, and sixteen percent were faculty or staff members.[31]

As the MSA matured as an organization, the increasing permanence of its membership became apparent. Through an examination of the immigration status and time spent in the United States of its members, the MSA demonstrated that its members were committed to creating a permanent space for Muslims in the United States. By 1977, only thirty-eight percent of the MSA's members were in the United States on student visas, whereas thirty percent were immigrants, and thirty-two percent were American citizens. Furthermore, while thirty-four percent of its members had been in the United States for less than three years, twenty-four percent had been in the country for three to six years, and the plurality (forty-two percent) had been living in the United States for over six years.[32]

Although the MSA had expanded to become an international group (US and Canada), with members stretching across the United States, the Midwest remained the dominant area within the organization in terms of membership and power. With fifteen percent of the membership living in Canada, fifteen percent in the organization's West Zone, and twenty-seven percent of its members in the East Zone, the plurality (forty-four percent) of the MSA's members resided in the Central Zone. Within the Central Zone, sixty-four percent of the membership resided in Region I.

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[31] Iqbal Unus, "Who are we: A profile of MSA members," *Islamic Horizons* 6, no. 6 (1977).
[32] Iqbal Unus, "Who are we: A profile of MSA members," *Islamic Horizons* 6, no. 6 (1977).

With Chicago as the center of the region, in all, twenty-eight percent of the MSA's total membership resided in Region I of the Central Zone. Furthermore, in 1977 alone, sixteen-percent of new members joined the MSA in Region I of the Central Zone. In comparison, the center of Region I of the East Zone, containing New York City and its boroughs, only made up ten percent of the MSA's membership and six percent of new members.[33] As such, despite the organization maintaining a headquarters in suburban Indianapolis, the city of Chicago remained the MSA's biggest population center

After expanding across the United States and into Canada, the MSA developed a structure to their organization which allowed them to prevent fracturing between its local chapters. In charge of the overseeing of the entire organization, the MSA elected an Executive Council served by a President, President-elect, Vice President- Community Secretary, and four Zonal Representatives. Originally serving one-year terms, the Council was elected by a vote at the annual convention until 1968, at which point the conventions grew to a much larger scale, forcing the organization to begin conducting the elections via mail. Dividing the map, the MSA created four "zones" (East, West, Central, and Canada) that would be overseen by a Zonal Representative. Each zone would be further divided into "regions" and sub-regions as seen fit based on the size and population of the area. A regional representative would represent these regions to the Zonal Representatives. Zonal

[33] Iqbal Unus, "Who are we: A profile of MSA members," *Islamic Horizons* 6, no. 6 (1977). "MSA Membership Drive: 2,200 Applied During July-October," *Islamic Horizons* 6, no. 12 (1977).

Representatives would also report to the Executive Council and participate in their meetings.[34]

Below the Executive Council, the MSA would be served by a host of new officers serving in the MSA's General Secretariat. Created in 1974, the Secretary General took over overseeing day-to-day operations of the organization's headquarters in Gary (and later, Plainfield), the Finance Officer managed the MSA's budget and expenses, the Publication and Information Officer took charge over *MSA News*, the MSA's official monthly journal, and oversaw the publication and distribution of educational pamphlets, finally, the Da'Wah Officer planned and managed the use of funds for charity purposes and put on events that spread the religion.[35] With the new positions established, the MSA increased the number of members working in the MSA's leadership into the teens, allowing the organization to more effectively reach into a broader spectrum of events and services.[36]

Although the MSA did not remain headquartered in Chicago, its decision to move away from the city demonstrated both the importance of the city to the organization, as well as the struggles immigrant Muslim groups faced in establishing themselves in the United States. In 1968, searching for a center for their growing organization, the MSA established its headquarters in Gary, Indiana. Needing a central location without large amounts of capital, the MSA looked towards Indiana to make its home. As a result of the burgeoning Black Muslim movement in nearby Chicago, Gary quickly became home to one of the largest African American Muslim

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[34] "MSA Towards the Reorganization," *MSA News* 3, no. 7 (1974). Iqbal Unus, Oral history interview by author, 5 January 2012.
[35] "MSA Towards the Reorganization," *MSA News* 3, no. 7 (1974).
[36] Iqbal Unus, Oral History interview conducted by author, 5 January 2012.

communities. Having broken away from the NOI and following Sunni Islam, a small congregation of mostly African American Muslims existed in the city since the early 1960s. By 1965, however, the Masjid Al-Amin badly needed funding and religious scholars to sustain itself. Reaching out to both immigrants and international groups located in Egypt, the leaders of the Masjid Al-Amin attempted to ensure its survival in the face of both financial and ideological crisis.[37]

Seeing the struggles of the mosque in Gary, the MSA seized the opportunity to intervene. Purchasing the Masjid Al-Amin, the MSA integrated with local Gary Muslims to found the organization's first official headquarters. Setting up a printing press and renovating the mosque, the MSA made Gary the organization's home for seven years. By 1975, the city's economic struggles made it an increasingly difficult place to attract members and leadership to. Searching for a major metropolitan area that was accessible easily by car from multiple directions, as well as having a relatively affordable cost of living, the MSA decided on relocating to Indianapolis. Purchasing a building in the city's center, the MSA experienced dramatic growth in its membership and in the number of full-time staff and workers relocating to the organization's headquarters.[38]

Having moved to Indianapolis, the MSA set up their offices on Director's Row. Named for the office complexes that had set up on the street, the MSA's General Secretary began to run the organization from their new building. Relying on graduated students for the leadership of the organization, the MSA attempted to draw

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[37] "Gary Muslims Search East for New Leader," *Chicago Tribune*, August 14, 1965, N8

[38] Iqbal Unus, Oral History interview conducted by author, January 5, 2012.

on the varied skill-sets of its members but often struggled to find good fits. For positions like Director of Education, the MSA attempted to find Education doctorate holders but were unable to find any candidates. With the majority of the available candidates carrying Ph.Ds in engineering or medical degrees, the MSA similarly struggled to find MBAs to run the business side of the organization. Unable to find many candidates with the preferred academic training, the MSA turned towards those with the strongest commitment towards "Islamic work." As former MSA President, Iqbal Unus, explained,

> But more than that, the first batch couldn't be just professionals, they had to be people who were 100% committed to the task. We could bring along professionals later on. The word got around that all these people who are involved, they had to be willing to sacrifice their careers to start this thing. That's where all these people that I mentioned did that, none of them went into their careers they decided to join the secretariat.

Over time, these committed members serving in the Secretariat would eventually leave their posts in order to finish their degrees and begin their careers.[39]

Developing an ambitious plan for expansion of the services and facilities of the MSA, the Executive Committee decided to once again relocate the MSA's headquarters. With Indianapolis proving to be an advantageous location, the MSA attempted to secure a new site within a short distance of the city. Settling on the suburb of Plainfield, eighteen miles from Indianapolis, the MSA purchased one hundred and twenty three acres of land in the rural community. Along with building

[39] Iqbal Unus, Oral History interview conducted by author, January 5, 2012.

a mosque and office space, the MSA planned on constructing housing for up to forty-five employees and their families.[40]

Frightened by the prospect of the MSA moving into town, residents of Plainfield began an attempt to block the organization from building their proposed facilities. For Plainfield's all-white community, Islam was synonymous with Malcolm X and terrorism. Sending a petition, signed by 1200 people, to the Plainfield Zoning Board, Plainfield residents cited three major concerns with regards to Muslims entering their town. Worried that their land-value would drop with Muslims moving into town, that the influx of "oil money" would damage the economy, and that the MSA would build condominiums to move blacks from Indianapolis into Plainfield, the town's residents demanded that the MSA's right to build be revoked. Joining forces with residents, the Klu Klux Klan began sending the MSA threatening messages warning them to cease any plans to move out of Indianapolis.[41]

Responding to the community's concerns and answering to the Zoning Board, MSA President, Iqbal Unus, noted that MSA residents would be an asset to the community as they were interested in doing service projects and would bring revenue to the city. Furthermore, while Arab nations had donated money to the building of the site, the "oil-money" fear was unfounded in both fact and logic. Although the MSA's Executive Committee did have three black members, the notion that the MSA

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[40] "The Headquarters: MSA's Appeal for Zoning Variance Faces Opposition from Plainfield's Community," *Islamic Horizons* 6, no. 10 (1977).
[41] Iqbal Unus, Oral History interview conducted by author, 5 January 2012. "The Headquarters: MSA's Appeal for Zoning Variance Faces Opposition from Plainfield's Community," *Islamic Horizons* 6, no. 10 (1977).

had a racial agenda of relocating urban blacks to the suburb was equally unfounded. While stating that he and the MSA, "believe in unity of mankind, and not in its unfortunate antagonistic fragmentation," Unus assured Plainfield's residents that MSA would bring people to Plainfield based on their merit as Islamic workers, not because of their race.[42]

After meeting with the Zoning Board in September 1977, the MSA eventually gained approval to proceed with construction of their new headquarters. Constructing a mosque, community center, and organizational headquarters, the MSA's new facility on, "The Farm," in Plainfield, became a site where the MSA conducted meetings, invited foreign dignitaries, met with other Muslim leaders, and published their journal.

Through their long road to establishing a presence and struggle to gain acceptance in Plainfield, the MSA exemplified the difficulties for Muslim immigrant groups in the United States. Faced with the prejudices of white American society that understood Islam through misconceived notions of the character of the NOI and black Islam more generally, immigrant Muslims struggled to redefine Islam and Muslims to the general public. Aiming to avoid alienating co-religionists among African American Muslims, yet also interested in following in the geographical paths of many white non-Muslims, immigrant Muslim communities struggled to find the best method to change American perceptions of the nature of Islam. Through their attempts, however, immigrant Muslims played a large role in reshaping the way non-

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[42] Iqbal Unus, Oral History interview conducted by author, 5 January 2012. "The Headquarters: MSA's Appeal for Zoning Variance Faces Opposition from Plainfield's Community," *Islamic Horizons* 6, no. 10 (1977).

Muslims imagined the typical Muslim in America, as well as what the religion of Islam stood for.

No longer just students: From MSA to ISNA

As the 1970s progressed, immigrant Muslim communities underwent demographic changes, as younger immigrants grew older and more established in Chicago and its suburbs. As a result, they sought to make changes to existing organizations and institutions in order to better serve their needs. For the MSA, while it continued to grow, its local branches began to be hindered by the organization's initial branding and focus. Throughout the 1970s, the MSA's success and popularity at its initial campuses led to the creation of a multitude of new chapters at universities across the country, most notably in the Midwest. In Chicago, the campuses of the Illinois Institute of Technology, University of Chicago, and in 1974, Roosevelt University, formed local chapters.[43] No longer catering to only student populations based in university-centric chapters, the MSA faced a crossroads. With the proliferation of urban and regionally based branches, many of the MSA's members complained about the focus and direction of the organization. Stating, as early as 1970, that the MSA was too focused on catering to students, many members wanted to start a separate organization to deal with the concerns of the greater Muslim

[43] "MSA- Roosevelt University, Chicago," *Islamic Horizons* 3 No. 3-4 (1974).

community.[44] In contrast, other members suggested growing the organization through abandoning the name, "MSA," in favor of something more inclusive.[45]

For the leadership of the MSA, the problem of the organization's name expanded beyond just the changing membership. With an expanded organization, the MSA attempted to partner with large Muslim groups and bring them into the MSA membership. In Chicago, the MSA-Greater Chicago attempted to bring the dominant immigrant Muslim group, the MCC, into the organization but met heavy resistance from the MCC's leadership. Despite their willingness to work with and even raise money for the MSA, in one instance donating $1001 to the MSA's Middle East Relief Fund,[46] the MCC voiced the familiar critique of the MSA being too student-focused and not diverse enough with respect to age and occupation of its members. As a result, the MCC leadership refused the MSA's requests, insisting on maintaining its independence.

Unable to unite previously existing non-student Muslim groups under the MSA banner, the Executive Council sought a way to maintain the MSA's student base, while presenting a more universal front. Working with the MCC, as well as a few other local masjids, the MSA brainstormed the different options that would allow them to have the best of both worlds. In 1974, the MSA proposed keeping its original name, while also creating two new organizations, the Islamic Society of North

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[44] Nasir Ahmad, "MSA Questionnaire," Folder: Task Force Questionnaire Responses, February 1978, MSA Box 1, Islam in America Repository, DePaul University Library.
[45] Annoynmous, "MSA Questionnaire," Folder: Task Force Questionnaire Responses, February 1978, MSA Box 1, Islam in America Repository, DePaul University Library.
[46] "Chicago Muslim Community Center Arts Renovation Work." *MSA News* 2, no. 10-11 (1973).

America and the Muslim Community Association. After sending out a ballot inquiry to local Muslim groups, the MSA received overwhelmingly positive feedback encouraging them to start the new organizations and pledging to join ISNA. Designed to operate as an umbrella organization, ISNA was to be a non-individual membership organization that solicited the membership of local, regional, and national Muslim groups interested in uniting under a single organization. ISNA would then coordinate between Muslim groups to help set up conferences, plan events, and establish bonds. Taking over the regional and local branches of the MSA, the leadership of the MSA designed the MCA to function as a separate organization that focused on the needs of non-students situated within their regional Muslim communities. Under the new set-up, the MSA would return to its roots and focus exclusively on college campuses, while maintaining its close ties to the larger community through MCA and ISNA.[47]

In practice, the newly created ISNA and MCA failed to act in precisely the ways the MSA intended. By 1979, the MCA's first two presidents had struggled to grow the membership or put forth any plan for the organization's survival. Part of the problem they encountered was that separate from individual universities, the MCA struggled to attract Muslim members who already attended independant mosques. With the MCC and other local groups growing and thriving in Chicago, the appeal of the MCA was lost on most of the cities practicing Muslims. Furthermore, the

[47] Iqbal Unus, Oral History interview conducted by author, January 5, 2012.

established leaders of the MCC saw little benefit in encouraging their members to join the seemingly redundant and possibly competing group.[48]

Struggling to remain viable and believing the organization to be redundant with the creation of ISNA, the leadership of the MCA began to encourage members of the MSA's non-university chapters to become members of ISNA instead of the MCA. In doing so, ISNA transformed from being solely an umbrella organization to one with both individual and group members. In order to incorporate the individual members of ISNA into a more cohesive community structure, ISNA then began to have regional and local branches in order to organize local events and meetings. As a result, the local branches of ISNA began to function much in the same way that the local branches of the MSA had in the past, and in the way the MCA was originally planned to have as well.[49]

With ISNA's creation, the MSA split its organizational leadership and resources to help start the new umbrella organization. Initially operating out of the same building, the majority of the MSA's secretariat transitioned from leadership of the MSA to being the leaders of ISNA. In doing so, the MSA further pushed the responsibilities of the original organization on the university and regional branches. By 1979, the MSA and ISNA were operating as parallel organizations. While the MSA continued to recruit and organize among university students, ISNA also included a mix of individual members who were members of local community masjids and organizations.[50]

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[48] Iqbal Unus, Oral History conducted by author, January 5, 2012.
[49] Iqbal Unus, Oral History conducted by author, January 5, 2012.
[50] Iqbal Unus, Oral History conducted by author, January 5, 2012.

NOI- Islamization and Changes in Leadership

Entering the 1960s, the Nation of Islam was in the process of a dramatic shift away from their unique religious dogma towards a more internationally accepted interpretation of Islam. Along with its rising membership, the NOI began to shift its rhetoric and message. As the organization increased its wealth, its members also began to change in character. Many of the early membership of the organization started off at the bottom of society, often newly arrived out of prison. The success of the NOI's program of self-help and entrepreneurship slowly transformed the entirely working-class membership into a mix of more upwardly mobile older members and more radical, more impoverished, newer members. This change, along with increased influence from abroad, led to the diminished need for mysticism and radicalism in the organizations message. Responding to these changes, the NOI began to de-emphasize the story of Yakub and spoke less of Fard Muhammad and his reincarnation as God.[51]

During the transition period between the 1950s and 1960s, the NOI began to shift from an organization almost entirely centered on issues of Black Power and urban problems, towards a more traditional Islamic set of ideologies. Through the stories of Yakub and Fard Muhammad, the NOI emphasized Black pride and self-sufficiency. In arguing that Black people needed their own sets of institutions, businesses, housing, and nationhood, the NOI lay the foundation for many of the same demands Black Power advocates would adopt nearly a decade later. Although

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[51] Lawrence H. Mamiya, "From Black Muslim to Bilalian: The Evolution of a Movement," *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* 21, no. 2 (1982): 138-152.

the organization claimed to be a form of Islam, much of its Islamic character was in name only. As an example, the NOI's "Koran" was in no way similar to the Qur'an of mainstream Muslims. Instead of a collection of revelations to the Prophet Muhammad, the NOI Koran[52] included large amounts of material written by Elijah Muhammad and Fard Muhammad, as well as material left over from the Moorish Science Temple.[53] As the 1960s began, the NOI began to Islamize in a number of ways. Elijah Muhammad decided to rename all "Temples," "Mosques," incorporate passages and sayings from the mainstream Sunni Qur'an, and make the pilgrimage to Mecca.[54] Furthermore, the NOI began to reach out to Muslims across the globe in an attempt to build cohesion with international Muslim groups.[55] As a result of these changes, the NOI slowly deemphasized the early Black Power ideology of the organization towards a focus on fitting into a traditional Islamic paradigm.

Despite the Islamization of the NOI during the 1960s and early 1970s, Elijah Muhammad continued, up to his death in 1975, the organization's strong focus on black empowerment and self-help. Still maintaining the numerous restaurants and stores in Chicago's South Shore neighborhood, the NOI struggled to maintain the religious and economic balance of the organization's changing goals. Finding it increasingly difficult to turn a profit with their businesses, along with the increasing costs accrued by Elijah Muhammad and his family, the NOI entered into a period of crisis.

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[52] Referred to as the "Circle Seven Koran" due to the cover featuring a 7 enclosed in a circle, part of the unique iconography of the Moorish-Science Temple and later NOI.
[53] Clegg III, *An Original Man*, 19, 24.
[54] Marable, *Malcolm X*, 119, 165.
[55] "Muhammad Plans 1st Interracial Press Gathering," *Chicago Defender*, February 1, 1960.

As the 1970s progressed, Elijah Muhammad struggled to successfully manage the NOI. Having suffered from chronic asthmatic bronchitis since 1959, Muhammad increasingly spent his time during the 1960s and 1970s in Phoenix, Arizona. Removed from the day-to-day happenings of the organization, Muhammad still continued his management-style of direct control over the NOI. "Brokering no dissent," as Muhammad's son, Wallace, described, Muhammad struggled to identify the growing financial weaknesses of the organization.[56] After his wife, Clara Muhammad, passed away in 1972, Muhammad's health quickly deteriorated. Diagnosed with both diabetes and high blood pressure the following year, Muhammad required full-time medical care at his house in Hyde Park. Before his death in February 1975, Muhammad had begun the use of an oxygen tank to aid him in breathing.[57]

Emerging as the two front-runners to replace their father as leader of the NOI, Herbert Muhammad and Wallace Muhammad represented two diverging paths for the organization to choose from. Serving as his father's second in command for much of the 1960s and 1970s, Herbert Muhammad represented a continuation of the policies of the past. Having attained much needed experience and education in overseeing the finances of the NOI, Herbert hoped to continue to build on the empire that Elijah left behind. Never overly invested in religious doctrine, those within and outside of the NOI believed that Herbert would maintain the NOI's commitment to his father's theology and emphasis on black self-help.

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[56] Jim Gallagher, "Wallace D. Muhammad: Reviver of Muslims Faith," *Chicago Tribune*, February 21, 1977. C1.
[57] Estate of Muhammad v. Commissioner, 59 T.C.M. (CCH) 478, 1990 TC Memo 211 (U.S.T.C., 1990), 3.

In contrast to his older brother, in the eyes of Elijah Muhammad's younger son, Wallace, the direction of the NOI needed to change. After serving time in prison in the early 1960s for draft evasion, Wallace emerged with a new perspective on the ideological foundations of the organization.[58] Having spent much of his two years in prison studying the Qur'an and reflecting on his spirituality, Wallace come to the conclusion that his father was not actually God's messenger on Earth. As a result, he struggled to find a place in the growing religion. For much of the 1960s, Wallace vacillated between being in and out of favor with his father's religion. Excommunicated by Elijah Muhammad on multiple occasions, Wallace utilized his time away from the NOI to further examine his religious beliefs. Taking his first trip to Mecca for Hajj in 1967, Wallace decided to convert to Sunni Islam.[59] Despite his conversion, Wallace eventually decided to acquiesce to his father in order to attempt to reform the NOI from the inside. After just over ten years of instability, Wallace regained his previous position as one of the NOI's imams in 1974.

With Elijah Muhammad finally succumbing to heart failure in February 1975, Wallace Muhammad assumed power after winning the struggle for control over the organization. Far beyond simply a personal victory, Wallace's assumption of power signaled the beginning of an important new chapter in the history of African American Islam. Although he did not immediately announce that the NOI would undergo a massive transformation in identity, ideology, and structure, he soon would

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[58] Mamiya, "Black Muslims to Bilalian," 138-152.
[59] *Impact* 7, no. 18 (1977). Folder UK (Import), Pamphlets Box 3, Islam in America Repository, DePaul University Library

begin instituting reforms that brought the organization closer to the mainstream Islamic movements proliferating throughout the city.

Within a year of taking over leadership of the Nation of Islam, the newly renamed, "Warith Deen" (formerly Wallace) Muhammad had transformed the organization. Claiming that the Nation of Islam was entering "an historic process of evolution,"[60] W.D. Muhammad attempted to alter the legacy of his father's teachings without completely rebuking them. Claiming that Elijah Muhammad never preached that white people were "original devils," he insisted that his father simply highlighted the way white people had assumed many of the characteristics of the devil. Further distancing the religion from its original theology, W.D. Muhammad renamed the organization's yearly celebration from "Savior's Day" to "Ethnic Survival Day." Finally, completing the organization's movement towards mainstream Islam, W.D. Muhammad reached out to non-black Muslims in an attempt to integrate the previously all-black movement.[61]

Although the organization was quickly shedding its racial exclusivity, in many ways it continued to progress in the trajectory of the larger Black Power movement. Notably, in 1976, any last bastion of official racial separation came to a close with the conversion and membership of the first white female member of the NOI. Converting in February 1976, Dorothy 13x (formerly Dorothy Dorsey) worked as a teacher in the NOI's school, the Sister Clara Muhammad University. Along with teaching at the

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[60] Vernon Jarrett, "Leader's view of changing Muslims," *Chicago Tribune*, March 19, 1978, 22.
[61] Vernon Jarrett, "Leader's view of changing Muslims," *Chicago Tribune*, March 19, 1978, 22. Jim Gallagher, "Wallace D. Muhammad: Reviver of Muslims Faith" *Chicago Tribune.* February 21, 1977, C1.

school, Dorothy was married to Donald 12x, a long-standing NOI member and former Black Panther. While breaking down the official barrier to membership, Dorothy maintained that she faced a degree of discrimination and resentment from some of the organization's members.[62] Along with its membership overlap with other manifestations of Black Power, the NOI's changing philosophy on electoral politics fit squarely in the larger trends of the time. While Elijah Muhammad preached for total separation from mainstream American life and had disavowed engagement in the American electoral process, W.D. Muhammad actively sought greater influence for Muslims in local and national politics. Getting into contact with Jimmy Carter in 1977, W.D. Muhammad would become a leading Muslim voice engaging the White House, and would later stump for Carter's re-election in 1980.[63] As such, despite the NOI's abandonment of racial separation, its membership, new and old, still found commonalities with the changing Black Power movement.

On the local level, the NOI under W.D. Muhammad, increasingly found partners within the city to help approve and fund the construction of mosques and community institutions. In January 1977, W.D. Muhammad worked with Mayor Bilandic to gain approval for a $26-28 Million urban renewal project in Woodlawn, which included eleven acres for construction of the largest mosque in the western hemisphere. In total, the city pledged $16 Million towards construction of the mosque, with $12 Million being spent on commercial and residential development, to

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[62] Barbara Reynolds, "First white woman becomes a Muslim" *Chicago Tribune*, March 2, 1976, C12.
[63] "Lead country to better life, Muslims told" *Chicago Tribune*, February 22, 1977, 3. Frederick Lowe "Muslim chief to work for Carter vote," *Chicago Tribune*, July 17, 1978, 12.

be done by the Woodlawn Organization.[64] Through partnering with local officials and politicians, the NOI signaled a dramatic shift in its relationship with the city of Chicago, as well as with the white establishment.

As time went on, W.D. Muhammad continued to reshape the religious identity of the organization, in order to make it more in line with traditional Sunni Islam. In the summer of 1976, W.D. Muhammad, in an attempt to distance the organization from its previous theology, announced that the NOI would change its name to "The World Community of Islam in the West (WCIW)." In making the name change, the organization expressly attempted to make an ideological connection to the Islam practiced around the world. Along similar lines, W.D. Muhammad also insisted that members of the organization no longer refer to themselves as "Black Muslims" but instead as "Bilalian" Muslims, making reference to the Prophet Muhammad's African follower named Bilal. Through this change, W.D. Muhammad attempted to tie the identity of his followers more closely to the Prophet Muhammad instead of to his father's unique theology.[65] Along with the name changes, W.D. Muhammad introduced the traditional five pillars of Islam into the organization's religion, and disavowed any divinity of Fard Muhammad or divine inspiration for his father, Elijah Muhammad. Finally, in dissolving the many business ventures of the NOI,

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[64] Robert Davis, "$28-million Woodlawn renewal to include big Moslem mosque," *Chicago Tribune*, January 28, 1977, 1. Susan Feyder, "Chicago to get $16-million mosque," *Chicago Tribune*, October 16, 1977, W_B1G.
[65] Edward Curtis IV, *Black Muslim Religion in the Nation of Islam, 1960-1975,* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2006). 180

Muhammad asserted that the previous NOI regime was, "more interested in filling their pockets with dollars than in spiritual values."[66]

Aiding in the religious transformation of the WCIW, W.D. Muhammad found willing partners in the major immigrant Muslim organizations in the city of Chicago and nationally. Interested in helping spread "true Islam"[67] to the large contingent of Black Muslims present in the country, the MSA began to reach out to the Nation of Islam as early as the late 1960s. Initially deeply critical of the NOI and its heretical theology, many mainstream American Muslims spent much of the decade attempting to influence the organization while others publicly attacked its beliefs. For example, many non-NOI members claimed that Elijah Muhammad's Islam was not "true Islam" and encouraged violence.[68] As the NOI increasingly moved towards Sunni Islam at the end of Elijah Muhammad's life, and more rapidly in the wake of W.D. Muhammad's assumption of power, however, the MSA seized on the opportunity to bring members of the NOI into the mainstream. In order to hasten the process, the MSA provided imams and Islamic literature to the organization and hosted joint events.[69]

As cooperation between the NOI/WCIW and immigrant Muslim groups grew, W.D. Muhammad increased his efforts to bridge the remaining gap between his organization and the rest of the countries Muslim communities. In an historic move

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[66] Jim Gallagher, "Wallace D. Muhammad: Reviver of Muslims Faith," *Chicago Tribune*, February 21, 1977, C1.
[67] This term was utilized by a host of different immigrant and international Muslim organizations in describing the NOI. As an example, see: "Ya Sin Mosque Shoot Out," *MSA News* 3, no. 2 (1974).
[68] "Cuts Tie with Black Muslims," *Chicago Defender*. February 24, 1965.
[69] "Of Task Force, Expenses and Bilalians: General Assembly Lacked Fire," *Islamic Horizons* 7, no. 8 (1978).

of cooperation, shortly after taking over the NOI, W.D. Muhammad led his followers in Chicago to attend the Eid-Ul-Fitr prayers organized by the MCC at McCormick Place in 1975. Bringing hundreds of Black Muslims with him, the event marked the first time NOI members joined orthodox Muslims for prayers. For members of both the NOI and traditional Muslim groups, the event made a significant impact on the building of trust and understanding between the opposing groups. As Rasheeda Rahman, a black Sunni Muslim noted, after the event her reservations about the NOI's membership had been assuaged as she realized that they were, "just Muslims," like her.[70]

By 1977, W.D. Muhammad's status as a promoter of religious cooperation between immigrant and black Muslims had made him a celebrated figure in Muslim communities across Chicago (as well as nationally). In June 1977, the MSA and other Chicago Muslim organizations held an event to recognize the work W.D. Muhammad had accomplished in bridging the divide between the NOI/WCIW and immigrant Islam. Attending the event included many religious leaders, as well as MSA President Yaqub Mirza and VP Nazruddin Ali.[71]

In August 1978, W.D. Muhammad took the final step in the WCIW's transformation by resigning from the leadership of the organization. Putting in place a council of six imams to cover the various regions of the country that the WCIW existed in, Muhammad appointed Sheik James Abdul-Aziz Shabazz, of Chicago, to oversee the city as well as the greater Midwest. The son of a Garveyitte, under Elijah

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[70] Nathaniel Clay, "6000 Muslims hold festival," *Chicago Defender*, October 8, 1975.
[71] "From the President's Diary: Yaqub Mirza visits MSA Chapters," *Islamic Horizons* 6, no. 9 (1977).

Muhammad's reign, Sheik Abdul-Aziz had been in charge of the NOI's school, The University of Islam, before becoming a chief advisor to W.D. Muhammad. Having accompanied W.D. Muhammad on a tour of Saudi Arabia in the mid-1970s, Abdul-Aziz Shabazz came into contact with a Sudanese member of the MSA, Tigani A. Bugideiri. After spending time in dialogue with members of the MSA, Abdul-Aziz Shabazz eventually joined the organization prior to the death of Elijah Muhammad. Having studied comparative religions in college and continuing to read on religious theory throughout his life, Abdul-Aziz Shabazz was an ideal choice for leadership in W.D. Muhammad's WCIW.[72] Fully embracing traditional Islam, Abdul-Aziz Shabazz represented both continuity with the organization's original ideals of Black Nationalism and self-help, while also following a religious doctrine more in line with the rest of the Muslim world.

Aiding the six imams on the council were a number of imams from around the country and from abroad. Notably, W.D. Muhammad included Sudanese cleric, Sheik Muhammad Nur, who had been preaching in Chicago for a number of years. Along with Sheik Nur, imams from Nigeria, Pakistan, and Iran served as auxiliary members of the newly appointed council.[73] With the council of Sunni clerics from around the world overseeing the organization's multitude of affiliated mosques, the WCIW closed the chapter on its transition into mainstream Islam.

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[72] Sheik James A.A. Shabazz, "Meet the WCIW Council of Imams," *Bilalian News*, November 3, 1978, 13

[73] "Bilalian News," *Muslim Journal*, September 29, 1978.

Conclusion: A More Global Chicago

As the 1970s came to a close, Islam in Chicago bore little resemblance to the disparate and fledgling Muslim communities that existed in the city before 1965. In the aftermath of the 1965 Immigration and Naturalization Acts, the floodgate of immigration, coupled with the demographic shifts brought about by suburbanization had conspired to radically change the geography and makeup of Chicago's Muslim organizations. Chicago's Islamic communities, previously concentrated within the African American population and a limited number of Arab groups, had expanded to also include immigrants from throughout the Muslim World, as well as a small number of white Americans. Similarly, having been previously located within a handful of neighborhoods on the city's south side, Muslim communities and institutions had branched out into new areas in the city's north and west sides, as well as into a number of suburban towns. Through these changes in demographics and geography, Islam in Chicago increasingly came to be represented not by urban African Americans, but instead by diverse sets of immigrant Muslims located both in the city and in the growing Chicagoland suburbs.

Ideologically, once dominated by the separatist communities of the Nation of Islam and the Ahmadiyya, by the end of the 1970s, Chicago contained a diverse array of Muslim organizations more in line with the larger Islamic world. As the NOI underwent strategic changes in the 1960s and 1970s, the organization and its followers increasingly adopted the customs and ideas of Muslims coming from mainstream Islamic traditions. Undergoing this process of Islamization, the NOI brought the largest single community of Muslims in Chicago towards mainstream

Islamic thought, paving the way for greater cooperation and interaction with growing immigrant Muslim communities.

With the NOI working to transform itself into a mainstream Muslim community, along with the rapid growth of the MSA and ethnic mosques, African American and immigrant Muslims began to cooperate and build community with one another in a meaningful way as early as the 1960s and most dramatically in the 1970s. Through these growing interactions between previously disparate Muslim communities, the character of Islam in Chicago underwent a dramatic change. As Sunni Islam took over the dominant ideological position in the city, Chicago's outlier status as a place dominated by separatist forms of Islam disappeared in favor of the primacy of mainstream Islamic traditions. Through the proliferation of Sunni Islam, as well as the emergence of minority Shi'a communities, Chicago's Muslim communities gained the critical mass of followers, resources, and networks to transform the city, making it much more closely resemble the ideological, racial, and ethnic composition of the greater Muslim World.

Chapter 3:
Arab Money: Islamic Chicago and transnational connections

During the spring of 2011, Colonel Muammar Gaddafi's forty-two year reign as ruler of Libya came under siege from a coalition of international and domestic opposition. Although the Libyan conflict began as a domestic uprising, powerful Western nations soon sided with the rebel forces and looked to the United States for support. Within the United States, journalistic accounts of Gaddafi's alleged barbarity towards his country's citizens swayed public opinion overwhelmingly towards favoring US military intervention. As US politicians sought to gain public favor in the early build up to the 2012 Presidential Election, American policymakers and citizens primarily argued over how quickly the US should intervene, and with how much international cooperation. Despite a growing strand of foreign policy isolationism, American public opinion resolutely stood opposed to the regime of Colonel Gaddafi and reviled him as a political figure. In a CNN poll taken on March 22, 2011, seventy-seven percent of Americans agreed that the United States should intervene in Libya to remove Gaddafi from power.[1] By the summer, the United States, working with NATO, began a bombing campaign that eventually resulted in the overthrow of Gaddafi's government, as well as the eventual capture and death of the Libyan dictator and many of his progeny.

In stark contrast to mainstream American political thought stood Louis Farrakhan, the leader of the Nation of Islam. In a public speech on March 31st, outside the NOI's Maryam Mosque in Chicago's south side, in front of a crowd of

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[1] Arshad Mohammed, "In U.S. poll, 60 percent back Libya military action." *Reuters US Online Report*, March 24, 2011, Accessed March 21, 2012, http://af.reuters.com/article/topnews/idafjoe72n00s20110324.

followers and journalists Farrakhan declared his everlasting support for Gaddafi and denounced US military action taken against the Colonel. Citing his, and by extension, the Nation of Islam's, longstanding friendship with Gaddafi, Farrakhan asked, "What kind of brother would I be if a man has been that way to me, and to us, and when he's in trouble I refuse to raise my voice in his defense?" In making such a statement, Farrakhan made indirect reference to the rhetorical, political, and economic aid that the Libyan dictator had provided the NOI over a span of forty years. The most noteworthy example of which was the approximately three million dollar loan Gaddafi awarded the NOI to build the headquarters that Farrakhan would deliver his speech in front of four decades later.[2]

The example of Gaddafi touches upon a greater history of cooperation and contribution between Arab and Islamic states and Muslim communities in Chicago. With Muslim communities a small but growing presence in the city and its suburbs, Islamic countries existed as significant sources for financial, theological, and psychological support. This support did not come without conditions, however. In exchange for monetary contributions, Arab and Islamic leaders attempted to gain influence over a diverse group of American Muslims in an attempt to shape their religious and political philosophies. For Chicago's Muslim communities, however, the increased cooperation and interconnections with the Islamic World helped empower their communities to gain better access to opportunities and resources

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[2] David Lepski, "Farrakhan Using Libyan Crisis to Bolster His Nation of Islam," *Chicago News Cooperative*, April 9, 2011, Accessed May 21, 2012, http://www.nytimes.com/2011/04/10/us/10cncfarrakhan.html?pagewanted=1&_r=3&hpw.

necessary to develop lasting institutions and leaders that allowed Islam to flourish in the city.

Chicago's Ahmadiyya- India's Role in Sustaining a Separate Religion

Perhaps no Muslim community in Chicago better highlighted the vital relationship with Islamic partners abroad than the Ahmadiyya. Located in Bronzeville, Chicago's oldest Muslim organization, the Ahmadiyya Islamic Mission, from its inception in 1921, maintained a complex relationship with its foreign compliment. The Ahmadiyya in Chicago, despite preaching universal rhetoric encouraging people from all origins to join the sect, were almost entirely composed of African Americans and South Asian immigrants. Before the wave of South Asian immigrants that came during the 1960s, the African American presence was even greater. As reporter Helen Fleming for the *Chicago Daily News* observed at a Sunday evening service in September 1949, "All present were of American Negro ancestry except their leader."[3]

For the Ahmadiyya in Chicago, transnational networks of support allowed them access to leaders and theologians that enabled them to grow and sustain their community in the city. Having recently arrived from Pakistan, the mosque's leader, Chulam Yasin, exemplified the importance of foreign religious leaders for Chicago's Ahmadiyya Islamic Mission. With a membership primarily comprised of poorer African Americans, primarily recent migrants to the city from the South, Chicago's

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[3] Helen Fleming, "A Stranger Goes to Church: Reporter Visits Moslem Service," *Chicago Daily News*, September 6, 1949, Chicago Public Library- Woodson Branch, George Cleveland Hall Archive, Box 44, Folder 8: Churches, Moslem/Islam 1949.

Ahmadiyya community turned to Pakistan in order to receive trained imams, as well as help cover the costs of their continued presence in America. Funded and sent by the Pakistani Ahmadiyya, Yasin replaced the previous Imam, Dr. Ahmad Nasir, who had relocated to Washington DC before being recalled to Pakistan after leading the congregation for a period of a few years.[4]

Beyond spreading the gospel of the sect, the foreign Ahmadi Imams played a critical role in establishing financial stability for Chicago's Ahmadiyya community. In Chicago, these imams harnessed their connections with the international movement in order to acquire funds necessary for the mission's survival. In one example, Dr. Nasir's predecessor, Mufti Muhammad Sadiq, after initially establishing the movement's presence in Chicago in the 1920s, acquired five hundred dollars from the central headquarters in Qadian, India,[5] in order to establish the groups first mission house on S. Wabash Avenue.[6] For a community primarily comprised of working-class African Americans that did not mandate their members to contribute large percentages of their income to the movement, these funds represented a substantial windfall for the movement.

While Chicago's Ahmadiyya community harnessed their connections with the South Asian branches of the movement in order to better sustain and provide for the religious and institutional needs of their community, the Qadian/Rabwah-based movement happily obliged in order to attempt to exert a measure of control over their

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[4] Ibid. "History of the Ahmadiyya Movement in Islam in America," *Moslem Sunrise* 42, no. 4 (1975).
[5] The partition of India and Pakistan led to the relocation of the Ahmadiyya headquarters from Qadian, India to Rabwah, Pakistan in Septmeber, 1948.
[6] "Some of our Missionaries," *Moslem Sunrise*, Vo. 42, no. 4 (1975).

American offshoot. Through the exportation of clerics from India/Pakistan, the Qadian/Rabwah Ahmadiyya maintained close contact with their American missionaries, allowing them to stay informed of the teachings and practices of its American outposts. Partly through this practice, despite a trend towards unification of Islamic ideologies among Chicago's Muslim communities during the 1960s and 1970s, the American Ahmadiyya stayed true to the international movement, instead of moving towards partnership with either mainstream Islam or the Nation of Islam. As such, through the institutional and financial cooperation between Chicago and Qadian/Rabwah Ahmadiyya communities, the Ahmadiyya in Chicago managed to maintain its independence from other Muslim groups within the city while preserving their ideological ties to the international Ahmadiyya movement.

The Nation of Islam- Moving towards the Middle East

Across town, the Nation of Islam employed a similar tactic in enlisting the help of foreign clerics to help reshape their religious practice. While the imams for the Ahmadiyya worked to maintain an orthodoxy that already existed, the clerics in the Nation of Islam actively shifted the organization to become more in line with foreign religious doctrines. Beginning far outside of mainstream Islam, the NOI faced significant hurdles in building solidarity with Muslim nations and organizations abroad. When in the late 1950s Elijah Muhammad first began reaching out to leaders of the Islamic World, he realized that his lack of familiarity with the Qur'an and his organization's emphasis on Black Nationalist mythology made foreign leaders wary to aid the sect. Badly needing money to cover the organization's many business

losses and misuse of funds, as well as seeking the prestige of allying with important world leaders, Muhammad decided to change the emphasis and practice of his sect in order to cater to potential foreign supporters.[7]

Determined to win the trust and support of the global Islamic community, Elijah Muhammad reached out to foreign Muslim leaders in order to receive monetary donations along with the services of a number of foreign clerics who would teach the Qur'an and perform religious functions for the Nation of Islam. As early as the 1950s the Nation of Islam increasingly began importing foreign Maulanas to perform a variety of tasks for the organization. By the 1960s, the full Islamization of the NOI had begun thanks to the influence and teaching of these new mainstream Sunni clerics.[8] Often of Arab origin, the Chicago NOI commonly used an Egyptian Maulana that was personally brought to the US by Elijah Muhammad for a variety of religious services.[9] By sending clerics to aid the Nation of Islam, the organization's religious doctrines slowly began to change. Although Elijah Muhammad never recanted his previous teachings about the inherent evil within whites or the divinity of W.F. Muhammad, he and his new clerics increasingly shied away from preaching it to their followers. Over the duration of the 1960s, the Nation of Islam emphasized Allah, social practice, and economic uplift in place of foundational myths and unique theology.[10] Thus through partnering with foreign leaders and governments in bringing clerics from abroad, the NOI gained significant resources and support while

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[7] Marable, *Malcolm X,* 165.
[8] Ibid, 252.
[9] *Muhammad Speaks* 5, no. 17, January 14, 1966.
[10] Marable, *Malcolm X*, 168-169, 252.

also undergoing doctrinal change that allowed them to better conform to the existing orthodoxy of Sunni Islam.

Along with acquiring the service of foreign clerics, the Nation of Islam attempted to solidify their ties to the rest of the Muslim World by strengthening the ideological bonds between the organization's future leaders and receptive Arab countries. The first notable step towards this goal occurred in 1959, where upon making a trip to Egypt to meet with President Nasser, Elijah Muhammad brought his sons Wallace and Akbar. While Elijah Muhammad aimed to make a short visit in order to meet with Nasser and secure promises of future cooperation, his vision for his sons included an extended stay. Under the encouragement and direction of the Egyptian leader, Elijah's college-aged son, Akbar, enrolled to study at Al-Azhar University in Cairo. Studying under one of the most renowned Qur'anic scholars in the country, Akbar began to receive an Islamic education in stark contrast to his previous training to be a religious leader in the Nation of Islam. Learning Arabic and Sunni interpretations of the Qur'an, both Akbar and Wallace began to believe that the teachings of the Nation of Islam would need to change in order to stay true to the religion that the organization claimed name to.[11]

Although both Wallace and Akbar were strong candidates to inherit the position of leader of the NOI upon Elijah Muhammad's eventual death, their paths to power proved to be winding. As a result, a divide emerged between the depths of Islamization that foreign governments hoped to help create in the NOI and the lesser degree that Elijah Muhammad clearly aimed for. During their stays in Egypt, both

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[11] Marable, *Malcolm X*, 168-169, 363-364.

Wallace and Akbar began to openly question their father's role within the NOI. Having become true believers in Sunni Islam, Elijah Muhammad's sons no longer could accept the notion that their father was a prophet, or that W. Fard Muhammad was God himself. Furthermore, the news of their father's infidelities, subsequent cover-ups, and embezzlement of NOI funds, only exacerbated their distrust in his worthiness to lead.[12] Questioning the interpretations and religious direction of the organization already posed a significant challenge to Elijah Muhammad, but the addition of personal mistrust and criticism pushed Muhammad to take action. Instead of leading to needed reforms of the organization, however, Muhammad decided to consolidate power and censor any dissent. At different times over the first few years of the 1960s, the leadership within the NOI would silence both Wallace and Akbar.

For the two brothers, the challenges of attempting to force the NOI to a more traditional religious position than their father wanted resulted in them finding themselves on the outside of the organization. Facing mounting pressure to conform to the organization's compromised position regarding religious and political ideologies, Akbar chose to resign as a member of the NOI in the summer of 1964. While announcing his decision to leave the organization, Akbar declared that the NOI's religious ideology was, "a homemade one with its own tight rules and regulations that tend to stifle any criticism of its leader." After making his declaration, Akbar returned to Cairo to continue his studies.[13] Unwilling to give up his position and potential influence, Wallace's departure from the organization

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[12] Federal Bureau of Investigation, U.S. Department of Justice, File 157-2209: Nation of Islam, Part 3, 23.
[13] Ibid, 25.

proved to be less voluntary. On direction from his father, Wallace received notice of his suspension from the organization in 1965, just before Malcolm X's murder. After four years outside the fold, Wallace eventually reconciled with Muhammad and the NOI, though his position in the NOI clergy would only be restored in 1974, a year before his father's death.[14]

Although initially unsuccessful, Wallace Muhammad's rise to leadership, after Elijah Muhammad's death in 1975, demonstrated the ultimate success of Arab influence over the compromise position of Elijah Muhammad[15] in bringing Sunni Islam to the NOI. Following his father's death, a power struggle ensued for control over the organization. With factions emerging in support of both Wallace and Herbert, Elijah Muhammad's eldest son, the Nation of Islam lay at a crossroads. Herbert, having been mostly shielded from international influences as the manager of the NOI's sprawling business empire, and fully supporting the organizations longstanding theology and political practice, represented a move away from the slow process of Islamization towards a separatist Black theology focused on economic centralization.[16] With Wallace's eventual triumph over his elder brother, the Nation of Islam immediately began to transform into a more orthodox version of Islam. Along with promising further cooperation and diplomatic ties to the rest of the Muslim World, Wallace utilized the Qur'an as justification for many of the

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[14] Lincoln, *The Black Muslims in America,* 264. Marable, *Malcolm X,* 363-364, 381, 392.

[15] Specifically, Elijah Muhammad's willingness to incorporate more traditional Sunni practices into the NOI while still maintaing his position as a Prophet of Islam and continuing to posit Fard Muhammad as a messianic figure.

[16] "Memo From SAC, Chicago to FBI Director," 5/15/1968, FBI-COINTELPRO-Black Nationalist Hate Groups- 100-448006, Section 2.

organizational changes he began to make. In one notable example, Wallace liberalized the position of women within the organization in order to have the NOI more closely follow traditional Islamic scriptures.[17]

Furthering the NOI's move into mainstream Sunni Islam, Wallace began to increase cooperation with local Sunni mosques and organizations. Beginning in 1975, Wallace would lead a group of black Muslims to attend major events at local Mosques run by Arab immigrants. Encouraging his followers to integrate fully into local Sunni Mosques, Wallace's presence at Eid prayers at the Muslim Community Center, Chicago's largest immigrant Mosque, served as proof that he and his followers were willing to embrace Sunni Islam.[18]

Through cooperation with mainstream Sunni organizations, Wallace Muhammad helped advance international influence on his religious followers. For example, in September of 1975, Wallace invited Professor Ghafoor Ahmad and Dr. Fazlur Rahman Gunnawri[19] to address the "Council of Ministers" in Temple Two. As a member of the Pakistan National Assembly and the religious political party, Jamaat-e-Islami, Prof. Ahmad directed his talk towards an emphasis on the importance of building a religious state in Pakistan and in the United States. He also stressed a message of racial equality, pointing out the commonalities between black Muslims and the rest of the Muslim world.[20]

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[17] "Women At Work," *Nation of Islam in Action!*, 1976. Pamphlets Box 6: Folder: NOI, DePaul University Archives-Special Collections: Islam in America, Chicago, IL.
[18] "Discipline and Commitment, Chicago Call," *Impact* 6, no. 20 (1976): 15.
[19] Both were in Chicago in order to give speeches at various MSA events.
[20] "Nation of Islam Receives the Visiting Muslim Guests," *MSA News* 4, no. 9-10 (1975).

Undergoing a significant transformation in ideology and organization, the membership of the NOI had mixed feelings about the groups new direction. As will be discussed in greater detail later, for a younger generation of NOI members, the organization's longstanding attachment to separation and self-suffiiency held less appeal in an increasingly integrated America. By moving into greater harmony with Muslims of different ethnic and racial backgrounds, as well as by establishing stronger connections with Muslims abroad, these NOI members found the direction of the organization better aligned with their politics and identites.[21] In contrast, for many older NOI members, as well as those drawn to the religion's emphasis on independent black culture, these shifts left them questioning whether the future of the organization would include a place for their visions.[22]

For the Nation of Islam, the journey towards the mainstream of Sunni thought involved a series of shifts closely tied to their interactions with groups overseas. The influence of the Libyan government not withstanding, the reception of clerics from Arab states, the acquisition of large donations, and the access to education abroad, all served to reposition the NOI closer to the Sunni majority and further away from their separatist ideology. Although the process of Islamization started under the direction of Elijah Muhammad, as a new generation of leaders within the NOI emerged, in conjunction with Muslim leaders from Middle East, they pushed the organization to take the process further than Elijah Muhammad ever anticipated his followers going. As a result, by the mid-1970s, ideologically the NOI hardly resembled the organization led by Elijah Muhammad for the better portion of half a century.

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[21] Mamiya, "From Black Muslim to Bilalian," 148.
[22] Na'im Akbar, Oral History interview conducted by *HistoryMakers*, April 2002.

MSA, MCC, and Immigrant Muslims- Connecting with the Muslim World

Much like the NOI, immigrant Muslim organizations in Chicago also attempted to build connections across the globe through contact and cooperation with Islamic states. In particular, through inviting foreign scholars, clerics, and leaders to attend and participate in conventions held by Chicago's Muslim organizations, Chicago Muslims largely succeeded in creating greater harmony among American and foreign Muslims. Through their attendance and participation at MSA conventions, Chicago Muslims and foreign clerical scholars and faculty members at Islamic universities had the opportunity to directly engage one another to build cohesion in political and religious ideology. For example, at the Twelfth Annual Convention of the MSA, the Saudi government, along with other international Islamic organizations, played a critical role in the proceedings. Over the four-day convention from August 30-September 2, 1974, noted guests from the Middle-East and the rest of the Muslim World delivered speeches on a range of topics pertaining to the "Future of Muslims and Islam in North America."[23]

Apart from the presence of well-known clerical scholars, Mian Tufail Muhammad, of Pakistan, and Dr. Al Mahdi bin Abbosd, of Morocco, the most distinguished speakers at the convention in Toledo were from the Riyadh University. Funded by the Saudi government, Shaikh Abdullah Al-Fantookh, Dean of the College of Shariah, and Dr. Abdul Aziz Al-Fadda, President of the university, attended the convention as honored guests of the MSA. Appearing in order to give advice on

[23] "Twelfth MSA Annual Convention Focuses on the Future of Muslims and Islam in North America." *MSA News* 3, no. 10 (1974).

spreading Islam in America, as well as to gain a better understanding of the conditions of Muslims in the US, the MSA reported in their newsletter that Dr. Al-Fadda, "noted with great satisfaction the improvements of the work of the MSA and the growing feeling of native Muslims to improve the situation," during his convention address.[24] In reporting on and speaking to the MSA members present at the convention, the various foreign delegates helped shape the issues and ideas discussed by the organization's membership, contributing to the growing cohesion between Middle-Eastern and Islamic countries and American Muslim organizations.

Much like their participation in conventions held by national organizations such as the MSA, Arab countries shared in the planning and funding of conferences held by local Muslim groups in Chicago. When the MCC sponsored a four-day conference on "Muslim Community Development," from December 30, 1977 through January 2, 1978, they turned to the Middle East for material and intellectual support. With help from the Institute of Muslim Minority Affairs at the King Abdul Aziz University, in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia, the MCC successfully staged a series of lectures on a range of topics pertaining to American Muslims. The topics selected by the IMMA included a discussion of the concept of Islamic Community in non-Muslim society, the experience of early Muslim immigrants in North America, the role of the individual in community development, examining the value and status of Islamic education for children, and discussing the problems with securing funding for mosques, housing, and business enterprises for the Muslim community.[25] By

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[24] Ibid.
[25] "National Conference on Muslim Community Development: MCC invites papers," *Islamic Horizons* 6, no. 11 (1977).

establishing connections with the Saudi Arabian government, Chicago's largest Muslim community center succeeded in making inroads with a Muslim country dedicated towards unifying Muslims around the globe.

For local organizations like the MCC, interactions with foreign visitors from the Islamic world played a significant role in shaping community thought and practice. During important months in the Islamic calendar, the MCC would frequently request and host foreign clerical scholars and maulanas to deliver sermons and addresses to the center's membership. In one example, during Ramadan in November 1974, the MCC hosted three foreign maulanas and nine members of a Tablighi Jamaat[26] to feature through the month-long set of services. Of particular prominence, Maulana Hafiz Sheikh Rashid from Kuwait, along with two other Kuwaiti clerics were prominent speakers. Travelling from India's Alighar University, Dr. Irfan Ahmad Khan also addressed congregants at the Center during different services. With attendance at prayers and services ranging from one hundred to three hundred people per day, the foreign visitors managed to reach a broad swath of the community with their ideas.[27] Through the invitation of foreign visitors to lead prayers and services, community rooted institutions like the MCC contributed to the growing interconnectedness of the Arab and Islamic worlds with practicing Muslims in Chicago.

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[26] Tablighi Jamaat is an evangelical movement within Sunni Islam that is non-affiliated to particular schools of Sunni interpretation. Mostly arising out of South Asia, the members of a Tablighi Jamaat focused on proselytizing and returning to the fundamentals of the religion.

[27] "Chicago Muslim Community Center's Ramadan Activities," *MSA News* 3, no. 11 (1974).

Having established connections with the Muslim World, Chicago's Muslim organizations often brought prominent foreign guests to the city in order to deliver talks on a broad range of Islamic subjects. Working in conjunction with the Illinois Institute of Technology branch of the MSA, the MSA of Greater Chicago organized and made arrangements for Mohammad Nooruddin of Egypt to deliver a lecture on the Middle East conflict in front of a mixed audience of IIT students and Muslim community members, in December 1973.[28] Through such events, the commonality in religious identity allowed for Middle Eastern Muslims to provide their perspectives on the pressing foreign policy issues of the day. As a result, Muslims on both sides of the Atlantic had the opportunity to come to consensus on important political stances and policies.

Apart from exchanging ideas related to issues pertaining to the Middle East, in many instances, Chicago's Muslim organizations would bring foreign speakers to the city for the purpose of helping preserve and further the gains Islam had already made within the United States. One such speaker, Maulana Abul Hassan Ali Nadvi, from India, embarked on a national tour as a guest of the MSA, delivering lectures in front of a variety of different audiences. In Chicago, on June 14, 1977, Nadvi gave separate talks to Arab, Urdu-Speaking, and women's groups. During his speech to the collection of women at the MSA of Greater Chicago, Nadvi instructed them to make sure that their children grow-up to love Islam. He emphasized to all that the un-Islamic path is the easier path in the United States and needs to be avoided.[29]

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[28] "In the News" *MSA News* 3, no. 1 (1974).
[29] "Maulana Abul Hassan Ali Nadvi visits North America: MSA Chapters Host Lecture Programs," *Islamic Horizons* 6, no. 7 (1977).

Invited guests from the Muslim World also come to give advice on how to grow the faith through greater religious cohesiveness within the United States. On April 4th, 1974, the MCC hosted Sulayman Mufassir, managing editor of Al-Ittihad.[30] After surveying the facilities the MCC utilized, Mufassir delivered a lecture at the Center, emphasizing the need for greater cooperation and harmony between the organization and other Muslim groups in the city of Chicago.[31]

Moving beyond the realm of religious and political ideology, Muslim organizations in Chicago also brought guests from the Muslim World to deliver talks on a range of intellectual issues, in an effort to build greater cohesiveness of thought amongst Muslims of different ideologies. In one example, MSA of Greater Chicago, in cooperation with local branches and the MCC, brought Prof. Mohammed Noor-Un-Nabi, of India, to give a series of lectures at University of Illinois-Chicago, Northern Illinois University, and at the MCC. The talks focused on a discussion of comparative philosophy placing Al-Ghazali[32] in conversation with Descartes.[33] Although these lectures were more academic in nature, the discussion of philosophy still centered on the ideas of creating cohesiveness among divergent groups of Muslims. Through such talks from speakers coming from abroad, Chicago and foreign Muslims attempted to help spread unity both within the country and transnationally.

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[30] The national newspaper of the UAE.
[31] "Lectures on Islam," *MSA News* 3, no. 5 (1974).
[32] A Persian philosopher and Muslim theologian, as well as a noted Sufi, Al-Ghazali's philosophy helped bridge many of the gaps between Sufis, many Shiite, and mainstream Sunni thought.
[33] "Visiting Professor Speaks on Islamic Philosophy," *Islamic Horizons* 6, no. 1 (1977).

Although most frequently American Muslim organizations brought guests to deliver speeches and interact with their members, on occasion, leaders of Islamic associations from the Muslim World would initiate the process of strengthening bonds with their American counterparts through state sponsored travel to the US. As part of its "International Visitor Program," in February 1977, the United States State Department brought Chumaidi S. Romas, the President of the Islamic University Student's Association of Indonesia and Chairman of the Islamic Student Association of Southeast Asia, to the United States. In the US, Romas toured the MSA Headquarters in Plainfield, Indiana, and met with the organization's leadership before making his return to Indonesia, where he was studying at the State Islamic Institute of Jogjakarta. Through meeting with Romas, the MSA leadership managed to solidify its connections with the Islamic State of Indonesia, opening the potential for future cooperation and assistance.

In contrast to simply receiving guests in the US, Chicago Muslims also sent delegations from the US to Arab countries in order to immerse them in Islamic culture. For example, in February 1974, the Muslim World League, an organization created and funded by the Saudi Arabian Government for the purpose of propagating the spread of Islam throughout the world, invited a delegation from the MSA to attend its international conference held in Jeddah on April 6-10, 1974.[34] In a similar vein, the Islamic University of Imam Muhammad ibn Saud, Faculty of Social Science, Riyadh, held an Islamic Geographical Conference in the summer of 1978. The conference examined the spread and distribution of Muslims around the world.

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[34] "MSA invited to attend conference in Jeddah," *MSA News* 3, no. 3-4 (1974).

For the conference, the Saudi Arabian university solicited participants from major US cities, including Chicago, particularly seeking out social scientists.[35] By engaging in conferences in Saudi Arabia, American Muslim organizations and the participants they sent helped solidify ties with the Saudi Arabian government, helping pave the way for future flows of people and money between the two groups.

With lines of connection established, American Muslim organizations strengthened their ties to Muslim countries by working with them in efforts to reach out to other Muslim-minority nations and assisting in Islamic proselytizing abroad. As President of the MSA, Yaqub Mirza made a trip to Nigeria in January of 1978, in order to meet with African Muslim groups along with prominent leaders from a number of Arab nations. As a guest of the West African Muslim Youth (WAMY), Mirza engaged in discussions surrounding the issues of colonization and the process of Islamization for African nations.[36] In another instance, the MSA dispatched a representative to visit a group of Muslim organizations in Trinidad during the winter of 1979. Having hosted Muslims from Trinidad and Tobago yearly since the 1974 MSA Annual Convention, the MSA had been attempting to help proselytizing efforts in the West Indies by sending Islamic literature and representatives. On his trip to the University of West Indies, Br. Mahmoud gave a series of lectures, drawing on his status as a "learned-experienced brother," and met with more than eleven different West Indian Islamic organizations, including a branch of the WCIW.[37] Through

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[35] "News in Brief: Geographic Conference, Riyadh," *Islamic Horizons* 7, no. 5 (1978).
[36] "Br. Yaqub's Report on Visit to Nigeria," *Islamic Horizons* 7, no. 5 (1978).
[37] "The Headquarters: Br. Mahmoud's Visit to Trinidad and Tobago," *Islamic Horizons* 8, no. 2 (1979).

working with leaders of the Muslim World in spreading Islam to non-Muslim nations, organizations like the MSA helped solidify international ties in an effort to build a transnational Muslim community.

Along with travelling to non-Islamic nations, American Muslim groups strengthened their connections with Muslim-minority countries by hosting the leaders of their Islamic movements. In one example, on March 16th, 1977, the MSA of Greater Chicago welcomed a South African Muslim delegation from the Islamic Propagation Center in Durbin, South Africa. The delegation comprised of three scholars of religion, Ahmed Deedat, Ismail Musa Baksh, and Saleh Muhammad. With 150 people on hand to attend the greeting, the MSA of Greater Chicago provided a forum for the set of African Muslims to lecture on comparative religions. In one lecture, Ahmed Deedat presented an in-depth comparison of the religious doctrines of Islam and Christianity.[38] Being outside of the Muslim World, rather than coming from a position of power and influence, the South African delegation relied upon the leadership of Chicago Muslims in order to build bonds of religious and political solidarity through their interactions with the MSA of Greater Chicago.

Arab Money- Scholarships, Employment, and Donations

For Chicago Muslims, cooperating with Arab countries provided key financial benefits that helped provide opportunities for individuals and organizations to aid in the growth of their communities. Aiming to help the spread of the religion in the United States, Islamic states would often set aside money for scholarship programs to

[38] "Lecture on Islam and Christianity" *Islamic Horizons*, Vo. 6, no. 4 (1977).

directly reach individual American Muslims. Beginning as early as 1963, a number of Arab countries started openly recruiting Muslims from Chicago to come study Islam at universities in the Middle East. Upon his meeting with Wallace Muhammad in November 1975, Anwar Sadat pledged twelve scholarships for "Bilalian" (black) Muslims to study Islam in Egypt.[39] The following year, pleased with the changes that Wallace Muhammad and the NOI, now known as the World Community of Islam in the West, were making, the Saudi Arabian government earmarked seventeen new scholarships for "Bilalian" Muslims to study in Riyadh. Within this program, the Saudi Government specified that ten of the scholarships would be held for women under a program designed by the Directorate of Girls Education.[40] Expressly interested in growing the global community of Sunni Muslims, the scholarship programs of both the Saudis and Egyptians represented the breaking down of theological barriers between Black Muslims and the rest of the Islamic world.

While Black Muslims continued to successfully make inroads with Arab countries, by the 1970s, immigrant Sunni organizations in Chicago began to increase their efforts to attract the attention of Muslim countries, in order to gain access to similar opportunities for religious education. In 1976, the Saudi Arabian Department of Education announced that separate from their programs for "Bilalian" Muslims, they would begin a scholarship opportunity that would allow twenty "indigenous

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[39] "Cover Story: Chief Minister and President Sadat," *Nation of Islam in Action!* 1976, 4. Pamphlets Box 6: Folder: NOI, DePaul University Archives- Special Collections: Islam in America, Chicago, IL.

[40] "Report of the Department of Education, Publications and Information" 1976. MSA Box 1: Folder: Department of Education, Publications and Information: Reports 1976-1977, DePaul University Archives- Special Collections: Islam in America, Chicago, IL.

American Muslims" to study in Riyadh at Imam Muhammad University.[41] At the same time, the Islamic University of Medina publicly pledged to admit eight hundred non-Saudi students on scholarship in order to further spread education and proper understanding of Islam. In their pledge, the university made special note of their desire to admit ten new students from America.[42] For many immigrant members of Muslim organizations in the United States, foreign educational and financial support was critical to the growth and sustainability of Islam in America. Members of the MSA commonly noted their fear that their children had no outlet for a proper Islamic education in the United States and could lose their Islamic heritage. Some members encouraged "conducting private schools and clinics" or "set-up educational facilities for kids," but worried that these measures alone would not be enough.[43] By utilizing the scholarship programs offered by Islamic countries, immigrant Muslims gained an opportunity to stop their children from losing the religious ideologies that they had brought to the United States.

In contrast to the American conception of Saudi Arabia and the rest of the Arab world providing opportunities simply for men and children, Chicago's Muslim women also took advantage of the Saudi Arabian government's interest in building stronger Islamic roots in the United States. In particular, some immigrant Muslim

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[41] "Report of the Department of Education, Publications and Information" 1976. MSA Box 1: Folder: Department of Education, Publications and Information: Reports 1976-1977, DePaul University Archives- Special Collections: Islam in America, Chicago, IL.
[42] "Situation Report: Saudi Arabia," *Impact* 6, no. 13 (1976): 3.
[43] "Questionnaire," MSA Box 1: Folder: Task Force Questionnaire Responses, February 1978, DePaul University Archives- Special Collections: Islam in America, Chicago, IL. "Some Reflections on Islamic Education in a Non-Islamic Atmosphere," *Islamic Horizons* 7, no. 11 (1978). "Muslimah: School for Muslim Children- A New Approach," *Islamic Horizons* 8, no. 4 (1979).

women took part in a series of educational programs, coordinated by the Saudi Arabian government, for the express purpose of educating Muslim women in the United States. In one example, working through a local Mosque in Gary, Indiana, the Saudi Arabian College of Education accepted two Chicagoland Muslim women, Saudah Almaas Abdul Malik and Kareemah Abdul Raheem, for study in the winter of 1977. Both women enrolled in courses in Arabic language and Islamic studies that lasted for one calendar year.[44] Through forming a partnership in such programs, both Chicago Muslim women and Arab Muslim nations gained considerable benefits, as the women gained opportunities to travel abroad and study the Qur'an under premier religious scholars, while the Saudi Arabian government benefitted through expanding their reach into American Muslim communities, moving past creating connections only with men.

For many Arab countries, providing educational opportunities to Muslims in the United States fell within a more global proselytizing push. During the 1970s, many Arab governments attempted to reach out to Muslim-minorities abroad to help them educate and spread the religion in their home countries. As a result, through international events, the influence of Arab scholarship programs could be seen even in the interaction between many non-Arab Muslims. For example, at the 14th Annual Convention of the MSA, members of the organization, as well as a number of foreign guests, met to discuss the issues facing Muslims in North America and across the globe. African American convert, Jihad Abdul Rahim, describing his experiences at the convention, included mention of meeting with Hajj Daud CM Ting, a Chinese

[44] "First American Sisters," *Islamic Horizons* 6, no. 2 (1977).

visitor to the United States that had been sent from Saudi Arabia. Ting, along with a small group of fellow Chinese Muslims, was in the process of completing study at Al-Azhar University in Cairo.[45] Much like Akbar Muhammad with the Nation of Islam, through his interactions with Rahim, Ting acted as a conduit for Egyptian interpretations of Islamic scholarship, without the need to send Egyptian clerics to the United States.

Beyond finding opportunities for study in Arab countries, American Muslims also attempted to utilize their growing connections with the Muslim World in order to find both temporary and long-term employment. Working in conjunction with the MSA, the Saudi Arabian Education Mission placed a series of ads in *Islamic Horizons* advertising for various positions, including a job as an Education Advisor. Explicitly a short-term appointment, the Education Advisor was to work with university students in Saudi Arabia, advising them on their academic careers.[46] Filling the position with an American Muslim, the MSA helped find employment for its members by branching out into its global networks. Conversely, through such positions, the Saudi Arabian government was able to strengthen its ties to American Islamic organizations while also increasing the scope of its influence on American Muslims through having some of them live in the Islamic state for a limited period of time before returning to the US.

Despite the notable affects of clerics and scholarships, no single factor impacted the character of Islam in Chicago more than the direct solicitation of

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[45] Jihad Abdul Rahim, "Impressions of the Annual Convention," *Islamic Horizons* 5, no. 8 (1976).
[46] "Saudi Arabian Educational Mission in Need of Student Advisors," *Islamic Horizons* 7, no. 10 (1978).

monetary donations from Islamic states. For immigrants to the United States from the Islamic World, the Muslim Student Association existed as the largest unified Muslim organization. Although the organization raised a reasonable amount of its funds domestically, they relied on foreign philanthropy to cover much of their operational expenses. As such, a significant portion of the group's income came from a diverse array of international sources, including Middle Eastern governments and private donors. Although exact figures are not available, by 1978, with an operational budget of nearly one million dollars per annum, the MSA estimated that they could survive no longer than one year without the support they received from the Middle East.[47]

In order to secure these funds, American Muslims would travel overseas in order to meet with potential donor organizations and individuals. For the MSA, the leadership played the main role of meeting with and convincing potential benefactors to provide their financial assistance. In 1976, after launching the North American Islamic Trust, a financial instrument designed to help American Muslims invest Islamically,[48] to manage investments and raise money for the MSA, NAIT General Manager, Jamal Al-Barziniji, embarked on a series of trips to the Arab world in order to solicit money from investors and donors. On the overseas trips, he would stay as a guest of foreign donors while making the case for them to increase or continue their support of the MSA.[49] Taking a more centralized role in the process, from September through October of 1979, the MSA Executive Committee sent a three-member team

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[47] "NAIT's Investments are Financially Sound: Financial Independence Doesn't Exclude Seeking Donations," *Islamic Horizons* 7, no. 2 (1978).
[48] North American Islamic Trust (to be discussed in greater detail in chapter 5).
[49] "NAIT Invests in Solar Energy: Housing Project, Stock Market Shares Contemplated; MSA Detractors Lack Character," *Islamic Horizons* 7, no. 3 (1978).

of, Mozaffar Partowmah, Essam Isma'el, and Shamsuddin Abidin to spend eight weeks in Kuwait and Bahrain delivering lectures and exhibits to foreign leaders, Emirs, and private benefactors. Making their trip possible was a network of MSA alumni living in Kuwait and Bahrain that helped provide accommodation and put the team into contact with potential donors.[50]

Through foreign aid, the MSA managed to play a vital role in tying indigenous Muslim communities to immigrant groups during the course of the 1970s. In one example, in 1971, the MSA utilized money they received from domestic and foreign supporters in order to purchase the Masjid Al-Amin from a group of African American Muslims located in Gary, Indiana. The Sunni African Americans who had been previously running the mosque sold the facility to the MSA due to the dire financial straits their organization had fallen into. Having been successful in winning international support for their cause, the MSA purchased the mosque intent on joining forces with the previous owners. Serving as the national headquarters for the MSA, the Gary mosque fused immigrant Islam with the existing black membership. By relocating the entirely immigrant Muslim officers and staff of the MSA to Gary after taking control of the location, the MSA began guiding the theological and organizational direction of the mosque while allowing a small number of the mosque's former executives to join the MSA's board. Located just outside the Chicago suburbs, the Gary mosque drew followers from the industrial Indiana town as well as Muslims from the southeast suburbs of Chicago.[51]

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[50] "MSA's Fund Raising Team is Back from Overseas," *Islamic Horizons* 8, no. 10-11 (1979).
[51] Iqbal Unus, Oral History Interview conducted by author, January 5, 2012.

By incorporating multiple Muslim communities into their organization, the MSA attempted to build cohesiveness through a brand of Islam palatable to its foreign donors, and also to Muslims in a wide range of communities within Chicago. As the MSA expanded, it increasingly feared the disunity of the Muslim movement in the United States. In response, they began to actively teach a specific interpretation of Islam to American Muslims in order to create orthodoxy domestically. To that end, the MSA founded the Islamic Teaching Center, funded primarily through international donations from Saudi Arabia and Egypt, in order to serve the MSA membership and reach out to Black Muslims.[52] Through this support from abroad, the MSA succeeded in growing their organization's membership and scope to incorporate indigenous and immigrant Muslims under the same umbrella.

As the MSA increasingly unified its religious and ideological moorings with those of Arab and Islamic states, their message often demanded a stricter adherence to traditional Muslim values than some culturally focused Muslim organizations. As a result, despite their attempts to create unity within American Muslim communities, they occasionally came into conflict with other groups of Muslims. In one example that will be discussed in greater detail in chapter 6, the MSA published a series of articles in *Islamic Horizons*, condemning the behavior and social practices of the Federation of Islamic Associations. The FIA, mostly comprised of second and third generation American Muslims, held series of events to help build community cohesion and allow a meeting place for single Muslims. The MSA severely criticized

[52] "MSA Da'wah Centre," *Impact* 7, no. 16 (1977): 15.

the FIA for allowing dancing and listening to popular music at their events.[53] In condemning the behavior of the FIA, the MSA staked out a more conservative position on the proper role of men and women at community events and what constituted proper Islamic behavior.

For the Nation of Islam, the continued financial support of Arab states allowed the organization to expand its facilities and holdings during its numerous transformations in religious ideology and mission. In 1972, while travelling around the Muslim World, Muhammad Ali visited Libya and met with Colonel Gaddafi. Gaddafi, having little interest in building a unified Islamic religion, did desire to make connections with African American Muslims stemming from his sense of racial solidarity and shared Muslim identity. Working on behalf of the NOI, Ali successfully negotiated a $4,000,000, interest free, loan.[54] The purpose of the funds was to allow the NOI to purchase a site for their new headquarters on Chicago's south side. Using the money, the NOI acquired the building of a Greek Orthodox Church on 74th street, converting it into the Mosque Maryam, which would remain their headquarters until the late 1970s.[55] As the NOI expanded, it continued to solicit foreign funds for construction projects, receiving one million dollars from the Emir of

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[53] "Letters to the Editor: F.I.A. Convention: Embarrassing and Disappointing," *Islamic Horizons* 7, no. 10 (1978). "Comments," *Islamic Horizons* 7, no. 10 (1978).
[54] Ali developed a complex relationship with Muammar Gaddafi. Along with soliciting funds for Islamic projects in the United States, Ali attempted to build a business connection for funding of fights and setting up of future collaboration. For more on the topic see: Thomas Houser, *Muhammad Ali: His Life and Times* (New York: Simon and Schuster Books, 1991), 391.
[55] "Libya Aid to U.S. Blacks Questioned," *Chicago Tribune*, June 15, 1972, A14. "Ali tells of Libya aid to Chicago blacks," *Chicago Tribune*, January 8, 1973, 7.

Chargah,[56] in 1976, intended for financing of a new mosque and an additional $250,000 to aid the Sister Clara Muhammad schools.[57] Under Wallace's direction, having converted the Islamic education provided at the Sister Clara Muhammad schools to orthodox Sunni Islam, the donation of the Emir helped further the creation of a unified Islamic theology among African American Muslims in Chicago.

As the NOI continued its movement into mainstream Islam, it increasingly turned to the Arab world to aid them in their plans. In 1977, Wallace Muhammad's World Community of Islam in the West laid out plans to build a $16,000,000 mosque that would be the largest in the Western Hemisphere. Planned for the Woodlawn neighborhood in Chicago, the mosque came as part of a larger urban renewal project that featured housing, parks and commerce. The WCIW, having already raised a portion of the money from their membership and businesses, declared that they would be able to raise at least $5,000,000 from Islamic countries around the world.[58] Through these donations, Wallace's mission of further distancing his organization from its Black Separatist past would be complete. The new mosque that the WCIW would go on to build was an integrated facility that welcomed members of the Sunni faith from all ethnic groups. Through the donations, Wallace's organization was able to complete its final transformation to the Sunni form of Islam that its Arab supporters had long hoped for.

Although the majority of the donations that Chicago's Muslim groups received from the Arab World aimed towards bringing greater unity in religious

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[56] Chargah is one of the Emirates comprising the UAE.
[57] "Sheik Gives $1 million to Muslims here," *Chicago Tribune*, May 5, 1976, E14.
[58] Susan Feyder, "Chicago to get $16-million mosque," *Chicago Tribune*, October 16, 1977, W_B1G.

thought and practice between Chicago Muslims and foreign nations, notable exceptions do exist. By 1985, Louis Farrakhan, having cultivated his international contacts, successfully solicited a $5,000,000 loan (though only an estimated $3,000,000 was ever received) from Libyan President Muammar Gaddafi. The loan allowed the re-constituted, separatist, Nation of Islam to cover many of its outstanding debts, and gave it the ability to pay for its new mosque construction.[59] By strengthening the NOI, Gaddafi's donation allowed for easier separation of previously unified black Muslim groups within the United States. In contrast to the pattern of philanthropy that existed throughout the 1960s and 1970s, Gaddafi's aid to Farrakhan can best be understood through the General's desire to maintain racial solidarity over any desire to build religious unity. Due to his unique ideological goals, Gaddafi's actions helped secure the future of a particularistic doctrine that eschewed the Sunni orthodoxy that had been growing for years, partly due to the help of other Middle Eastern Islamic states.[60]

Conclusion- Providing Material and Intellectual Support

Chicago Muslims understood and appreciated the benefits of their alliances with Islamic states in the Middle East. In return, they stood behind the nations and leaders that had profoundly affected them. Despite the overwhelming national

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[59] "The Honorable Louis Farrakhan: Minister for Progress." Pamphlets Box 8, Folder: NOI, DePaul University Archives- Special Collections: Islam in America, Chicago, IL.

[60] Although the Nation of Islam held a favorable view of Gaddafi, most Sunni Muslims maintained a negative opinion of the Libyan dictator. In particular, Gaddafi's belief in melding Islamic theology with the tenets of socialism elicited strong criticism from Muslim groups in the United States, particularly the MSA, who accused the Libyan dictator of corrupting the doctrines of Islam.

distrust for many of the countries and leaders of the Islamic World, Chicago's Muslims lent their private and public support. Although unpopular and counterproductive in the American political landscape, Farrakhan's 2011 defense of Muammar Gaddafi fits into a larger picture of American Muslim cooperation and conformity with the rest of the Muslim World.

For the multiple and varied Muslim communities in Chicago, forging connections with nations and leaders of the Muslim World played a critical role in shaping the theological, political, and ideological identities of the many organizations and their followers. By enlisting the help of clerics, Chicago Muslims and Islamic states helped create greater unity among disparate groups and helped tie American Muslims to their counterparts abroad. Through reaching out to Islamic states to fund scholarships, attend conferences, and provide speakers to deliver lectures, Chicago Muslims gained valuable opportunities and knowledge to help solidify their communities' futures. Finally, through soliciting donations of substantial sums of money, Chicago's Muslim communities acquired the resources necessary to sustain and expand their institutions and organizations, in order to allow Islam to flourish in the city.

In doing so, Chicago Muslims, with the help of their foreign partners, strengthened Islam in America by paradoxically forging stronger bonds between divergent communities, while simultaneously allowing others to thrive independently.

Chapter 4:
Islamic Chicago and the US Government

On February 6, 1992, W.D. Muhammad appeared before the United States Senate. Making his appearance unique was that instead of appearing to testify in front of a Senate committee or hearing, Muhammad's appearance was requested to highlight his achievements in the eyes of the US government. Delivering the invocation at the beginning of the Senate's session, W.D. Muhammad became the first Muslim in American history to receive such an honor. Over the span of the next year, Muhammad would accept invitations to deliver an address on the floor of the Georgia State Senate, as well as offering an Islamic prayer at an interfaith prayer service hosted by President Bill Clinton.[1] Through the distinction of being the first Muslim to be granted such appearances, the US government, on multiple levels, solidified W.D. Muhammad's position as the most prominent and respected Muslim religious leader in the country. What made Muhammad's status in the early 1990s so remarkable, however, was the contrast with his position in the eyes of the government as little as twenty years earlier.

As one of Elijah Muhammad's sons, W.D. Muhammad held a prominent role in the Nation of Islam for much of the 1960s and early 1970s. Although the NOI was the largest Muslim organization in the country, the US government primarily viewed it outside of its stated religious identity. Comprised almost exclusively of African Americans, the NOI poised a significant threat to the country in the eyes of the federal government. In the context of the Civil Rights Movement and the beginnings of Black Power, the federal government viewed any organization preaching black

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[1] Ahmed, *Journey into America*, 176.

empowerment to be a serious threat to national security. Furthermore, the NOI's emphasis on the historical and ongoing wrongs committed by the American government against black Americans struck fear into the heart of a government that was increasingly wary of anti-American rhetoric in the context of Cold War geopolitics. Labeling the NOI as one of a number of "Black Nationalist Hate Groups," the federal government utilized any tool at their disposal to attack and discredit Elijah Muhammad and his family.

For W.D. Muhammad, the federal government's attempts to persecute him began well before the specter of Black Power loomed over the country. In 1960, the federal government arrested Wallace for draft evasion.[2] Like his father, many years earlier, Wallace refused induction into the United States Army and instead chose to serve time in jail. Imprisoned in the Sandstone Federal Correctional Institution from 1960-1963, Muhammad's prison term and refusal to serve his country played a large role in the federal government's initial mistrust and animosity towards him.

Over the span of the next twenty years, W.D. Muhammad's status in the eyes of the federal government underwent a dramatic transformation. Well before giving the invocation before the Senate in 1992, Muhammad's relationship and interaction with different government agencies put him on the path to becoming an important ally of the state. With evolving priorities stemming from changes in domestic politics and foreign affairs, the federal government found an important partner in W.D. Muhammad. Aiming to alter the NOI's ideological and organizational trajectory,

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[2] "Try Muslim Leader's Son on Draft Evasion Charge," *Chicago Defender*, February 8, 1960.

Muhammad and the government entered into a complex partnership, allowing for the accomplishment of their shared goals.

On a broader scale, Muhammad's relationship with the federal government reflected a larger story for black communities, throughout Chicago and around the country, and their interactions with federal and local governments. Determined to protect the nation from the threat of Black Nationalism, the federal government attempted to utilize the FBI to infiltrate and neutralize the NOI. Harnessing the efforts of the government, W.D. Muhammad, his supporters, and like-minded members of the NOI, followed in a pattern visible across the country during the Black Freedom Movement. Much as black activists during the Black Freedom Movement demanded that federal agencies use their resources to help them combat the power of both clandestine and official white supremacists on the local level, so too did a faction of Black Muslims attempt to utilize FBI resources to help them gain access to power within their own community. By the 1970s, Black Power activists around the country had begun to reach out to form allies with people of color, as well as taking to the polls to harness the power of the ballot box to hold government officials accountable to black interests. Similarly, by allying with federal agencies like the FBI, members of the NOI that favored embracing the rights, privileges, and responsibilities entailed in emphasizing American citizenship, as well as participation in broader American communities, succeeded in seizing the power necessary to transform the organization.

Apart from the NOI, immigrant Muslim groups also entered into a complex and evolving relationship with the government on both a national and local level.

During the 1960s and 1970s, the US used the power of its intelligence agencies to control and alter the strength and direction of immigrant Muslim groups within the context of growing American involvement in Middle Eastern politics. However, while government policies interfered with immigrant Muslim communities, Chicago's immigrant Muslims took an active role in working with and against federal and local governments in order to help determine the future of their own communities and institutions. Involving themselves in large numbers and in a unified manner in electoral politics, Chicago's Muslim immigrants harnessed the power of their growing population and shared experiences with government harassment and interference to make key alliances. Having a newfound economic and social impact in the city, increasingly established and growing Muslim immigrant communities, during the late 1960s and 1970s, partnered with black Muslims and drew the attention of prominent black leaders to make their first attempt at affecting governmental policy towards Muslim interests at home and abroad.

Taken in total, Chicago Muslims, in the 1960s and 1970s, radically altered the ways in which they interacted with their government. By pressuring elected officials, utilizing the power of the ballot box, and allying themselves with federal intelligence agencies, Chicago Muslims increasingly gained a measure of control in shaping the affects of government in the development of their communities. Through their involvement with power holders at multiple levels, Chicago's Muslim communities engaged in a complex relationship with the American government that helped reshape the ideologies and politics of the city's Muslim population as they approached the 1980s.

The NOI and COINTELPRO

Without a doubt, during the 1960s and 1970s, the interaction between government intelligence agencies and the Nation of Islam had a profound impact on the direction of the NOI. Utilizing a diverse array of techniques and practices, the Federal Bureau of Investigation undertook a multi-year project of intelligence gathering, agent recruiting, and sabotage, that resulted in fundamental changes in the outlook and aims of the NOI. Over the span of a decade, beginning in 1966 and ending in 1975, the FBI attempted to reshape the NOI so that it would abandon its strain of Black Power and Black Nationalism. Although the government ultimately realized some of their goals, the story of the NOI's relationship with the FBI is better understood as one of success for a faction within the NOI. Utilizing the power and resources of the FBI, the faction supporting mainstream Islam within the organization, led by Wallace Muhammad, benefited greatly from allying themselves with the state. Through their complex relationship with the federal government, Wallace and his supporters played a critical role in taking over and reshaping the NOI. In dropping the organizations Black Separatist ideological underpinnings and Black Nationalist goals, the NOI, under Wallace's leadership, did quell many of the government's fears about the organization. However, by developing a new ideology closely tied to Sunni Islam, while emphasizing interracial solidarity and political activism, Wallace helped move the NOI closer to the main currents of the Black Freedom Movement that existed during the 1970s.

Beginning as early as the 1950s, the FBI began transitioning from a program of surveillance towards a coordinated series of operations aimed at limiting the strength and scope of the NOI. Before the institution of the more expansive Counter-Intelligence Program (COINTELPRO) in the late 1960s, the FBI initiated a smaller-scale counter-intelligence plan from their Chicago offices. Gaining approval in 1962 for a "high level" program, the Bureau attempted "a nationwide counterintelligence program which showed fallacies and weaknesses of the NOI to the public." Aiming to keep the activities of the program shielded, the FBI avoided more obvious forms of smearing the names of leaders of the organization in the newspapers and in public, and instead focused on highlighting some of the organization's legitimate struggles and failures. Executing this strategy for much of the 1960s, the FBI notably followed NOI leaders like Elijah Muhammad and Malcolm X across the country and even in their international travel. Noting the presence of FBI agents monitoring his activity on his trip to Mecca, Malcolm X remained a target of the FBI even after his departure from the organization.[3] Continuing this initial program into 1968, the defection and subsequent death of Malcolm X led to a significant reduction in Bureau actions, in large part due to the public's strong negative reaction to the NOI in the aftermath of the event.[4] While these early monitoring operations of the FBI remained ongoing for a number of years, the Bureau would begin the transition to more active forms of interference with the coming of COINTELPRO in 1968.

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[3] Marable, *Malcolm X*, 424.
[4] "Memo to FBI Director from SAC, Chicago." COINTELPRO- Black Nationalist Hate Groups- 100-448006, Sec. 5. 27 November 1968.

Starting in 1968, FBI Director J. Edgar Hoover enacted a new program of action for the agency, allowing greater leeway to pursue clandestine action against organizations and people deemed by the Bureau to be threats to the United States. One of the main targets for the new Counter-Intelligence Program of the FBI were organizations espousing radical political ideologies that fit within a wider category of Black Power or Black Nationalism. Claiming that black radicalism was deeply linked to communism, Hoover made stopping "Black Nationalist Hate Groups" a top priority for the agency. Explaining the purpose of the new program, Hoover wrote, "The purpose of their new counterintelligence endeavor is to expose, disrupt, misdirect, discredit, or otherwise neutralize the activities of Black Nationalist, hate-type organizations and groupings, their leadership, spokesmen, membership, and supporters, and to counter their propensity for violence and civil disorder." Furthermore, COINTELPRO endeavored to prevent Black Nationalist groups from gaining "respectability" from "responsible blacks," white sympathizers, and "radical blacks." Hoping to kill recruitment of young black men to these organizations, Hoover and the FBI hoped to extinguish the threat of Black Nationalism once and for all. Concerned with the NOI's strong business endeavors, anti-white rhetoric, and connection to "pro-Arab" groups, the FBI placed Elijah Muhammad's organization near the top of its list of targets.[5]

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[5] "Letter to J.E. Hoover," COINTELPRO- Special Operations File: 105-174254, Espionage File: 65-69260, v.1, s.1. 9 May 1968. "Memo from SAC, Philadelphia to FBI Director," COINTELPRO- Special Operations File: 105-174254, Espionage File: 65-69260, v.1, s.5. 11 August 1970. "Memo to SAC, Albany from Director FBI," COINTELPRO- Black Nationalist Hate Groups- 100-448006. S.1, 25 August 1967. "Memo to SAC, Albany from FBI Director," COINTELPRO- Black Nationalist Hate Groups- 100-448006. S.1, 4 March 1968.

Despite receiving mixed evaluations on the threat the NOI posed to the country from several FBI agents, Hoover proceeded to formulate and implement a plan of action to disrupt the activities and direction of the organization. In its initial assessment of the NOI, many field agents in cities around the country advised Hoover that the NOI was neither militant nor posed a significant threat to American safety, even going as far as to claim that the NOI was in some cases a stabilizing force for black Americans. Arguing that the NOI was not particularly integrated into the larger Black Power movement and had failed to make alliances with any important civil rights leaders, even after securing a meeting between Elijah Muhammad and Martin Luther King Jr., in February 1966, a number of FBI agents recommended the agency forego any direct action against the group.[6] Although many voices in the field echoed these sentiments, Hoover followed the recommendations of a different set of agents who chose to highlight the potential threat to safety the NOI posed, due to its "hate indoctrinated philosophy" and its ability to organize a large number of followers.[7] Noting that Malcolm X had become "the martyr of the movement (Black Nationalism) today," Hoover worried about the NOI producing a new "Black Messiah" that would lead African Americans in revolt against the United States.

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[6] "Memo to FBI Director from SAC, Baltimore" COINTELPRO- Black Nationalist Hate Groups- 100-448006. S.1, 8 March 1968. "Memo to FBI Director from SAC, Chicago," COINTELPRO- Black Nationalist Hate Groups- 100-448006. S.1. 21 March 1968. "Memo to FBI Director from SAC, Pittsburgh," COINTELPRO- Black Nationalist Hate Groups- 100-448006. S.1, 28 March 1968. "Memo to FBI Director from SAC, Denver," COINTELPRO- Black Nationalist Hate Groups- 100-448006. S.1, 5 April 1968. "Memo to FBI Director from SAC, Richmond," COINTELPRO- Black Nationalist Hate Groups- 100-448006. S.1. 1 April 1968.

[7] "Memo to FBI Director from SAC, Cleveland," COINTELPRO- Black Nationalist Hate Groups- 100-448006. S.1. 3 April 1968. "Memo to FBI Director from SAC, Miami," COINTELPRO- Black Nationalist Hate Groups- 100-448006. S.1. 2 April 1968.

Pointing out that Elijah Muhammad was probably too old to be such a leader, Hoover focused on the younger generation of up and coming NOI leaders.[8]

In order for the Bureau's plan to work, they needed to successfully recruit a cadre of informants and agents to infiltrate the NOI. After gaining an initial group of agents working in the field in Chicago, the Bureau's ongoing recruitment efforts helped bring in newer and more numerous assets. In one instance, in 1970, the Chicago office reported successfully procuring the services of four new operatives to help with efforts of information gathering and sabotage.[9]

For the NOI, the FBI's large army of operatives damaged their cohesiveness and public status within Chicago through their direct sabotage techniques. Utilizing a variety of tactics, the FBI attempted to sow division and mistrust between members of the NOI's leadership. Through their letter-writing ploy, the FBI greatly weakened the Chicago-based leadership of the NOI's control over their satellite chapters. Often pretending to be common members of NOI mosques, the FBI would send letters to important officials at the NOI's Chicago headquarters, including Elijah Muhammad, tipping them off to embezzlement or impropriety from the leaders of other the organization's other mosques. In one example, the Special Agent in Charge of Tampa informed Director Hoover that they sent a letter from "an anonymous sister" citing the head of the Tampa mosque for embezzling funds. As a result, the Tampa minister lost his position, despite the charges being baseless. Along similar lines, the SAC New York had his agents distribute a propaganda book to members of the NOI

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[8] "Memo to SAC, Albany from FBI Director," COINTELPRO- Black Nationalist Hate Groups- 100-448006. S.1, 4 March 1968.
[9] "Memo to FBI Director from SAC, Chicago," COINTELPRO- Special Operations File: 105-174254, Espionage File: 65-69260, V.1, S.5, Reel 1, 3 September 1970.

in New York, chronicling financial improprieties of their leaders, including charges of NOI leaders purchasing "$200 suits." As a result of this action, the Chicago headquarters began asking for New York leaders to submit receipts for all money donated from their members, and sent officials to New York in order to check for improprieties.[10]

Apart from sowing divisions within the organization, the FBI's campaign to discredit the organization's national leadership among its members greatly affected the NOI. Identifying the singular importance of Elijah Muhammad in the eyes of the NOI membership, the Bureau began to attack the credibility of Muhammad by disseminating information highlighting his personal failings. Along with distributing pamphlets, the Chicago FBI operatives created animated cartoons and even called into radio programs to discuss Muhammad's lavish life-style and illegitimate children he secretly had. Although this tactic, at first, had limited success at turning away members, it did further sow mistrust between the organization's leadership.[11]

Outside the organization itself, the FBI launched a moderately successful propaganda campaign against the NOI in newspapers and other public forums. In one instance, the SAC Chicago gained permission from Director Hoover to use one of their embedded agents to disclose data and information to the public about the NOI's business dealings. In particular, he aimed to highlight how the NOI misrepresented

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[10] "Memo to FBI Director from SAC, Tampa," COINTELPRO- Black Nationalist Hate Groups- 100-448006. S.2, 17 May 1968. "Memo to FBI Director from SAC, New York," COINTELPRO- Black Nationalist Hate Groups- 100-448006. S.2, 26 June 1968.

[11] "Memo to FBI Director from SAC, Chicago," COINTELPRO- Black Nationalist Hate Groups- 100-448006. S.2. 22 April 1968. "Memo to FBI Director from SAC, New York," COINTELPRO- Black Nationalist Hate Groups- 100-448006. S.1. 27 February 1968.

themselves in legal data by linking to private companies outside of the control of the organization. Specifically, in the Chicago newspapers, the agent emphasized that the NOI simply paid lip service to its religious beliefs, since it was willing to work with private companies that violated some of the organization's core beliefs.[12]

For their larger goal of neutralizing the NOI to be successful, the FBI determined that the underlying ideology of the group should be the primary target for change. Writing to the SAC Chicago, Director Hoover instructed him to come up with a plan to, "change the philosophy of the NOI to one of strictly religious and self-improvement orientation." Advising him to identify leaders who could be turned or were already interested in such ideas, Hoover insisted that the primary approach the agency should take was one of refocusing the organization. Only if attempts to shift the ideology of the NOI failed, Hoover instructed, should COINTELPRO be directed towards destroying the organization by intensifying divisions between both the leadership and the membership.[13]

Turning their attention to the family of Elijah Muhammad, the FBI identified Wallace Muhammad as their preferred choice to succeed his father. Assessing that Elijah Muhammad intended on consolidating power and leadership of his organization within his family, the FBI determined that the most powerful candidates to replace him were his eldest son, Herbert and next eldest son, Wallace. In making

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[12] "Memo to FBI Director from SAC, Chicago," COINTELPRO- Black Nationalist Hate Groups- 100-448006. S.6. 24 December 1968. "Memo to SAC, Chicago from FBI Director," COINTELPRO- Black Nationalist Hate Groups- 100-448006. S.6. 6 January 1969. "Memo to FBI Director from SAC, Chicago," COINTELPRO- Black Nationalist Hate Groups- 100-448006. S.6. 14 January 1969.

[13] "Memo to SAC, Chicago from FBI Director," COINTELPRO- Black Nationalist Hate Groups- 100-448006. S.6. 7 January 1969.

their assessment of the two, FBI agents characterized (rather accurately) Herbert as more invested in the NOI's business ventures and less likely to challenge its core ideologies. Stating that, "Herbert Muhammad can best be described as merciless, cunning and an ego maniac," the SAC Chicago also noted that Herbert "has been described as money crazy." In contrast, the SAC Chicago argued that Wallace Muhammad was more committed to religious ideology and would be more likely to change the organization if in power. Noting that he had been expelled from the organization for heresy on a number of occasions, the SAC Chicago claimed that Wallace Muhammad was the only person who could lead the NOI into a more traditional Muslim ideology that diverged from the Black Nationalism espoused by the organization. Furthermore, he stated that Wallace was, "the only son of Elijah Muhammad who would have the necessary qualities to guide the NOI in such a manner as would eliminate racist teachings."[14]

Having identified Wallace Muhammad as their target for succession, the FBI had to formulate a plan of action to eliminate Herbert Muhammad from contention. With Elijah Muhammad dealing with chronic bronchitis, along with a variety of other ailments for a number of years preceding 1968, succession within the NOI had already been widely speculated upon from within and from outside the organization. Since the expulsion and subsequent assassination of Malcolm X, most observers believed that Herbert Muhammad was the overwhelming favorite to carry on his father's legacy. In charge of the NOI's business ventures, Muhammad had gained a

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[14] "Memo to FBI Director from SAC, Chicago" COINTELPRO- Black Nationalist Hate Groups- 100-448006. S.2. 22 April 1968. "Memo to FBI Director from SAC, Chicago" COINTELPRO- Black Nationalist Hate Groups- 100-448006. S.2. 15 May 1968.

small degree of visibility as Muhammad Ali's business manager. Profiting from the great success of Ali in the boxing ring, the NOI collected a large percentage of the boxer's winnings and distributed them to leaders within the organization. As one of the primary beneficiaries of Ali's successes, the FBI determined that Herbert Muhammad directly received a substantial percentage of Ali's winnings.[15]

In order to take down Herbert, the Bureau decided to turn his business experience and expertise against him. Knowing that Herbert was the official accountant and bookkeeper for the majority of the NOI's business ventures, the FBI began to explore the possibility of utilizing the IRS as a primary means towards bringing down important NOI leaders, potentially arresting them for tax evasion. Filing a request in May 1968, the SAC Chicago informed Hoover that the IRS would be providing, at minimum, three years of Herbert Muhammad's tax records for the Bureau to comb through. Hoping and expecting to find some history of improprieties, the Bureau planned on prosecuting Herbert in order to shift power towards Bureau agents. Explaining the plan to Hoover, the SAC Chicago wrote, "Neutralization of Herbert Mohammed would help our high-level NOI informants to exercise more control over the NOI."[16]

After months of collecting extensive tax records on Herbert Muhammad, the FBI was forced to reassess their strategy when Herbert's IRS records gave them little

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[15] Thomas Hauser, *Muhammad Ali*, 362. Clegg III, *An Original Man*, 16. "Memo to FBI Director from SAC, Chicago" COINTELPRO- Black Nationalist Hate Groups- 100-448006. S.2. 22 April 1968.

[16] "Memo to FBI Director from SAC, Chicago" COINTELPRO- Black Nationalist Hate Groups- 100-448006. S.2. 22 April 1968. "Memo to FBI Director from SAC, Chicago" COINTELPRO- Black Nationalist Hate Groups- 100-448006. S.2. 15 May 1968. Memo to Mr. W.C. Sullivan from C. Moore," COINTELPRO- Black Nationalist Hate Groups- 100-448006. S.2. 7 May 1968.

to prosecute. Writing to Director Hoover in July 1968, the SAC Chicago claimed that years of Herbert Muhammad's tax returns proved to be accurately filed. Reasoning that Muhammad was probably cautious of IRS scrutiny of income and distribution of business revenue, the Bureau theorized that Herbert took great caution to remove himself from any possible implication in financial malfeasance. Furthermore, in combing through his extensive tax documents, the SAC Chicago informed Hoover that Muhammad's use of a CPA firm to prepare his returns protected him from any prosecution for illegal activity. As a result, the SAC Chicago recommended abandoning any efforts to utilize tax returns to discredit Herbert or the NOI on the whole.[17]

Despite the FBI's decision to eliminate Herbert from the NOI's succession plan, Herbert's influence and relationship with his brother forced the Bureau to tread lightly. Noting that Herbert and Wallace continued to have a strong relationship, the FBI emphasized the need to preserve some of Herbert's influence within the NOI, even if they neutralized his chances of becoming its leader. Writing to Director Hoover, the SAC Chicago explained the Herbert was "the key person" to help Wallace Muhammad "regain close rapport with his father."[18] As a result, the FBI dropped any further attempts at attacking Herbert through the legal system and instead shifted to a strategy of empowering Wallace and his supporters through the help of agents that had infiltrated the organization's power structure.

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[17] "Memo to FBI Director from SAC, Chicago," COINTELPRO- Black Nationalist Hate Groups- 100-448006. S.2. 25 July 1968.
[18] "Memo to FBI Director from SAC, Chicago" COINTELPRO- Black Nationalist Hate Groups- 100-448006. S.2. 22 April 1968.

As the NOI persevered despite the setbacks from the FBI's clandestine actions, the FBI increasingly shifted their tactics towards empowering Wallace Muhammad. Arguing that despite his position as likely successor to Elijah Muhammad, Herbert Muhammad could easily fall out of favor with the NOI leader, since he was well known to shift his loyalties over time. Reiterating the importance of swaying Elijah Muhammad towards making Wallace his successor, the SAC Chicago noted, "Wallace Muhammad is still the only member of the 'Royal Family' who could give proper spiritual guidance to the organization." Furthermore, he argued that if attempts to empower Wallace failed, there would be no suitable replacements that the FBI could use, claiming, "No one has emerged as a successor to Wallace insofar as this sphere of activity is concerned."[19]

Beyond simply the desires of the FBI, the Bureau argued that Wallace Muhammad clearly sought power within the organization, making him a willing partner. Noting that regardless of Wallace's intermittent troubles with his father, he kept on good terms with influential members of the NOI "Royal Family," and even met with them clandestinely when he was suspended from the organization. Also, the Bureau agent's added that upon the assassination of Malcolm X, dissenting members of the NOI turned to Wallace for spiritual guidance. Continuing to teach traditional Islam, many within the NOI continued to hold him in high regard, despite his suspension for teachings heretical to the organization. Furthermore, with the changing politics of the late 1960s and early 1970s, some members of the NOI began favoring the type of move away from Black Nationalism that Wallace openly

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[19] "Memo to FBI Director from SAC, Chicago," COINTELPRO- Black Nationalist Hate Groups- 100-448006. S.6. 22 January 1969.

advocated. With this in mind, the SAC Chicago advised Director Hoover that if a power play were to be made by a certain faction of ministers or family members in the event of Elijah Muhammad's death, Wallace would likely be turned to to serve as either the leader or at worst a figurehead for a larger reform movement.[20]

For Wallace Muhammad, his desire to actively attempt to shift the NOI into a new religious and ideological direction stemmed from the strong reception he received for his ideas while his father remained in charge. Having begun preaching more traditional Sunni Islam to his followers as early as the 1960s, Wallace found himself in and out of the organization on a number of occasions. By the early 1970s, Wallace had reconciled with his father and had been given ministry of the NOI's Mosque No. 12 in Philadelphia. Maintaining a great deal of popularity with members of the Philadelphia mosque, Wallace's ideas increasingly gained steam with a rising faction within the organization.[21] With the NOI originally targeting the poor, incarcerated, and working-class African Americans in the Urban North, the original base of the organization found inspiration in the Black Nationalist rhetoric of Elijah Muhammad, particularly in the context of the violence and oppression experienced by black Americans during the early stages of the Civil Rights Movement. By the late 1960s and early 1970s, a large number of NOI members had been in the organization for decades and had found the organization's principle of self-discipline and thriftiness had greatly improved their financial well-being. With more members having savings, along with a rising generation of upwardly mobile younger members,

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[20] "Memo to FBI Director from SAC, Chicago," COINTELPRO- Black Nationalist Hate Groups- 100-448006. S.6. 22 January 1969. Mamiya, "From Black Muslim to Bilalian," 148.
[21] Clegg III, *An Original Man*, 207.

equipped with solid educational foundations thanks to the NOI schools, the original message of Elijah Muhammad ceased to have the same appeal it did years prior. As an increasingly educated, middle-class, faction began to rise within the organization, Wallace's ideas regarding a more active engagement in broader American political and economic life, gained considerable steam.[22] Furthermore, retaining much of the black pride inherent in the NOI's teachings, these members maintained an interest in participating in the current forms of the Black Freedom Movement occurring across cities in the North. As a result, Wallace quickly gained more support and followers, actively interested in finding a way to transform the organization that they belonged to.

Although no single indisputable piece of evidence exists that definitively proves Wallace's involvement with the FBI, many within the NOI believe that a relationship existed between the two. With a great deal of the FBI's COINTELPRO files redacted, it is difficult to know for certain who the FBI had embedded in high levels of the organization. For Dr. Abdul Alim Muhammad, the current Minister of Health in the reconstituted NOI, however, the case for Wallace being an agent of the FBI is very clear. Linking Wallace's actions to dismantle the NOI's business empire along with his decision to disavow Black Nationalism, Dr. A.A. Muhammad claimed that the NOI, in the 1970s, was "destroyed under an FBI counterintelligence program through an FBI agent named Imam Wallace D. Muhammad."[23] As a part of the reconstituted NOI under the leadership of Louis Farrakhan, Dr. Muhammad's

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[22] Mamiya, "From Black Muslim to Bilalian," 147-149.
[23] Clifton E. Marsh, *The Lost-Found Nation of Islam in America*. (Lanham, MD: Scarecrow Press, 2000), 181.

comments regarding Wallace, echo those of Farrakhan himself, who was one of the greatest losers in Wallace's rise to power.[24]

Apart from members of the NOI, a number of scholars indicate that the circumstantial evidence indicates that Wallace likely actively engaged the FBI in order to gain his position. Counter to Wallace's narrative that in the late 1960s his father began to see the merits of his orthodox teachings and encouraged him to change the organization upon his death, historians of the NOI argue that Wallace's ascension to power within the NOI was far from inevitable. Arguing that he outmaneuvered his siblings and other NOI ministers in the years leading up to his father's death, Claude Clegg, Manning Marable, and others view Wallace to have been a strong strategist in pursuing power within the organization.[25]

During the late 1960s and early 1970s, the Bureau's combination of information gathering, ally building, and outright sabotage left a critical mark on the history of the NOI. Following a calculated plan of propaganda dissemination, the FBI helped weaken the standing of the NOI in the eyes of the public. Utilizing the press, media, and local government, the Bureau played a large role in containing the scope and power of the NOI in Chicago and nationally. Despite these successes, however, the NOI maintained a large membership and a large business empire well into the mid-1970s.

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[24] Having previously become the head of the prestigious NOI Mosque #7 in Harlem (previously Malcolm X's position), when Wallace took over, he relegated Farrakhan to one of the NOI's smallest mosques in the Chicago area and renamed Mosque #7 in honor of Malcolm X. For more information on this see: Marable, *Malcolm X,* 469-470.

[25] Marable, *Malcolm X*, 469-470. Clifton E. Marsh, *The Lost-Found Nation of Islam in America*, 68-70. Clegg III, *An Original Man*, 224, 274.

Although the efforts of the FBI only produced mixed results by the termination of COINTELPRO in the early 1970s, the aftermath of the program witnessed the greatest changes in the NOI's eventual composition, largely due to the partnership between a faction within the organization, headed by Wallace Muhammad, and the Bureau. Maintaining interest in containing the Black Separatist threat of the NOI, the FBI and its NOI agents continued to work with its partners in the organization, ultimately culminating in the rise to power of Wallace Muhammad and the eventual dissolution of the NOI in 1979. Through their recruitment of agents and infiltration of the organization, the FBI managed to maintain a strong understanding of the brewing ideological split arising within the NOI.

Through allying with the Bureau's agents, the faction within the NOI favoring a move away from Black Separatism and closer to the engagement and participation in American political and social life that was occurring across the nation in the Black Freedom Movement, was able to utilize traditional Islam as a vehicle to gain considerable support and power. Embracing American citizenship as a core identity for the NOI, Wallace Muhammad and his supporters naturally turned to the federal government in order to aid them in their quest. Helping lay the groundwork through spreading dissent and weakening relationships between leaders of the NOI, the Bureau and its allies helped pave the way for leaders like Wallace Muhammad to eventually harness control of the organization and move it away from Black Nationalism. Working towards somewhat different ends, but sharing a displeasure with the Black Nationalist ideologies of the organization, Wallace Muhammad and his supporters helped lead a transition towards mainstream Islam that brought about

the end of a period of FBI surveillance that characterized the 1960s and 1970s for Black Muslims.

Immigrants and the FBI

Outside the NOI and African American Muslims, the federal government played a role in shaping Chicago's immigrant Muslim community, however, they did so in more conventional ways. Eschewing the use of COINTELPRO and active infiltration and sabotage, the FBI utilized its traditional tools of intelligence gathering. Through the collecting of data, attempting to recruit informants, and the utilization of harassment techniques, the FBI tried to control the character of immigrant Islam in the city to better serve the nations domestic and foreign policy interests.

For Muslim foreign students attending Chicago's many universities, the FBI and other American intelligence agencies often placed them in precarious situations. Beginning in 1972 at the latest, the United States government instructed the Immigration and Naturalization Services (INS) to begin monitoring Muslim college students in order to screen for potential terrorist activity. According to William H. Bartley, the Director of the INS, his agency began monitoring all Arab students entering the country in response to the Munich Olympic Games hostage situation in 1972. Paying particularly close attention to those with ties to Muslim organizations, in the two years following the Olympics, "Operation Boulder" resulted in the screening of over 150,000 Arabs entering the United States. Downplaying the

disruptiveness of the operation, Bartley noted that of those screened, the federal government only denied a handful of visas.[26]

Beyond the simple monitoring and control of visas by the INS, the FBI took a more active role in the day-to-day lives of Muslim foreign students. Seeking to recruit informants and agents to help gather intelligence against Muslim countries that stood as geopolitical foes of the United States, the FBI put tremendous pressure on foreign students. Often threatening deportation for refusal to cooperate, the FBI attempted to enlist Muslim foreign students to take part in acts of espionage. In one example, the FBI offered Talal Saadi, a student at Northeastern Illinois University, six hundred dollars to attempt to gain access to the United Holy Land Fund for intelligence gathering. When Saadi turned down the offer, he found himself subject to a deportation hearing two weeks later. Apart from espionage, the FBI also recruited Muslim foreign students to become informants for the agency. In the case of Ahmad Karim, a Palestinian student at Roosevelt University, the FBI asked him to begin informing on the actions of other Palestinian and Muslim students enrolled at the university and in the greater Chicago community. Despite the fear of government reprisal, Karim claimed to rebuff the government's request.[27]

Not limited to just the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, the US Government's involvement in Iran created problems for Iranian students in the United States. In response to the 1979 hostage crisis in Tehran, the US attempted to curb the number of Iranian citizens residing in the country through tightening controls on visas and

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[26] David Young, "Arabs in US accuse FBI of spying on them: FBI snooping angers Arabs in US," *Chicago Tribune*, July 13, 1975, 1.
[27] Ray Moseley, "Arabs here charge FBI shadows and threatens them," *Chicago Tribune*, October 30, 1977, 42.

stronger enforcement of immigration law. Shortly after the Iranian revolution, the government issued a directive that ordered all Iranians in the US on student visas, estimated to be 50,600 in total, to report to their immigration office and provide evidence of attending school. Anyone residing in the country found not to be in attendance would be immediately deported. As a further consequence of the US's geopolitical conflict with their country of origin, Iranian students also faced intimidation and harassment from their fellow students. In one notable example, two hundred students gathered outside the Downtown Islamic Center to take part in an Anti-Iran protest.[28]

For Muslim foreign students in Chicago, the actions by the FBI and INS greatly altered their organizational affiliations and religious choices. For the MSA, continuing to recruit Muslim members to local university chapters increasingly grew difficult in the face of government harassment. Forming a local chapter in 1974, MSA members at Roosevelt University initially struggled to recruit foreign students fearful of government reprisals. Beyond university-based organizations like the MSA, Muslim foreign students also grew increasingly reluctant to affiliate with local mosques and community centers suspected to be monitored by the FBI.[29]

In addition to the difficulties faced by Muslim foreign students, with the United States locked in a geopolitical struggle in the Middle East, the government's continued support of Israel created further problems for Palestinian Muslims in Chicago. Working with the Israeli government and supporters, the FBI exacerbated

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[28] "US orders 'careful inspection' of Iranians entering country," *Chicago Tribune,* November 12, 1979, 2.
[29] Yaqub Mirza, Oral History conducted by author, January 6, 2012.

tensions between Jewish and Muslim immigrants in the city through their strategy of intelligence gathering. According to a spokesman for the Anti-Defamation League of B'nai B'rith, a member of the United Jewish Appeal organizations in the US., his organization kept files on Arabs living in the US and shared them with the FBI. For Muslim-Jewish relations in Chicago, the gathering of intelligence by local Jewish groups marked a gradual shift in the status quo. As late as the early 1970s, many Chicago Muslims lived in heavily Jewish neighborhoods with little friction. In one such instance, Adib Abu Sharif, a Palestinian refugee residing in South Shore,[30] noted that up through the late 1960s he had been on good terms with his Jewish neighbors, even receiving help from a local Rabbi in filing papers with the Israeli government for reparations for lost land. However, Sharif claimed, "Since the '67 War, I'm a little less comfortable here as an Arab than I was before."[31]

Outside of American Jewish groups, the 1970s witnessed the Israeli government increase their efforts to provide information on persons of interest for the FBI to monitor. For many Chicago Muslims, this meant continued connection to organizations linked to Palestine and Egypt carried potentially grave consequences, including the freezing of assets and loss of job. In one instance, for Sherif M. Nasir, an Egyptian Muslim living in Chicago, the FBI began tracking him after being labeled as "an agent of influence" on behalf of radical groups by Israeli intelligence

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[30] South Shore in the early 1970s began a dramatic demographic shift from mostly white with a Jewish and Greek presence towards being almost entirely black by the end of the decade.

[31] Carolyn Toll, "Chicago Arabs Work at Poking Holes in Stereotypes," *Chicago Tribune*, April 25, 1975.

organizations. As a result of the FBI's inquiries at his work, Nasr lost his job at the computer department of R.R. Donnelley & Sons.[32]

Working on its own, the FBI attempted to further American interests through tracking, monitoring, questioning, and sometimes intimidating Palestinian immigrants. In the case of Salameh Zanayed, a supermarket owner of Palestinian descent, the FBI repeatedly questioned him over the donations he made to Islamic charities. Claiming that the FBI told him, "You may be a good Palestinian but you're not worth a dime as an American citizen," Zanayed reported a pattern of harassment that affected his business and personal life.[33] As the decade wore on, Chicago's Palestinian Muslims reported that the FBI surveillance increased noticeably. Echoing the complaints of Zanayed, Taysir Yunis, Director of the Arab Information Center, noted the psychological burden the FBI surveillance program placed on the community, stating, "We don't want to be viewed as terrorists or camel drivers or tent dwellers. We want to be viewed as human beings with rights like everyone else."[34]

Although considerably less powerful than the federal government, many of Chicago's immigrant Muslims took steps to protect themselves and fight back against government harassment. In the instance of Abdeen Jabari, a second-generation Muslim American of Arab descent, his efforts involved fighting the intelligence agencies through the courts. Engaging in a three-year court battle with the FBI, Jabari attempted to prove that the FBI had illegally wiretapped his phones, along with

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[32] David Young, "Arabs in US accuse FBI of spying on them: FBI snooping angers Arabs in US," *Chicago Tribune*, July 13, 1975, 1.
[33] Ray Moseley, "Arabs here charge FBI shadows and threatens them," *Chicago Tribune*, October 30, 1977, 42
[34] Clarence Page, "Jackson 'gives us voice' city's Palestinians say," *Chicago Tribune*, October 28, 1979, 6.

monitoring and distributing information about his bank accounts to three foreign governments.[35] Outside the legal realm, Chicago's Arab Muslims attempted to force the government to change its policies by raising awareness of their plight in the press. Speaking out about the intimidation, deportations, arbitrary denial of citizenship applications, and disruption of their cultural organizations, Chicago's Muslims held rallies to pressure the government to change its policies.[36]

Much as it did for Chicago's Muslim foreign students, the pattern of investigation and harassment from the federal government placed a significant strain on Muslim religious and cultural institutions in the city. One organization affected by the increase in surveillance was the Arab Community Center. Located on 2735 W. 55th Street, in Englewood, the center experienced a steady drop in attendance in the mid-1970s. Once regularly drawing four hundred to five hundred attendees for events, the center struggled to gather two hundred community members for functions by 1977. With its founder, Mohammed El-Khatib, under FBI scrutiny since 1972, the center struggled to repair its damaged reputation.[37]

As a result of the harassment of federal intelligence and immigration agencies, Chicago's immigrant Muslims struggled to continue the upward trend in the growth of Muslim organizations and community involvement. Threatening monitoring, job loss, or deportation, the federal government attempted to coerce Chicago Muslims to

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[35] Ray Moseley, "Arabs here charge FBI shadows and threatens them," *Chicago Tribune*, October 30, 1977, 42

[36] David Young, "Arabs in US accuse FBI of spying on them: FBI snooping angers Arabs in US," *Chicago Tribune*, July 13, 1975, 1.

[37] David Young, "Arabs in US accuse FBI of spying on them: FBI snooping angers Arabs in US," *Chicago Tribune*, July 13, 1975, 1. Ray Moseley, "Arabs here charge FBI shadows and threatens them," *Chicago Tribune*, October 30, 1977, 42.

act as informants and agents in service of American foreign and domestic policy interests. Despite these pressures, Chicago Muslims, by and large, resisted these calls, choosing instead to attempt to influence governmental policies to better protect their rights and needs as citizens and residents of the United States.

Muslim Politics in Chicago

By the middle of the 1970s, Chicago's Muslim communities began to respond to the influence of government agencies and the policies of elected officials, for the first time, on a large scale. As the forces of government actively engaged in working against their security and comfort, Muslims utilized their growing numbers and increasing economic stability in order to pressure power holders to address their economic, political, and social grievances, as well as advocating for their interests both on a local and national level. With many immigrant Muslims having planted permanent roots in the city, Chicago's immigrant Muslim began to assert their identity as American citizens, with all of the political ramifications such identities entailed. Forming new solidarities across ethnic, racial, and linguistic lines, the shared experience of being Muslim in a country hostile to their beliefs, helped tie disparate communities together in an effort to fight for improvements in their daily lives. Perhaps the most significant way in which Chicago's Muslim community attempted to influence government policy was through their participation in both local and national politics. Most notably, Chicago's Muslim community coalesced around the re-election campaign of Jimmy Carter, beginning towards the end of 1979. However, Chicago Muslims also used their influence to pressure local governments to

recognize Muslim interests, support Palestinian Independence, attempt to sway the American electorate towards international Muslim causes, build political coalitions across racial lines, and lobby in support of Arab/Islamic states.

Within the city, immigrant Muslims attempted to utilize their resources to advance local and international causes. Voicing their support for the leaders of their countries of origin, many of Chicago's immigrant Muslims arranged for meetings and representation with visiting diplomats. In one instance, when Anwar Sadat visited Chicago in October 1975, many of Chicago's Arab immigrants sought a meeting with the Egyptian President in an effort to strengthen business opportunities. Believing to have met resistance from city officials, Fisal Hammouda, President of the Egyptian American Club, accused the Mayor's Director of Special Events, Jack Reily, of intentionally blocking their meeting. Having previously vetoed the request of the Mid-American Arab Chamber of Commerce to meet with Sadat, Egyptian immigrants engaged in a protracted struggle with the Mayor.[38]

Despite the city's resistance in allowing Arab Muslim groups to meet with Sadat, the strong relationship the NOI had established with local politicians allowed it greater opportunity. Making a request to meet with Sadat on his visit, the NOI worked out a deal with Mayor Daley, granting them a short audience with the Egyptian President. For around fifteen minutes, Wallace and Herbert Muhammad engaged in a brief discussion with Sadat related to expanding trade opportunities between the NOI and the Arab world. In the aftermath of their meeting, Sadat

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[38] Carol Oppenheim, "Arabs vs. city: Sadat visit sparks tiff," *Chicago Tribune*, October 24, 1975, 2.

pledged to make twelve scholarships available for black Muslims to study in Egypt and agreed to begin purchasing goods produced by the NOI and its members.[39]

Beyond meeting with international leaders, Chicago Muslims attempted to gain important accommodations from their local officials in order to improve the standing and recognition of Muslims in the city. Finding a willing partner in Mayor Daley's successor, Mayor Bilandic, Chicago's larger Muslim organizations attempted to pressure the city into recognizing and observing Muslim holidays and practices. In one such instance, after lobbying for a period of years on behalf of his organization, Atiqur Rehman, the President of the MCC, succeeded in gaining official recognition of Eid-Ul-Fitr from the city. Through issuing an executive order, Mayor Bilandic officially began the practice of excusing Muslims from attending work during the holiday beginning in October 1977. In doing so, Chicago became the first city in the United States to officially recognize Eid-Ul-Fitr as a holiday. Later that month, a record number of Chicago Muslims, totaling over 10,000, attended the yearly Eid prayers held at McCormick Place (sponsored by the Eid Committee of Greater Chicago).[40] Attempting to build on the successes of Chicago's Muslim community, the Islamic Council of North America attempted to get President Carter to declare Eid-Ul-Fitr to be a national holiday for Muslims, with the organization's President, Dr. El-Tigani AbuGideiri, claiming Muslims should "have the same religious rights

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[39] "Top Muslims, Sadat huddle," *Chicago Defender*. November 3, 1975. "Cover Story: Chief Minister and President Sadat," *Nation of Islam in Action!* 1976, 4. Folder: NOI, Box 8: Pamphlets, Islam in America Repository, DePaul University Library.

[40] "Community News: Muslims in Chicago Earn Eid as Holliday," *Islamic Horizons* 6, no. 10 (1977). "Over 10,000 Attend Eid Prayers in Chicago," *Islamic Horizons* 6, no. 10 (1977).

as other minorities." Despite their efforts, national attempts by organizations like the ICNA failed to produce the results that Chicago's Muslim community managed to achieve on the local level.[41]

Outside of city politics, by the middle of the 1970s, Chicago's Muslim community increasingly sought to build coalitions and empower allies in their struggles against the FBI and on foreign policy issues. Beginning early in the decade, Chicago's immigrant and black Muslims began to envision a shared struggle against persecution from American government. For Arab Muslims in Chicago, American foreign policy with respect to the Muslim world led them to feel a sense of shared experience with the history of black Americans within the country. Voicing this view, Sulayman Shahid Mufassir, a black convert to Islam in Chicago, noted, "Israeli propaganda has visualized the Arab as sub-human (America did the same to her Blacks)." Furthermore, he made a direct appeal to black and immigrant Muslims to reach out to non-Muslim black Americans, claiming that they should be natural allies in supporting Muslim causes. Arguing that all black Americans had Islamic heritage he noted, "So the tragedy is that a people, 25 million strong, who have an Islamic heritage and whose long history of subjugation would make them naturally sympathetic to the Arab cause, have been substantially neutralized and hoodwinked into supporting Israel."[42] Building on these commonalities, many immigrant Muslims noted the shared geopolitical struggles for Arab and black Americans. Specifically, they highlighted Israel's support for Apartheid in South Africa, drawing comparisons

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[41] "Religious Minority Status Sought for Muslims: ICNA's Appeal to Carter and Trudeu," *Islamic Horizons* 7, no. 3 (1978).
[42] Sulayman Shahid Mufassir, "Voice of Muslim America: USA and Israel," *MuslimNews International* 9, no. 1 (1970): 25-26.

to the treatment of Palestinians within Israel.[43] Beyond appeals to altruism, highlighting Israel's support of Apartheid drew a direct link between the larger foreign policy goals of both the immigrant Muslim and African American communities.

As immigrant Muslims attempted to garner support from African Americans, many came to realize that a number of black Americans already shared their views. Throughout the 1970s, black Muslims and many of their allies worked towards building support for the cause of Arabs in the conflict in the Middle East. Writing letters to newspapers, speaking with their representatives in congress, as well as donating money to Arab charities, African Americans, Muslim and non-Muslim alike, played an important role in forging alliances with Arab Muslims in Chicago. Grateful for the considerable support, immigrant Muslims noted the contributions of their black neighbors. Writing into national Muslim journals and newspapers, Black Power activist Dr. Dennis Walker noted, "One of the most heartening factors for the Muslim world in its struggle to survive the repeated onslaughts of the racist Western settler State of Israel has been the increased support America's 22,000,000 black community has given the Arab cause," noting that he was pleased to see the realization of the, "shared suffering, a common struggle for liberation, and past cultural ties that are not always remembered but are non the less real," evident in black and Arab relations within the country.[44]

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[43] "Black Communities in U.S. Condemn Zionist Blackmail, U.S. Racism," *PLO Information Bulletin* 5, no. 16 (1979).
[44] Dennis Walker, "Reader's Write: Afro-Americans and Israel," *MuslimNews International* 9, no. 6 (1970): 33.

While some immigrant Muslims, early in the decade, noticed the shared struggle of black Chicagoans and Arab Muslims in the city, for others this harmony only became clear during the waning years of the 1970s, thanks in part due to the notable actions of Rev. Jesse Jackson. By the latter stages of the 1970s, Jesse Jackson gained considerable popularity among Chicago's Muslims after he began his mission of peace with the PLO.[45] In the aftermath of his support, the city's Palestinian residents reportedly began donating considerable money to the Reverend's PUSH organization. Through support of Jackson, Chicago's Muslim community helped foster greater goodwill between black and immigrant residents of the city. As Zayed Judeh, a Palestinian supermarket owner in the city's Washington Park neighborhood, told reporters, "Blacks and Arabs should be close to each other, I am very pleased with what Rev. Jackson is doing. I support people who support me. I don't think Israel has my best interests in mind." He claimed that in his supermarket, two photos adorned the walls, that of Yasser Arafat and Jesse Jackson.[46]

Domestically, working to build support between the city's black and immigrant Muslim residents, Jesse Jackson, already a respected figure in the black community, gained considerable support and praise from immigrant Muslims in the city. Highlighting the shared struggles of the city's black and immigrant communities, Judeh further emphasized the solidarity of the two communities in stating, "We get along fine here, after all, we are all dark-skinned people, we share a history of oppression, and Africa, in many ways, is the motherland for blacks and

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[45] to be discussed in greater detail later in the chapter
[46] Clarence Page, "Jackson 'gives us voice' city's Palestinians say," *Chicago Tribune*, October 28, 1979, 6.

Arabs alike." Striking a similar tone, Taysir Yunis of the Arab Information Center also noted the contributions made by Jackson, claiming, "The Rev. Mr. Jackson has helped give us a voice in a city where we have not been heard ." With the increased sense of solidarity, black and Arab businessmen came together to raise funds for PUSH as well as foster reciprocity between their businesses. As Alderman Clifford Kelley noted, "I have not always agreed with Rev. Jackson but I think in this case, he is doing a good thing by bringing black and Arab leaders together. The divergence of the two cultures has led to a lot of misunderstanding and a few arguments we should not have had."[47]

Although black and immigrant Muslims were able to strengthen their bonds of solidarity through their mutual support for Palestine, for black Muslims, this support received tremendous criticism. Driving a wedge between black Muslims and the larger black community, numerous black figures weighed in against the position of black Muslims. Prominent civil rights leaders like Bayard Rustin and A. Philip Randolph spoke out in support of Israel, lending significant weight to that side. In one particular instance, Rustin and his Black Americans to Support Israel Committee (BASIC) condemned a 1975 boycott of Israeli goods. Likening the Israeli's position to the black struggle, Rustin declared, "Black Americans have fought too long and too hard to root out discrimination form our land to sit idly by while the government cooperates with foreign interests trying to import bigotry into America."[48] Lending further weight to the positions of Randolph and Rustin, many black journalists

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[47] Clarence Page, "Jackson 'gives us voice' city's Palestinians say," *Chicago Tribune*, October 28, 1979, 6.
[48] "Blacks criticize U.S. support of Arab boycott," *Chicago Defender*, October 16, 1975.

expressed their reservations towards Arab-black harmony. Embarking on a goodwill trip to the Middle East sponsored by the League of Arab States, a group of black journalists working for the *Chicago Defender* faced a number of problems that soured them on the Arab states. Along with "lightweight racism," such as poorer treatment than Arabs by hotel staff and flight attendants, none of the Arab nations allowed the team of journalists re-entry into their states after they visited Israel. In total, the journalists left with negative feelings about Arabs vis-à-vis Israel and race.[49]

Beyond prominent civil rights activists, many black residents of Chicago criticized black Muslims due to their sympathies with Israel in the Middle-Eastern conflict. Critiquing Arab-Black solidarity, many black Chicagoans cited Arab racism as a reason for their disapproval. In one instance, in December 1975, Chicago resident, Edith Franklin, wrote to the *Chicago Defender* to express her displeasure with black Chicagoans who sided with Arabs in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Citing both history and current events, Franklin noted, "Traditionally Arab countries oppressed and enslaved your ancestors. They are the racists." Furthermore, she pointed out that Saudi Arabian contracts allowed for racial (and gender) exclusion. Beyond simply criticizing Arabs, many black Chicagoans cited their longstanding support for Israel and American Jews as the reason for their disapproval. In her letter, Franklin noted that many Jews participated in and fought for the rights of black Americans during the Civil Rights movement.[50] Along similar lines, in her December 1975 editorial, Esther Banks argued that blacks and Jews have more common cause

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[49] Ethel L. Payne, "From Where I Sit: The Arabs and blacks in USA," *Chicago Defender*, July 6, 1974.
[50] Edith Franklin, "Our Readers Write: The Racist Arabs…" *Chicago Defender*, December 8, 1975, 11.

than blacks and Arabs, stating, "blacks and Jews have always been the victims, not the perpetrators of the worst racist acts throughout the world and throughout history." Beyond which, she argued that comparing the plight of Palestinians to the racism faced by black and Jewish people cheapened the term, as the experiences were not comparable.[51]

With much of the criticism of newfound black-Arab solidarity stemming from lingering public resistance to Muslim positions regarding foreign policy, many Chicago Muslims attempted to influence American foreign policy by swaying the hearts and minds of the public to look more favorably on Muslim political positions. By the late 1970s, American involvement in the Middle East had expanded beyond the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and into Iran and Iraq. As American intervention in the Muslim world increased, Chicago's Muslims grew increasingly concerned with the way the media and political discourse represented Islam and Muslims. In one example, Tyrone Abdul-Rahman, a Marine Corps journalist and black convert to Islam, wrote in to *Islamic Horizons* to object to the way Islam's treatment of women was covered in the tv program, *20-20,* on January 14, 1979. The program accused Iran of repressing its female citizens and having a poor record on women's rights. Abdul-Rahman argued that the opposite was true and that the West had the poor record of protecting women's rights, due to its objectification of women's bodies.[52] Much like Abdul-Rahman's objections to the media's portrayal of Islam and Islamic countries, Muslims throughout Chicago voiced similar concerns.

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[51] Esther Banks, "Insult to blacks," *Chicago Defender,* December 16, 1975, 9.
[52] Tyrone Abdul-Rahman, "The Veil on Your Eyes," *Islamic Horizons* 8, no.3 (1979).

Trying to convert their concerns with the media into actions, Chicago Muslims formulated plans to influence the public discourse. Frustrated by what many Muslims believed to be "misrepresentations of Islam and Iran in the news," the MSA-Chicago began a donation drive to raise money for spreading more accurate information on Islam. Within twenty-four hours, MSA-Chicago successfully raised $10,000 from its members. Putting these funds to use, MSA-Chicago began a program of monitoring local news media, contacted knowledgeable Muslims to write on Islam in a positive light, and spoke with editors about setting up meetings with "responsible members of the media." Additionally, they provided books on Islam to the *Chicago Sun-Times* and had a half-page article on Islam written by MSA-Chicago member, Hatem R. Radwan, appear in the newspaper.[53] Through their campaign against misrepresentation in the media, Chicago Muslims attempted to change the public perception of Islam and Muslim nations that helped justify the direction of American foreign policy.

Beyond influencing the media to change public perception, Chicago Muslims took their concerns directly to the highest levels of American government. Attaining a meeting with President Carter in December 1979, a group of twelve American Muslims, including W.D. Muhammad, Mahammad Abdur Raouf of the Islamic Center, and many members of a number of Muslim organizations, presented their ideas directly to the President. In an attempt to appeal to the President's sense of fairness, the group asked him to help stop the defaming of Islam in the media, and in the American conscience, by differentiating it from the political actions of certain

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[53] "Misrepresentations of Islam Activates MSA's Chapters: $10,000 Raised in 24 Hours," *Islamic Horizons* 8, no. 4 (1979).

Islamic states.[54] Through their appeal to Carter, Chicago Muslims teamed with national Muslim groups in attempt to change the political discourse surrounding Islam from the top down.

Along with their discussion regarding the portrayal of Islam, the group of Muslims attending the meeting attempted to sway the President's policy towards Iran by asserting the importance of the country to the Muslim community. Warning President Carter that the Muslim World would turn against the United States if it resorted to military action against Iran, the group pointed out that American Muslims shared a sense of hope for Iran's future after the removal of the Shah. Hoping for a peaceful resolution to the US's conflict with Iran, the group emphasized that harmony between the two nations would greatly benefit American Muslims.[55] As such, the group made it clear that the President's policy towards Iran would have direct effects on the American Muslim community, and its satisfaction with American policymakers.

By the end of the 1970s, the growth in numbers and economic stability of Chicago's Muslim communities allowed them to become a viable political force for the first time. Responding to both what they saw as unfavorable treatment and lack of accommodation, these communities attempted to utilize their standing in the city to force elected officials and city agencies to better serve their needs. Seeing themselves as an important part of the city's citizenry, Chicago Muslims demanded that their interests be catered to at multiple levels of government. Through a variety of tactics,

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[54] "Muslim Representatives Meet President Carter," *Islamic Horizons* 8, no. 12 (1979).
[55] "Muslim Representatives Meet President Carter," *Islamic Horizons* 8, no. 12 (1979).

Chicago Muslims attempted to pressure both local and national political figures to fight for their causes and rights. Utilizing the media with great effectiveness, immigrant Muslims managed to garner sympathy and build coalitions to combat the unequal treatment they received from federal intelligence agencies and local politicians. While placing pressure on politicians helped assuage some of their concerns, the direct involvement in electoral politics on the national level, helped assert the influence and power of the growing Muslim community in Chicago.

Chicago Muslims and Jimmy Carter's Re-election Campaign

In electoral politics, black and immigrant Muslims attempted to assert their newfound influence by joining forces to alter American governmental policy directly through the re-election campaign of Jimmy Carter. Responding to the increasingly active anti-Muslim foreign policy enacted by the US Government, Chicago Muslims came to develop a unified voice on the national level, for the first time, during the mid to late 1970s. Beginning to organize in the late 1970s, Chicago's Muslim groups sought to influence the future of American foreign policy in the Middle East as well as domestic policies concerning governmental intelligence gathering and racial equality. Having instructed his followers in the NOI/WCIW to begin actively engaging in national electoral politics, W.D. Muhammad reached out to President Carter shortly after he assumed office in 1977. Making contact with Carter, W.D. Muhammad discussed the importance of moral leadership for the country, and offered his services to the President. Within a year, Muhammad openly endorsed Carter for re-election, declaring his willingness to lend whatever support he could to the

President's campaign.[56] Following the leadership of W.D. Muhammad, members of the WCIW began to work towards furthering Democratic candidates at multiple levels in the 1980 election cycle.[57]

Perhaps the most unifying event that helped lead to a coalescence of black and immigrant Muslim interests was the Andrew Young controversy. Appointed by Carter to be the US's Ambassador to the UN, Andrew Young served in that role for only two years. Having spent most of his life living in Alabama and Georgia, Young became a member of the SCLC during the late 1950s. Working alongside his friend, Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., Young gained national acclaim for the role he played in the Civil Rights Movement. With his appointment as Ambassador in 1977, Young became the first African American to fill the post.

Despite his prominence and the respect he carried nationally, Young lasted only two years as a result of his work on quelling problems between Israel and Palestine. After learning, in July 1979, that the United Nations Division for Palestinian Rights called for the immediate creation of an independent Palestinian state, a demand that stood in direct conflict with America's position on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, Young attempted to delay action through an act of diplomacy. Meeting with UN representative from many of Israel's neighboring states, Young attempted to work out a compromise that would allow the US to delay action on

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[56] "Lead country to better life, Muslims told," *Chicago Tribune*, February 22, 1977, 3. Frederick Lowe, "Muslim chief to work for Carter vote," *Chicago Tribune*, July 17, 1978, 12.

[57] As Lawrence Mamiya has argued in his article, "Black Muslim to Bilalian: The Evolution of a Movement," the changing demographics within the NOI/WCIW, from almost entirely poor members towards an increasingly upwardly mobile, middle-class, membership helped lead to greater willingness to abandon isolation in favor of working with white businesses and holders of public office.

Palestinian independence. However, in order to work out a deal, the Arab nation's representatives demanded that he also meet and forge an agreement with leaders of the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO). Agreeing to do so, Young met with the UN representative from the PLO at the UN Ambassador from Kuwait's New York residence. For Young, this move carried tremendous risk as it stood in violation of American foreign policy directives. Having promised Israel that no American diplomats would engage in negotiations with the PLO unless it accepted Israel's right to exist, Young's attempt to further American foreign policy goals also violated one of its stated rules.[58]

Shortly after Young's meeting with the PLO's representative, news of the meeting reached the press when Israeli intelligence leaked the information. Having been spying on his actions, Israeli intelligence viewed Young as untrustworthy and sought to have him removed from his position. As the resulting controversy began over Young's breach of American diplomatic protocol, conservative and Jewish groups placed tremendous pressure on Carter to take action. By August 1979, Carter viewed the controversy as another major liability for his re-election chances. As a result, Carter accepted Young's resignation from his post in an attempt to save face.[59]

In the aftermath of Young's resignation, immigrant and black Muslims came together to voice their opposition to his ouster. Expressing their outrage over the privileged position and power that the Israeli government held in directing American

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[58] "PLO envoy rips 'Zionist pressure' for Young's quitting," *Chicago Tribune*, August 16, 1979.
[59] Raymond Coffey, "Under Fire for meeting with PLO aide: Carter expresses his 'deep regret' Young quits as UN envoy," *Chicago Tribune*, August 16, 1979. "Young Resigns," *Chicago Tribune*, December 2, 1979, A2

foreign policy, Chicago's Arab Americans reached out in an effort to build solidarity with the black community. Lobbying the League of Arab Nations, Arab Americans managed to secure donations and business agreements that would strengthen ties between the two communities. In one example, Khalid Abdullah Tariq Al-Mansour, an Arab American working in the Chicago law firm of Holmes and Warden, urged the Arab kingdoms to donate money to black businesses, colleges, and students. Working with OPEC, Arab Americans helped create a fund of $20 million per year for ten years to provide aid for 10,000 minority students (including blacks, Arabs, Hispanics, Asians, and native Americans).[60]

Joining Arab Americans in their outrage over Young's resignation, many prominent black voices made direct overtures to future cooperation with Palestinian leaders. Noting the common cause between Palestinians and blacks, Coretta Scott King stated, "Andrew Young, more than any other individual, symbolized the administration's commitment to human rights- both at home and around the world."[61] Calling for increased cooperation with the PLO and Palestinians, many black leaders called for more direct engagement with Palestinian leadership. Echoing those calls, the SCLC agreed that the "The black leadership in this country must become students of the Middle East situation with a view to making contribution to the peaceful solution to the heightening crisis there."[62]

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[60] Vernon Jarrett, "Effects of Arab aid to U.S. blacks," *Chicago Tribune*, November 2, 1979.
[61] "PLO envoy rips 'Zionist pressure' for Young's quitting," *Chicago Tribune*, August 16, 1979.
[62] "Black leaders seek Palestinian ties," *Chicago Tribune*, August 20, 1979, 11.

Most notable of these attempts to reach out to Palestinian leaders, Jesse Jackson utilized his Operation PUSH to directly engage the PLO through his diplomatic mission to the Middle East. In direct response to their outrage over Andrew Young's resignation, Jesse Jackson and members of PUSH made a trip to Beirut in September 1979. Looking to engage in a form of citizen-diplomacy with Palestine, Jackson attempted to meet with PLO leader, Yasser Arafat. Meeting with Arafat, as well as Jordan's King Hussein, Egyptian President Anwar Sadat, and Syrian leader Hafez al-Assad, Jackson, in the unique position as a prominent private citizen, offered to act as a go-between for both sides of the conflict. Along with the offer, Jackson expressed his desire to see the formation of a Palestinian state, as long as Israel gained recognition from all of its Arab partners. In exchange for his cooperation, Jackson promised Arafat that he would work to round up support amongst African Americans to challenge the United States' official policy of non-recognition of the PLO. Embracing the opportunity to forge an alliance with a popular American leader, Arafat declared Jackson a friend of Palestine, as well as a friend of justice and humanity. Posing for a photo with Jackson, the image of Arafat and Jackson together proved to be a powerful image in building harmony and cooperation between Arab Muslims and African Americans in the years to come.[63]

Furthering Jackson's cause, the Israeli government misplayed their hand through their response to the Reverend's visit. Condemning the action taken by Jackson as inherently unfair to Israel, Israeli foreign minister, Michael Shilch,

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[63] Karin L. Stanford, *Beyond the Boundaries: Reverend Jesse Jackson in International Affairs*. (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1997). P. 58-61.

claimed Jackson, "has appointed himself to a mission which he has prejudged before he even began." Furthermore, Shilch questioned the authority Jackson had to meet with world leaders, dismissing him as a "self-appointed African American envoy" unwelcome in the Middle East. Even more significant than the comments from Shilch, Israeli Prime Minister Begin elected not to meet with Jackson, despite overtures from the Reverend, claiming that American Jewish organizations asserted that Jackson had made anti-Semitic remarks towards them. Denying any such remarks, Jackson further drove a chasm between Israel and African American opinion by claiming that Begin's decision to snub him was a "racist decision based on skin color." Through the official Israeli condemnation of Jackson, the Israeli government inadvertently drove many black Americans towards sympathy for the Palestinian position, in no small part due to their decision to stand in opposition to the overwhelmingly popular Jackson.[64]

Along with their commitment to further helping Palestine, black Americans allied with Arab Americans in their questioning of the United States' larger foreign policy. Claiming that other nations have been asking whether "Israel is running US policy?" Parren Mitchell, the former Chair of the Congressional Black Caucus, implied agreement with PLO envoy, Zeidi Labib Terzi, who stated that Young's resignation was a direct result of "Zionist Pressure." Arguing that black-Jewish relations were likely to take a dramatic hit as a result of this maneuver, Mitchell and other black leaders believed that President Carter potentially would drive a wedge between himself and black voters. Stating that the American policy of non-

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[64] Stanford, *Beyond the Boundaries*, 58-61.

recognition of Palestine was deeply flawed, Young's voice carried substantial weight, and his disagreement with Carter's foreign policy stood to potentially harm Carter's chances of re-election. Agreeing with such sentiments, SCLC Director Tyrone Brooks noted, "I felt he represented the only shred of hope Carter had of being elected in 1980 because he pretty much assured Carter another chance of getting the black vote."[65]

Although Young's resignation seemed to spell the end of black and Arab support for the President, the subsequent actions taken by Young and WCIW leader, W.D. Muhammad, helped reconnect black and Muslim voters to Carter's reelection campaign. Despite becoming what NAACP Executive Director, Benjamin Hooks, described as a "sacrificial lamb for circumstances beyond his control,"[66] Young quickly acted to bridge the growing divide between Carter and black and Muslim voters. Praising the President after tendering his resignation, Young pledged to work towards Carter's reelection.[67] Carrying significant influence in the black community, Young's actions towards the PLO gave him newfound credibility and sway with Muslim voters throughout the nation.

Joining Andrew Young, Jesse Jackson also contributed to building support for Carter's reelection among Chicago's black and Muslim population. Despite making his diplomatic mission to the Middle East in response to Andrew Young's

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[65] Mary McGrory, "Andrew Young will be missed," *Chicago Tribune*, August 22, 1979, B4. "PLO envoy rips 'Zionist pressure' for Young's quitting," *Chicago Tribune*, August 16, 1979.
[66] "PLO envoy rips 'Zionist pressure' for Young's quitting," *Chicago Tribune*, August 16, 1979.
[67] Raymond Coffey, "Under Fire for meeting with PLO aide: Carter expresses his 'deep regret' Young quits as UN envoy," *Chicago Tribune*, August 16, 1979.

resignation, Jackson received behind the scenes support from the Carter administration. Agreeing to report on his visits and meetings to the President upon making his return, Jackson was empowered by the federal government, giving his actions greater weight and authority while on his mission. Once back in the United States, Jackson followed through on his agreement, debriefing with the State Department before proceeding to advocate on behalf of Carter.[68]

Adding to the voices of Young and Jackson, W.D. Muhammad's decision to lend support to Carter helped provide substantial substance to the President's reelection chances among black and immigrant Muslims. Having publicly endorsed Carter in his initial run for President in 1976, W.D. Muhammad's silence posed a significant threat to the Carter's popularity among black Muslims, as Muhammad's followers increasingly became amenable to participation in electoral politics. With his endorsement in 1976, Muhammad went against years of NOI policy committed to non-involvement in American politics. Changing this precedent, Muhammad began to encourage his followers not only to get involved in voting, but also to start seeing themselves as American citizens. For the first time in the NOI's history, emphasis on American values and institutions began to permeate all of the organization's enterprises. From 1976-1979, a series of changes including the appearance of American flags in place of the NOI flag, the recitation of the pledge of allegiance in NOI schools, and allowing members to engage in military service, helped reshape the level of civic participation of NOI members.[69] As a result, for the first time, NOI

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[68] Stanford, *Beyond the Boundaries*, 58-61.
[69] Peter Skerry, "America's Other Muslims," *The Wilson Quarterly*, (2005): 22, 24.

members began to see themselves as American citizens with the privileges and responsibilites inherent with such an identity.

While W.D. Muhammad's endorsement of Carter helped the soon-to-be President in 1976, Muhammad's backing proved to be of even more importance for 1980. With the change in NOI policy coming suddenly, the effects of Muhammad's call to vote in 1976 were somewhat limited. Over time, the membership's compliance with Muhammad's edict greatly increased. By the end of the decade, Muhammad's followers had become the most politically engaged Muslims in the entire country, believing in greater proportions than immigrant Muslims that it was both important and Islamic to be involved in American politics. By coming to the aid of the President a second time, W.D. Muhammad's followers came out in greater force than before.[70]

Adding to his effect, W.D. Muhammad's profile among immigrant Muslims continued to grow into the late 1970s. Leading his followers to multiple events hosted by immigrant Muslims, including Eid prayers, Hajj trips, and conferences, W.D. Muhammad increasingly came to be seen by immigrant Muslims as the driving force in bringing black Muslims into the larger Islamic fold. Furthermore, his appearances and engagement with leaders of the MSA and many of Chicago's immigrant Muslim organizations, most notably Mosque Cares in Bridgeview, created significant goodwill and cooperation between him and immigrant Muslim communities. As a result of his efforts, W.D. Muhammad's popularity and influence

[70] Skerry, "America's Other Muslims," 22-24, 27.

amongst Chicago's immigrant Muslims rose dramatically.[71] So while the effects of his 1976 endorsement of Carter was limited to only the black Muslim community, his support for Carter in 1980 had the profound effect of influencing the greater Muslim community on the whole.[72]

Conclusion- Chicago Muslims and Governmental Power

Working on both the national and local levels, Chicago's Muslim communities sought to influence the direction governmental policy took towards shaping their communities. With the FBI's COINTELPRO attempting to fundamentally change the NOI by forcing it to distance itself from its Black Nationalist ideology, the faction within the NOI's membership favoring the move to traditional Islam moved quickly to ally themselves and take advantage of the power provided by the agency. Gaining favor and support from the FBI, W.D. Muhammad and his supporters pushed to remake the NOI in the image of Sunni Islam. Following in-step with the trends of the Black Freedom Movement, during the late-1970s, W.D.

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[71] "From the President's Diary: Yaqub Mirza visits MSA Chapters," *Islamic Horizons* 6, no. 9 (1977). "Of Task Force, Expenses and Bilalians: General Assembly Lacked Fire," *Islamic Horizons* 7, no. 8 (1978). "New Spectrum: Discipline and Commitment, Chicago Call," *Impact* 6, no. 20 (1976):15. "'Bilalian Muslims': Progress and Pluses," *Impact* 7, no. 18 (1977): 14. Iqbal Unus, Oral History conducted by author, 10 January 2012.

[72] Although W.D. Muhammad endorsed Carter for his election and re-election, Muhammad took care not to be overtly aligned with any one political party. After Carter, Muhammad did not endorse any candidate for President until 1992, when he endorsed the re-election of President Bush. While Louis Farrakhan and the reconstituted NOI endorsing and actively participating in (including providing security for) Jesse Jackson's Presidential bid in 1984, W.D. Muhammad remained notably silent. Despite his lack of endorsements, he did continue to encourage his followers to do their civic duties by actively participating in American electoral politics.

Muhammad led the NOI into an era of political engagement and interracial cooperation that better tied it into the mainstream of both American and Islamic life. Embracing the notion of American citizenship, W.D. Muhammad and the NOI's members began to explore ways to use the government to further their aims. By utilizing the power of the federal government to achieve such an end, Muhammad and his supporters tied themselves closer to important power holders at the national level. As a result, Muhammad and his supporters helped transform the relationship of their movement to the federal government from one of antagonism and conflict to one of respect and admiration. Culminating in his eventual invitations to meet and advice the President on matters related to Muslims in the country, Muhammad and his cooperation with the FBI helped radically alter the future of Black Islam in America.

For immigrants, the continual harassment from the FBI, INS, and other federal agencies, during the late 1960s and 1970s, led them to come together in order to speak out against federal spying policies. Refusing to acquiesce to the demands of government intelligence agencies, the comparable experiences dealing with the meddling and harassment of the FBI, CIA, and other government agencies led Chicago's Muslims to build coalitions across racial and ethnic lines. Pressuring both local and national governments to take measures to protect them from the interference of federal agencies, Chicago Muslims, for the first time, harnessed their growing numbers to affect changes in policy that affected their treatment and status as citizens and residents within the city.

Pushing to further their economic and political interests, Chicago Muslims worked on influencing local and national politics. On the local level, black and

immigrant Muslims attempted to utilize their connections and influence with city politicians to provide valuable business opportunities, as well as gaining important accommodations to improve the quality of Muslim life in the city. While the NOI, under Elijah Muhammad, had engaged with local governments well before the 1970s, for immigrant Muslim groups, this marked a stark change. With their newfound numbers and increasingly stable economic position within the city, immigrant Muslim groups pressured their local elected officials to help improve their daily conditions. On foreign policy matters too, as the US Government increasingly supported Israel and intervened in Muslim countries, immigrant and black Muslims came together to strongly support Palestine and Arab nations, helping lead to new understandings of shared struggle and solidarity for otherwise distinct communities. Through working together, they brought important attention to the plight of Palestinians and engaged with President Carter to further the interests of the Muslim community.

Finally, through flexing their political muscle in the re-election campaign of President Carter, Chicago Muslims demonstrated their newfound strength as a result of changes in the composition of Islamic Chicago. With the NOI having moved into the public sphere on a national level, W.D. Muhammad utilized his influence to harness the black Muslim vote to support the candidacy of a President that had granted him influence on policy. Furthermore, as the growing immigrant Muslim community in Chicago began to identify themselves as permanent citizens of the United States, they turned to politics in order to further their interests. In particular, having established a large enough presence in the city to draw the attention of, and

partnership with, prominent political figures like Jesse Jackson, Chicago Muslims used the threat of the ballot to succesfully pressure President Carter to change the direction of American foreign policy in the wake of the Andrew Young scandal. Through their alliance, black and immigrant Muslims saw their political strength grow dramatically, helping them further the interests of Chicago's Muslims by forcing national politicians to listen to their concerns.

Chapter 5:
Islamic Life in Chicago: Building an Urban Umma

Continuing their semi-annual practice of holding Eid prayers in downtown Chicago, at McCormick Place, the Eid Committee of Greater Chicago, in 1975, hosted an Eid-Ul-Fitr prayer unlike any other in its short history. Comprised of leaders from the MCC, MSA Chicago and a number of other Muslim organizations in the city, the Eid Committee of Greater Chicago had held prayers at McCormick Place since the beginning of the decade. From their first Eid prayer in 1971, up through 1975, the events at McCormick place drew a fairly steady attendance of two to five thousand Chicago-area Muslims from both the Sunni and Shi'a Muslim populations.[1] By September 1977, attendance at Eid prayers rose to over ten thousand Muslims, making it by far the largest mainstream Muslim event in the nation.[2] Bringing his followers to the event for the first time in 1975, Wallace Muhammad and many members of the NOI/WCIW accounted for the majority of the spike in attendees at the prayers. The presence of Wallace Muhammad and the NOI at Eid-Ul-Fitr prayers, in October 1975, marked a significant shift in the relationship between Black Muslims and the rest of Chicago's Muslim communities. For years, the MCC and MSA had attempted to integrate the NOI into the practices, ideologies, and

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[1] "Eid Celebrations and Resource Potential for Community Development," *MSA News* 2, no. 10-11 (1973). "Local Chapter News: Large Eid Gathering in Chicago," *MSA News* 3, no. 1 (1974). "MSA of Greater Chicago: 4000 Muslims offer Eid Prayer. Prayed for Liberation of Qibla Awwal," *Islamic Horizons* 3, no. 12 (1974). "Muslims Gather: 'Feast of Sacrifice' observed," *Chicago Tribune*, January 5, 1974, B12.

[2] "Over 10,000 Attend Eid Prayers in Chicago," *Islamic Horizons* 6, no. 10 (1977). "New Spectrum: Discipline and Commitment, Chicago call," *Impact* 6, no. 20 (1976): 15. Folder: UK (Import). Pamphlets Box 3. Islam in America Repository. DePaul University Library.

organizations of mainstream Muslims in the name of forming a unified Muslim community. Through Wallace and the NOI's decision to join mainstream Muslims at McCormick Place, they signaled the culmination of these efforts and the beginning of a new chapter in the history of Islamic Chicago. Finally, in the eyes of mainstream Muslims, members of the NOI could be considered, "just Muslims" and part of the broader Muslim community. In the words of Atiqur Rahman, the Chairman of the Religious Committee of the MSA: "The presences of the Black Muslims is an expression of their acceptance of the Arabian prophet Muhammad as the last prophet and signifies that the people of the 'nation' consider themselves part of the Ummah."[3]

During the late 1960s and 1970s, the city's Muslim community experienced a significant shift towards cooperation, combination, and integration, as economically, educationally, and socially, Chicago Muslims increasingly aspired towards shared sets of goals and ideals. Mirroring many of the trends visible in the Black Freedom Movement, the end of the 1960s and beginning of the 1970s involved a strong push towards greater integration and the decline in independent black organizations and institutions. Shortly after Wallace Muhammad began transforming the NOW/WCIW into an integrated, mainstream, Muslim organization, Chicago's Muslim community's spirit of cooperation and togetherness reached its apex. By 1978, the culmination of many years of work helped Chicago Muslims come close to achieving the creation of a unified urban Umma.

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[3] Nathaniel Clay, "6000 Muslims hold festival," *Chicago Defender*, October 8, 1975.

Islamic Business Ventures in Chicago

For both the immigrant and Black Muslim population, more than any other issue, economics featured prominently in their decisions to become part of Chicago's various Muslim communities. With the NOI, the organization's economic platform emphasizing independence, entrepreneurship, and employment was a decisive factor in the decision of many black Americans to convert to and join the movement. Building a large financial empire during the Postwar Era, the NOI entered the late 1960s with a booming set of businesses and institutions. Whereas Chicago's immigrant Muslims, although in some instances coming to the United States to flee war and persecution, by and large underwent the journey of migrating to the city in order to gain greater economic and financial opportunities for themselves and their families. Despite arriving later on the scene, Muslim economic institutions developed by immigrant groups, grew dramatically over the course of the 1970s. By the middle of the 1970s, with Wallace Muhammad rising to power, the NOI followed a pattern visible throughout the country in the post-Civil Rights Movement. Just as independent black businesses and institutions declined as the process of integration began nationally, in a similar fashion, the growth of businesses and trusts within the immigrant Muslim community rose to fill in an important gap created by the NOI/WCIW's decision to abandon their business empire and integrate into mainstream Muslim organizations. Playing a vital role in building solidarities and community out of Chicago's diverse collection of Muslims, these new Islamic economic and financial institutions underwent a dramatic transformation in the late 1960s and early 1970s.

At the onset of the 1960s, owning and operating a host of stores, restaurants, and businesses around the country, the NOI provided jobs and opportunity to a large number of their members. Within their department stores, like the one on 553 E. 79th St. on Chicago's south side, the NOI employed both men and women as clerks and salespeople. Employing mostly Black Muslims, though a small number of non-Muslims also worked at the stores, the NOI provided economic opportunities for both men and women that were hard to come by outside the organization. Arguing that Muslim business employment protected women from sexual exploitation and men from economic exploitation by whites, jobs within the NOI business empire proved to be a considerable draw for new members.[4]

Along with the NOI's thriving department stores, the organization also ran an array of other businesses around Chicago. Located almost entirely within a one-mile radius, the NOI featured a number of restaurants, a dry cleaner on 63rd St., and a grocer on 71st St., among its many south side holdings. Enabling these businesses to achieve greater profitability, the NOI attempted to create a vertical integration of its food services industries. Purchasing farmland in nearby Michigan, the NOI began to produce meat and dairy to be sold by their grocers and restaurants back in Chicago.[5]

In 1975, as the organization transitioned into a new chapter with the ascension of W.D. Muhammad in to a leadership role, the NOI appeared to continue to explore new ways to generate revenue and expand the group's business ventures. In one example, the NOI's longstanding importation business, Muhammad's Imports, signed

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[4] Malcolm X, *The Messenger Magazine* 1, no.1 (1959). Journals and Newspapers Box 11. Islam in America Repository. DePaul University Library.
[5] Malcolm X, *The Messenger Magazine* 1, no. 1 (1959). Journals and Newspapers Box 11. Islam in America Repository. DePaul University Library.

a contract to begin the importation of whiting and sardines from Peru and Morocco. With the new contract, the business promised to "provide jobs for over 5,000 Bilalians at a time of over 40% unemployment in the Bilalian community."[6] As the decade came to a close, however, the NOI abandoned attempts at furthering its business empire as it rapidly changed its goals and direction.

By the end of 1976, under the leadership of Wallace Muhammad, the NOI in its efforts to integrate into the larger Muslim community, decided to give up on further pursuit of commercial and economic enterprise. Arguing that these changes were partly out of necessity, Wallace Muhammad publicly admitted to the lack of viability of much of the organization's affiliated businesses. Attempting to shift the organization's focus away from economic uplift and instead towards religious ideology and integration with the broader Muslim community, Wallace Muhammad found little reason to attempt to salvage the struggling NOI business empire. Declaring that the NOI businesses had been operating at a significant loss for years, and with ongoing debt resulting from competing claims on the estate of his father, Wallace Muhammad began to sell off the NOI businesses piece by piece. Stating that his father was never, "an entrepreneur or business genius," W.D. Muhammad asserted that most of their business ventures "didn't have solid footing." Moreover, Wallace Muhammad responded to the criticism from many NOI members who still believed in the viability of the organization's businesses by stating, "It is a totally false

[6] "Photo," *Nation of Islam in Action!* 1976, 22. Folder: NOI, Pamphlets Box 8, Islam in America Repository, DePaul University Library.

conception and I would invite anyone to come in here who is experienced in business and examine the whole business operation."[7]

Helping him make the decision to sell much of the NOI's business empire, Wallace Muhammad publicly pointed out that the NOI had inflated their claims about the robustness of their membership and sale of their goods. For instance, he corrected previous claims that the organization had over 2,000,000 members by noting that the NOI peaked at 1,500,000 with only 250,000 of those being active. Far from at its peak, W.D. Muhammad and the new cohort of NOI leaders admitted that the organization had seen a significant drop in membership during the early to mid 1970s. As new Information Director, Hasan Sharif, noted, "What most people don't know is that before the Chief Emam took over our membership had fallen severely. In Chicago our Masjid was almost empty. It went up nearly 40 per cent under Chief Emam's new program." Similarly, Wallace Muhammad claimed that, far from the million copies of *Muhammad Speaks* that the NOI reported to sell on a daily basis, the organization's members only achieved the sale of 600,000 newspapers per day at its peak, and much lower by the middle of the 1970s. As a result, in 1976, the NOI began selling both its stores and its suppliers. By 1978, the WCIW had even sold most of the 20,000 acres of farmland it had acquired during the 1960s.[8]

By the end of the decade, financially, the WCIW hardly resembled the organization it was during the reign of Elijah Muhammad. Having sold off much of the NOI's $30,000,000 business empire, W.D. Muhammad had successfully reshaped

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[7] Vernon Jarrett, "Leader's view of changing Muslims," *Chicago Tribune*, March 19, 1978, 22.
[8] Vernon Jarrett, "Leader's view of changing Muslims," *Chicago Tribune*, March 19, 1978, 22.

the image of the WCIW to be one of a religious movement first. Standing in stark contrast to the attempts of Louis Farrakhan in Chicago and Silis Muhammad in San Francisco to capture much of the WCIW membership into their new organizations centered on rebuilding a financial powerhouse, the WCIW placed clear priority on becoming an organization respected for its commitment to mainstream Sunni Islam. Pleased with the new direction the organization had undertaken, W.D. Muhammad happily noted, "The image has been changed from one of financial empire to one of a real religious movement and I hope it remains that way."[9]

While the WCIW's public financial transformation in the late 1970s was dramatic and grounded in reality, W.D. Muhammad's declarations of change masked the ways in which the organization was unable to completely abandon its past economic goals. Despite largely encouraging his followers to get involved in the spiritual, social, and economic activities of the larger Muslim community, the lack of established comparable institutions created a significant loss for many members. Struggling to deal with the loss of jobs and opportunities from shutting down the WCIW's businesses, many black Muslims pressured W.D. Muhammad to re-launch some economic ventures.[10] In this way, the NOI/WCIW differed from the traditional narrative of the decline of black business during the post-civil rights, at least for the late 1970s, because unlike their counterparts in the Civil Rights Movement, the relative lack of established immigrant businesses and institutions, in comparison to

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[9] Clarence Page, "'New Muslims': Success amid strife," *Chicago Tribune*, January 7, 1979, 6.
[10] Na'im Akbar, Oral History Interview conducted by HistoryMakers, April 2002.

the general white population, limited the free market imperative to defeat black institutions in favor of their immigrant alternative.

Responding to calls to bring back some of the NOI's old business programs, in January 1979, the WCIW began plans to renovate buildings at 2548 S. Federal St. and 4603 W. Gladys St. in order to start a program intended to provide pre-cooked meals to the U.S. military. As part of the program, the WCIW aimed to provide four hundred new jobs for unemployed workers, particularly those within the Muslim movement. Believing the move to be just the start for the WCIW, Nader Ali, President of Salaam International,[11] stated, "The new venture will be bigger than all previous Muslim businesses put together. If Imam Wallace Muhammad had not taken his new directions, we would not have been able to work out a program like this."[12] Despite Ali's bold projection, the WCIW's new project, and new commitment to working with US governmental institutions like the military, would not mark the start of a new economic development plan for the organization. Instead, it stood as a final holdover tying the group to its NOI past, before the gradual expansion of immigrant-run Muslim business and financial institutions developed the strength to become the dominant Muslim institutions.

In contrast to the WCIW's evolving business empire, for the immigrant Muslim community, the late 1970s featured their first large-scale attempts to develop a set of Islamic business and financial enterprises that could function hand-in-hand with the religious aspect of Muslim life in Chicago. As immigration increased and

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[11] Salaam International was the NOI/WCIW's largest food production and distribution corporation.
[12] Clarence Page, "'New Muslims': Success amid strife," *Chicago Tribune*, January 7, 1979, 6.

helped lead to a build up in strength and resources for many immigrant organizations, a number of people within the community began to clamor for Muslims to form their own economic organizations. Examining a wide range of possible endeavors, immigrant Muslims hoped to utilize their growing resources to provide important goods and services that had been left unfulfilled by the regular market. Within the realms of food services, importing, cultural products, and Islamic banking, Chicago's immigrant Muslims gradually expanded their role in building Islamic businesses in the city.

During the 1970s, the occupational status and demographic differences between immigrant and Black Muslims led to significant divergence in the goals and aims of Islamic business ventures within non-NOI/WCIW organizations. With the majority of the Black Muslim population engaged in working-class professions, the organization's focus on creating factory, clerical, and retail jobs directly appealed to the majority of the membership. In contrast, members of immigrant Muslim organizations in the city mostly had middle-class occupations and high levels of employment. In a survey of the Chicago's Muslim Population conducted by the MCC,[13] the MCC reported that forty-five percent of Chicago's mainstream Muslims were medical doctors, engineers, or other professionals. With students comprising thirty-five percent of the city's remaining Muslims, only six percent identified

[13] For the survey data, the MCC conducted the survey at an Eid Prayers in 1976 that W.D. Muhammad had not brought members of the NOI to. As such, the data reflects mostly the immigrant and mainstream American-born Muslim population in Chicago.

themselves as either skilled or unskilled labor with fourteen percent not disclosing their occupation.[14]

Within those not disclosing their occupation, there is reason to believe that a large number of these Muslims were involved in owning and operating businesses. In particular, in Chicago's south side, Palestinian Muslim immigrants prominently ran a variety of stores, restaurants, and offices. In the aftermath of the Six-Day War, the flood of Palestinian immigrants into the city of Chicago reportedly led to the creation or transfer of ownership of three hundred stores and businesses into the hands of Palestinian immigrants.[15] As an example, the Director of the Chicago Islamic Center, Adib Abu Sharif, a Palestinian refugee, worked in and employed a number of other Palestinian Muslims in the real estate company that he owned on Ashland Ave.[16] Similarly, a large number of people within the Egyptian immigrant Muslim community became small-business owners within the early part of the 1970s. Forming the Mid-American Arab Chamber of Commerce, Egyptian and other Arab Muslim immigrants joined together in order to lobby for friendlier government policies towards small business owners.[17] With such a limited number of Chicago's immigrant and American-born mainstream Muslims engaged in non-professional

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[14] "Table II. Summary of Survey Data: Chicago Area Muslim Population Estimates ~30,000-50,000," *The Masjid and Community Development Project*. 1977. p.10. Folder: Muslim Community Center. Pamphlet Box 8. Islam in America Repository. DePaul University Library.
[15] Clarence Page, "Jackson 'gives us voice,' city's Palestinians say," *Chicago Tribune*, October 28, 1979, 6.
[16] Carolyn Toll, "Chicago Arabs Work at Poking Holes in Stereotypes," *Chicago Tribune*, April 25, 1971.
[17] Carol Oppenheim, "Arabs vs. city: Sadat visit sparks a tiff," *Chicago Tribune*, October 24, 1975.

work, the business goals of immigrant Muslim organizations focused less on providing jobs and more on creating wealth.

Despite the lack of emphasis on job creation, for many MSA members hoping to see immigrant Muslims begin new ventures, the NOI's successful business empire served as a useful model to build upon. However, instead of focusing on the ways in which NOI businesses helped producers (by providing labor), the MSA hoped to create businesses that could satisfy the needs of Muslim consumers. In particular, the NOI's extensive groceries and restaurants demonstrated the necessity and viability of Islamic food production for Muslim consumers in the US. In response to a 1978 MSA survey asking how the organization could expand to suit the needs of the changing community, one anonymous member suggested, "How about starting a meat-processing plant? We can learn a lot from our Bilalian Brothers."[18] Making a similar suggestion, another respondent recommended that the MSA get involved with both the manufacturing and importing of Halal food. He wrote that the MSA needs to, "Hire a person to manufactor (sic) /get Halal sausages, food materials even jelatin (sic) etc… Produce here or in countries like Pakistan, India, Indonesia and import and sell it to Muslims in N. America."[19] Within the realm of food services, but expanding beyond just meats and groceries, other respondents recommended that the MSA should help establish restaurants to serve food that met Islamic criteria. As one respondent wrote, "The MSA could get involved in some business such as restaurant

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[18] Anonymous, "MSA Questionnaire," Folder: Task Force Questionnaire Responses, February 1978. MSA Box 1. Islam in America Repository, DePaul University Library.

[19] Anonymous, "MSA Questionnaire," Folder: Task Force Questionnaire Responses, February 1978. MSA Box 1. Islam in America Repository, DePaul University Library.

chains to serve halal meat, etc… This will serve the Muslim community as well."[20] Going as far as suggesting collective farming projects, immigrant Muslims, in the mid-to-late 1970s, attempted to build enough interest and capital to create food related business ventures that could mimic the products produced by their black counterparts.

While the push for creating a larger supply of Muslim consumer products occurred in the late 1970s, the Chicago immigrant Muslim community had begun expanding into the realm of providing Islamic rites and services much earlier in the decade. Along with purchasing new buildings and facilities for masjids and community centers, Chicago Muslims began acquiring resources and capital to offer important religious and cultural services. In one example, a coalition of Muslim groups, including the MSA Chicago, joined forces with the MCC in order to begin plans to purchase a facility intended for use as a funeral home. Forming a seven person committee, the coalition examined issues including finding land convenient to multiple groups, raising and pooling the necessary capital to make the initial investment, and training community members in how to perform the necessary services. The first of its kind in the Chicago immigrant Muslim community, on June 23rd, 1974, the coalition purchased a facility that met all of their requirements, including adjacent land to be converted into a Muslim cemetery.[21] With the advent of the funeral home, Chicago's immigrant Muslims finally gained the ability to provide

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[20] Anonymous, "MSA Questionnaire," Folder: Task Force Questionnaire Responses, February 1978. MSA Box 1. Islam in America Repository, DePaul University Library.

[21] "Muslims in Chicago propose buying facilities for funeral home and a cemetery," *MSA News* 3, no. 8-9 (1974).

much-needed cultural and religious services that mosques and community centers previously could not.

Outside of Islamic services and consumer goods and products, Chicago's Muslim community made creating new Islamic financial institutions a top priority for the late 1970s. With Islamic prohibition on usury hotly contested religious ground, many Muslims across America viewed American financial practices, including mortgages and student loans, as being un-Islamic in practice. As a result, as the immigrant Muslim population increased in the 1970s, the call for Islamic banking grew among members of the Muslim community. Making such a call, MSA member, M. Haddad, wrote, "MSA should establish its own Islamic projects such as banks or so to support Muslim brothers in their need."[22] In a similar vein, another anonymous member argued that the primary thing the MSA could provide for its members would be an interest free bank run by the organization.[23] With many other voices within the organization, and in the larger Muslim community, echoing such sentiments, the MSA began to investigate the best path to bring Islamic banking to the United States.

Having anticipated the demand from the growing Muslim population for Islamic financial institutions, the MSA helped establish the first such organization in 1975, The North American Islamic Trust (NAIT). The institution attempted to provide a wide range of financial services as well as act as the bank for the MSA. In particular, the NAIT attempted to raise and invest money in order to provide loans,

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[22] M. Haddad, "MSA Questionnaire," Folder: Task Force Questionnaire Responses, February 1978. MSA Box 1. Islam in America Repository, DePaul University Library.

[23] Anonymous, "MSA Questionnaire," Folder: Task Force Questionnaire Responses, February 1978. MSA Box 1. Islam in America Repository, DePaul University Library.

under Islamic conditions, for new Muslim organizations including mosques, community centers, schools, and businesses. From 1975 through 1977, the NAIT largely remained in the formative stage, mostly attempting to raise the start up capital that would allow it to become a viable alternative to the American banking system. In its early stages, the NAIT relied heavily on donations from foreign countries and religious groups, before it gained the footing necessary to become more independent.[24] As a result, in the mid-1970s, the NAIT's profile remained low, as many members of the MSA and other Muslim organizations had little knowledge of or dealings with the institution.

As the decade progressed into the late 1970s, the NAIT grew to become a powerful financial institution playing a key role in the funding of a variety of Muslim organizations. From 1976 through the end of the decade, the NAIT would be managed under the direction of Jamal Al-Barzinji, an Iraqi immigrant to the US and the former MSA President in 1972. Under Al-Barzinji's leadership, the NAIT began a series of investments that aimed to increase the wealth of both the MSA and individual Muslim investors while also allowing for the growth and vibrancy of Muslim businesses and institutions. In one example of the type of deals Al-Barzinji made, the NAIT invested $7100, in 1976, to take over the International Graphics Printing Press, a company the MSA had sometimes used for printing their materials. Within two years, the NAIT had succeeded in growing the value of the press to be greater than $60,000. Similarly, when the NAIT took over the Islamic Book Service

[24] Iqbal Unus, Oral History conducted by author, January 5, 012.

in 1976, the company was conducting between $9500-30,000 annually in sales. By the end of 1977, the IBS had increased sales revenue to nearly $250,000 annually.[25]

Along with its successful business investments, the NAIT functioned as an important financial services provider for the MSA's greater mission. Acting as the main bank for the MSA, the NAIT utilized its funds and investments to bankroll the organization's activities. For instance, to pay for the organization's yearly conference, the NAIT would provide funds to the convention centers and affiliated contractors. By the end of the 1970s, the MSA was spending nearly $1,000,000 per anum, which went far beyond what the NAIT could produce through investments alone, which they estimated to be netting around $200,000 in profits annually.[26] Beyond operating expenses, in some instances the MSA utilized the NAIT and its resources in order to help fund and nourish fledgling projects that had questionable financial viability. In one instance, the MSA took one of their oldest projects, the Muslim House, a small Muslim cultural center on the campus of University of Michigan in Ann Arbor, and gave the responsibility of managing and maintaining it over to the NAIT. Despite its lack of profitability, the MSA made clear to the leadership of the NAIT that the Muslim House was a necessary institution to maintain.[27]

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[25] "NAIT is a Milestone in our Endeavors Towards Generating Funds: Certain Quarters Dislike MSA's Growth," *Islamic Horizons*. 7, no.1 (1978). "NAIT's Investments are Financially Sound: Financial Independence Doesn't Exclude Seeking Donations" *Islamic Horizons* 7, no. 2 (1978).

[26] As a result, the NAIT continued to rely on the donation of funds from American Muslims, as well as seeking donations from abroad. The importance and persistence of foreign donations to NAIT will be discussed in chapter 5.

[27] "NAIT's Investments are Financially Sound: Financial Independence Doesn't Exclude Seeking Donations," *Islamic Horizons* 7, no. 2 (1978). Iqbal Unus, Oral

Apart from helping the MSA, by the end of the decade, the NAIT increasingly became a profitable institution for the wider Muslim community. Outside of funding business and organizational endeavors on behalf of the MSA, the NAIT put its money to work for outside Muslim groups as well. In one instance in 1977, the NAIT gave a loan of $100,000 to a Muslim group outside of Philadelphia for the purpose of purchasing a facility to be converted into an Islamic school. As a result of the loan, the NAIT claimed an eventual return of eighteen percent above the initial investment.[28] Although many organizations sought out the NAIT for funding, individual MSA members and non-MSA Muslims comprised the biggest group utilizing the services of the NAIT. As the 1970s wore on, increasingly, individual Muslims invested their money in the NAIT, hoping to grow their wealth without compromising their Islamic values. With the NAIT reporting a return on investment at nearly fifteen percent, the number of Muslims who chose to invest through the organization grew into the end of the decade.[29]

By the end of the 1970s, with its growth and prominence as the leading Islamic financial institution in the country, the NAIT looked to branch out and enter new fields of investment. Having acquired a number of small presses through their early investments, the success of the NAIT in making these smaller endeavors profitable led them to begin plans on creating a full-fledged Islamic publishing house.

History conducted by author, 5 January 2012. "NAIT Invests in Solar Energy: Housing Project, Stock Market Shares Contemplated; MSA Detractors Lack Character," *Islamic Horizons* 7, no. 3 (1978).

[28] "Who is Saying What- II: A Look Through the Window," *Islamic Horizons* 7, no. 9 (1978).

[29] "NAIT's Investments are Financially Sound: Financial Independence Doesn't Exclude Seeking Donations," *Islamic Horizons* 7, no. 2 (1978).

Hoping to become the hub for Islamic written materials, the NAIT consolidated some of their operations and began hiring a number of full-time employees to work the press. By the middle of 1978, the NAIT employed fifteen to twenty full-time employees in their printing and graphics businesses. Apart from publishing, the NAIT further looked to expand its scope by entering the stock market at the end of the decade. Despite worries about the Islamic nature of the market, the NAIT came to a decision that it would be possible to invest in the stock market without compromising the institution's overarching mission. One of the first avenues the NAIT began to explore with its planned entry into the stock market was investing in clean energy. In particular, the NAIT purchased shares in a solar field to be utilized by a solar energy company. Finally, the NAIT attempted to expand the investor base of the institution by providing new forms of financial services directly to clients. Specifically, the NAIT made plans to launch an interest-free mortgage operation so that American Muslims could acquire home loans that fit within Islamic jurisprudence.[30] Through the growth of their printing presses and through their increasingly diverse investment portfolio, the NAIT played a significant role in promoting and representing the growth of immigrant-led Islamic businesses in Chicago and across the country during the late 1970s.

Despite its strength and growing profile, the NAIT came under heavy criticism from many members of the MSA and the larger Muslim community. Accused of not adequately and fully accounting for all of its investments, many Muslims already investing with the NAIT began to call for greater transparency from

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[30] "NAIT Invests in Solar Energy: Housing Project, Stock Market Shares Contemplated; MSA Detractors Lack Character," *Islamic Horizons* 7, no. 3 (1978).

the organization. As a result, the NAIT started disclosing more information about successful investments, as well as detailing some of the institutions outstanding liabilities. Despite this increase in information, the activities of the NAIT led many Muslims to question the integrity of the institution and its leaders. In particular, the fundraising efforts of NAIT General Manager, Jamal Al-Barzinji, created pause for investors. Frequently travelling overseas to solicit donations from foreign entities, Al-Barzinji's trips raised a number of concerns. To begin with, some investors raised the question of the NAIT's possible ties to militant organizations abroad, and how relationships with such groups could jeopardize the security of the institution and its funds. Furthermore, for some Muslims, the image of Al-Barzinji constantly travelling around the world led them to question whether the NAIT was properly utilizing their funds. In particular, they accused Al-Barzinji of corruption, stating that they believed he misused funds in order to lavishly travel abroad. Responding to such charges, Al-Barzinji assured investors and the larger Muslim community that his travels abroad were strictly for fundraising purposes and that he took great care to save the NAIT money while on business. In particular, he noted that when abroad, he almost always stayed as a guest of foreign donors in order to avoid having the NAIT pay hotel fare.[31] Although their attempts to quell criticism from Muslim investors had a measure of success, the end of the 1970s found the NAIT growing steadily, while also increasingly under fire.

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[31] "NAIT's Investments are Financially Sound: Financial Independence Doesn't Exclude Seeking Donations," *Islamic Horizons* 7, no. 2 (1978). "NAIT Invests in Solar Energy: Housing Project, Stock Market Shares Contemplated; MSA Detractors Lack Character," *Islamic Horizons* 7, no.3 (1978).

In all, the 1970s dramatically altered the economic and financial aspects of Muslim life in Chicago. While the NOI/WCIW began the process of dismantling its once flourishing business empire, immigrant Muslims looked to expand their financial ventures, partly filling a void created by the NOI/WCIW and partly reaching beyond private employment and beginning to enrich the Muslim community. Aiming to create institutions that fit within the boundaries of Islamic rules of finance, immigrant Muslim groups created a diverse array of businesses and financial instruments designed to benefit both individuals and community organizations. In creating businesses that shared much in common with those previously created by the NOI, immigrant Muslim groups consciously attempted to learn from their black counterparts. Furthermore, much like white Americans in the end of the Civil Rights Movement, through reaching out to and modeling after the successful enterprises of the NOI/WCIW and its members, immigrant Muslims captured their market power through integrating them into their developing institutions. As the decade drew to a close, the success of financial institutions like the NAIT allowed mainstream Muslims to lend greater financial support to fledgling organizations, strengthening the bonds between different parts of the Muslim community. Through such efforts, the economic actions by Muslim groups within the city helped lend credence to the notion that a unified urban Umma existed within Chicago.

Islamic Education: Raising Islamic Children

During this era, the growing importance and emphasis on creating and controlling educational institutions increasingly became a unifying force in building a

sense of community among Chicago's Muslim residents. As the 1960s came to a close, Chicago's Muslim population grew more concerned with creating educational opportunities for their children. Feeling a sense of separation from the values and ideologies of mainstream American society, Chicago Muslims of various backgrounds began to seek out alternatives to the public and private schools in existence throughout the city. While the NOI had successfully built the foundation for alternative education in the 1950s and early 1960s, the end of the decade saw their educational model come into a serious crisis, as the organization increasingly altered its goals and ideologies. Meanwhile, for immigrant Muslim groups, the multiplying effect of migration coupled with the expanding growth of a second-generation of American-born children of Muslim immigrants led to a stronger push for the development of independent Islamic schools and institutions. As the NOI/WCIW slowly gave up its adherence to separation and independence, educational institutions created and run by immigrant Muslim groups took on a greater significance for Chicago Muslims. Through the formation and expansion of such institutions, the Chicago Muslim community grew more unified as a result of their emphasis on Muslim brotherhood and shared Islamic values.

For the NOI, one of the organization's top priorities, entering the late 1960s and early 1970s, was the proliferation and maintenance of their primary and secondary schools. Founded in the 1950s, the Muhammad University of Islam No. 2, in Chicago, functioned as the NOI's largest and most successful school. With an enrollment of over six hundred students by 1972, the school taught students from kindergarten through grade twelve. Drawing enrollment from both NOI members and

black non-Muslims, the school was an attractive private school option for black Chicagoans on the city's south side. Making the school stand out from public schools was its unique curriculum. Attempting to not only instill Islamic values, the schools also aimed to teach black pride and identity in stark contrast to the messages taught in white-run public schools. Along with its emphasis on teaching black history and civilization, the Muhammad University included a stringent curriculum of study including the hard sciences, mathematics, arts, English, and Arabic. As an added benefit for parents, enrolling their children in the NOI school also ensured them greater child care, as Muhammad University operated on a fifty-week calendar instead of the 9-month regular school year. Claiming, "Coeducation does not exist in the Muhammad Universities of Islam… Coeducation is the Western way of educating youth. Separate education is the Islamic way of educating youth," Minister Yusef Shah, Dean of Boys at Chicago's Muhammad University of Islam, stressed the Islamic nature of children's education at the school. Following a strict dress code for the students, boys attending the school dressed in shirts and ties, while girls were required to wear ankle-length gowns and headscarves to cover their hair.

Despite its countercultural focus, the school received accreditation from the board of education and grew to include a diverse set of teachers, as the organization began to change its racial rhetoric. By the end of the 1960s, the NOI no longer limited its faculty to just Black Muslims, as the Muhammad University No. 2 hired non-NOI and even non-black teachers to work in the school. Along with hiring immigrant and foreign Muslims to teach Arabic and Qur'anic studies classes, in the

early 1970s, the NOI began hiring a few white teachers as well.[32] Looking for teachers with education credentials, while the NOI welcomed a small number of white teachers into the faculty, they made sure to only hire white Chicagoans who also had proven to be supporters of advancing the causes of both moderate and more radical aspects of the Black Freedom Struggle. For example, Dorothy Dorsey, a white woman hired to teach at Muhammad University No. 2, along with supporting the Black Muslim movement, had previously worked alongside the Black Panthers and had even married one of their former members.[33]

As the 1970s wore on, the increasingly integrationist ideology of the WCIW led to a decrease in emphasis on the organization's schools. Worried about controlling costs, the WCIW, under the direction of W.D. Muhammad, no longer had the resources or the will to invest in the further expansion of the facilities. Furthermore, with the abandonment of separation and black nationhood as core beliefs of the organization, the need for a Black Nationalist oriented Islamic education diminished in the eyes of the WCIW. As a result, enrollment at the Muhammad University No. 2, began a period of decline, as W.D. Muhammad shifted the ideological focus of the newly renamed Sister Clara Muhammad School,[34] abandoning many of the ideological tenets that parents found appealing.[35] Increasingly in the last years of the 1970s, WCIW members turned to public schools, and in some cases, to mainstream Islamic schools, for the education of their children.

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[32] Lincoln, *The Black Muslims in America*, 119-122.
[33] Barbara Reynolds, "First white woman becomes a Muslim," *Chicago Tribune*, 2 March 1976, C12.
[34] Named after his mother.
[35] Lincoln, *Black Muslims in America*, 274.

With the transition of the NOI towards mainstream Islam, the continued growth of Muslim immigration to the US, and the emergence of a large generation of American-born Muslims, Chicago Muslims began plans to develop institutions devoted to Islamic education. With a diverse array of potential students, Chicago Muslims opened a variety of organizations that suited the varied groups they hoped to educate. Beginning in the late 1960s and continuing on to the end of the 1970s, these institutions met a varying degree of success while playing an important role in creating a common bond for many Muslims in the city.

Holding similar concerns to their Black Muslim counterparts, Chicago's immigrant Muslims also sought an alternative to the public and private school options available within the city. The particular racial message of the Muhammad Universities, as well as their heterodox interpretation of Islam, made enrollment at their black counterparts' schools unappealing for immigrant Muslims that were even aware of the existence of the NOI schools. As such, many immigrant and second-generation Muslims began to voice their support for expanding efforts to found their own educational institutions. Noting the urgency of the issue, MSA member Shamseldin Abdin urged members at the October 1977 Central Zone Conference to take immediate action and not overly focus on logistics. Arguing that everyone in the community has the ability to be effective teachers, he recommended that MSA members start plans to form Islamic schools, and worry about finding facilities and teachers later.[36]

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[36] "Big School and Qualified Teachers a Myth" *Islamic Horizons* 7, no. 1 (1978).

Furthermore, as the decade progressed, many MSA members increasingly found fault in the methods and teachings of public schools. Writing in 1978, MSA members listed a variety of concerns ranging from objections to sex-education being part of the public school curriculum, to the misinformation on Islam that appeared in standard social studies courses. While formulating a plan to create alternate educational institutions for Muslim children, the MSA recommended that Muslim parents became more involved in public education. Urging parents to join their local PTAs, the MSA also suggested that parents attempt to pressure local schools to have Arabic available as a second language option and for schools to recognize Muslim holidays.[37] For schools that continued to teach ideas and values anathema to Islam, the MSA even recommended withdrawing students. Writing specifically to women members of the MSA, the organization claimed that American schools were not only dangerously flawed from an Islamic perspective but also from the perspective of many modern educational experts. As such, they insisted that, "home-schooling should be considered by good Muslims."[38]

Despite their increased exploration into the logistical issues involved in creating independent schools, the MSA and its members' continued pressure on American public schools yielded a few tangible results. In an effort to correct misconceptions and negative narratives about Islam taught in social studies classes in schools around the country, in 1973 the MSA began a five-year project of collecting and distributing literature and textbooks to local schools and teachers. Encouraging

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[37] "Some Reflections on Islamic Education in a Non-Islamic Atmosphere," *Islamic Horizons* 7, no. 11 (1978).
[38] "Muslimah: School for Muslim Children- A New Approach," *Islamic Horizons* 8, no. 4 (1979).

MSA members to become active with PTAs, the organization had a degree of success in having local school boards approve their texts for use in the classroom.[39] Furthermore, in their efforts to have Arabic appear as an option for instruction, the MSA found their greatest successes. By the middle of the 1970s, the MSA and local Arab Muslims succeeded in having nine primary schools declared as minority controlled, paving the way for Arabic to be the medium of instruction. In order to help the schools realize their goal, the MSA helped recruit Arabic-medium teachers to begin teaching at the various institutions.[40] Despite the hard won gains in the public school system, for many Muslims, Western education remained less desirable than forming an Islamic alternative.

Noting the lack of Islamic knowledge students would gain in American schools, as well as the inculcation of Western values, Chicago's growing Muslim population, in the late 1960s, began the push to found their own Muslim schools. With the founding of the MCC in 1969, Chicago Muslims began preliminary explorations into the possibility of expanding into the field of education. Despite considerable positive feedback from members of the MCC and larger Muslim community, the MCC would only succeed in establishing their first full-time school in the late 1980s. During the 1970s, the MCC instead attempted to fill the gap in Islamic education of American-born Muslim children by establishing Saturday and Sunday schools dedicated entirely to religious education.[41]

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[39] "MSA Executive Committee," *MSA News* 1, no. 4 (1973).
[40] "Teaching Arabic in Public Schools," *MSA News* 4, no. 6 (1975).
[41] Schmidt, *Islam in Urban Americ*a, 62.

With the proliferation of Saturday and Sunday schools, immigrant Muslims largely succeeded in providing Islamic education for their children, however, they remained unsatisfied with their children remaining in American schools. By the middle of the decade, the MCC's Sunday school had an enrollment of one hundred eighty students, ranging in ages from six to thirteen.[42] Apart from the MCC, the MSA's series of Saturday and Sunday schools stand out as examples of the success of this approach to Islamic education. For example, the MSA's Sunday school on 91st Street and Austin had over two hundred children attending by the middle of the 1970s.[43] Despite the high and growing enrollments in weekend schools, Chicago Muslims felt the need to turn their attentions away from part-time Islamic instruction and began to focus more concretely on elementary and secondary education.

Although the MCC's attempts to create a full-time Islamic school struggled to gain traction during the 1970s, through their continued efforts, immigrant Muslims did succeed in creating a number of weekday schools during this era. Working separately from the MCC on educational issues, the MSA Chicago began plans to form their own Islamic school in late 1976. Planning for the school to provide elementary education to Muslim children, the MSA hoped to open the school by the fall of 1977.[44] Following the lead of the Chicago branch of the MSA, the organization quickly expanded their efforts into neighboring cities, as well as larger Muslim hubs. Opening a pre-school in Indianapolis the following year, the MSA continued to

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[42] "Table III. Some Data Reflecting MCC Activities: January 1975 to December 1976." *The Masjid and Community Development Project*. 1977. P.10. Folder: Muslim Community Center. Pamphlets Box 8. Islam in America Repository. DePaul University Library.
[43] "Calendar of Events: MSA, Chicago," *Islamic Horizons* 7, no. 3, (1978).
[44] "Chicago selected for Islamic School," *Islamic Horizons* 5, no. 11 (1976).

search for innovative new approaches to providing educational opportunities for children within the community.[45] Outside of the MSA, a number of Muslim organizations and communities around the country began to form full-time Islamic schools mainly focused on elementary education. During the fall of 1978, in Philadelphia, Muslims opened an elementary school for grades one through 4, and in New York, the FIA, in conjunction with a group of local Muslims, followed through on plans to open their own elementary school in Manhattan.[46] Despite these notable successes in early childhood and elementary education, the creation of independent secondary schools remained on the horizon as both within Chicago and in other cities, Muslims waited until the 1980s to establish such institutions.

As the mid-1970s progressed, many MSA members began to voice their interest in expanding the notion of teaching beyond just formulating schools, but instead towards forming a larger institution dedicated to teaching all levels. Arguing that the Muslim community needed better educators to spread correct information about Islam to American Muslims, and to the general public, many MSA members urged the organization to begin plans to create an institution that could act as a valuable resource for furthering Islamic education on a broader scale. Making their voices heard in a 1978 questionnaire of the membership of the MSA, one respondent

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[45] "Community News: Indianapolis Muslim Educational Cooperative in Stride," *Islamic Horizons* 6, no. 7 (1977).

[46] "Muslims in Philadelphia set up 1st regular school," *Islam Canada* 7, no. 3 (1978). Folder: Canada. Pamphlets Box 1. Islam in America Repository. DePaul University Library. "Federation of Islamic Associations found Elementary Schools in NYC," *Islam Canada* 6, no. 1 (1978). Folder: Canada. Pamphlets Box 1. Islam in America Repository. DePaul University Library.

suggested that the MSA begin work on "conducting private schools and clinics"[47] geared towards removing American-born Muslims from the inculcation of Western values. Echoing those concerns, another respondent noted that the top priority for the organization should be to "try to set-up educational facilities for kids."[48]

In the summer of 1977, the MSA acted upon the suggestions of many of its members by finalizing the formation of the Islamic Teaching Center (ITC) for the express purpose of teaching Islam throughout the country.[49] The center intended to serve a number of purposes for the furthering of Islamic knowledge within the country. Expressly built around the notion of teaching, the ITC involved a number of Muslim scholars, clerics, and educators, aiming to serve as valuable assets to both the Muslim community, and to non-Muslims as well. Through the efforts of the ITC, the MSA hoped to use education as a tool to further its work in building a broad coalition of Muslims under a unified banner.

With the continuing transition of NOI/WCIW members into the mainstream Muslim community, the ITC played an important role in integrating Black Muslims into the larger Islamic Chicago. After its founding, one of the primary functions of the ITC became the dissemination of information and ideologies of mainstream Sunni Islam to converts coming from the NOI. Providing literature to Islamic teachers and community organizations, the ITC hoped to inculcate a common set of beliefs among

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[47] Anonymous, "MSA: Task Force Questionnaire." Folder: Task Force Questionnaire Responses, February 1978. MSA Box 1. Islam in America Repository. DePaul University Library.
[48] Anonymous, "MSA: Task Force Questionnaire." Folder: Task Force Questionnaire Responses, February 1978. MSA Box 1. Islam in America Repository. DePaul University Library.
[49] "New Spectrum: 'MSA Da'wah Centre,'" *Impact* 7, no. 16 (1977): 15.

new Bilalian Muslims. Specifically, the ITC hoped to ensure the Bilalian Muslims believed in the seal of the Prophet and held the Qur'an as their only sacred text. Expressing his satisfaction with the work the ITC had accomplished in its first two years, one member of the MSA wrote, "No doubt, it (the ITC) is the cornerstone for building a knowledgeable Islamic society, especially among our brothers in the Belalian (sic) Muslims."[50] Through its direct focus on Bilalian Muslims, the ITC helped Islamic teachers bring black and immigrant Muslims closer together on ideological issues.

Along with its focus on NOI converts, the ITC also attempted to be the source of Islamic knowledge to new Muslims coming from non-Islamic backgrounds, aiming to prevent non-black converts from adopting ideologies outside of the growing mainstream. Specifically, the ITC paired providing religious books and pamphlets with formal classes at mosques and through community organizations to help school new Muslims in Islamic ideology and beliefs. Often this included bringing in religious scholars from within the country and abroad to help teach a variety of classes. In one instance, renowned Islamic scholar, Dr. Ahmad Al-Asal, took up residence in Chicago in order to conduct an introductory course on reading the Qur'an in Arabic for new Muslims.[51] Through such efforts, the ITC helped ensure that organizations like the MSA and MCC continued to gain membership from new converts, expanding the breadth and scope of Chicago's Muslim community.

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[50] Anonymous, "MSA Questionnaire," Folder: Task Force Questionnaire Responses, February 1978. MSA Box 1. Islam in America Repository, DePaul University Library.

[51] "MSA- Time to Change: Rabie Talks to Horizons," *Islamic Horizons* 8, no. 6 (1979).

Beyond its work with new Muslims, the ITC aimed to further build unity within the Muslim community by increasingly becoming a source for furthering the education and training of existing Muslims in the city. By 1979, the organization began the process of training Imams, utilizing the wide range of Islamic scholars and religious leaders involved in the organization. Similarly, in October 1979, the MSA Chicago co-hosted a two-day seminar with the ITC's Arabic Laboratory in order to help train Muslim teachers in the best techniques for teaching non-Arabic speakers how to read the Qur'an. Helping teachers deal with both children and adult students, the seminar aimed to empower Muslims to be able to not only read the Qur'an in Arabic, but to be able to understand its meaning on their own.[52] Through its work with the existing Muslim community, the ITC helped mold the religious ideologies of Chicago's Muslims in order to bring greater religious cohesion to its diverse population.

Continuing to grow the reach of the ITC's mission, as the MSA built its prison outreach program, the ITC expanded its role in providing religious guidance to Muslims in the prison system.[53] Responding to the requests of Muslim converts in the prison system, in 1977 the ITC began a program designed to aid the MSA's prison outreach initiatives. Providing Qur'ans and books on Islam, the ITC attempted to help in the education of inmates, while guiding them towards an understanding of Islam that fit within the ideologies of the MSA and the mainstream Muslim

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[52] M. Badr, "Chicago's MSA Holds Arabic Classes," *Islamic Horizons* 8, no. 10-11 (1979).
[53] "MSA- Time to Change: Rabie Talks to Horizons," *Islamic Horizons* 8, no. 6 (1979).

community.[54] Through such programs, the ITC buttressed the Da'wah work of the MSA within the prison system, to help ensure that prison converts would be equally connected to and a part of the larger Muslim community.

Apart from its role in educating other Muslims, the ITC attempted to further build the idea of a singular Islamic community by taking on the role of spreading information about Islam to the public. In particular, the ITC attempted to correct misconceptions and misrepresentations of Islam in the media. Taking over this responsibility from the previously existing sub-committee on mass media,[55] the ITC sought to open channels of communication with media members while monitoring the press and television for what they believed to be misrepresentations of the religion.[56] Often providing literature and consulting on religious matters with members of the press, the ITC had a tremendous amount of influence in shaping the national narrative on Islamic issues. In building connections with news outlets like the *Chicago Sun-Times*, the ITC helped position itself as the primary source for information about the religion within the city.[57]

Despite the largely successful efforts of the ITC to further the cause of Muslim unity, many members of the MSA found reason to criticize the new center's approach to spreading the religion. Claiming that it lacked the reach and tactics necessary to succeed, these members called for changes to the institution. As one

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[54] "Islamic Teaching Center: Director General to Implement New Educational Plans," *Islamic Horizons* 6, no. 7 (1977).
[55] To be discussed in chapter 6.
[56] "Who is Saying What?: A Look through the Window," *Islamic Horizons* 7, no. 8 (1978).
[57] "Misrepresentation of Islam Activates MSA's Chapters: $10,000 Raised in 24 Hours," *Islamic Horizons* 8, no. 4 (1974).

Chicago MSA member wrote, the MSA needed to, "Modernize the ways of Dawha[58] work according to the American way of approach."[59] For many members of the MSA and the larger Muslim community, the actions of the ITC had not made as deep an impact as they would have liked, as much work remained to be done towards uniting Chicago's Muslim community under one Islamic umbrella.

The criticism of the center not withstanding, the MSA's successful formation and support of the ITC, in the late 1970s, helped create the first national institute dedicated to the support of Islamic education. Working on a wide range of issues, the ITC brought a broader notion of education to the Muslim community, helping tie together disconnected parts of the community into a larger Islamic framework. Through its work with converts, immigrants, second generation American Muslims, prisoners, and the general public, the ITC established itself as a useful tool for Muslim organizations and educators to turn to for guidance in spreading Islamic thought and jurisprudence. Furthermore, by involving itself in such a diverse set of Muslim institutions and groups, the ITC played an important role in creating common ground and unity between an ever-diversifying Muslim community, both in the city and nation.

As the 1970s progressed, the importance and efficacy of Muslim educational institutions grew to become a unifying force in Chicago's Muslim community. Originally comprised almost entirely of the NOI's independent schools for elementary and secondary education, the scope and direction of Islamic education in

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[58] Dawha or Da'wah refers to the practice of proselytizing in Islam.
[59] Anonymous, "MSA Questionnaire," Folder: Task Force Questionnaire Responses, February 1978. MSA Box 1. Islam in America Repository, DePaul University Library.

Chicago radically shifted over the course of the decade. Peaking and then declining in strength in the second-half of the decade, the NOI/WCIW increasingly ceded the territory of education to immigrant Muslim organizations. At first creating Saturday/Sunday Schools, immigrant Muslims began to fill the void created by the decline of WCIW schools through the creation of full-time primary and secondary schools near the end of the decade. Hoping to aid Muslim groups in their attempts to build these schools, national organizations like the MSA created institutes such as the ITC to provide much needed resources and direction. Emphasizing the importance of Islamic brotherhood and Muslim unity, the schools and institutions founded by immigrant Muslim groups attempted to bring a diverse array of Muslims together under one banner. Through these efforts, the field of education ended up playing a major role in laying the ideological groundwork necessary to help build a shared sense of community for Muslims throughout the city.

Conferences: Bringing Chicago Muslims Together

As the 1960s came to an end, signs of a commitment towards greater cooperation between different Muslim racial, ethnic, and professional communities started to appear more frequently. Joining together to host events and further Islamic causes, one of the most visible avenues for increasing cooperation were lectures, banquets, conferences, and religious celebrations. As large Muslim organizations, like the MSA and MCC, quickly expanded towards the end of the 1960s and early in the 1970s, they utilized their growing budget to hold public events intended to bring Muslims of differing backgrounds together in the name of Islamic brotherhood.

Utilizing these events to preach solidarity, spread Islamic knowledge, and increase interaction between disparate groups, these programs played a vital role in promoting a growing sense of community among Chicago's Muslim residents.

In Chicago, the large number of Muslim affiliated organizations allowed for a diverse group of Muslims to come together across racial and ethnic lines in support of Islamic causes. In one example, in 1969, the Organization of Arab Students of Chicago held a symposium at the University of Chicago bringing together Arab students and members of the NOI. Entitled, "Palestine, Revolution of the Third Wall," the symposium included Arab and South Asian speakers from the faculty and graduate student bodies of a number of universities in Chicago. Apart from their discussion of Palestine, some of the speakers focused on the importance of continuing to grow the interracial Muslim community in the city. Speaking at the event, Prof. Abu Lughold from Northwestern, highlighted the shared experiences of Arab and African American Muslims. Stating, "The Arab community understands the struggle of the Afro-American people as part of the right to resist oppression from within or without one's homeland,"[60] Prof. Abu Lughold made a direct appeal to interracial Muslim solidarity based on their shared experiences, despite their continuing differences on religious dogma.

Later that year, in May 1969, the OAS attempted to further solidify ties between Black and Arab Muslims when it held its annual banquet on the city's south side. At the event was a broad coalition of foreign dignitaries, diplomats, and immigrant Muslims. Notably, the Deputy Chief of Algerian Mission to the UN and

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[60] "Arab Students Hold a Symposium at U of C," *Muhammad Speaks* 8, no. 24, February 28, 1969.

the Acting Chief of Pakistani Mission to the UN attended the banquet along with the Arab Information Center Director, and Arab-American Organization President. Making the event different from those in the past, however, was the presence of a selection of NOI members. Along with the attendance of several NOI officials, Sister Onelia X, a regular member of Mosque No. 2, and the married couple of Mr. and Mrs. McDuffie, who worked at the NOI supermarket, joined the NOI 's representatives at the event. At the banquet, the Deputy Chief of the Algerian Mission to the UN delivered a speech outlining the importance of American Muslims support for Palestinians living through Israeli occupation.[61] In making appearances at the event, the NOI not only increased its interaction and cooperation with foreign officials, a trend that had begun many years earlier, but also further solidified ties with the city's Arab Muslims through its willingness to engage them on the issue of Palestinian Independence.

By 1975, the transition to power by Wallace Muhammad, inside the NOI, led to greater frequency in the number of events and lectures with mixed audiences of black and immigrant Muslims. In these events, NOI members and immigrant Muslims reinforced the speakers' repeated calls for unity through their attendance and interaction. In one notable example, on September 15, 1975, Wallace Muhammad invited two professors from the MSA, Ghafoor Ahmad and Rahman Gunnawri, to address the NOI Council of Ministers and selected NOI members at Mosque No. 2 in Chicago. In his address, Prof. Gunnawri emphasized the commonalities in the two

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[61] "Special Guests," *Muhammad Speaks* 8, no. 33, May 2, 1969. "An Algerian's Look at the Palestinian Crisis," *Muhammad Speaks* 8, no. 33, May 2, 1969.

religious groups and asserted the Islamic position of racial equality.[62] In making such a direct appeal to the similarities between the two groups, Gunnawri and the MSA made clear their reciprocal interest to join forces with the NOI and form a more unified Muslim community.

Less than one month later, Wallace Muhammad and the NOI made their largest statement indicating interest in becoming part of the larger Muslim community in Chicago, through their attendance at Eid Prayers in 1975. Leading thousands of NOI members to McCormick Place in October 1975, the presence of Black Muslims praying alongside immigrant Muslims signaled in important step in the formation of an urban Umma in the eyes of both immigrant and black Muslim communities.[63] Although changes within the organization had been ongoing, as well as behind the scenes cooperation between immigrant and Black Muslims, the act of joining in a religious event like Eid Prayers elevated the relationship between the disparate communities to a different level.

Once again in 1977, the NOI/WCIW made use of a mixed event to further solidify its standing among mainstream Muslim groups. Delivering a speech at the Conference of Islamic Organizations in North America in July 1977, W.D. Muhammad publicly disavowed racialist ideas and explained that such notions had previously been necessary to "Give us a sense of superiority and dignity in a world that had held us down under white supremacy," but were no longer necessary or proper. Vowing that his community would no longer hold such ideas, W.D.

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[62] "Nation of Islam Receives the Visiting Muslim Guests." *MSA News* 4, no. 9-10 (1975).
[63] Nathaniel Clay, "6000 Muslims hold festival," *Chicago Defender*, October 8. 1975.

Muhammad announced plans to bring three hundred Bilalian Muslims to join other Muslims on Hajj later that year.[64] Through his public declaration of orthodoxy for the WCIW, W.D. Muhammad utilized the platform provided by large Muslim events to help clear up misconceptions and reassure immigrant Muslims that the WCIW could be trusted as part of a unified urban Umma.

Reciprocating the attempts by the NOI/WCIW to build community with immigrant Muslim groups, the MSA also utilized their public events as tools to preach unity to its members in hopes of spreading a spirit of cooperation. For example, in September 1977, at the MSA East Zone Regional Conference, Program Chairman Rashid Hamid specifically focused on the need of the immigrant Muslim community to avoid falling into the trap of internalizing American racism against blacks.[65] Noting the important opportunity to build strong communal bonds with WCIW members, Hamid hoped to promote colorblindness among immigrant Muslims. In doing so, Hamid made clear the MSA's desire to build unity across racial lines, despite any existing prejudices held by some in the immigrant Muslim community.

Along with addressing the immigrant community on issues of racism and inclusiveness, the MSA leadership utilized public events to signal their respect for Bilalian Muslims. At the MSA East Zone Regional Conference, MSA member, Dinawaz Siddiqui, delivered a speech where he cited Malcolm X as an exemplary

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[64] "'Bilalian Muslims': Progress and Pluses," *Impact* 7, no. 18, (1977). 14. Folder: UK (import), Pamphlets Box 3. Islam in America Repository, DePaul University Library.

[65] "MSA East Zone Regional Conference: Issues of Islamic Mission in North America Explored," *Islamic Horizons* 6, no. 9 (1977).

figure for Muslims in America to emulate.[66] Likewise, in June 1977, the MSA Chicago held a function in honor of W.D. Muhammad. Inviting representatives from the WCIW, MCC, and other Muslim organizations in the city, MSA President Yaqub Mirza highlighted the successes and work of W.D. Muhammad to help build Muslim unity in the city of Chicago through bringing Bilalian Muslims into the religious mainstream.[67] In making such statements, Siddiqui and Mirza not only emphasized the importance of Black Muslims to the immigrant community, but also used their public forums to signal to WCIW members that immigrant Muslim groups held important Black Muslim figures in high regard.

Beyond simply acquiescing to the desires of the leadership of immigrant groups, near the end of the decade, members of the immigrant Muslim community pressured their organizations to do more to bring the NOI/WCIW into the fold. For instance, at the Sixteenth Convention of the MSA, in September 1978, the Executive Committee fielded questions and concerns from the MSA membership regarding the depths of their involvement in integrating Bilalian Muslims into the organization and into the larger Muslim community. In response, President Al Tigani emphasized the lengthy and ongoing work done by the MSA, stating, "When our brother Wallace D. Muhammad took over the leadership of the W.C.I.W., he expressed his desire to bring the Bilalians back to the fold of Islam. The MSA decided to support and help them in understanding Islam. Books were provided to them and training programs for Imams were conducted at Atlanta, Los Angeles, and Chicago. Our contact with our brothers

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[66] "MSA East Zone Regional Conference: Issues of Islamic Mission in North America Explored," *Islamic Horizons* 6, no. 9 (1977).
[67] "From the President's Diary: Yaqub Mirza visits MSA Chapters," *Islamic Horizons* 6, no. 9 (1977).

in W.C.I.W. dates back to 1967."[68] Through their diverse set of programs with the WCIW, the MSA attempted to meet the demands of its members to better integrate Bilalian Muslims into the larger community.

Apart from the work done by Muslim groups to break down racial barriers, the 1970s also featured the use of public events to solidify ties between previously separate immigrant Muslim organizations. Of particular note, the coordination and hosting of Eid Prayers played a significant role in bringing together a diverse set of Chicago Muslims, even before the NOI/WCIW first attended in 1975. Becoming the first Eid Prayer to draw national press coverage in American history, the October 1973 Eid-Ul-Fitre Prayers at McCormick Place featured five thousand Muslims from across the city, bridging ethnic and linguistic barriers, coming together for prayer and celebration. Despite the MCC taking a leading role in organizing, it chose MSA President Dr. Eltigani Abu Gideiri to lead the prayers.[69] Shortly after, the MCC and MSA joined with each other, and with other prominent Chicago Muslim communities, to form a Central Eid Committee of Greater Chicago, with the express purpose of planning and hosting future Eid Prayers.[70] In a similar vein, the MCC and MSA continued their success in co-hosting public ceremonies by jointly holding a celebration of the Prophet's birthday in March 1975. Garnering an attendance of over three hundred revelers, the small event represented another important step in the

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[68] "Of Task Force, Expenses and Billalians: General Assembly Lacked Fire," *Islamic Horizons* 7, no. 8 (1978).
[69] "Eid Celebrations and Resource Potential for Community Development," *MSA News* 2, no. 10-11 (1973).
[70] "Muslims Gather: 'Feast of Sacrifice' Observed," *Chicago Tribune*, January 5, 1974, B12. "Local Chapter News: Large Eid Gathering in Chicago," *MSA News* 3, no. 1 (1974).

solidification of MCC and MSA cooperation.[71] Through Eid Prayers and other celebrations, immigrant Muslim groups came together to host shared events that bridged many of the ethnic and linguistic barriers that kept them independent of one another.

Outside of Eid Prayers, the desire of immigrant Muslim groups to plan joint events helped lead to the creation of new umbrella organizations designed to tie the Muslim community together. For example, in the summer of 1977, a diverse set of immigrant Muslim groups came together to form the Islamic Coordinating Committee. Expressly intended to plan a variety of Muslim holiday events, lectures, and conferences, the Islamic Coordinating Committee served as another example of the increasing sense of community and spirit of cooperation that had begun a few years prior.[72] With the creation of umbrella organizations, Muslim immigrant groups, while maintaining their independence, took important steps to increase the interaction and unity within the larger Muslim community.

As the decade progressed, the MSA and MCC's cooperation continued, becoming important partners in planning and hosting conferences, lectures, and celebrations. Early in 1978, the MCC's National Conference on Muslim Community Development featured the participation of a sizeable number of Muslims that had become dual members of the MCC and MSA Chicago. Through their work, the MCC managed to put together a conference that had a large number of attendees from other Muslim organizations and groups within the city. Lauding the MCC for its strong work in building community amongst disparate Muslim groups, MSA President,

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[71] "Muslims in N. America Celebrate Miladu-Nabi" *MSA News* 4, no. 4 (1975).
[72] "New Spectrum: American Conference Revolutions," *Impact* 7, no. 11 (1977): 15.

Yaqub Mirza, promised the continued support of the MSA in helping the MCC in its endeavors.[73]

Moving into the end of the 1970s, Chicago Muslims took part in conferences, lectures, and events at an ever-increasing rate. With the proliferation of such points of interaction, Muslims of different backgrounds met with one another more frequently than ever before. Through cooperation and conversations in these settings, Chicago Muslims found common ground on a host of issues, building understanding and solidarity with one another. Through identifying and developing shared interests in foreign affairs, religious practice and theory, and Muslim life in the city, Chicago Muslims increasingly came to see themselves as part of a unified urban Umma in place of once disparate ethnic and national communities.

Prison Outreach: Protecting the Most Vulnerable Muslims

Much as the increasingly similar approach to business, education, and cooperation helped tie Chicago's Muslim population together, in the realm of prison outreach, so too did Islamic Chicago begin to coalesce around shared strategies, concerns, and attitudes. While the NOI had long since established itself as a major presence in prisons around the country, many immigrant Muslim groups began to explore the possibility of utilizing similar methods to increase the influence of mainstream Muslims within the city and country. Although competing for a short period of time, the decline of the NOI's independent outreach programs, during the leadership of W.D. Muhammad, coupled with the emergence of a mainstream Islamic

[73] Yaqub Mirza, "Br. Yaqub Lauds MCC: Conference on Community Development; Pledges MSA's Support" *Islamic Horizons* 7, no. 2 (1978).

presence in prisons, helped pave the way for future cooperation between the once disparate NOI and immigrant Muslim groups. As ideological shifts in Islamic Chicago helped forge common ground between different groups, the competing prison outreach programs increasingly began to coalesce around shared concerns over fair treatment of Muslims and converts within penal institutions. Through working together in the prison system, black and immigrant Muslims formulated a shared approach to proselytizing and inmate outreach, bringing new Muslims into an increasingly unified Muslim community.

For the NOI, the prison system held a great deal of importance to the organization from an early era in its history. Beginning shortly after the group's move to Chicago in the 1940s, the NOI began recruitment inside prisons across the country. Referring to their prison recruitment as one form of "fishing,"[74] the NOI experienced early success gaining new converts inside prisons in the Urban North.[75] With many of these institutionalized converts becoming deeply loyal followers of Elijah Muhammad, many ex-convicts became prominent members of the organization.

Arguably the NOI's most famous member, Malcolm X represented a larger phenomenon of the NOI placing ex-convicts in positions of power within the organization. From the 1940s through the 1960s, apart from becoming ministers in the organization's numerous temples, ex-convicts made up a significant percentage of the Fruit of Islam[76] membership. In general, the NOI leadership placed a great deal of trust in converts from the prison system because of their greater debt and

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[74] Marable, *Malcolm X*, 102.
[75] Lincoln, *Black Muslims in America*, 20.
[76] The Fruit of Islam was a men's organization within the NOI that was charged with security and policing among Black Muslims. To be discussed further in chapter 6.

appreciation of the efforts and benefits bestowed upon them by the organization.[77]

In order to maintain a strong presence inside prisons, the NOI often attempted to assign a converted inmate serving an extended sentence to become a leader in proselytizing on the inside. Maintaining continuity through such a system allowed the NOI the ability to convert a steady stream of new inmates despite the continuous release of many converts. By the end of Elijah Muhammad's life in 1975, the NOI, along with many dedicated members from the general membership, had enlisted the time and strength of the FOI to help in recruitment efforts. Creating "FOI Brotherhoods," acting as de facto local chapters, the NOI brought many new members within the prison system directly under the control of the larger FOI leadership.[78] Through their use of the FOI, the NOI demonstrated the overall importance and priority they placed on prison outreach by entrusting it to, arguably, the most well organized and powerful group within the organization.

Beyond proselytizing, as the 1960s and 1970s progressed, the NOI increasingly grew concerned with the lack of basic rights for their converts within the system. With the NOI largely resented and mistrusted by the general public, as a part of a larger fear of Black Power groups during the 1960s and 1970s, many Black Muslim converts faced discrimination and mistreatment while incarcerated. Whether facing physical abuse by guards or limitations on rights to assemble, pray, or access religious literature set by wardens and prison boards, Black Muslim prisoners had a

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[77] Lincoln, *Black Muslims in America*, 24.
[78] *Muhammad Appreciation Day Journal on the Occasion of the Official Visit of Allah's Servant the Honorable W.D. Muhammad, Supreme Minister of the NOI on 29th June, 1975 in New York City.* p. 14. No Folder. Rosicrucian Order Box 3. Islam in America Repository. DePaul University Library.

litany of complaints regarding their treatment.[79]

After W.D. Muhammad took over leadership in 1975, the NOI/WCIW altered their approach and message within the prison system. Having begun the move away from the doctrines of racial separation and Black Nationalism that had dominated its earlier message to inmates, the NOI/WCIW increasingly sought to fight for the rights of Muslim inmates already in the prison system. Highlighting the way Black Muslims faced rampant discrimination in their treatment from guards, other inmates, dietary restrictions, and freedom to practice religious rituals, the NOI/WCIW attempted to utilize the press to call attention to injustices. Similarly, the NOI/WCIW attempted to send representatives to the prisons in order to provide comfort to inmates and speak directly to wardens. Carrying out these actions during the first two years of W.D. Muhammad's leadership, Brother Camallah Udin played a leading role in engaging in and organizing prison outreach efforts for the NOI/WCIW in Chicago.[80] In shifting the organization's focus towards prisoner treatment and away from the group's previously held separatist ideology, the NOI/WCIW's prison programs ceased to create further distance between black and immigrant Muslim groups and instead began to deal with many issues that affected all Muslims in the prison system.

By the end of 1977, the WCIW's shift away from supporting separate institutions and programs reached their prison outreach efforts. As a result, the organization began to de-emphasize their prison outreach programs while working

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[79] "Prison Reform," *Nation of Islam in Action!* 1976. p.19. Folder: NOI. Pamphlets Box 8. Islam in America Repository. DePaul University Library. Marsh, *Lost-Found Nation of Islam in America*, 130. Lincoln, *Black Muslims in America*, 211.
[80] "Prison Reform," *Nation of Islam in Action!* 1976. p.19. Folder: NOI. Pamphlets Box 8. Islam in America Repository. DePaul University Library.

towards greater integration into aiding the efforts of mainstream Islamic groups. With W.D. Muhammad increasingly moving the WCIW towards dissolution and absorption into mainstream Islamic organizations and communities, the WCIW's independent prison outreach programs gradually disappeared. In its place, many WCIW members who had worked with prisoners and on prison issues began to lend their support to organizations like the MSA, whose presence in the prison system had grown exponentially in the latter half of the decade.[81] In transitioning into the MSA and other mainstream Muslim groups, much as was the case with the decline in NOI business and education, prison outreach programs ceased being the exclusive realm of black Islam and increasingly existed as a program that helped connect Muslims of different backgrounds.

In total, for the NOI, prison outreach played an important role in the overall effectiveness of the organization. In its early years, prisons existed as critical sites for recruitment of new and loyal members. Serving as prominent members of the NOI, these new members helped form a committed base engaging in work critical to the health of the organization. As the NOI Islamized and adapted in the last years of Elijah Muhammad's leadership, and first years of W.D. Muhammad's, prison outreach became an important way to fight for the rights of Muslims and help out coreligionists, making life better for members of the larger Islamic community of faith.

As the NOI continued its proselytizing attempts within the prison system into the early stages of the 1970s, immigrant Muslim groups took notice and began

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[81] "Proposed Budget for the Fiscal Year ending 06/30/1978." Folder: Budget Proposals. MSA Box 1. Islam In America Repository. DePaul University Library.

formulating plans to engage in similar actions. Noting the successes of the NOI in converting prison inmates to Islam, the MSA began to formulate plans to enter the prison system in the early parts of the 1970s. For example, in 1972, members of the MSA had begun working with a variety of correctional facilities to provide Islamic texts and reach out to Muslim converts within the system. Writing to the MSA from within prison, Abdul Aziz, thanked the organization, stating, "The Qur'an and Islamic literature that you sent us is a fine example of Islamic brotherhood at work. Your publications have helped us tremendously and no word can best describe our thanks."[82] Similarly, early in 1974, in response to requests from Muslim inmates, members of the MSA began letter writing correspondence to provide emotional and religious support to incarcerated converts.[83] Through such donations of time and resources, individual branches of the MSA lent whatever resources they could acquire to help spread the faith among inmates.

By 1974, the MSA moved beyond their previously haphazard approach to prison work, formalizing plans by including the decision to start prison outreach programs in the second edition of the MSA Handbook. Observing that prisoners represented the most common category of American to convert to Islam, the MSA looked to spread information, literature, and begin advocacy for the rights of Muslims

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[82] Omar Abdul Halim Hamidullah, "Letters from Prisons," *MSA News* 1, no. 4 (1973). Abdul Aziz, "Letters from Prisons," *MSA News* 1, no. 4 (1973).
[83] "Light of Islam from prison," *MSA News* 3, no. 2 (1974).

within the penal system.[84] Working nationally, the MSA's prison outreach programs created a lasting effect on Muslim inmates through a number of their actions.

Incorporating prison outreach under the banner of the ITC, the MSA greatly increased its budget and personnel devoted to helping spread Islam in the prison system. Headed by Dr. El Tigani Abugideri, the former Director of Education, Publication, and Information of the MSA, the ITC began publishing a set of materials geared directly towards the Muslim inmate population.[85] By 1978, under the administration of the ITC, the MSA began devoting twelve percent of its Zakah[86] funds towards creating and distributing educational materials to new converts in the prison system.[87] Along with standard materials like Qur'ans and copies of *Islamic Horizons*, the ITC created special materials to serve unique groups within the prison system. For instance, in prisons that contained a large number of Spanish speakers, the ITC provided Islamic literature in Spanish to be distributed to inmates.[88] Through the ITC, the MSA succeeded in expanding the reach and effectiveness of its attempts to provide Islamic educational materials to Muslim converts in the prison system.

Beyond attempts at providing religious education to inmates, much like the NOI/WCIW, towards the latter half of the decade, the MSA increasingly attempted to address issues of unfair and harmful treatment of Muslim prisoners. For inmate

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[84] "Penal Institutions," *MSA Handbook 2nd Edition*. August 1974. Folder: Constitutions and Proposed Changes to by-laws. MSA Box 1. Islam in America Repository. DePaul University Library.
[85] "Islamic Teaching Center: Director General to Implement New Educational Plans," *Islamic Horizons* 6, no. 7 (1977).
[86] Zakah or Zakat is one of the five pillars of Islam that refers to the Islamic duty to donate a share of one's income to charitable causes.
[87] "MSA Institutes National Zakah Fund," *Islamic Horizons* 7, no. 8 (1978).
[88] Jihad Abdur Rahim, "Islamic Literature in Spanish," *Islamic Horizons* 7, no. 8 (1978).

Khalil Muhammad Tariq, guards within the prison system were "uncooperative and distrustful" of Muslim worshippers. In some instances, this led to the denial of basic rights to worship and engage in Islamic proselytizing.[89] In other cases, mistreatment of Muslim inmates extended into more extreme measures that the MSA hoped to call attention to. In one noted instance, inmates received solitary confinement and lost outdoor privileges for attempting to conduct prayers in the prison yard. In response, along with publicizing the inmates' complaints, the MSA solicited local college students to begin writing letters and making visits to the facility, in order to convince the warden to change his policies.[90]

Apart from outright hostility and repression from guards and authorities within the prison system, the MSA fought to change prison policies that violated the religious beliefs of Muslim inmates. Concerned with Islamic notions of propriety and modesty, one issue that the MSA attempted to address was the lack of gender separation between guards and inmates. Although the prison system separated prisoners by gender, often times, women oversaw male prisoners, depriving them of privacy. Protesting the hiring of women officers in male prisons, the MSA cited their presence in "strip searches," "anal inspections," and "supervising male communal showers," as violations of religious rights of Muslims.[91] Much in a similar vein, the MSA's prison outreach involved attempts to ensure Muslim inmates could enjoy in equal privileges to their non-Muslim counterparts. In one example, the MSA pressed a prison to serve a substitute to pork at dinner for inmates. When the Chairman of the

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[89] Omar Azful, "Islam in Prison," *Islamic Horizons* 6, no. 1 (1977).
[90] Najiyal Razzaq, "Letters to the Editor," *Islamic Horizons* 6, no. 9 (1977).
[91] "Help Sought to Protect Muslim Inmate Rights," *Islamic Horizons* 6, no. 5 (1977).

State Commission of Corrections claimed that the meals provided to prisoners were sufficiently nutritious without pork, and therefore no substitute needed to be provided, the MSA attempted to use his own words against him. Arguing that if the meal was sufficient without pork, then pork constituted a luxury and therefore should have a substitute available in order to satisfy the constitutional requirement of equal-protection under the law.[92] Through their advocacy for Muslims' religious rights within the prison system, the MSA and its members filled an important void created by the NOI's gradual withdrawal from such advocacy.

Along with their efforts to address the unfair treatment Muslim inmates faced, the MSA attempted to provide comfort and support to those inside the prison system. One way that the MSA hoped to raise the spirits of inmates was through publishing their letters in *Islamic Horizons*. In some instances, this involved letting their complaints be aired for other Muslims to hear. For others within the system, however, *Islamic Horizons* provided them the opportunity to discuss their journey to Islam and the way it had improved their lives.[93] Along with publishing letters, Muslims in the MSA attempted to provide emotional support to Muslim inmates through correspondence and visitation programs. Giving preference to inmates without families, the MSA helped organize members to write letters and visit prisoners to strengthen their connection to other Muslims. Through these multiple programs, the support provided by MSA members helped to establish a sense of community between Muslims inside and outside of the prison system.

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[92] "Rights of Muslim inmates in Correctional Facilities," *Islamic Horizons* 6, no. 9 (1977).
[93] Khalil Muhammad Tariq, "From Correctional Facility: Somehow I knew," *Islamic Horizons* 6, no. 7 (1977).

Transforming from entirely an arena dominated by the presence of the NOI, the advent of mainstream Muslim prison outreach programs helped build a more unified Muslim community as the 1970s progressed. As the NOI slowly de-emphasized and decreased its prison presence during the late 1970s, the MSA largely stepped into the void to continue to address the isolation and mistreatment of Muslim inmates. Through their devotion of resources, literature, and time, Muslims outside of the prison system helped forge greater connections with Muslim prisoners and helped them integrate more fully into an increasingly unifying Muslim community.

Conclusion- The Promise of the Urban Umma

As the 1970s progressed, increasingly, Chicago Muslims came together to participate in shared practices and work towards common goals. As changes in organizations and institutions brought previously disparate Muslim communities into greater contact and cooperation, the idea of creating a unified Muslim community gained substantial traction. Through similar experiences in building financial and business ventures, shared visions in alternative education, participation in conferences, and work in prison outreach programs, Chicago Muslims grew to find common cause across racial, cultural, and organizational lines. In doing so, they found a degree of success in their efforts to create an urban Umma in Chicago.

As the economic hub of Islamic Chicago shifted away from the NOI towards immigrant Muslim organizations in the middle of the decade, the services and institutions that these groups provided helped create important connections between previously disconnected groups. Much like the decline of black business that could

be seen across the nation, the NOI/WCIW dismantled its economic ventures in an effort to better integrate socially and spiritually into the mainstream immigrant Muslim community. In contrast to the ease of white businesses replacing black ones, nationally, in the wake of the Civil Rights Movement, with far less experience and wide-ranging success than their black counterparts, immigrant Muslims expressly aimed to learn from and emulate the institutions built by the NOI. In order to do so, immigrant Muslims began the process of creating parallel business to provide many of the same services the NOI had successfully provided for decades. Furthermore, in extending beyond consumer products and food services, the MSA helped establish financial institutions that helped provide much needed funding to fledgling Muslim organizations. Through these services, the MSA played a pivotal role in creating greater support and interconnectedness between different parts of the Muslim community.

While the character of Islamic education underwent significant changes during the 1970s, Chicago Muslims attempted to strengthen the bonds of the community through teaching a common set of ideas and values. With the Muslim community expanding and diversifying, education became a key tool for solidifying ties across cultural and generational lines. With the NOI increasingly deemphasizing racial separatism and pride, replacing them with stronger Qur'anic and Islamic instruction, the generation of students in Black Muslim schools began receiving many of the same set of doctrines that the children of immigrants learned in Sunday Schools operated by organizations like the MSA and MCC. Expanding beyond children's schools, the MSA's adult education and media presence helped further inculcate a

broad range of Muslims with shared ideologies. Through these educational endeavors, Chicago Muslims helped solidify a common set of ideas and values that aided in unifying a diverse set of believers into a larger Islamic community.

Playing a crucial role in forging stronger communal bonds between disparate groups, conferences, lectures, and meetings created opportunities for interaction that had never existed prior to the late 1960s and into the 1970s. As Black Muslims increased their cooperation with the immigrant community, these events allowed for the important exchange of ideas under the banner of Islam. Furthermore, beyond ideology, conferences and lectures helped promote solidarity between different national, ethnic, and racial Muslim groups, as issues pertaining to foreign policy and Muslim life in the city helped highlight commonalities in the Muslim experience in Chicago. Through the growth of these events during the 1970s, Chicago Muslims increasingly saw themselves as members of a larger community that encompassed Muslims of different backgrounds than their own.

Over the span of the late 1960s and 1970s, prison outreach programs become a significant avenue for creating broader cohesion and cooperation within the Muslim community. At first the exclusive domain of the NOI, the presence of immigrant Muslim groups expanded greatly in the 1970s. Once again filling the void created by the gradual declining program of the NOI in prison work, immigrant groups like the MSA expanded their efforts, providing important continuity for incarcerated Muslims. As the NOI shifted from emphasizing proselytizing towards concerns over prisoner treatment, the NOI/WCIW and MSA increasingly found common cause in their outreach programs. Furthermore, with the MSA providing the lion's share of

Islamic literature to inmates, by the middle of the decade, Muslim prisoners increasingly held ideological views that fell in the mainstream of the Islamic community. Finally, with MSA members volunteering to reach out to and maintain contact with incarcerated Muslims, Muslim inmates built stronger connections to and felt part of a broader, unified, Muslim community.

In total, as Chicago Muslims approached the latter portions of the 1970s, the Muslim community looked dramatically different than it had only a few years prior. As Bilalian Muslims increasingly abandoned their separate institutions and programs in favor of integrating into mainstream Muslim communities, large Muslim groups like the MSA and MCC began the process of expanding the scope and mission of their organizations. Through the creation of financial institutions, founding of schools and other educational organizations, expansion of prison outreach, and the proliferation of conferences, Chicago Muslims interacted and cooperated with Muslims of different racial, ethnic, and national backgrounds in greater frequency than they ever had before. Through these avenues of interaction, Chicago Muslims came to see each other as members of something larger than just the narrow identity groups they belonged to. For a good number of the city's Muslim population, this larger entity was the urban Umma that so many had worked tirelessly to build over the previous decade.

Chapter 6:
Chicago's Muslims: Coming Together while Growing Apart

In an era featuring increased harmony, interaction, and sense of community between differing Muslim organizations, the FIA's yearly convention, in 1978, emerged as a touchstone of controversy. The events and occurrences at the convention created a divide between them and more conservative Muslim groups, like the MSA. At the convention, members of the FIA engaged in activities that included playing music and dancing. Since the FIA conventions often served as opportunities for second and third generation Muslim immigrants to meet potential spouses, these activities often involved a fair amount of physical and interpersonal contact between men and women. Having attended the convention, some attendees, who were also members of the MSA, left the convention outraged. Reporting back to the MSA, Abdullah Khasawinah condemned the occurrence of mixed gender dancing and other "non-Islamic" events that took place at the convention. Striking a more conciliatory tone, Abdul Karim Baram wrote that the MSA needed to step up to guide the FIA towards the correct, Islamic, path, stating, "We like to make the organizers and the Muslims aware about the deviation from Islamic principles observed during the convention."[1]

Responding to the criticism from MSA members, the FIA highlighted the persistence of the divide between American-born Muslims and those emigrating from the Muslim world. According to Ferial Abraham, a second generation Arab-American Muslimah and member of both the FIA and MSA, the FIA functions

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[1] Abdullah Khasawinah, "Letters to the Editor: F.I.A. Convention: Embarrassing and Disappointing," *Islamic Horizons 7*, no.10 (1978).

provided an important service as it greatly helped American-born Muslims have the opportunity to meet and socialize in a modern but Islamic setting.[2] Sensing the divide in religious interpretation between American-born and immigrant Muslims, Nihad Hamid, the President of the FIA, made clear that they would continue to operate by the standards of the American-born Muslim community, regardless of how immigrant Muslims felt. Hamid stated, "The Federation never purported to represent Muslim students from foreign lands; it does however emphatically and unequivocally represent American and Canadian born Muslims, the majority of which are FIA members." In addition to the FIA's stance, the Hamid took care to note the long history of cooperation and friendly relations between the FIA and MSA, arguing that it was unproductive and damaging to the growing sense of Muslim unity for one organization to call into question other Muslim groups' dedication to Islamic values. Despite his call for conciliation, Hamid's request fell on deaf ears as the MSA offered a rejoinder where they reaffirmed their critique, claiming that the FIA never responded to the substance of their criticism.[3] Through the conflict over the FIA convention, the growing generational divide between Muslim immigrants and the children of an earlier generation of Muslim immigrants became even more apparent. As the decade came to a close, the FIA and its mostly American-born membership increasingly struggled to balance Western cultural practices with stricter Islamic codes held by many immigrants, leading to conflict between them and many immigrant-led organizations.

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[2] Ferial Abraham, "FIA Deserves Understanding," *Islamic Horizons* 8, no. 1, (1979).
[3] Nihad Hamid, "F.I.A. Response," *Islamic Horizons* 7, no. 10. (1978). Editor, "Comments," *Islamic Horizons* 7, no. 10 (1978).

While the mid-1970s saw a shift in the Chicago Muslim community towards greater cooperation and interaction between disparate Muslim groups in order to build joint institutions and organizations, the newly formed harmony failed to stand the test of time. Despite initial optimism and enthusiasm, the increased interaction and cooperation of these diverse groups sowed the seeds of fractures within the urban Umma, as the realities of a cohesive singular Muslim community proved problematic for many of the city's Muslim residents. By the end of the decade, the sense of shared community in Islamic Chicago had begun to come apart as tensions along racial, generational, and cultural lines proved too difficult to overcome.

Matchmaking and the limits of Muslim Integration

For Chicago's immigrant Muslims, one of the most important, yet contentious, services that religious organizations provided was matchmaking. Through pairing single Muslims together in marriage, Islamic organizations around the city attempted to aid the growth and health of the Muslim community. As interracial and intercultural Muslim cooperation grew during the 1970s, conflicting expectations towards the idea of intermarriages led to conflict within the community. With the persistence of racism and feelings of cultural superiority within segments of the community, marriage proved to be an important point of disconnection between disparate parts of Islamic Chicago, undermining the optimism of the notion of a Muslim community based in equality under Islam.

Beginning at the end of 1976, the MSA responded to demands from its membership to provide "Some honorable formula… for Muslim men and women to

have Islamic marriages,"[4] and began posting matrimonial ads in its monthly journal, *Islamic Horizons*. In order maintain what they deemed to be Islamic standards of propriety, the MSA made sure to avoid direct contact between those posting and responding to the ads. Instead, the MSA acted as a go-between for both parties. Those placing the ad would provide its language to the editors of *Islamic Horizons*, and then prospective responders would send a photo and their information back to the MSA, who would distribute it to the placer of the ad. Afterwards, the placer of the ad was free to continue contact with any prospective match they chose. While the program resulted in a number of successes in finding marriage partners for single Muslims, it also brought a storm of controversy from members that objected to the content in many of the ads and what it said about the level of integration in the community.

More than any other issue, race and ethnicity played a large role in matrimonial ads placed by Chicago's Muslims. In most ads, the person placing it specified their age, ethnicity, and occupation along with a list of desired traits in prospective responders. While this information helped readers assess their interest and chances in finding a match, different ethnic groups showed clear patterns of differences in what they required out of a match. For many South Asian Muslims, their ads specifically called for finding a match of South Asian descent. As an example, in the January edition of *Islamic Horizons*, of the few matrimonial ads appearing, both of the ads involving Pakistanis specifically requested responses from

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[4] Anonymous, "MSA: Task Force Questionnaire." Folder: Task Force Questionnaire Responses, February 1978. MSA Box 1. Islam in America Repository. DePaul University Library.

other Pakistanis. The first ad from a 33-year old Muslim woman with a Ph.D, states, "Wishes to marry a good Muslim, preferably of Pakistani origin." Alongside that ad was another, placed by a 31-year old Pakistani engineering graduate student wishing to marry "a girl from Pakistan or India with some college background."[5] Similarly, in the April edition of *Islamic Horizons*, two more Pakistani Muslims placed matrimonial ads, both specifying their desire to receive proposals from other Pakistani Muslims.[6] With similar ads appearing in May and in most months after, Pakistani Muslims made clear their preference to stay within their ethnic community for marriage, despite the growing emphasis on cross-ethnic Muslim unity spreading throughout Islamic Chicago.

While Pakistani matrimonial ads exhibited a clear preference for other South Asians, other immigrants often looked more broadly, but still indicated racial and ethnic preferences. In general, many Arab Muslims posting matrimonial ads made clear a preference for Americans or Arabs first, while also considering South Asians. In one example, a 35-year old Saudi Arabian engineer specifically requested an American or Canadian Muslim to marry. In another example, for a 24-year old Egyptian student, his ad specified the desire to marry either a US, Arab or Pakistani girl.[7] In making requests for "American" Muslims, many matrimonial ad placers began specifying the type of American they had in mind. Increasingly in the latter half of 1978 and into 1979, Arab men began specifying that they were interested in "Anglo-American" or Arab Muslims for marriage. In one such ad, an Arab Canadian

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[5] "Matrimonial," *Islamic Horizons* 6, no. 1 (1977).
[6] "Matrimonial," *Islamic Horizons* 6, no. 4 (1977).
[7] "Matrimonial," *Islamic Horizons* 7, no. 1 (1978). "Matrimonial," *Islamic Horizons* 6, no. 12 (1977).

immigrant expressed his desire for a "Muslim girl of Arabic or Anglo-American origin." In a similar vein, a 43 year-old Arab professor sought an "Anglo-American Muslimah" to marry.[8] Standing in stark contrast to the trend towards indicating preference for white American Muslims, the small number of ads from African Muslims did express openness to marrying black American Muslims. In one such ad, a 28-year old Senegalese man indicated that he "seeks marriage with Afro-American Muslimah."[9] With African Muslims making up a small minority of those placing matrimonial ads, however, the larger trend of Arab exclusion of blacks holds greater significance in shaping the Muslim community. Through specifying their openness to marry only white American Muslims, many immigrant Muslims demonstrated the persistence of a strong racial divide between the black and immigrant Muslim communities.

In contrast to the ethnic and racial preferences rampant in the ads of immigrant Muslims, for black Muslims seeking spouses these requests rarely appeared. Instead, most of the ads from black Muslims featured open-ended qualities emphasizing the desire to marry a good Muslim. In one example, a 36-year old African American medical secretary advertised in search of simply, "a Muslim man."[10] Similarly, one ad reads: "Afro-American Muslim male, teacher/doctoral student, wants Muslim woman."[11] Even black Muslims who had adopted the more politically conscience "Bilalian" Muslim label made little indication of a clear racial preference in their matrimonial ads. Appearing in multiple editions of *Islamic*

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[8] "Matrimonial," *Islamic Horizons* 7, no. 9 (1978).
[9] "Matrimonial," *Islamic Horizons* 7, no. 3 (1978).
[10] "Matrimonial," *Islamic Horizons* 6, no. 5 (1977).
[11] "Matrimonial," *Islamic Horizons* 6, no. 9 (1977).

Horizons, one ad read: "Farm worker, 34, never married, Blilalian Muslim seeks Muslimah, country resident."[12] Without indicating a racial or ethnic preference, black Muslims, at minimum, signaled a greater openness to the idea of a unified Muslim community that Muslims across Chicago claimed to desire.

As time passed, many Muslims began to take issue with the persistence of racial preferences appearing in matrimonial ads. Voicing her displeasure with the persistence of racial preferences appearing in *Islamic Horizons*, MSA member, Rashida Mian, wrote that while the matrimonial is a good idea and provides an important service to the community, in theory, it "discredits MSA and our Muslim Community to allow for race or nationality stipulations." Arguing that such stipulations are illegal in Europe, she claimed that the idea is un-Islamic since Islam is a color-blind religion. Furthermore, she pointed out that such stipulations damage community cohesion and if one truly held such preferences they were under no obligation to respond to requests from suitors they did not like. She also noted that if one truly wanted to advertise only to one's own ethnic group, one could always use an ethnic newspaper.[13] Taking a softer approach, a different MSA member, Salahuddin Muntaqim, stated that it isn't necessarily racist to have a preference in the ethnic or racial background of the person you would like to marry, since all people have preferences. He commended Mian for her letter, and the underlying point about the Muslim community, despite advocating for assuming the best in people, instead of

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[12] "Matrimonial," *Islamic Horizons* 8, no. 9 (1979).
[13] Rashida Mian, "Our Reader's Comment: Matrimonial Column Un-Islamic Race Stipulation," *Islamic Horizons* 7, no. 1 (1978).

the worst.[14] In voicing their objections to racial and ethnic stipulations appearing in matrimonial ads, many of Chicago's Muslims emphasized the importance of inclusiveness and equality in ensuring harmony and cohesiveness within an increasingly diverse community.

Moving past the process of matchmaking, within the NOI, marriage posed an important opportunity to highlight the increasing level of interracial cooperation occurring within the organization and its membership. Well before W.D. Muhammad and the integration of the NOI into mainstream Islam occurred, the NOI's policy of Islamization resulted in greater cooperation with foreign religious scholars. For Black Muslim weddings, the desire of the NOI and its members to more closely adhere to traditional Islamic practice often manifested itself in the invitation of Maulanas from the Muslim world to administer the proceedings. In one example, in 1966, the NOI in Chicago brought in Maulana Ibrahim M. Shalaby, a religious scholar at Al-Azhar University in Cairo, who was in residence at University of Arizona that year, to perform the wedding ceremony for Sister Anne Ali (secretary for Elijah Muhammad) and Willie 21X Mian. While in Chicago, the NOI also had Shalaby preside over the wedding of a second couple, Sister Dorry x Curry and Odell X Cole. After the ceremonies, Shalaby along with the couples and friends and family, attended a post-wedding reception held at Elijah Muhammad's Woodlawn residence.[15] Although the dual wedding involved the families of high-level NOI members, the presence of foreign religious scholars performing the marriage rites

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[14] Salahuddin Muntaqim, "Matrimonial Column- UnIslamic Race Stipulations," *Islamic Horizon* 7, no. 6 (1978).
[15] "Two Weddings at NOI," *Muhammad Speaks* 5, no. 17, January 14, 1966.

spread to more common members of the organization as the NOI increasingly Islamized into the 1970s.

As the NOI gradually brought cultural and religious practices from mainstream Islam into their marriage functions, the existence of inter-racial and inter-cultural marriages began to occur in small numbers, although remaining relatively limited. With the ascension of W.D. Muhammad to leadership within the NOI, interracial marriages and marriages outside of the religion began to be allowed. In a few notable cases, white non-Muslim women active in the Black Freedom Movement married Muslim men within the NOI.[16] Although inter-cultural marriages began appearing among some members of the organization, these unions were almost exclusively limited to those outside of the Islamic faith, as mainstream Muslim resistance to the NOI's heretical theology prevented immigrant and American-born Muslims from participating in much inter-marriage. By the late 1970s, however, the transition of the WCIW into mainstream Islam quelled many of those concerns, creating a significant influx of eligible Bilalian Muslims into the Muslim community.

Despite the outward exclusion that persisted in marital ads and matchmaking searches, the occurrence of intermarriage between black and immigrant Muslims did grow significantly in the late 1970s with the arrival of Bilalian Muslims into the larger Chicago Muslim community. With Bilalian Muslim women increasingly attending mosques formed by and frequented by new immigrants, the gender imbalance of the immigrant Muslim population created many opportunities for forming marital unions. With young single immigrant men arriving in Chicago with

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[16] Barbara Reynolds, "First white woman becomes a Muslim," *Chicago Tribune*, March 2, 1976, C12.

the aims of attending school or searching for work, the pool of marriage eligible Muslim women of their ethnic and racial backgrounds often paled in comparison to their numbers. As a result, immigrant men that hoped to marry a woman they met in the United States, as opposed to arranging a marriage from abroad, often found more opportunities to form relationships with black Muslim women than those of similar background.

Although instances of African American Muslim women marrying immigrant Muslim men grew significantly in the late 1970s, their unions often times created more disunity within the Muslim community. Although almost all mainstream Muslims preached the doctrine of racial equality, citing the Qur'an as justification, many harbored prejudices and resentment towards Muslims marrying black Americans. Noting the relatively small numbers within particular ethnic and linguistic groups inside the Muslim community, many immigrant Muslims expressed their opposition towards American Muslims further reducing the number of marriage eligible members in their ethnic groups.[17] As a result of the enduring desire to insulate their particular ethnic groups, as well as maintain and preserve their cultural traditions, the criticism of intermarriage from many immigrant Muslims, directed towards African American Muslims, only further dashed hopes of a harmonious mixed community.

Apart from the concerns of immigrant Muslims, African American Muslim women often found themselves exploited at the hands of immigrant Muslim men. For many immigrant men, the end of their tenure at universities or colleges also brought

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[17] "16th Annual Convention of the MSA," *Islamic Horizons* 7, no. 3 (1978).

the prospect of losing their visas to legally stay within the country. As a result, some immigrant men sought to marry African American Muslim women as a way to secure themselves continued legal status. Upon gaining legal status, many of these men would go on to abandon their wives along with any offspring they produced. As a result, these men created a class of African American Muslim women who faced the burden of single motherhood. Making matters worse, the stigma of abandonment often left these women feeling ostracized within both the African American and Muslim communities.[18]

As the 1970s drew to a close, no issue more accurately highlighted the paradoxical trends in race relations occurring in Chicago's Muslim community. As the NOI transitioned into becoming the WCIW and abandoned racial separatism in favor of integrating into the larger Muslim community, many black Muslims found themselves increasingly excluded from social integration. Drawing disturbing parallels to the debate over "full integration"[19] during the Civil Rights Movement, black Muslims began to experience the exact social discrimination that Malcolm X and Elijah Muhammad foretold a decade prior. Despite attending Mosques and joining in religious events, lectures, and conferences with black Muslims, many Muslim immigrants continued to draw a line when it came to marriage. In doing so, for many black Muslims, the hope and promise of joining the larger Sunni Muslim

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[18] Aminah McCloud, Oral History Conducted by Author, October 2011. Ahmad Abdul Masjid, "The Muslima: Women's Committee mini-Seminar: Problems of New Muslims," *Islamic Horizons* 6, no. 9 (1977). For more information on this phenomenon across the country, see: Vivek Bald, *Bengali Harlem*, (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2013).

[19] During the Civil Rights Movement: Full Integration often was used as code to reference the fear of interracial sexual relations and marriage.

community began to lose significant luster, as the burden of racism called into question the logic and appeal of abandoning separatism simply to face discrimination from a new set of people.

Culture Clashes

As interaction and cooperation between Chicago's disparate ethnic and racial Muslim communities increased, conflict over cultural traditions began to counteract the newfound spirit of harmony in Islamic Chicago. For many Chicago Muslims, success in integrating a diverse array of cultures into common organizations and institutions resulted in clashes over a wide array of practices. With many Muslims holding ardent views on Islamic clothing, propriety, and religious practice, increasing diversity brought strong minds and long-held traditions into direct conflict. As a result, Chicago Muslims, in many instances, reaffirmed their cultural and national heritages to the detriment of Muslim unity. Similarly, the opinions and actions of diverging groups within the Muslim community undermined the building harmony and spirit of cooperation in Islamic Chicago.

One of the largest issues impeding the budding harmony between immigrant groups, and between immigrant and black Muslims in Chicago, were objections to other communities' style of dress. For Chicago's Muslim converts to Islam, this often took the form of criticism of Western clothing. As a result, many Muslim converts, particularly women, struggled to integrate into the larger Muslim community. Writing into the MSA's journal, *Islamic Horizons*, Nafia Jami, an American-born Muslim convert, implored MSA women to stop criticizing women

like her for continuing to wear Western clothing. Arguing that Western clothing was not inherently more revealing than clothes worn in the Muslim world, she claimed that a great deal of hypocrisy existed in the criticism she had received from various members of the MSA.[20]

Not limited to just between immigrants and non-immigrants, the misunderstandings over clothes also manifested itself between immigrant Muslim communities. Most prominently, conflict over the appropriateness of the sari[21] in South Asian attire led to repeated and persistent disharmony between South Asian and other Muslims. Responding to the complaints from American Muslim converts that some Eastern clothes were revealing but received no criticism, MSA member, Rashida Mian, wrote to *Islamic Horizons* to voice her opinion of the inappropriateness of the sari. Claiming that the sari is too revealing and impractical, she argued that South Asian women should stop wearing what she deemed to be an "un-Islamic" form of dress. Agreeing with Mian's viewpoint, many readers wrote in to voice their similar oppositions to the sari. Taking a different approach, Fatima Habib, quoted information from the *Urdu Digest*, that pointed to the history of the dress. Stating that the sari had origins in Hindu customs, she claimed that the

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[20] Nafia Jami, "Open Letter to Women of the MSA," *Islamic Horizons* 5, no. 4 (1976).

[21] Sari is a traditionally Indian form of dress for women that involves a long cloth wrapped around the waist and then draped over the shoulder often leaving the midriff bare.

clothing represented the oppression of Muslims in India and was therefore un-Islamic on multiple levels.[22]

Unwilling to see an accepted part of their cultural practice under attack, many South Asian Muslim women responded in defense of the sari. Writing in opposition to the wave of criticism, Parveen Afridi, a South Asian M.D., declared that critiques of the sari were ridiculous. Countering Habib's claims, Afridi argued that the sari was not simply Hindu, but Indian. Furthermore, she took a more liberal position than previous writers, stating, "Un-Islamic dress has more to do with intention and way of carrying oneself, not the form of the clothes."[23] In voicing their opposition to criticism of the sari, Muslim women often took positions that indicated a more liberal interpretation of Islam, as well as a defense of their cultural norms. As such, they highlighted the persistence of divisions between Chicago's Muslims on issues of orthodoxy and modernity.

Trying to quell the storm surrounding the sari question, the editors of the MSA attempted to call for restraint before the issue further fractured community harmony. Stating, "We have received a large number of comments against the Indian-dress. There are also a couple of letters in favor of sari. The discussion is heading towards inflamed passion," the editors of *Islamic Horizons*, put an end to the conversation, hoping that all parties would be able to put it behind them.[24] Despite

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[22] Rashida Mian, "Our Readers' Comment: Inadvertent Public Use of Un-Islamic Dress," *Islamic Horizons* 6, no. 12 (1977). Fatima Habib, "Our Readers' Comment: Sari Is Hindu-Indian," *Islamic Horizons* 7, no. 3 (1978).
[23] Parveen Afridi, "Our Readers' Comment: Islamic Dress," *Islamic Horizons* 7, no. 3 (1978).
[24] Rashida Mian, "Our Readers' Comment: Leaving the Middle Bare is not Islamic," *Islamic Horizons* 7, no. 5 (1978).

their best efforts to cool tensions, the conflict over the sari demonstrated an important divide between cultural and religious practice. Despite the increased cooperation between Muslims of various backgrounds, underlying differences between different cultures and religious practices were not bridged without a degree of conflict.

As conflict over cultural practices spilled over in the MSA and immigrant Muslim communities in the late 1970s, different ethnic and racial groups began to separate, badly damaging attempts to construct a unified community. As some immigrant Muslims observed in the late 1970s, ethnic subdivisions within the community increasingly held separate events, had begun to form separate Mosques, and had little social interaction with one another. As an example, just outside of Chicago, MSA member, Idris Qadeem, noted the existence of separate Eid prayers and racially separate Ramadan activities.[25]

Noting the increasing splintering of the Chicago Muslim community along ethnic and racial lines, many Muslims began to voice their concerns about the future of the community. Within the MSA, in 1977, Rashid Hamid, a program chairman for the organization, argued that American Muslims had fallen pray to American forms of racism and exclusion. Stating that members of the organization lived in the "American milieu," he urged them to avoid further replicating and internalizing American racism. As it stood, Hamid noted that too many separate ethnic Muslim communities existed in major American cities, instead of one unified Islamic community. Building on Hamid's notions, his colleague, Dinawaz Siddiqui, attempted to exemplify the type of inter-racial community building Hamid advocated

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[25] Idris Qadeem, "Letters to the Editor: There Seems to be a Contradiction," *Islamic Horizons* 6, no. 10 (1977).

by calling on all Muslims, immigrant and American-born alike, to follow in the footsteps of Malcolm X.[26]

Countering the notion that the particular American experience had created the fissures within the Muslim community, many Muslims within the country cited immigrant culture as the root of the failure of greater cohesiveness. For Sharifa al Khateeb, a black Muslim women, fractures in the Muslim community along class and ethnic lines existed pre-immigration and had been brought over by immigrants from abroad. In her viewpoint, both foreign and American forms of racism reinforced each other in the United States and helped prevent greater unity amongst different ethnic groups.[27] Highlighting the persistence and existence of racism from abroad, many American Muslims began to question the possibility of building a truly harmonious Muslim community.

While doubts began to emerge among Chicago's Muslims over the long-term viability of one cohesive Muslim community, some Muslims looked to organizations like the MSA to provide the leadership for increasing group cohesion. Noting that the MSA had been attempting to overcome racial and ethnic divisions within the Muslim community since the early 1970s, MSA member, Mahmoud Rashdan, credited the organization with easing some of the tensions existing within the community. Despite his praise for the organization, Rashdan still cited the persistence of ethnic separation, as well as the need for continued work in bringing together three separate strands of American Muslims. Noting that students, African Americans, and

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[26] "MSA East Zone Regional Conference: Issues of Islamic Mission in North America Explored," *Islamic Horizons* 6, no. 9 (1977).
[27] Sharifa al Khateeb, "Towards Real Community," *Islamic Horizons* 6, no. 1 (1977).

immigrant Muslims still had limited interaction with one another, Rashdan implored the MSA to take more steps to create a stronger and more unified Muslim community.[28]

For the MSA, the absence of racial and ethnic cohesion in the larger Muslim community led many American Muslims to criticize the organization over the lack of diversity represented on their Executive Committee and in the general leadership. Writing a letter to the MSA in 1977, a MSA member queried why no Iranian immigrants held positions in the organization's leadership. Responding to the question, the MSA attempted to use their commitment to colorblindness as justification, stating, "Muslims are not separate nationalities," and that, "MSA has duty to Islam/Muslims, not national groups." Furthermore, by noting that Iranians had served in leadership of the organization in the past, the organization argued that its commitment to a colorblind philosophy had not led to a systematic exclusion of any particular ethnic group.[29]

Despite their claims that Islam necessitated colorblindness, many within the organization continued to be frustrated by the homogeneity in MSA leadership. For non-immigrant members of the MSA, the persistence of Arab and Indo-Pakistani groups holding office within the organization lay at the root of the problem. Claiming that the dominance of these particular immigrant groups weakened group cohesion, many members of the MSA believed that greater diversity was the only

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[28] Mahmoud Rashdan, "Islamic Identity: A Myth or Reality," *Islamic Horizons* 5, no. 11 (1976).
[29] "The Headquarters: MSA Stands for Islam, not Nationalities," *Islamic Horizons* 6, no. 11 (1977).

way to tie the community together in a meaningful way.[30] Along those lines, at the 16th Annual Convention of the MSA on May 26-28, 1978, MSA members re-raised the issue of diversity on the MSA Executive Committee. Claiming that a lack of diversity existed on the committee and that it directly affected the priorities and attitudes of the organization, the MSA was once again put on the defensive. Claiming that it was "un-Islamic to analyze people by ethnicity," the MSA leadership continued to dismiss concerns over the composition of its Executive Committee.[31]

By the end of the decade, the fractures in the urban Umma had grown to include a litany of issues of cultural practices and identity. While increased cooperation and interaction opened the possibilities of a unified Islamic Chicago, conflict over clothing, propriety, and representation plagued the Muslim community. Exposing national, linguistic, and generational differences among Chicago Muslims, many resisted the push towards unification of the community, fearing that it would lead to the dominance of certain traditions and practices over others. As a result, significant pushback from a diverse set of the city's Muslim residents worked to preserve differences and separation within Islamic Chicago.

The Difficulties of Life as a Muslim Convert

As Muslims in Chicago attempted to expand the strength and breadth of the Muslim community, new converts often faced difficulties that left them feeling on the outside of the urban Umma. Whether related to racial, cultural, or familial problems,

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[30] Sharifa al Khateeb, "Towards Real Community," *Islamic Horizons* 6, no. 1 (1977).
[31] "Of Task Force, Expenses and Billalians: General Assembly Lacked Fire," *Islamic Horizons* 7, no. 8 (1978).

new converts experienced Muslim life from a unique vantage point. Attempting to reconcile their old lives and communities with their new religious identity, many converts struggled to maintain their previous relationships and find place within Islamic Chicago. As fractures within the Muslim community began to drive a wedge between differing groups of Chicago Muslims, converts bore the brunt of many of the same conflicts along with the unique challenges brought on by conversion to a minority religion within the US.

For Chicago's Muslim converts, life as Muslims brought a host of challenges. Along with the persistence of racial barriers dividing the Islamic community, trouble with family and friends made it difficult for many new Muslims to adjust to life after conversions. Converting to Islam partly for its strong rhetorical support for racial equality, many new Muslims came to be disappointed by the reality of community division. In the case of Salman bin Yaqub, formerly Carl C. Suggs, an American-born Muslim convert, the persistence of nationalism and racism negatively affected his belief in the unity of the Muslim community in America. Stating, "Where is the single brotherhood? You have people running around shouting more about Egyptians, Iraqis, Palestinians, Pakistanis, and Syrians, etc., instead of Muslims and Islam," Yaqub implored Muslims in the country to set aside their differences in order to avoid the fate of Muslims throughout the early twentieth century, when imperial powers successfully used divide and conquer strategies against them.[32]

New Muslims in both the NOI and in mainstream Islam often found themselves facing racial discrimination in their new communities. For Dorothy 13x,

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[32] Salman bin Yaqub, "Letter to the Editor: Nationalism Condemned," *Islamic Horizons 6*, no. 4 (1977).

the first white woman to join the NOI after it officially disavowed racial separatism in 1976, the organization's new ideology did not always match the actions of its membership. Despite teaching in the NOI's school, the Clara Muhammad University, and being married to former Black Panther and current NOI member, Donald 12x Dorsey, Dorothy claimed to face persistent discrimination, suspicion, and exclusion at the hands of the women in the NOI.[33] For white Muslims and non-black Muslims joining the NOI in the late 1970s, the persistence of self-separation acted as a barrier to social integration within the organization. Mostly maintaining a nearly all-black membership until the dissolution of the organization, the degree of race conflict in the NOI never reached the problematic levels that occurred in mainstream Islamic Chicago.

In the mainstream Muslim community, racism repeatedly appeared as a major concern for many new Muslims. In particular, black converts often received the worst degrees of discrimination. Writing in to *Islamic Horizons,* in 1976, Sharifa al Khateeb, a black American convert, highlighted the persistence of immigrant racism towards black American Muslims in the MSA and in general. Claiming that there was no intermixing ethnically on a social level, and with little intermarriage within the Islamic community, the divide between black and immigrant Muslims had no reason to lessen. Arguing that fractures along class and ethnic lines existed pre-immigration and had been brought over from abroad, Khateeb stated that the mythical "Islamic Community" never truly existed.[34] Expanding on those thoughts, Ahmad

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[33] Barbara Reynolds, "First white woman becomes a Muslim," *Chicago Tribune*, March 2, 1976, 12.
[34] Sharifa al Khateeb, "Towards Real Community," *Islamic Horizons* 6, no. 1 (1977).

Abdul Masjid, at a mini-seminar at the MSA's headquarters in Indianapolis, stated, "Almost all new Muslims in this country have been the object of discrimination because of their color or race." Explaining that he saw the disconnect between black and immigrant Muslims stem from the social and cultural experience of immigration, Masjid stated, "The gap may be due to the latter's (immigrant Muslims) inferiority complex which impels them to identify with the Caucasians rather than the blacks. Or it may arise from the disparity between the educational levels of the two groups."[35] Building on the idea of class divisions leading to racism from immigrant Muslims towards blacks, Shamsuddin Abdul Hakeem, argued that the lack of shared experiences between the two groups created a lack of empathy and cohesion, stating, "The Muslim who is a doctor does not encounter the same problems as a Muslim who has no High School Education and is standing in the Harlem Ghetto unemployment line."[36] In making such claims, Masjid and Hakeem located immigrant discrimination against black American Muslims squarely within the logic of the "Model Minority Myth."[37]

For many Black Muslim converts, the underlying cause of the persistent racial divide was grounded in a sense of immigrant religious superiority. To begin with,

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[35] Ahmad Abdul Masjid, "The Muslima: Women's Committee mini-Seminar: Problems of New Muslims," *Islamic Horizons* 6, no. 9 (1977).
[36] Shamsuddin Abdul Hakeem, "Need for Greater Interaction Between Muslims," *Islamic Horizons* 6, no. 8 (1977).
[37] The "Model Minority Myth" is a sociological theory that argues that many non-white immigrant groups identify more closely with white Americans than other minorities due to the level of economic success they find upon establishing themselves in the United States. Overlooking the structural nature of racism and poverty in America, these immigrants often cite cultural superiority as the cause of their success and, conversely, the failure of black and Hispanic Americans. For more information see: Vijay Prashard, *The Karma of Brown Folk*. (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2000).

many immigrant Muslims looked upon the NOI's move towards Sunni Islam with suspicion and condescension. Believing their new direction to contain simply "cosmetic" changes, some immigrant Muslims openly questioned whether black converts from the NOI had even basic understanding of true Islamic principles.[38] Believing it to be their role to educate these new Muslims in the proper religious practices and ideologies, immigrant Muslims often assumed NOI converts of having little Islamic knowledge. Reflecting the sense of responsibility to guide less knowledgeable Muslims into traditional practices, one immigrant Muslim, Abdul Monem, implored the MSA to "be in touch with the Black Muslims organizational leaders and arrange circles to show practical Islam, prayer,…etc…"[39] Likewise, another member wrote that the MSA must begin building an Islamic teaching foundation in order to create "a knowledgeable Islamic society especially among our brothers in the Belalian (sic) Muslims."[40] According to Melvin An-Nur, a former member of the NOI who had converted to mainstream Islam, immigrant criticism and condescension to black Muslims was deeply rooted in their sense of exceptionalism. Critiquing the attitudes of many immigrants, An-Nur stated that despite their claims otherwise, black Muslims could be Muslims of just as high caliber and attain a comparable level of Islamic knowledge.[41]

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[38] "New Spectrum: 'Bilalian Islam?'" *Impact* 6, no. 19 (1976).
[39] Abdul Monem, "MSA Questionnaire," Folder: Task Force Questionnaire Responses, February 1978, MSA Box 1, Islam In America Repository, DePaul University Archives.
[40] Anonymous, "MSA Questionnaire," Folder: Task Force Questionnaire Responses, February 1978, MSA Box 1, Islam In America Repository, DePaul University Archives.
[41] Melvin An-Nur, "Our Reader's Comment: Let Allah Be the Judge," *Islamic Horizons* 6, no. 12 (1977).

Sharing An-Nur's frustrations, many black members of the MSA voiced their displeasure with the Muslim community's lack of tolerance. Writing to the MSA in response to a questionnaire, one black member noted that the organization's membership had to increase its, "Tolerance of each others' cultural backgrounds by controlling the idea of Arab Supremacy." Too often, black Muslims found little interest on the part of Arab Muslims to expand their sense of community to involve them. As one MSA member put it, "Whenever we Muslims get together, Arab Muslims (here) do not participate it. All Muslims should have no race problem."[42] The problem was bad enough that they argued that in order for the MSA to remain a successful organization, it "Must have racial balance in all levels. Must let every Muslim think 'the MSA cares for all.'"[43] In asserting their Islamic fluency, black Muslims demonstrated their unwillingness to simply allow immigrant Muslims to direct their religious lives and identities.

In general, the continual mischaracterization and derision that many immigrant Muslims had for the NOI and its leaders led to greater disunity between the black and immigrant Muslim communities, well before the groups came together after 1976. Immigrant Muslims often viewed Elijah Muhammad as a fraud, repeatedly highlighting his conflict with other Muslims. For example, in 1973, after the murder of five children and two adult black Sunni Muslims in an apparent sectarian fight, the MSA in Chicago openly questioned the motives and ideals of the

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[42] Anonymous, "MSA Questionnaire," Folder: Task Force Questionnaire Responses, February 1978, MSA Box 1, Islam In America Repository, DePaul University Archives.

[43] Anonymous, "MSA Questionnaire," Folder: Task Force Questionnaire Responses, February 1978, MSA Box 1, Islam In America Repository, DePaul University Archives.

NOI, lauding the slain Muslims as being real Muslims, in contrast with the NOI. Similarly, in 1974, the MSA publicly condemned Elijah Muhammad for targeting "true Muslims" when police suspected the NOI was responsible for the murder of two black Sunni Muslims in Brooklyn.[44] Although these condemnations by immigrant Muslims damaged their attempts to build relations with the NOI, they pale in significance to the gap future criticism of NOI leaders created for the community.

Damaging the integration of former NOI members into the mainstream Islamic movement, Muslim immigrants' post-1976 criticism of the NOI and its leaders drove a wedge between the two groups. Even after Elijah Muhammad's death, immigrant Muslims placed heavy emphasis on the religious heresies of the NOI instead of noting the organizations successes in putting black Americans on the path towards mainstream Islam. In one such example, a white female MSA member wrote to the MSA to suggest that the organization needed to due more to undo the damage in the press done by many famous figures within the NOI. Writing, "The organization has not spoken loudly enough or been recognized by press [ete] when we have been violated especially concerning misrepresentation by Muhammad Ali," she argued that the MSA needed to do more to, "combat the fear which still remains from Malcolm X."[45] Similarly, an Arab immigrant Muslim, Omer Bin Abdullah, wrote in to *Islamic Horizons* to condemn the behavior of prominent African American Muslims, Kareem Abdul-Jabbar and Muhammad Ali. Criticizing Abdul-

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[44] "Can they murder the truth?" *MSA News* 2, no. 2 (1973). "Ya Sin Mosque Shoot Out," *MSA News* 3, no. 2 (1974).
[45] Anonymous, "MSA Questionnaire," Folder: Task Force Questionnaire Responses, February 1978, MSA Box 1, Islam In America Repository, DePaul University Archives.

Jabbar for his willingness to engage in un-Islamic behavior on television shows like NBC's *Laugh-In*, Abdullah also called attention to Muhammad Ali's extramarital affairs and divorces. Claiming that these celebrities set a bad example for Muslims in America, he argued that the two were inappropriate representatives for Islam and would damage any hopes to further spread the religion.[46]

In handling the continual criticism of black Muslim leaders, many African American Muslims voiced their concerns at the tenor and accuracy of immigrant Muslims critiques. Responding to the sentiments of many immigrant Muslims, Melvin An-Nur criticized the constant character assassination of Elijah Muhammad by many Muslim immigrants. Claiming that it deepened the divide between many black converts and immigrant Muslims, he argued that it also placed greater emphasis on the lack of orthodox religious practices of past and present NOI members.[47] Similarly, with regards to Malcolm X, many immigrant Muslims struggled to look beyond his checkered past or his strong racial rhetoric from his days in the NOI. In one instance, at the 15th Convention of the MSA, a presentation from Rashid Hamid, a black Muslim convert, on the legacy of Malcolm X was summarized in *Islamic Horizons* to contain a multitude of errors. Voicing his concerns over the representation of his message, Hamid took exception to the characterization of Malcolm X as having been a "hoodlum" pre-conversion and being a "racist and

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[46] Omer Bin Abdullah, "Letters to the Editor: Islam Defiled," *Islamic Horizons* 6, no. 10 (1977).
[47] Melvin An-Nur, "Our Reader's Comment: Let Allah Be the Judge," *Islamic Horizons* 6, no. 12 (1977).

reactionary" while serving as a minister for the NOI.[48] In noting their positive views of important NOI figures, black converts to mainstream Islam highlighted another lasting division between them and the immigrant Muslim community.

Problems for new Muslims were not limited to just African American converts, as white American Muslims faced significant difficulties making inroads into the larger Muslim community. For one, the issue of religious superiority extended beyond immigrant attitudes towards blacks, as even white converts complained of their treatment upon joining the religion. Writing in to the MSA headquarters, an anonymous MSA member stated, "I am a white American Muslim convert. I have been told by both Black Muslims and Indian and Pakistani Muslims that I cannot be a Muslim because of my background- MSA should reach AMERICANS you are in USA."[49] Echoing those sentiments, Kaneez Fatima Rahman, formerly Molly Ann Rahman, expressed how she felt "unwelcome in MSA for racial reasons."[50] In all, the transition for white American Muslims included some commonalities with black converts while on the whole remaining relatively less fraught with class tensions.

For many American converts to Islam, their conversion isolated them from their friends and family. In many instances, conversion strained relationships between new Muslims and their parents. In one instance, Wadiah Al-Amin, formerly

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[48] Rashid Hamid, "Leter to the Editor: Al-Hajj Malik Shabazz," *Islamic Horizons* 6, no. 8 (1977).
[49] Anonymous, "MSA Questionnaire," Folder: Task Force Questionnaire Responses, February 1978, MSA Box 1, Islam In America Repository, DePaul University Archives.
[50] Kaneez Fatima Rahman, "MSA Questionnaire," Folder: Task Force Questionnaire Responses, February 1978, MSA Box 1, Islam In America Repository, DePaul University Archives.

named Paula Jones, noted the strain her conversion left on her relationship with her mother, stating that she wished her mother would be more accepting of her path to God. As time progressed for Al-Amin, her relationships with friends and family grew more strained. Writing in to *Islamic Horizons*, Al-Amin mentioned that her family increasingly distanced themselves from her due to their inability to accept her conversion away from Christianity. Beyond just her family, Al-Amin also noted that she struggled to maintain closeness to her non-Muslim friends as they forced her to compromise many of her newfound beliefs to fit into social outings.[51]

Making matters worse, for some converts to Islam, their conversion tested the strengths of their marriages. Asking for advice on how to continue to deal with the non-Islamic practices of her Christian husband, an anonymous female convert to Islam brought to light many of the difficulties converts faced in their day-to-day life. In particular, this new Muslim woman struggled to understand whether it would be appropriate to continue to purchase and prepare pork meals for her Christian husband. Highlighting the lack of tolerance and understanding emanating from many non-convert Muslims, the writers at *Islamic Horizons* recommended that she strongly consider divorcing her husband if he refused to convert to Islam, arguing that it would be nearly impossible to live a good Muslim life while married outside the faith.[52]

Apart from their difficulties with friends, family, and the Muslim community, Muslim converts experienced the difficulty of being Muslim in a society rife with religious discrimination. For black Muslim converts, in particular, this led to a

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[51] Wadiah Al-Amin, "A Letter from a Muslim Daughter to her Non-Muslim Mother," *Islamic Horizons* 8, no. 3 (1979). Wadiah Al-Amin, "Road Toward Islam- II: Islam Gave Me a Sense of Dignity," *Islamic Horizons* 8, no. 9 (1979).
[52] "Islam annuls non-Islamic marriage," *Islamic Horizons* 5, no. 5 (1976).

double burden of both racial and religious discrimination. For instance, in the case of Amin Al-Ghana, a black Muslim convert, his conversion to Islam created problems for him at work and with law enforcement. Having moved to Indianapolis and working as a Program Development Specialist for the State of Indiana for a number of years, Al-Ghana claimed to have lost his job after his supervisor complained of his newly adopted dress and customs. Afterwards, when searching for a new job, Al-Ghana claimed to have found considerably more success garnering interviews when he used his previous, Christian, name. Outside of work, Al-Ghana accused the police of further discrimination against him, noting hostility and the issuance of unreasonably high tickets from police officers that stopped his vehicle.[53] In all, Al-Ghana's experiences with discrimination matched those of many Muslim immigrants, however, in being a convert, Al-Ghana encountered these problems in direct contrast to the relative ease of his pre-conversion life. Furthermore, unlike most immigrants, Al-Ghana's encounter with discrimination was also paired with newfound difficulties in his relationships with friends and family.

Despite the promise of fulfillment, many Muslim converts in Chicago struggled to find acceptance from fellow Muslims and from the people close to them before conversion. While often times conversion forced direct challenges to familial identity and values, new Muslims in Chicago also struggled with the adjustments necessary to balance social and professional obligations and norms with their newfound way of life. As a result, the resistance and mistrust that many older Muslims in Chicago had towards new followers bore a disproportionate burden on the

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[53] Amin Al-Ghana, "The Road Toward Islam: How Did I Find Islam?" *Islamic Horizons* 8, no. 8 (1979).

lives of Chicago's Muslim converts during the mid-to-late 1970s, causing many of them to seriously examine the true costs of their life altering decisions. With their Islamic identity in doubt, many converts found the promise of a welcoming and unified Muslim community to ring hollow in the face of reality, leaving many disillusioned and separated from whatever degree of urban Umma that did exist.

Women in Islamic Chicago

During the span of the late 1960s through the 1970s, the changing role of women in Islamic Chicago highlighted the often conflicting forces that worked to bring disparate parts of the Muslim community together, while laying the foundation for its future fractures. Prominently involved in solidifying a sense of community within the NOI, Black Muslim women experienced significant continuities and discontinuities in their eventual migration into the mainstream Muslim community. Joining with a diverse collection of immigrant and American-born mainstream Muslim women, the committees and programs created by Chicago's Muslim women brought women together to fight for common goals. Despite the opportunity to solidify unity between a diverse set of women, divergent ideas on the role of women, their treatment within women's groups, and their relationship to men in larger organizations, helped create a degree of mistrust that further demonstrated the ways in which a harmonious Muslim community in Chicago would never be realized.

During the 1960s and early 1970s, Black Muslim women played an important role in shaping the NOI community; one that allowed them greater control and influence than in the wider society. Arguing that women had more influence over the

direction of family and community than men, the NOI prioritized women's work and education. Stating, "Educate a man is just one individual, educate a woman will educate a whole family," the NOI placed much of its attention on training women to be good Muslims and community leaders. Expected to be important financial contributors to the household, Black Muslim women were also assumed to be in control of the family's expenses. Noting, "Women should be thrifty and industrious," the NOI placed considerable amount of power, within households, in the hands of women.[54]

Organizationally, in the late 1960s and early 1970s, women in the NOI did not hold leadership positions as ministers of temples, but instead served as leaders of women only groups. In charge of teaching and organizing Black Muslim women, the Muslim Girls Training and General Civilization Class (MGT and GCC) was run entirely by NOI sisters. Conducting weekly instruction to NOI women, the MGT served a variety of functions and acted as a counterpart to the men's Fruit of Islam organization. A large part of the MGT's mission was to help train other women in basic home economics. Along with the proper methods of preparing food, the MGT also instructed women in sewing, cleaning, and best practices in child rearing. Apart from teaching domestic skills, the MGT also focused on imparting NOI religious dogma and highlighting the important role women played in Muslim life. Finally, the MGT attempted to take the lesson of self-sufficiency and extend it beyond a racial lens, noting the importance of women being able to take care of themselves. For

[54] Malcolm X, "Moslem Bazaar," *The Messenger Magazine* 1, no. 1 (1959). Journals and Newspapers Box 11. Islam in America Repository. DePaul University Library.

example, as part of MGT classes, NOI women learned self-defense tactics to protect themselves without needing to rely on NOI men.[55]

Although the MGT and GCC classes focused on NOI practices and life, in the late 1960s, Black Muslim women utilized these meetings to build broader alliances to help attack larger social ills. Holding weekly meetings on Tuesdays from 1-2:30 P.M. at the NOI's Salaam Restaurant, the MGT-GCC women hosted non-Muslim women who shared their political leanings and concerns. In one example, in February 1969, women leaders from the Antioch Baptist church and St. Paul Missionary Baptist Church attended a MGT meeting to join in discussing issues of education and "slum reform."[56] Through such meetings, Black Muslim women extended their influence beyond the confines of the domestic sphere to help create social change within their communities.

After Wallace Muhammad assumed power over the NOI, in the wake of his father's death in 1975, the NOI began a rapid transformation in its teachings about the role and place of women in the organization. Citing the Qur'an as justification, Wallace Muhammad "reinstated women as spiritual and divine beings." As such, women began to assume greater responsibility as workers, teachers, and leaders within the Black Muslim community. No longer limited to just working on women's committees, black women in the NOI began appearing in a more diverse array of occupations. Highlighting the contributions of women within the organization, the NOI included photos of women as doctors, nurses, consultants, and as saleswomen in their 1976 publication, *Nation of Islam in Action!* Furthermore, within the

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[55] Curtis IV, *Black Muslim Religion in the Nation of Islam,* 146-147.
[56] Curtis IV, *Black Muslim Religion in the Nation of Islam,* 147.

organizational leadership itself, the NOI began to employ women to be representatives of the organization to outside Muslim and non-Muslim groups. For instance, Ameenah Rasul received a "diplomatic assignment" to meet and work with Dr. Rauf of the Islamic Institute[57] in Washington, DC.[58]

Although the role of women in the NOI grew and changed in the mid-1970s, the organization was hesitant to depart entirely from its long held beliefs. In particular, the emphasis on women's particular role within the family and in raising children largely remained unchanged into the late 1970s. Arguing that it was "unnatural" and "harmful" for men to raise children under the age of 12, the NOI continued to insist that it was women's role to raise young children.[59] Although the NOI began to emphasize the importance of women being both good mothers and good workers, in the eyes of the organization, the primary focus of women's lives remained raising children.

After becoming the WCIW in the late 1970s, the gradual integration of Black Muslims into mainstream Islamic communities altered the status and opportunities for Bilalian Muslim women. No longer within their own exclusive organization, Bilalian Muslim women began working with immigrant and second generation Muslim women in a variety of committees and organizations. In joining organizations like the MSA and MCC, Bilalian Muslim women faced a series of challenges despite the

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[57] The Islamic Institute of Washington DC was one of the best funded and largest immigrant Islamic centers in the United States. Located near many Islamic nations' embassies, the Islamic Institute received a great deal of financial and religious support from abroad.
[58] "Women at work," *Nation of Islam in Action!* 1976. P.20. Journals and Newspapers Box 11. Islam in America Repository, DePaul University Library.
[59] Responsibility of Motherhood," *Nation of Islam in Action!* 1976. P.21. Islam in America Repository, DePaul University Library.

shifts in the immigrant Muslim community towards many practices and ideas that had existed in the NOI/WCIW for decades.

For immigrant Muslim women during the 1970s, an important part of their roles in Mosques and Muslim organizations involved their participation and work within women's committees. Much like their Black Muslim counterparts, immigrant Muslim women's committees largely involved training and teaching other women on proper Islamic practices. For the MSA, the Women's Committee consisted of a 5-member board including a national chair and four zonal coordinators. Highlighting the purpose of the Committee, in 1977 the Chairwoman explained, the "MSA Woman's Committee, although an integral part of the MSA, is not merely an auxiliary body to it. Its main purpose is to motivate Muslim women to use their capacities for acquiring Islamic knowledge. The committee seeks also to involve them in Islamic activities that would help establish the word of Allah on Earth." As such, the Women's Committee coordinated activities on self education, held women's programs at conferences, held seminars for women, hosted Qur'anic study circles, and trained women to speak, organize, and manage within the MSA. Over the course of 1976, the national Women's Committee held seven seminars dealing with issues of racism, nationalism, and Islamic identity.[60]

Often bringing Muslim women together across particular regions of the country, the MSA had particular success organizing women's conferences in and around Chicago. For example, in February 1975, the Women's Committee, along with the directors of the North Central Region of the MSA, partnered with the MCC

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[60] "The Muslima: MSA Women's Committee: The Chairwoman's Address at the 15th Annual Convention of MSA of USA and Canada," *Islamic Horizons* 6, no. 8 (1977).

to hold a seminar for MSA women. Sending out invitations to MSA women within three hundred miles of Chicago, the conference focused on similarities and differences in Islamic and Western ideas of freedom for women.[61] In a different instance outside the city of Chicago, on April 16th, 1977, MSA Milwaukee sponsored a women's conference at the Randolph Hotel. In attendance were two hundred-fifty women and fifty men from several MSA chapters in the region, with a large contingent coming from MSA Chicago. At the conference, the MSA women listened to speakers and discussed topics related to the history of Muslim women, Muslim women's responsibility to Allah, and their role in Islamic family life.[62]

Specifically within MSA Chicago, the Women's Committee repeatedly, in the mid-to-late 1970s, planned seminars and events to help further spread their ideas on women's role in the family and in the community. Often the message of these seminars echoed those that women in the NOI/WCIW preached in their parallel institutions. In one instance, in August 1975, the Committee held a three-day seminar in Chicago for Muslim women to discuss matters of the individual and family relationships, community relations, and plans to begin a national Da'Wah program.[63] The following year, the Women's Committee partnered with the MCC to hold a regional seminar in Chicago, to again attempt to address the problems and challenges of women's education in the US.[64] Finally, in 1977, Nishat Balbale of MSA Chicago and Maysoon Kahf, the Chair of the MSA's Women's Committee, held a one-day seminar at the MCC in April 1977 on "Muslim Women in Education." Emphasizing

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[61] "MSA Women's Committee Plan one-day Seminar," *MSA News* 3, no. 12 (1974).
[62] "Muslim Women's Regional Conference," *Islamic Horizons* 6, no. 5 (1977).
[63] "Women's Leadership Training Seminar," *MSA News* 4, no. 7 (1975).
[64] "Seminar on Muslim Women and Education," *MSA News* 5, no. 1 (1976).

the importance of Muslim women in ensuring the Islamic education of the entire Muslim family, the seminar included a large and diverse audience of Muslim men and women. In attendance were seventy-four women and fifteen men from a number of Muslim organizations in and around Chicago.[65] For the increasingly integrated Black Muslim women, the messages of the conference likely bore close resemblance to those they had grown accustomed to hearing in the NOI/WCIW.

In their seminars and events, the MSA Women's Committee attempted to further integrate their ideologies and teachings into broader, global, Islamic trends. Directly calling for greater unity among Muslim women in the US and around the world, the Committee began its push for greater international harmony as early as 1976.[66] Within a few years, the Committee's efforts would begin to include participation from foreign religious leaders. For example, at the 16th Convention of the MSA in June 1978, the Women's Committee brought world-renowned scholar, Hasan Turabi, to address a mixture of women and men on issues pertaining to women in Islam. Noting that women should not marry non-Muslims according to his interpretation of Islamic doctrines, he argued that injustices to women continued because people had not fully understood the Prophet's teachings.[67] In making such claims, Turabi and the Women's Committee attempted to bring American Muslim women's behavior and ideologies closer to a global Islamic ideal, while also reinforcing Muslim community ties.

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[65] "Chicago's One-Day Seminar," *Islamic Horizons* 5, no. 4 (1976).
[66] "Seminar on Muslim Women and Education," *MSA News* 5, no. 1 (1976).
[67] "Islam is a Challenge to Muslims: The Us Muslims Can Guide in Many Fields," *Islamic Horizons* 7, no. 7 (1978).

Following a similar pattern to the NOI/WCIW, in the middle of the 1970s, the MSA Women's Committee extended their efforts beyond simply teaching Islamic knowledge and instead extended into training Muslim women in home economics. For instance, in June 1975, the MSA launched an Islamic Dress contest for young girls. Open to girls and young women from across the organization, the Women's Committee would judge participating girls' outfits at the MSA's Annual Conference. Evaluating the fashion and ingenuity of the girls' outfits, the contest emphasized that the winner would be the girl with "the best outfit that meets Islamic standards."[68] Through the contest, the Women's Committee hoped to better instill the virtues of Islamic modesty in young girls' clothing choices.

As the 1970s wore on, the MSA Women's Committee expanded and formalized their efforts to train young women in practical skills for family life. In order to do so, along with the short seminars that the MSA's Women's Committee planned, the Committee also staged a series of more intensive retreats that allowed them more time to work on skill development. Beginning in 1978, the MSA Women's Committee held their first girls training camp from September 22nd-24th. Staging the three-day camp in Indianapolis, the majority of the girls in attendance came from MSA Chicago, with smaller numbers coming from other cities within driving distance. Along with speeches from current and former executives on the Women's Committee, the camp involved older women teaching the girls a number of skills, including how to decoupage, bake chocolate chip cookies, make apple sauce cakes, sew prayer scarves, and make Islamic art. At the end of the camp, the women

[68] "Islamic Dress Contest for Girls," *MSA News* 4, no. 7 (1975).

awarded prizes to winners of an Islamic knowledge quiz, and to those who demonstrated greatest mastery of their newly acquired skills.[69] Through the girls training camp and similar events, the MSA's Women's Committee followed in the footsteps of the NOI's MGT program, as it extended beyond Islamic education and entered the realm of teaching home economics to Muslim women.

Much like in the NOI during the early 1970s, the women of the MSA put to use many of their skills and expertise in order to aid the growth of the organization. Along with planning seminars and conferences, MSA women extended their reach beyond the realm of education, by independently raising funds for the organization's use. In one example of the type of events MSA women took part in, the Women's Committee, in conjunction with a number of female volunteers, held a bake sale in June 1975, in an attempt to apply their home economics skills to further promote the financial health of the organization. Promoting the event as a success for the MSA, the organization highlighted the independence and entrepreneurship of Muslim women.[70] Similarly, by the beginning of 1976, the MSA Women's Committee began formulating plans for expanding the scope of the economic projects MSA women took part in. Proposing the beginning of a sewing scheme that would involve MSA women sewing and selling clothing, the Women's Committee also requested members to contribute ideas on how to best form a bazaar for women to sell the goods they produced, with the proceeds going to help fund the MSA.[71] Putting their plans into action, the Committee helped set up such a bazaar at the 14th Annual

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[69] "Women's Committee Sponsors First Girls Training Camp," *Islamic Horizons* 7, no. 10 (1978).
[70] "Bake Sale," *MSA News* 4, no. 7 (1975).
[71] "To All Muslim Women," *MSA News* 5, no. 2 (1976).

Convention of the MSA, featuring products produced domestically and imported from abroad.[72] Through the production and selling of goods, Muslim women in the MSA greatly added to the financial strength of the organization, while also demonstrating their ability and determination to be important economic actors within Muslim life.

Beyond holding meetings, planning events, and participating in conferences, members of the MSA's Women's Committee created educational materials to distribute to Muslim men and women. In one instance, in 1977, the MSA's Women's Committee produced a pamphlet containing a checklist of questions that Muslim women should be able to answer. Mostly covering issues related to Islamic theology tenets, like the five pillars, the questions also tested Muslim women's basic knowledge of Islamic history. Attempting to ensure women understood the importance of their role in Islamic society, one of the questions asked, "What privileges do women have that men do not?" and another, "What are the characteristics of an Islamic life for women?"[73] Through these questions and answers, the MSA Women's Committee attempted to reach beyond those that attended MSA events, to ensure proper women's education for all Muslim women.

Along with the pamphlets and other educational materials to be distributed to Muslim women, MSA women attempted to expand their presence in the organization's publication, *Islamic Horizons*, in order to further the breadth and scope of their message. Beginning in March 1976, the Women's Committee officially

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[72] "Annual Convention Bazaar," *MSA News* 5, no. 1 (1976).
[73] "The Muslima: MSA Women's Committee Self-Education Plan," *Islamic Horizons* 6, no. 7 (1977).

began a monthly feature, entitled, "Women's Page" within every issue of *Islamic Horizons*.[74] In a similar vein, members of the Women's Committee, along with other MSA women, often wrote to *Islamic Horizons*, in order to guide Muslim women on the proper roles they needed to take in the family economy. Asserting that women should seek employment to help bolster the household income, MSA member, Rehana Khan, noted the importance of women's work but still maintained that it came second to a woman's role in raising a family. Furthermore, while asserting women's Islamic right to equal pay, she instructed women to avoid taking jobs that were outside women's natural abilities. Specifically she argued that women lacked the rationality and natural instinct to serve as politicians, judges, or in the military.[75] Through arguing for the importance of women's work, while also subordinating it to men's position in the workplace, the MSA argued a position very close to that of the NOI/WCIW.

For former NOI/WCIW and African American women converts, their experiences as members of the mainstream Muslim community came fraught with difficulty. Noting the lack of cooperation and understanding between different ethnic and racial groups of women within American Muslims, the Women's Committee, in 1976, urged all Muslim women to unite under Islam.[76] Going even further, at a mini-seminar in Indianapolis held by the MSA's Women's Committee in July 1977, executives of the committee attempted to address the persistent difficulties of new black women in the ranks of the MSA. Noting the problem of racism within the

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[74] "To All Muslim Women," *MSA News* 5, no. 2 (1976).
[75] Rehana Khan, "The Status and Role of a Woman in Islam," *Islamic Horizons* 7, no. 8 (1978).
[76] "Seminar on Muslim Women and Education," *MSA News* 5, no. 1 (1976).

Muslim community, the speakers at the event highlighted the need for MSA women to be more open-minded towards new, predominately black, Muslim women joining the organization. Noting that "Muslims from other countries are more fortunate," in their racial treatment in the United States, the speakers called attention to the need for MSA women to change their behavior if they hoped to keep growing the Muslim community in the country.[77]

The events and programs of the Women's Committee met mixed responses from the majority of the women within the organization. In a survey conducted at the 15th Annual Convention of the MSA, the MSA asked its members its level of satisfaction with a variety of services and programs conducted at the convention and in general. Responding to the inquiry, the MSA members who gave their input demonstrated a lack of agreement on the quality and presentation of women's programs. With thirty-two percent of respondents claiming the programs were good, thirty-five percent stating that they were satisfactory, and thirty-two percent indicating that they were poor, MSA members identified a number of areas for improvement. Claiming that many events were not well publicized, unorganized, and poorly run, MSA members indicated that the women's programs left much to be desired.[78] Along with their dissatisfaction with many of the available programs for women, some women cited the MSA for its overall subordination of women's importance within the organization. Highlighting such beliefs, one white female respondent to the MSA's 1978 membership questionnaire informed the MSA,

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[77] Ahmad Abdul Masjid, "The Muslima: Women's Committee mini-Seminar: Problems of New Muslims," *Islamic Horizons* 6, no. 9 (1977).
[78] "The Headquarters: Convention Evaluation," *Islamic Horizons* 6, no. 7 (1977).

"Women are greatly neglected in material pertaining to them."[79] In making their critiques heard, MSA women demonstrated that while the opportunities and programs for women provided opportunities to make a mark within the family and in the community, they believed much work remained in attaining equal footing with men within the organization.

For women in the Chicago Muslim community, the 1970s featured conflicting forces that helped create cohesion and unity for a diverse set of Muslim women, while also leading to disillusionment with the notion of equality along racial and gender lines in Islamic Chicago. During the transition from their prominent role in the NOI/WCIW to becoming members and participants in mainstream Muslim organizations, Bilalian Muslims experienced a great deal of continuity. With women's organizations sharing common aims and ideologies, women found much in common with other women of different racial backgrounds. Although these continuities helped build solidarity, problems of racial and gender inequities damaged their greater connections within the urban Umma. With the persistence of racial discrimination and the subordination and lack of attention to the importance of women's programs within larger organizations like the MSA, many Muslim women struggled to find satisfactory achievement of the dream of a unified Muslim community built on the tenet of equality under Islam.

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[79] Anonymous, "MSA: Task Force Questionnaire." Folder: Task Force Questionnaire Responses, February 1978. MSA Box 1. Islam in America Repository. DePaul University Library.

Conclusion- The End of the Urban Umma

As the 1970s came to a close, the integration of Bilalian Muslims into mainstream Islamic communities neared completion. With the nearly two million former members of the WCIW joining local mosques and immigrant-led Muslim organizations, the largest mass religious conversion in American history created dramatic changes to the American Islamic scene. From featuring racially distinct religious movements, early in the 1970s, the middle of the decade featured the coming together of black, immigrant, and American-born Muslims in an attempt to create a unified Muslim community. Despite, and sometimes as a result of, these efforts, the close of the decade featured a step away from the trends that characterized the decade.

For African American Muslims, the realities of life within a larger, integrated, Muslim community proved to be rife with disappointment. Often, African American Muslims faced racial and class-based discrimination upon joining organizations like the MSA and MCC, making the prospect of true integration into a larger Muslim community a fantasy. In particular, exclusion in intermarriage, criticism of American customs and religious literacy, and discrimination in women's groups, all highlighted the ways that African American Muslims struggled to achieve true equality with their immigrant counterparts. As a result, many Bilalian Muslims came to openly question the efficacy of abandoning the racialist rhetoric of the NOI, as well as the Black Nationalist economic and political programs of the late 1960s and early 1970s. By the end of the decade, the reconstituted NOI, under the leadership of Louis Farrakhan, would bring a substantial proportion of Bilalian Muslims back into the fold, rejecting

the integrated Sunni Islam that W.D. Muhammad and the WCIW had adopted in 1976.

Much like the experience of Bilalian Muslims, American converts to Islam found joining the Muslim community to be an experience fraught with economic and personal difficulties. Often struggling to gain acceptance in a community dominated by distinct immigrant groups and a large contingent of ex-NOI members, Muslim converts voiced their feelings of isolation within Islamic society. Making matters worse, many Muslim converts found their newfound religion to be the cause of greater workplace discrimination, as well as rejection from friends and family members. For African American converts, in particular, the experience of being both black and Muslim in Chicago led to a double-burden (and for women, a triple-burden with gender factored in as well) of racism and bigotry within American society.

While less dramatic than the forms of discrimination that African American Muslims faced, within the immigrant Muslim community, the persistence of ethnic, cultural, and generational quarrels further damaged attempts to unify Chicago's Muslim community. As Chicago's immigrant Muslim community grew over the course of the 1970s, increasing diversity brought ethnic and cultural misunderstandings to the forefront. Often these issues manifested themselves in debates over proper Islamic attire for women, along with arguments over religious interpretation and legitimacy. Furthermore, as a first and second generation of Muslim children of immigrants came of age in the United States, growing disconnects between traditional practices in the Islamic world and American customs drove a wedge between the children of immigrant Muslims and their parents.

Perhaps highlighting the contradictory character of the latter half of the 1970s, the experience of Muslim women demonstrated the way the increasing unity and cooperation of the decade failed to necessitate the creation of a truly unified Muslim community. Despite the continuities and shared goals of women's groups in both the Black Muslim and mainstream Muslim communities, the persistence of racism within the community damaged attempts to unite all of Chicago's Muslim women in sisterhood. Furthermore, with the unequal status of women vis-à-vis men in the Muslim community, many Muslim women demonstrated their unhappiness and feelings of exclusion from equal membership in Chicago's urban Umma.

In total, by the end of the decade, Chicago's Muslims increasingly turned towards creating ethnicity-specific mosques and organizations, largely as a result of the fractures that grew out of the increased cooperation of the greater part of the decade. With African American Muslims struggling to find a place in the larger Muslim community, many turning away entirely to join the revamped NOI, immigrant Muslims increasingly finding themselves in conflict over ethnic, cultural, and generational differences, and new converts dealing with the social and economic discontinuities entailed in conversion, Chicago Muslims increasingly splintered into their component parts. As a result, despite great strides made throughout the decade, at the end of the 1970s, the goal of building an urban Umma encompassing Chicago's entire Muslim population remained unrealized and increasingly undesired.

Conclusion:
Islamic Chicago: The Urban Umma entering a New Era

On February 22nd, 1981, in Chicago's Auditorium Theatre, Louis Farrakhan delivered a speech that marked a fundamental change in the process of Black Muslims integrating into mainstream Islamic life. Proclaiming the reconstitution of the Nation of Islam, Farrakhan promised to return the organization to its original teachings of Black Nationalism, making direct reference to his familial legacy of Garveyism, while highlighting the goals and accomplishments of Elijah Muhammad. Reaffirming the organization's original dogma and re-emphasizing the importance of separation and self-sufficiency, Farrakhan harkened back to the NOI's previous traditional celebrations, declaring the day to be remembered as the First Saviour's Day[1] celebration for the new organization.[2]

Declaring that, "the Nation of Islam is not an exclusive order. It is inclusive of every black man, woman, and child in America and throughout the world." Farrakhan reached out to the larger black community in hopes of using his brand of Islam as a way to unite black Americans in common cause. With his message of black unity resonating, not only did many former NOI/WCIW members join him in celebration of Saviour's Day but also important non-Muslim black intellectuals and leaders including Rev. Al Sharpton.[3] In reaffirming Black Islam's roots in Black

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[1] During the life and leadership of Elijah Muhammad, the NOI held a yearly celebration for the leader and the organization, which they called "Saviour's Day," in honor of their prophet. Saviour's Day usually involved a parade, speeches, and celebrations for members of the organization.
[2] *Saviour's Day 1981: Historic Souvenir Journal*. 1981. Folder: NOI, Pamphlets Box 8. Islam in America Repository. DePaul University Library.
[3] Ashahed M. Muhammad. "Saviours' Day: A Timeline and Brief History," *Final Call*, February 24, 2008. *Saviour's Day 1981: Historic Souvenir Journal*. 1981.

Separatism and racial pride, Farrakhan attempted to reverse the tide of interracialism among African American Muslims throughout the country.

Through his revival of the NOI, Farrakhan tapped into growing sentiments for many within the African American Muslim community. With many former NOI members increasingly growing weary of the direction W.D. Muhammad had brought the NOI/WCIW, a sizeable number of Bilalian Muslims left mainstream Islam in order to recapture what they had in the old organization. For members like Sonia Sanchez, membership in the NOI was never about religion in the first place. Instead, the commercial, educational, and community aspects of the organization are what drew her and many like-minded people to the movement. Describing her interest in the organization many years later, Sanchez said, "It was very interesting because I've never been a real religious person, you know, so I think I went in more for the pol--most of the people I know--the young people who came in there came in because of the political structure, the words."[4] As a result, for those like Na'im Akbar, a noted scholar who had moved to Chicago to help the movement upon W.D. Muhammad's assumption of power, the new direction of the NOI/WCIW called into question the whole reason for being part of the movement. Expressing how many members like himself felt unhappy with the new direction, Akbar explained that when W.D. Muhammad took over, he and many like him believed, "when Elijah Muhammad died and, and his son Wallace Muhammad came in, the initial kind of impression we had, 'okay, this is going to be kind of like an expansion of the Nation where we're going to

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Folder: NOI, Pamphlets Box 8. Islam in America Repository. DePaul University Library.

[4] Sonia Sanchez, Oral History interview conducted by *HistoryMakers*, April 19, 2003.

become a world kind of leadership group for the whole of the black community.'" Instead, Akbar found disappointment with W.D. Muhammad's decision to, "basically to convert the Nation from being like a, kind of like a social, cultural movement to being exclusively a religious movement. And, and this was very different from what we'd expected."[5] In his and other's disappointment, many former NOI members demonstrated their unwillingness to simply be part of a religious movement spanning the globe, but instead reaffirmed the importance of the political and social implications of joining the organization in the first place.

For many former NOI members, the initial appeal of the organization was its Black Nationalist and Pan-African viewpoints. In the case of Haki Madhubuti, the founder of the *3rd World Press,* the new direction of the NOI/WCIW did not match his vision, as working on building community with immigrant Muslims in a religious-only focused movement did little to help with issues black Americans faced in daily life. Committed to the causes of Pan-Africanism and Black Liberation, Madhubuti agreed to help Louis Farrakhan with his new movement when approached at the end of the 1970s. When contacted by a close confidant of Farrakhan and asked to help re-start the movement, Madhubuti told him, "okay, we'll help you, but we're not really concerned about trying to start another kingship."[6] Like Madhubuti, despite the dissatisfaction with the personal fiefdom that Elijah Muhammad had created through the organization, many former members remained committed to the political and

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[5] Na'im Akbar, Oral History interview conducted by *HistoryMakers*, April 2002.
[6] Haki Madhubuti, Oral History interview conducted by *HistoryMakers*, December 1999.

cultural ideologies that W.D. Muhammad had abandoned in his efforts to join orthodox Islam.

As a sizeable number of former NOI members returned to the reconstituted organization at the beginning of the 1980s, they represented an important moment in the history of Islamic Chicago. Running directly counter to the trend towards greater unity of thought, interaction, and cooperation among the multi-racial and multi-national Muslim community in the 1960s and 1970s, the return to the NOI brought to light the limits of the movement. With many African American Muslims frustrated by their treatment from Muslim immigrants, the persistence of racist and nationalistic tendencies within the mainstream Muslim community proved to be too great a burden to bear. Similarly, the disappearance of African American Muslim controlled mosques, schools, and businesses, left many questioning the benefits of integrating into the mainstream Muslim community in the first place. Mirroring the process of integration that coincided with the demise of black institutions in larger American society, the decline of Black Muslim institutions left some without as many opportunities for employment and representation, fighting to ameliorate their specific problems and concerns. As a result, the end of the decade saw the end of the greatest push for fully integrating black and immigrant Muslims into one unified Muslim community. While many black Muslims remained part of mainstream Islamic organizations and thought, with others joining them in relatively consistent numbers, the beginning of the 1980s also began to witness the steady stream of African American Muslims reacting to and separating from the integrated Islamic community in Chicago.

Outside of the African American community, a similar pattern of separation emerged as the 1970s came to a close. With immigrant Muslims increasingly moving out of the city and into suburban locations, the unity of immigrants in Islamic Chicago began to weaken under geographic and demographic strains. Following in the same patters of suburbanization that had witnessed the flight of white residents from the city center, many Muslim immigrants with high-incomes and elite professions followed suit by leaving the city for its growing suburbs. With new mosques and community centers opening in the city's suburbs, Muslim immigrants began to re-solidify ethnic communities increasingly removed from the city center and the places of interaction that brought disparate groups together. Furthermore, with the number of immigrants increasing exponentially at the start of the 1980s, Chicago Muslims gained greater opportunity to form independent enclaves within their own ethnic communities. Forming new mosques and community groups with linguistic and national-specific maulanas and services, many Chicago Muslims exchanged greater unity for the comforts and benefits of religious and community life more specifically catering to their backgrounds.

As Muslim Chicago continued to expand in population and diversity by the 1980s, building a unified urban Umma increasingly seemed an impossible task. With Chicago Muslims spreading throughout the Chicagoland area, and largely separating on national and linguistic lines, the voices for integration lost significant influence in their respective communities. Over time, the class divisions between professional, upwardly mobile, immigrants and mostly working-class black Muslims, along with tensions over generational, gender, and cultural issues, led to disharmony between

newly interacting Muslim groups. Although the hard work by the MSA, MCC, and smaller Chicago Muslim groups accomplished much in the way of increasing interaction, cooperation, and integration of once wholly separate Muslim groups, the possibilities of keeping such a diverse and large group of people in one unified community was perhaps never truly attainable. As experienced by many other communities within the United States and abroad, once reaching such population and diversity levels, the chances of unity on social, political, and spiritual issues for any group would appear to be impossible.

With that in mind, in order to understand the successes in building unity within the Muslim community during this era, it is important to note the importance of the particular historical moment. For a brief period from the late 1960s through the 1970s, Chicago's Muslim community existed in a size, scope, and political climate that allowed it to come together to accomplish greater integration of thought and action than anyone could have predicted pre-1965. As those factors changed by the end of the decade, the eventual turn away from such unity followed, as the weight of such changes combined with the fractures and conflicts brewing between ethnic, national, and racial groups, proved to be too much to overcome.

Before the immigration wave of the 1960s, Islam in Chicago was characterized by small groups of immigrants mostly from Bosnia and Palestine, dwarfed by the Black Muslim population in the NOI. As immigration waves began to alter the city, Chicago became the center of American Muslim activity, thanks to its diverse and vibrant Muslim immigrant communities existing in concert with the organizational hub of the NOI. Building the first Muslim institutions in the city, the

presence of early Muslims in Chicago helped set the stage for the growing interaction to take place in the years to follow.

By the 1970s, population and institutional changes helped remake the Chicago Muslim community to be much more in keeping with the rest of the Muslim world. Creating and sustaining a wide range of new organizations and institutions to aid in Muslim life and community building, Chicago's Muslim community rapidly diversified ethnically, ideologically, and geographically. Despite these differences, the development of Muslim organizations in the late 1960s and 1970s allowed a diverse set of Chicago residents to join together in membership in large organizations aimed at creating unity among the totality of Chicago's Muslim residents.

During these changes, Chicago Muslims increasingly came to see each other as part of a global Muslim community by reaching out across the Atlantic, in order to find support and build relationships with the larger Islamic World. In making connections abroad, Muslims in Chicago exposed themselves to the manifestations of the particular politics of the Middle East that existed in the era. Specifically, in response to the conflict with Israel, the call for unity among Muslims throughout the Islamic World, during the 1960s and 1970s, extended beyond the borders of the Middle East to reach Muslims everywhere. As such, Chicago Muslims exchanged ideas and interacted with religious ideologies and political actors that encouraged greater harmony between Muslims within the United States. Through the educational, social, and financial benefits Chicago Muslims solicited from abroad, they managed to help sustain and strengthen important institutions that expressly worked to build unity among Chicago's Muslim communities.

Domestically, the federal government's increasing attempts to control and shape the city's Muslim communities, helped forge solidarities between Chicago Muslims that allowed them greater influence in American politics. Much as black activists during the Civil Rights Movement partnered with federal agencies to help black Americans enjoy the full benefits of citizenship, W.D. Muhammad and his followers harnessed the power of the FBI to help re-orient the NOI's ideology to better integrate its members into full participation in American society and electoral politics. When the power of the government could not be allied with, Chicago Muslims resisted government attempts to interfere with their communities. Whether in response to COINTELPRO or targeting from INS agents, Chicago Muslims came together to voice their opposition to the policy of harassment that the federal government enacted upon them. Increasingly viewing themselves as citizens of the United States, Chicago Muslims utilized their full constitutional rights in order to affect change in American domestic and foreign policy. Taking to the ballot box, for the first time in large numbers, Chicago Muslims also harnessed the power of the press, staged demonstrations, and organized politically, in order to force the government to recognize their interests as American citizens. Despite attempts to stifle Muslim influence in the city, the federal government helped spur Chicago Muslims to greater political action, culminating in their efforts to utilize electoral politics to re-elect Jimmy Carter.

Within Islamic Chicago during the late 1960s and 1970s, the solidarities and connections disparate Muslim groups had made helped lead them to make greater efforts to develop a unified urban Muslim community. As the NOI moved towards

integration into mainstream Muslim communities, the city witnessed the rapid replacement of black Islamic institutions with counterparts from the increasingly integrated immigrant and native-born Muslim community. Through these shared institutions and efforts, many Chicago Muslims began to view themselves as part of an urban Umma encompassing nearly all of the city's Muslim residents. As a result, Muslims from various ethnic, racial, and national backgrounds attempted to create opportunities for greater interaction and integration of disparate Islamic groups throughout the city.

Consequently, the unity building efforts of many Chicago Muslims resulted in greater instances of interaction and cooperation, but also helped lay the foundation of fractures that would eventually halt the progress towards unifying the community. While Chicago Muslims came to interact in shared institutions, frictions related to issues of race, class, language, nationality, and gender, began to disillusion many towards the benefits of further integration. Unwilling to break boundaries related to intermarriage, cultural traditions, clothing, representation, and leadership, many Chicago Muslims opted to break away from joint institutions in hopes of finding fulfillment in smaller, less diverse, communities and organizations. As such, the end of the 1970s represented a departure from the efforts of the previous decade and a half, where a coordinated push to emphasize and harness commonalities and solidarities in order to unify Chicago Muslims was replaced with a renewed focus on smaller, more homogenous, Muslim communities.

Moving beyond the borders of Chicago, the experiences of Islamic Chicago resonated with Islamic communities across the nation. Despite its privileged position

as the center of black Islam, as well as one of the primary destinations for immigrants from the Muslim World, many of the trends within the city were reflected nationally in major cities and in smaller communities. In some smaller communities, lacking a critical mass of particular Muslim immigrant groups allowed for greater cooperation and unity within their Islamic community. For such communities, bigger cities, like Chicago, played a pivotal role in providing opportunities for followers to connect to Muslim communities with greater resources at their disposal. In playing a leading role in organizing events, conferences, and trips abroad, changes in Chicago's Muslim communities were felt and reflected in smaller communities across the nation, particularly in the Midwest.

With Chicago Muslims deeply connected to national and international Islamic movements, many of the changes in the community could be seen in other major metropolitan areas with robust Muslim populations. In particular, many of the trends towards greater cooperation with foreign Muslim nations, as well as increased integration between black and immigrant Muslims, occurred in cities like New York and Washington, DC, during this era. Travelling from Chicago to other major cities on the East Coast, leaders of Chicago's Muslim communities coordinated with Muslim leaders in New York and DC in order to help build national solidarities for Muslims in the country. Through national events and programs, Chicago's position as the home to many noteworthy Muslim leaders granted it great influence in spreading its prevailing ideas and practices to other large Islamic Commuities. As such, the experiences of Islamic Chicago stand as a critical piece of a larger narrative

of changes in the character of Islam in America and the nature of Muslim communities in the country.

In all, the story of Chicago Muslims attempting to build an urban Umma during the 1960s and 1970s is largely one of successes. Through their creation of umbrella organizations, coordination of integrated events and celebrations, and cooperation in creating educational and economic opportunities for members of the community, Chicago Muslims largely came to see themselves outside of the ethnic, national, linguistic, sectarian, and racial groups that had defined the boundaries of Chicago's multiple Muslim communities in the Postwar Era. Despite falling short in their ultimate goal of creating a lasting unity in Islamic Chicago, the creation and maintenance of infrastructure and institutions necessary to allow for greater integration and cooperation helped make it possible for Chicago Muslims to take part in events and activities in the larger Muslim community on a regular basis. Whether through the bi-annual celebrations of Eid, or the hosting of lectures and events, even with the gradual fracturing of the Chicago Muslim community during the 1980s, the precedent set in the 1960s and 1970s of interaction and cooperation helped sustain the momentum necessary to continue with such practices. In doing so, the direct legacy of the era is still felt to this day, as Chicago Muslims routinely come together, bridging their disparate communities in the spirit of unity under the banner of Islam.

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