

Essay on religious studies

[Sociology](#), [Immigration](#)



A brief history of Islam in the United States. & Islamophobia & Jews, Christians, and Muslims

History of Islam in the United States

The United States is not usually associated with Islam although there are more than 3 million followers of the religion in the country. Islam is also a religion in America that over time has undergone changes in terms of the population of its believers, Islamic culture in America, and the factors that fuel these changes. The population of Muslims has dramatically grown over the previous half-century because of factors like procreation, immigration, and conversion. Highest number of immigrants are from Middle East, followed by Afro-Americans. Americans form majority of the converts. Muslims discovered America from early 17th century this involves slaves speaking Arabic being brought to America, this extended to the 18th and 19th centuries which involved African slaves who were Muslims also being brought into America.

How US immigration policy has influenced growth of Islam

Immigration laws have greatly influenced the growth of Islam in America. Through historic happenings these laws have been shaped in a way that either favors or bars the inflow of Muslim migrants into America over time. This issue will be looked at from a point of view regarding immigration waves. An example is like during the second wave of immigration which occurred in the 1930s which was halted by the 2nd world war. During this time the laws of immigration were deliberately discriminatory. It was in Ellis Island where immigrants were told to go back. Moreover, middle easterners could not be able to get citizenship. At one point in that time the immigration laws used

the criteria of nose shape and color of skin to give citizenship to the immigrants. As a result, since the officials could not ascertain the race they were. Other restrictive laws narrowed the number of immigrants who could enter America, with prevalence going to kin of those immigrants who came in earlier before. This immigrants are Muslims and through this Islam's growth in America stagnated since Muslims were few.

In the third wave, which occurred between 1947-mid 1960s Muslims migrated because of political oppression that was happening in their native countries. They included Palestinians who were evacuated by Israelis, Egyptians due to Nasser's nationalization of their property, Syrians who opposed their government, and Muslims from east Europe countries like Albania, Soviet Union, and Yugoslavia. The US decided to harbor these immigrants and as a result made their immigration laws less strict resulting to an influx of Muslim people into America. Resultantly, this led to an increase in the population of Muslims in America that led to a growth of Islam in the country.

The fourth wave, which happened in the Johnson administration brought a lot of alterations in the laws of immigration. The laws favor those immigrants who fit according to the specifications of the labor market of the US. This determined who and who would not get into America. It started in 1967 and it continues up to date. It consist of Muslims who are good in English, westernized, and educated. They have therefore adapted to Muslim practices in a way that goes in line with the American society. Earlier immigrants could not promote Islam since economic survival made them busy, they were less in numbers, and viewed their stay in America as only temporary. This

subdued founding of Islamic organizations. However, Muslim population increased and those who wanted to permanently settle in America increased. They therefore slowly started to establish institutions and organizations needed to reserve the faith.

Role of Islam in African American community

Islam was used to unite African Americans. This is evidenced when Timothy Drew who was from North Carolina understood the principles of Islam and used it to unite African Americans. He founded Moorish American Science Temple in New Jersey. He insisted that Christianity belongs to whites and Islam is for Asiatic. Although his movement was not based on normal Islam traditions, he intended on finding a way of bringing together those who were oppressed, give them something to be proud of, and a way for self contribution. Islam was used to open the eyes of the black nation and make them realize their true nature. The Lost Found Nation of Islam which was headed by Elijah Muhammad was a Muslim organization that helped African Americans find ways of life that are new which stress on economic independence, self-respect, and ethnic integrity. This made African Americans turn to Elijah for guidance. Elijah's movement was viewed as a gate through to get escape the ghetto life, rise above sufferings of the past, and asserting their own identity which had been suppressed by the white people for a long time. They called the movement the Nation of Islam. Islam was used to as a means of controlling the African Americans. Elijah Muhammad was seen as a leader of the black community by which he preached his teachings on the way people should live both ethically and financially. He also demanded converts to maintain moral and ethical

standards that are high in order to attain self-worth and self dignity.

Islam was used to enlighten the black nation of the need to stop racism. This is experienced when Warith D. and Farrakhan replaced those tenets that were racist which happened in the transitional stage. This was done to remove the idea of subjugation from the minds of American Americans. This made the movement of African Americans to share simple ideas of dignity and freedom for people including the whites. They therefore changed their approaches to life concentrating on the teachings of the Holy Quran and Prophet Muhammad (SAW).

Issues faced by American Muslims

Muslims in America face a number of issues ranging from precept to practicing problems.

Muslims adopt practices not common to them and apply them to their normal ways. An example is where the imam's role has widened. Normally they would only instruct followers in the ways of Islamic law and the Quran but they now counsel followers and maintain mosques which is similar to what Christian clergy do. Other religions also face this problem.

American Muslims face practical problems. American Muslims face problems when it comes to practicing their religion. An example is where they face difficulty to observe the five basic daily prayers and rituals of cleaning up before prayer. This is seen as embarrassing when they are at work. This problem applies also to other religions since they become ashamed of practicing their religious culture in America.

American Muslims face an issue that public are prejudiced against their religion. This is where there is a growing racist and insensitive statements on

television, press, and radio. They see the media covering attacks by Muslim terrorists which makes Americans equal Islam to terrorism this furthermore increases the prejudice. This problem is particular to Muslims only since other minority religions do not face the same fate.

American Muslims are frustrated. Despite America being a country where religion is valued Muslims are still frustrated in trying to practice their religion. An example is when they are told to serve in the army yet the military chaplaincy does not include imams as other religious leaders are included.

Foreign students due to public prejudice are become inclined to radical Islam. This is where the students join radical Islamic groups that are in support of activities that are aimed towards violence like jihad and terrorist activities. This problem is particular to Islam religion only and no other minor religions.

Islamaphobia and its impact on American Muslim lives

Islamaphobia is defined as hatred or prejudice towards Muslims or Islam that is close-minded. The impacts that Islamaphobia has on American Muslims are explained below.

American Muslims face the problem of acquiring jobs after they graduate. Employers become biased and treat them as outcasts and terrorists thus not employing them. Moreover, those that have jobs do not get pay rise.

Mental health of Muslims is affected making it to further worsen. They are treated bad and discriminated against and that the cases of mental insecurity is increasing among Muslims in America according to a study by Gallup Center.

Muslim youth are also affected in a number of ways. According to research and statistics by Gallop center, youth aged 18-28 are angry and not happy. 26% of Muslims who are young compared to 14% of Protestants who are young confessed to experiencing anger. Another report by Pew center shows that 26% of Muslims who are young support suicide bombings.

A study by Yale University says that 50% of Arab-Americans show clinical depression signs. This has led to other problems like divorces and domestic violence on the increase as reported by social service agencies.

Some Muslims even decide to either convert to other religions or refuse to identify themselves with Islam. Reason being they are afraid of what people will say and think about them.

Islamaphobia generally affects Muslim social life.

Solutions by modern Muslims to establishing proper relationships between society and religion

Muslim women are taking public responsibility roles and are showing what it means to be Muslim to them. Muslim women are coming out to show that there is gender equality in Islam and rejecting the society's claim to it not being there.

Muslims are getting involved in the Americas political system. They are involved in vying for seats so that they can address issues relevant to them and people of other religions should follow this.

Muslims are finding new ways to conduct business in relation to legal Islamic restrictions.

Muslims are also building new schools that conform to their religious culture and practice what is normal to them in those schools. This challenges the

public education system to favor all religions.

Muslims are changing their way of thinking. Muslims are now not only thinking of what being Muslim in America is, but also what being religious (with other religions, Jews, Christians, and others) is in a secular society which defines itself as so.

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