University of San Diego

Digital USD

Theses

Theses and Dissertations

Spring 5-4-2016

Islamophilia: Challenging Prejudice and Promoting Mutual Understanding

Lallia Allali

Follow this and additional works at: <https://digital.sandiego.edu/theses>

Part of the [Leadership Studies Commons](#), and the [Other Social and Behavioral Sciences Commons](#)

Digital USD Citation

Allali, Lallia, "Islamophilia: Challenging Prejudice and Promoting Mutual Understanding" (2016). *Theses*. 16.

<https://digital.sandiego.edu/theses/16>

This Thesis: Open Access is brought to you for free and open access by the Theses and Dissertations at Digital USD. It has been accepted for inclusion in Theses by an authorized administrator of Digital USD. For more information, please contact digital@sandiego.edu.

**ISLAMOPHILIA: CHALLENGING PREJUDICE AND PROMOTING
MUTUAL
UNDERSTANDING**

By

Lallia Allali

A Thesis Presented to
The School of Leadership and Education Sciences
Department of Leadership Studies
University of San Diego

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Arts in Leadership Studies

May 2016

Thesis Committee

Afsaneh Nahavandi, Ph.D.
Zachary Gabriel Green, Ph.D.

UNIVERSITY OF SAN DIEGO
SCHOOL OF LEADERSHIP AND EDUCATION SCIENCES

CANDIDATE'S NAME: Lallia Allali

TITLE OF THESIS: ISLAMOPHILIA: CHALLENGING PREJUDICE AND
PROMOTING MUTUAL UNDERSTANDING

APPROVAL:

Afsaneh Nahavandi, PhD	Chair
Zachary Gabriel Green, PhD	Reader

DATE: May 4, 2016

Abstract

Muslims across the United States are experiencing an unprecedented increase in discrimination and violence due to a growing fear and hatred towards Islam and Muslims. Many educators have labeled this anti-Islamic phenomenon as “Islamophobia”. Several studies have addressed the existence of “Islamophobia” and discussed its impact on the Muslim community and society at-large. However, few studies focus on helping Muslims transcend their mindset and believe in their ability to challenge prejudice and promote mutual understanding. This two- phase research attempted to fill that gap by first looking at the impact of contact relations and education in reducing Islamophobia and then considering the role of the Imams in that process.

The first study surveyed 189 people who visited the Islamic Center of San Diego to evaluate the effectiveness of its educational and outreach program. More than ninety percent of the participants in the first survey indicate that following their visit, their stereotype changed, and that they gained a balanced view about Islam. Ninety-nine percent of the participants find the presentation very interesting and more than ninety-three percent indicate that observing the prayer and touring the Mosque were effective.

The first study indicates that contact and education decrease prejudice and shows the effectiveness of the educational program provided at the center.

The second study examined the role of the faith leaders, or “Imams,” in raising global awareness and providing accurate information about Islam by building relations based on mutual respect and understanding. The results from the 9 Imams who completed the survey indicate that there is a gap between their espoused and enacted

values, between what they say they stand for and what they actually do. While all the surveyed Imams believe that the responsibility of the Mosque and Imams is enormous in dispelling the misconceptions about Islam. Only three of them agree on the need for setting consistent interfaith work as well as having concrete goals.

Although limited to one location and based on a small sample of Imams, the information from these two studies can be used to improve educational programs and propose ways to increase contact. It further points to the need of a more active role from the Muslim community in helping to dispel Islamophobia.

Keywords : Islamophilia, Islamophobia, Imam, Prejudice, Change

Dedication

This thesis is dedicated to the memory of my mother F. Mekkakia, who emphasized the importance of education and instilled in me the inspiration to set high goals and the confidence to achieve them.

Unfortunately, she didn't stay in this world long enough to see my academic accomplishment but, I am glad that she saw the initial steps of my work, offering the support, love and encouragement

Acknowledgments

First and foremost, I would like to express my deepest gratitude to my thesis advisor Dr. Afsaneh Nahavandi for her excellent guidance, insightful comments, inspiration and support during these past 2 years. I could not have imagined having a better supervisor for my Master study.

A very special thanks goes to the members of the Thesis Committee, particularly Dr. Zachary Green for his encouragement.

I would also like to thank my husband and my daughters for their understanding and endless love throughout my life. My family has been encouraging, supportive and shown belief in me and my work.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS.....	v
LIST OF TABLES.....	viii
LIST OF FIGURES.....	x
1-INTRODUCTION.....	1
2- LITERATURE REVIEW.....	3
Racism and Stereotype.....	3
Islamophobia: A Particular Case of Racism.....	6
Theories Explaining Islamophobia.....	14
Measuring Islamophobia.....	18
Addressing Islamophobia.....	21
The Vital Role of Faith Institutions and Faith Leaders.....	33
Current Study.....	37
3- METHODOLOGY.....	38
Study 1: The Islamic Center of San Diego.....	42
Procedure and Instrument	42
Study 2: The Survey of Imams.....	43
Instrument and Procedure.....	44
4-ANALYSIS.....	46
Study 1: The Islamic Center of San Diego.....	46
Study 2: The Survey of Imams.....	67
5- CONCLUSIONS, DISCUSSION, IMPLICATIONS AND LIMITATIONS.....	84

Discussion:	84
Study 1.....	84
Study: 2.....	96
Islamophilia.....	112
Conclusions.....	116
Implications.....	117
Limitations.....	120
Future Research.....	121
REFERENCES.....	122
APPENDIX A: Visitors' survey	127
APPENDIX B: Imams' survey.....	129

LIST OF TABLES

Table	Page
1. Demographic Information of Participants.....	47
2. Religious Affiliation of the visitors.....	48
3. Number of Visitors.....	49
4. The Visitors Referral to the Center.....	50
5. The Purpose of the Visit.....	51
6. The Visitors' Insights on the Presentation.....	53
7. The Visitors Insights on the Presenter.....	54
8. Gaining Factual Information about Islam.....	56
9. Increasing the Visitors Understanding of Islam	57
10. the Visitors' Views of Islam after the visit.....	58
11. The Visitors' Stereotype about Islam	59
12. Gaining a Balanced View about Islam and Muslims.....	60
13. Knowing More about Islam as a Result of the Visit.....	61
14. Observing the Prayer and Touring the Mosque.....	64
15. The Visitors' Positive Remarks.....	65
16. Imams' Country of Origin.....	68

17. Imams' Children Age.....	69
18. Numbers of Years Serving as Imams.....	70
19. The Imams' Involvement in the Interfaith Work.....	71
20. The Faith Groups.....	72
21. American Muslims & Islamophobia.....	73
22. The Role of Mosques in Increasing Awareness about Islam.....	74
23. The Need of an Active Leader in our Time.....	75
24. The Enormous Responsibility of the Imam in our Time.....	76
25. Imams Reaching out to Religious, Civic and Political Organizations	77
26. Consistency in Interfaith Programs.....	78
27. Strengthening Muslims/ non-Muslims Relationship.....	79
28. Open Mosque Day.....	80
29. The Annual Interfaith Goal	81
30. Imams' Speaking Engagement.....	82
31. Mosques and Politics.....	84

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure	Page
1. AQAL Model.....	26
2. AQAL Structure for Change.....	30
3. Path Model of Blame.....	110

Chapter 1

Introduction

Following the tragic events of September 11, 2001, the lives of Muslims in the United States have become more difficult due to a multitude of misconceptions and stereotypes that swept the news media and the internet. To many Americans and American Muslims, this was a “tipping point” that constructed new social norms leading to major change (Gladwell, 2002). Hatred, prejudice and irrational fear of Muslims swept through the United States (Esposito, 2011). Such fear and hostility led to discriminations against Muslims, exclusion from mainstream political or social process and the assumption of guilt by association. The term "Islamophobia" became commonly used as the mass media broadcast information in fast pace associating Islam with violence. The situation created a systemic fear that spread throughout the nation as an epidemic (Gladwell, 2002). Many Muslims in America feel insecure and suspicious of possible hateful reactions and some Americans feel that all Muslims are violent and a threat to their lives.

Almost fifteen years after the terrible event of 9/11, violent attacks carried by Muslims occurred in Paris, San Bernardino and most recently Brussels. The Muslim community across the American nation, is continuously facing embedded Islamophobia. Muslims of all ethnicities and backgrounds are still experiencing prejudice, bigotry and discrimination. The FBI's new national hate crime statistics reported that hate crimes against Muslims increased by 50% in 2010, and persisted for the following year in 2011 at a high level. The Department of Justice (DOJ) studies reports that the number of anti-

Muslim hate crimes during 2011 may have been reached 3,000 to 5,000. Furthermore, between “2011 and 2012”, 51 anti-mosque acts occurred, 29 in 2012 and 22 in 2011. More than 5,000 Muslims have been detained in preventative detention, the large majority were never accused much less convicted, of any terrorist act. Of those detained not a single individual was found guilty of having committed a terrorist act. The Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) notice a 250% increase in the religion-based discrimination cases involving Muslim. Between 9/11/2001 and 3/11/2012, 1,040 cases were reported that were connected to the attacks on individuals who are perceived to be Muslim, Sikh, Arab, Middle Eastern or South Asian (EEOC). The Council on American Islamic Relations (CAIR) states that 55% of Muslim students in California, have been subject to at least one form of religion-based bullying (CAIR, 2015)

This two-phase thesis reports the findings of survey at the Islamic Center of San Diego to examine the factors that have led to the increase number of the Non- Muslims visiting the center and how the educational and outreach programs adopted at the center can be applied in other Mosques to help dispel the misconceptions about Islam and Muslims. Also central to the research study is exploration of the religious, social, and political role and responsibility of the Imams in increasing awareness and reducing prejudice and discrimination against Muslims.

CHAPTER 2

Literature Review

Racism and Stereotype

A significant number of studies within Social science literature is related to racism and prejudice. Although there is no a general consensus on the definition of prejudice, the most accurate definition is one proposed by All-port in 1979 (Listraugh, & Straback, 2007), as “an antipathy based upon faulty and inflexible generalization.” Prejudice and racism have been conceptualized as an attitude involving negative and undesirable feelings, beliefs, views, and behaviors towards a specific social group (Dovidio, 2000; Jackman, 1977; & Yinger, 1984). In defining prejudice, it’s considerably important to emphasize the evolving dimensions of prejudice defined as “old” and “new” procedures and practices (Pittigrew, & Meertens, 1995), old- fashioned and symbolic racism (Kinder & Scars, 1981; Traman & Scars, 2005). In 1950 Aldo’s work on prejudice focused on the personality of the prejudiced and racist person and individual as authoritarian personality (Listraugh & Straback, 2007). However, psychological characteristics are not the only factor in manifested prejudiced and intolerant attitude (Pittgrew, 1959, 1960). The sociocultural factor is crucial in determining what we perceive and shaping our racist attitude (Kinlosh, 1974; Middleton, 1976). The Sociocultural approach assumed that societal norm of

prejudice is the result of a compilation of historical events and processes, and these prejudiced attitudes are found to be irrational with no accurate social or economic foundation (Bobo, Hutchings, 1996). David Schoem (1991) describes stereotyping as a fixed facts believed by one group towards the characteristics or comportments of another group, these facts are constructed consciously or unconsciously using perceptions rather than accurate information. When people are incapable or reluctant to acquire the information needed to make fair-minded judgment about people or situations, Stereotypes occur. Schoem (1991) argues that stereotypes are used as alternative for substantive human knowledge and understanding, and are expressive of the deep variations of social, ethnic and racial differences arising across societies, “What we do learn along the way is to place heavy reliance on stereotypes, gossip, rumor, and fear to shape our lack of knowledge.” (Schoem, p. 98).

Ewen and Ewen describe stereotyping as a “fixed, commonly held notion or image of a person or group, based on an oversimplification of some observed or imagined trait of behavior or appearance.” (2006, p. 27). Ewen & Ewen add that stereotype reveal that the perceptions of others are often prejudiced and racist ideas because they are lacking in depth and seen from a single dimension and further deprive them from their humanity (Ewen & Ewen, 2006).

In the realm of sociology, many sociologists consider “labeling” as a metaphor that is used to differentiate or categorize a person, a group of people or things (Becker, 1963). When Labeling is used to distinguish one group of people from another, stereotyping of the labeled people occur simultaneously (Becker, 1963). Depicting a group of people through perceptions and inaccurate information using individual or societal views,

religious opinions, or constructed thoughts, can be very harmful and destructive to the labeled individual, group of people (Becker, 1963). Becker (1963) considers that the origin of several labeling is deep-rooted in social beliefs that were formerly reliable to compare between different groups. Social norms and standards are the customary practice of all dogmas, beliefs, and standards that are usually reinforced by the majority group of any locality or society (Becker; Wright, 1984). Also, comparing the comportments and beliefs of a minority group to those of a majority group leads to the labeling of the minority group to occur (Becker, 1963; Wright). Becker further elucidated that these social norms are then imposed upon the minority group, which in turn, develops undesirable behaviors as a reaction.

Stereotype can spread rapidly to reach more people that start believing in the same views without contact relations or exploration (Becker, 1963). The impact of stereotype against a specific group can lead to major concerns. Sowell (2005) argues that the labeled groups that are frequently underrepresented will start to internalizing these stereotypes and may start using these negative stereotypes as obstacles for their inability to achieve their goals and become positive contributors to their community (Sowell, 2005). Reflecting on the impact of the anti- Islam sentiment in the U.S., in a Times Magazine article, Christopher Meyer (2007), reported that a number of young Muslims after being subjected to the continuous negative stereotypes about Islam and Muslims were actually leaving their faith because they did not want to be associated and practicing an “oppressive, violent and anti-Semitism” religion. Other Muslims who are in fear of prejudice and hate crimes against them have avoided recognizing their faith in public circles and even practicing within their communities (Meyer, 2007). These groups may also see their future with despair because

the stereotypes associated lead to negative consequences (Sowell, 2005). Furthermore, per the history, many the stereotyped groups begin to accept and believe in the stereotypes forced upon them such as slavery and discrimination against previous minority groups (Adams, Bell, and Griffin 2007).

Islamophobia: A Particular Case of Racism:

The major interest in prejudice and discrimination targeted towards Muslims in United States and Europe is related to the first use of the term Islamophobia. The Oxford English Dictionary defines Islamophobia as “hatred or fear of Islam, esp. as a political force; hostility or prejudice towards Muslims” (Oxford, 2013). A study confirms that one of the initial documented use of the term was in 1925 by Etienne Dinet, a French painter who embraced the Islamic faith, and Sliman Ben Ibrahim in their book “Acces de delire Islamophobe” about Prophet Mohamed (Cesari, 2010), and their book “L’Orient vu de l’Occident,” dedicated to the critique of some orientalist’s opinions on Islam and Prophet Mohamed (Lopez, 2010). Another use of this term was in 1976 in International Journal of Middle East Studies. In a discussion section, Anawati uses the term Islamophobia without any clear definition (Said, 1985). Other studies emphasize that the notion of Islamophobia appeared centuries ago during the period of the Crusades (Richardson, 2004). The term "Islamophobia" was introduced publically as a notion in a 1997 Runnymede Trust Report when a report was published on pluralism and multiculturalism, the report was titled “Islamophobia: A Challenge for Us All.” (Allen, 2010). Domestically, Islamophobia was used in American mass media when Time Magazine entitled a cover story asking “Is

America Islamophobic? (Esposito, 2014). Though the term “Islamophobia” has increasingly become common and accepted, there is little agreement among scholars in regards to its exact meaning. The 1997 Runnymede Trust report provides various and sometimes inconsistent views (Bleich, 2011). The report defines Islamophobia as “a useful shorthand way of referring to dread or hatred of Islam and, therefore, to fear or dislike of all or most Muslims” (Runnymede Trust, 1997, p. 1). It then confounds that meaning by drawing a difference between “legitimate criticism and disagreement” with Islamic principles or with the rules and practices of Muslim countries as compared with factual Islamophobia, defined as “unfounded prejudice and hostility” (p. 4). The report uses the term “Islamophobia” not only to analyze and describe antagonistic sentiments but also extends it to “the practical consequences of such hostility in unfair discrimination against Muslim individuals and communities, and to the exclusion of Muslims from mainstream political and social affairs” (p. 4). Regardless the limitations, the Runnymede Trust report gives a comparatively precise and well-built meaning of the term (Bleich, 2011). Some writers use the term “Islamophobia” without clearly defining it (Bunzl, 2007; Cole, 2009; Halliday, 1999; Kaplan, 2006; MacMaster, 2003; Poynting & Mason, 2007). Others deploy descriptions that are either imprecise, narrow, or broad. For example, Gottschalk and Greenberg (2008, p. 5), defines it as “a social anxiety toward Islam and Muslim cultures.” Geisser states it a “rejection of the religious referent . . . the Muslim religion as an irreducible identity marker between ‘Us’ and ‘Them’” (2003, p. 10). For Werbner it is “a form of differentialist racism” (2005, p. 8), Lee et al. define the term “Islamophobia” as “fear of Muslims and the Islamic faith.” (2009, p. 93). Likewise, Abbas says that Islamophobia is “the fear or dread of Islam or Muslims.” (2004, p. 28). Zúquete defines

Islamophobia as “a widespread mindset and fear-laden discourse in which people make blanket judgments of Islam as the enemy, as the ‘other’, as a dangerous and unchanged, monolithic bloc that is the natural subject of well-deserved hostility from Westerners.” (2008, p. 323). Semati (2010, p. 1) defines it as “a single, unified and negative conception of an essentialized Islam, which is then deemed incompatible with Euro-Americaness.” (2010, p. 1).

Contemporary study has attempted to describe prejudice against Muslims as different from other types of racial and religious prejudice (Altareb, 1998; Ecchebarria-Echabe & Fernandez-Guede, 2007; Pratto, Sidanius, Stallworth, & Malley, 1994). In 2013, Council on American Islamic Relations released a study entitled “Legislating Fear, Islamophobia and its impact on the United States” the fundamental finding is that, the Islamophobia is an industry and a network formed of at least 37 groups whose primary determination is to promote hostility, prejudice and animosity against Islam and Muslims. An additional 32 groups whose primary motive is to support and endorse themes related to Islamophobia (CAIR, 2013). Among the 37 identify by CAIR as inner core, eleven are local. Five of the local groups are founded in Florida: Americans against Hate, Citizens for National Security, Counter Terrorism Operations Center, Florida Family Association and The United West. ACT! For America is headquartered in Florida as well. The impact of these inner core groups varies from small, such as the Sheepshead Bay, New York’s Bay People, to major, such as ACT! For America, the Center for Security Policy, Jihad Watch, Atlas Shrugs and the Investigative Project on Terrorism (CAIR, 2013). As far as the 32 Outer Core, they were identified by the Center for America Progress Action Fund in Fear, Inc. and are counted because they donate funds to white supremacist or

anti-Semitic groups such as, American Center for Law and Justice, American Family Association, American Islamic Leadership Coalition, Anchorage Foundation/William Rosenwald Family Fund, Family Security Matters (CAIR, 2013). The Islamophobia network had access to at least \$119,662,719 as profits between 2008 and 2011. This revenue is spent wisely on programs to nurture the fear of Islam in the American public (CAIR, 2013). Additionally, the tone training provided to law enforcement and military personnel on Islam had increased significantly in 2011. The content of these training is based on the trainer's biased thought on Islam and the material is inaccurate and not reliable to the Islamic belief (CAIR, 2013).

Allen in his definition to the Islamophobia, recognizes three factors that explains the Islamophobia-as-process. First, stereotypification: the process of building an "evaluative hierarchy" by labeling and shaping in-group and out-group differences. This process inserts and validates "meaning and knowledge about certain groups and individuals" into the "mainstream of societal thought and understanding" (pp. 140–144). Second, representation: the process of expressing meaning and knowledge using visual symbols. Third, semiology: the procedure that associate the representation with visual triggers and identifiers. Through symbols and visual identifiers, meaning and knowledge of a specific group turn to be part of the general public norms and standards. Allen argues that Islamophobia is:

"an ideology, similar in theory, function and purpose to racism and other similar phenomena, that sustains and perpetuates negatively evaluated meaning about Muslims and Islam in the contemporary setting in similar ways to that which it has historically, although not necessarily as a continuum, subsequently pertaining, influencing and impacting upon social action, interaction, response and so on, shaping and determining understanding,

perceptions and attitudes in the social consensus – the shared languages and conceptual maps – that inform and construct thinking about Muslims and Islam as Other’ (2002, p. 190).

Stolz (2005) states that “Islamophobia is a rejection of Islam, Muslim groups and Muslim individuals on the basis of prejudice and stereotypes. It may have emotional, cognitive, evaluative as well as action-oriented elements (e.g., discrimination, violence).” (p. 548).

Tracing back the different definitions, Lee et al (2009) and Abbas (2004), described that Islamophobia is utterly rooted in the fear, expressed towards Islam or Muslims. However, Zúquete (2008) and Semati (2010), argue that Islamophobia includes either more than fear or possibly eliminates the fear and is expressed exclusively towards Islam and not Muslims. For Stolz, it is the refutation of either Islam or Muslims that spreads further than believed procedures to comprise actual actions (2005). As much as these definitions lack accuracy or consistency, they all converge in the concept that Islamophobia is a social evil. Nevertheless, well known British authors and journalists Polly Toynbee and Rod Liddle give another interpretation to the term Islamophobia, Toynbee writes “I am an Islamophobe, and proud of it,” while Liddle presented a talk titled “Islamophobia? Count me in” (cited in Osborne & Jones, 2008, p. 14). These two writers stress their doubt and suspicion of Islam as a faith rather than antagonism toward Muslims as a group. Kenan Malik suggests that there is slight evidence that the increase of Islamophobia is manipulated by Muslim leaders to reinforce their control and power and for politicians to show sympathy and compassion towards Muslims as well as persisting the war in Iraq or the war on terror strategies that stimulate deep concern, exasperation and have shown

negative impacts on Muslims (2005). This disagreement around the meaning of Islamophobia is common. Apparently deep-rooted terms like democracy or ideology are matters of academic disagreement as well (Gerring, 2001, Chapter 4; Goertz, 2006, Chapter 4). Many writers have disapproved the use of the term Islamophobia because it has been used in broadly different occurrences (Cesari, 2006, pp. 5-6; Zúquete, 2008, p. 323), because it involves fear of Islam as a faith while the real problem is undesirable stereotypes towards Muslims (Halliday, 1999, p. 898) and because it causes stigmatizing all criticisms of Islam (Halliday, 1999, p. 899; Zúquete, 2008, p. 324). John Bowen (2005), denotes that “because the term has come to be used in this overly broad way and is highly polemical, using it as an analytical term is a bit dicey.” (p. 524). As an alternative, it would be desirable to use more directed and precise categories, for example anti-Islamic (Zúquete, 2008, p. 324), anti-Muslimism (Halliday, 1999, p. 898), or anti-Muslim prejudice (M. Malik, 2009) because Islamophobia has origins in public, political, and academic speech and its extremely hard to retrieve it. Some academics assume that Islamophobia is not a distinct aspect of religious bigotry but rather has an aspect of ethnic and cultural prejudice (Modood, 1997; Purkiss, 2003; Larsson 2005). However, culture and religion are often confused in dialogs of anti-Muslim bias and prejudice (Jhonson, 2012). Very limited academic studies are accessible on religious discrimination (Malik, 2001), creating serious obstacle to measure its nature, occurrence and detect the factors behind the phenomenon. The imprecise distinction between prejudice and religious discrimination is still considerable (e.g. Allen& Nielsen, 2002). Empirical studies have not elucidated whether Islamophobia is a religious or an ethnic antagonism towards Islam (Jonhson, 2012). While exploring the practices that motivate religious discrimination, it is essential to examine the

origin of the discriminatory information related to the out-group. Altareb (1998) in his study, examined attitudes of the Non-Muslims toward Middle Eastern Muslims in the United States. He has found that, the participants hold little consciousness level on Muslims and Islam. The information for this study was mainly gathered from film and media sources.

The depiction of Muslims in the media has also garnered some attention. Jacobs (1999) emphasizes that the marketing campaigns and publicity of today's products, music, food and services help nurture the stereotypical notions and generalization of groups of people. Mamdani (2000), analyzing newspaper headlines from between 1956 and 1997, find that the U.S. media depicted Muslims and Arabs more negatively than Western Europeans and Israelis do. Historical and contemporary depictions of Muslims in both the entertainment and news media have emphasized their hostile intentions (Karim 2003; Said 1997; Shaheen 2009). Sheikh, Price, and Oshagan (1995) find that news stories about Muslims often involve crises, war, and conflict. Lean, (2013) argues that the media is very powerful in controlling and influencing the population, "news media are corporate ventures, and to retain their viewership, they want to sensationalize live, breaking events. You will not hear a TV anchor tell you that we will come back when we have more concrete details. They continue to narrate and try to sensationalize to retain the viewership" (Lean, 2013). For instance, Terry Jones, the pastor of a small Evangelical Christian church consisting of 12 church members, gained American media attention in 2010, when he planned to burn Qurans on the anniversary of 9/11. Jones was given 15 minutes to speak to the media, an ample amount of time for a small congregation in national media.

Following the tragic event of September 11, Allen and Nielsen (2002) state that although the majority of politicians overtly offered appeasement and solidarity with Muslim communities, some preferred to remain silent, and a few others made negative statements. Negative portrayals of Muslims from discriminatory, bigoted and sensationalist were equally presented in the mass media. Negative descriptions of Muslims continuously seen in the media and used by political leaders may serve to shape or provide evidence for the current anti-Islam sentiment (Allen and Nielsen, 2002). In the last few years, dozens of movies portray Muslims as the main villain and often terrorists (Body of Lies, 2008; Iron Man, 2008, Traitor, 2008; Syriana, 2005) and in television shows (24, 2001 – 2009; Bones, 2005 – 2008; Numbers 2007 – 2009). This portrayal of Muslim in the media is likely to fan stereotypes against Muslims and further feed Islamophobia.

Mamdani (2002) emphasizes on another perspective to understand Islamophobia, the political and social environment right after the tragic attack of 9/11. He critiques not only the mainstream media but also the United States government's political, military, economic, and/or socio-cultural agendas towards Muslims and/or Arab immigrants. Mamdani (2002) stresses the cultural discourse of politics and religion. Mamdani added that the idea of "Good Muslim" versus "Bad Muslim" is a technique to misleadingly slander the entire Muslim population, explicitly Afghans and Palestinians. "The implication is undisguised: Whether in Afghanistan, Palestine, or Pakistan, Islam must be quarantined and the devil must be exorcized from it by a civil war between good Muslims and bad Muslims" (Mamdani, 2002, p. 776).

Furthermore, Mamdani (2002) analyses how “contemporary, Islamic politics are perceived as a reflection of Islamic civilization when the same association between Western politics and Western civilization is never drawn”. He also challenges the concept of looking at the Islamic culture in the political context. “Political units (states) are territorial; culture is not” (Mamdani, 2002, p. 767). “Main dialog was unable to see terrorists as bad people rather than good, or as criminals, rather than productive citizens” (Mamdani, 2002). He contends that the struggle exists within cultures not between them (Mamdani, 2002).

Theories Explaining Islamophobia:

Today, Islam and Muslims are associated with the negative headlines including terrifying terms such as “fundamentalist,” “militant,” “terrorist,” “radical,” or “extremist” (Esposito, 2011). Current representations of Muslims by social media play a significant role generating a negative and unpleasant picture of Muslims (Johnny & Shariff, 2007; Kincheloe & Steinberg, 2004; Rizvi, 2005; Said, 1997; Steinberg, 2007). Unfortunately, researches confirm that the media have regularly projected a homogenous image of the Islamic faith, constructing it as foreign and threat to the principles of western society (Johnny & Shariff, 2007).

Several theories can be used to explain Islamophobia, the theoretical reading applied to deeply comprehend the impact of the media on the growth of the Islamophobia is the Marxist theory. Marxist theory suggests that all type of production involving the mass media affect the societal environment and the economy is the causation of all social

constructions such as assumptions and beliefs (Fourie, 2001). Furthermore, the global media is influenced by push towards profit. This applies on the leading Western countries where the profit motive dominates where the media is controlled by a small group whose main emphasis is producing capital. Internationally, a small group of capitalist leaders are able to manipulate issues and topics associated with content, publicities and plan settings. Curran *et al.* note, that Stuart Hall and many researchers in the Marxist tradition in Britain studied the issue of media portrayals of violence whether these portrayals could serve “to legitimize the forces of law and order, build consent for the extension of coercive state regulation and de-legitimate outsiders and dissidents”. “They have thus examined the impact of the mass media in situations where mediated communications are powerfully supported by other institutions such as the police, judiciary and schools... The power of the media is thus portrayed as that of renewing, amplifying and extending the existing predispositions that constitute the dominant culture, not in creating them” (Curran *et al.* 1982). This was evident after the tragic attack of 9/11 (Lewis, 2004). Many other studies confirmed that the media is the main factor in nurturing fear, stereotype and prejudice towards Muslims (Allen & Nielsen, 2002; Council on American-Islamic Relations, 2005; Hamdani, 2004, 2005; Johnny & Shariff, 2007; Poynting & Noble, 2004; Sheridan, 2006).

When the media and politicians created hysteria and panic close to campaign time, Pew Research Center finding confirms that the number of people who have positive opinions on Muslims dropped from 41 to 32 between 2005 and 2010. The council on American Islamic Relations reported that the crimes committed against Muslims rose steadily from 118 to 153 between 2007 and 2008, the media is responsible for the growth according to the same source. In a report conducted by (CAIR) in 2002 entitled the "Civil

Rights Report,” indicated a 15 percent increase in incidents of discrimination, harassment and violence against Muslims in 2002, when compared to the statistics from 2001. In 2006, the CAIR reported a total of 2,467 civil rights complaints in United States, an increase with 25 % when compared to the data from 2005 about 1,972 cases. The CAIR chapter in New York State reported more than 300 hate crime cases, an increase from 113 in 2005, constituting a 117.7 percent rise.

Social psychology, explained that the concept of Islamophobia is a result of three conceptual theories: the first theory is “feeling threatened,” it is academically known as integrated threat theory, an intergroup threat is identified when members of one group notice that another group is in a situation to create destruction and harm to them. The concern of a physical damage or a loss or deprivation of possessions is referred to as realistic threat, and the concern about the rationality, integrity and honesty of the in-group’s structure is referred to as symbolic threat (Stephan, Diaz-Loving, & Duran, 2000; Stephan & Stephan, 2000). Realistic and symbolic threats are often associated with minority groups such as Mexicans (Stephan et al., 2000), immigrants (Stephan, Ybarra, Martinez, Schwarzwald, & TurKaspa, 1998), and Blacks (Stephan, Ybarra & Bachman, 1999; Stephan et al., 2002). This threat is translated into reality through political action. For example, politicians such as Newt Gingrich and Rick Santorum use disparaging speech to discuss some the principles of Islamic Shari’ah, that represents the practical duties prescribed on every adherent of the Islamic faith, as a threat in United States (Siddiqi, 2011). Republican Peter King held a five consecutive anti-Muslim congressional hearings (CAIR, 2013). Rep. Michele Bachmann joined Frank Gaffney in initiating an accusatory campaign against Muslims in public service (CAIR, 2013). According to Council on

American Islamic Relations, thirty-seven anti-Islam bills were presented in sixteen states and turned into law in Oklahoma and North Carolina. Between “2011 and 2013”, anti-Islam bills were introduced in 32 states and the U.S. Congress (CAIR, 2013).

The second theory that can be used to explain the presence of “Islamophobia” is categorization theory, which refers to classifying people based on social groups creating an intragroup where similarities are shared and intergroup where differences are rejected (Tajfel & Turner, 1986; Devine, 1995). It is manifested in the concept of “us” versus “them”. After the tragedy of 9/11 a nationalistic solidarity swept American society in the wake of an external danger and threat (Oswald, 2005). President Bush stated clearly in his discourse “Either you are with us, or you are with the terrorists” (Hirsch, 2002).

Self- categorization theory suggests that classifying people based on societal groups leads to an emphasis on increase in the concept of intragroup resemblances and intergroup dissimilarities, in addition to negative and unpleasant attitudes when the ingroup appears as dominant (Tajfel & Turner, 1986; for a review, see Devine, 1995).

The third theory that applies is the social dominance theory. It theory suggests that people with great social power and dominance orientation allow and enforce group unfairness and inequality and validate attitudes that promote hierarchy within the society (Pratto, Sidanius, Stallworth, & Mal- le, 1994). Additionally, these people believe that their racist attitudes have a moral and intellectual basis. Terrorist attacks on the trader center in 2001, are continuously used to legitimize discrimination and bias against Muslims (Oswald, 2005). Based on the three conceptual theories, the anti- Muslim prejudice can be justified by the perception that Muslims represent a threat to the United States, self-

categorization where Muslims are excluded from the American fabric and identified as “them” rather than “us”, and the ideology of social dominance that promotes ethnic inequality and racial classification (Oswald, 2005). However, Kalkan et al. (2009) argue that hostility towards Muslims is not entirely associated and linked to a typical, and one-time disaster and tragedy. The anti-Islam sentiment is in fact an insistent and persistent attitude rather than a reaction to the terrorism attack of 9/11 (Johnson, 2012).

Measuring Islamophobia

The theoretical perspectives on prejudice remain insufficient to understand the phenomenon of “Islamophobia” as a prejudiced attitude that remains in the absence of threat. It is a phenomenon with deeper and more profound roots than a response to violence. Several empirical studies have attempted to measure Islamophobia. The Runnymede Trust, a British research and social policy agency, defined the eight negative categories people hold about Muslims:

1. “Islam is seen as a monolithic bloc, static and unresponsive to change.
2. Islam is seen as separate and “other”. It does not have values in common with other cultures, is not affected by them and does not influence them.
3. Islam is seen as inferior to the West. It is seen as barbaric, irrational, primitive, and sexist.
4. Islam is seen as violent, aggressive, threatening, supportive of terrorism, and engaged in a clash of civilizations.
5. Islam is seen as a political ideology, used for political or military advantage.
6. Criticisms made of 'the West' by Islam are rejected out of hand.

7. Hostility towards Islam is used to justify discriminatory practices towards Muslims and exclusion of Muslims from mainstream society.

8. Anti-Muslim hostility is seen as natural and normal". (Kandel, 2006)

The Runnymede Trust report added that the finding can be listed as follow "Islam is a monolithic entity, static and unresponsive to change". The term monolithic refers to a concept labeled as entitativity by Campbell (1958) to define the perception that group members are united together into an integrated unit (Brewer & Harasty, 1996; Gaertner & Schopler, 1998; Lickel et al., 2000; Yzerbyt, Corneille, & Estrada, 2001). Entitativity explains the perception that Muslims living in United States are isolated and secluded, interdependent and inter-reliant, and share mutual social standards and objectives. Entitativity and intergroup relations explain the collective blame placed on all Muslims post 9/11. The belief that the Muslims are monolithic group is related to promoting stereotypes and prejudice (Bastian & Haslam, 2006), considering stereotypes to be reliable and accurate (Bastian & Haslam, 2007), promoting validation of social and racial inequalities (Verkuyten, 2003), emphasizing groups differences (Yzerbyt & Buidin, 1998), and natural ascriptions for members' conduct of their religious belief (Yzerbyt, Rogier, & Fiske, 1998). In a study that includes different faith traditions: Christianity, Islam, Hinduism, Judaism, and Atheism, Muslims were rated the highest on perception as being monolithic entity (Toosi & Ambady). Entitativity clarified the collective responsibility against Muslims post 9/11. Newheiser, Tausch, Dovidio and Jewstone (2009) added that the anti-Muslim prejudice is justified by the level of entitativity ascribed to Muslims. The second attribute assigned to Muslims is that, they are static and unresponsive. Two theories can be used to explain this perception: First, Entity theory

that suggests that positive and negative stereotypes can also occur towards new groups even if its members had no exposure or contact with other groups (Levy et al., 1998). In addition, entity theory assumes that a group is internally alike. Second, Implicit theory, it also considers that the comportments of particular group members affect the whole group (Levy et. al, 1998; Levy & Dweck, 1999). The group's characteristics according to the entity and implicit theories align with the notion of Islam as monolithic and Muslims as similar and homogenous group, allowing the perception that the actions of a few extremist members are representative of the whole group.

In 2005, Gibbon provided a significant analysis of a survey conducted in 2003 on religion and diversity. The survey was a response to the question "Please tell me if you think each of these words applies to the Muslim Religion" 'back- ward, closed-minded, fanatical, violent, and strange". Then "tolerant, appealing, peace- loving". Almost half of the participants believe that the word fanatical relates to Islam and 40 percent think the word violent does. These statistics are similar to the 44 percent of Americans in another survey conducted around the same time who agreed that "Islam is more likely than other religions to encourage violence among its followers" (Pew Research Center2003). In another study conducted by Gibbon (2003), Christian participants were asked if they agree or disagree with the following statement: "Christianity is the best way to understand God." Those who agreed were asked, "Is Christianity the best way for you, or is it the best way for everybody?" The vast majority of Christian participants think that Christianity is the greatest way to comprehend the concept of God. According to his study Gibbon found that Islamophobia is a result of the religious particularism and exclusivity. Based on another study conducted by Gibbon (2003), participants were asked

the following questions: “How much personal contact have you had with Muslims?” and “Have your contacts with Muslims been mostly pleasant, mixed, or mostly unpleasant?” As a result, Gibbon confirmed that Islamophobia is highly connected to absence of contact with Muslims. To measure fear of another terrorist attack, Gibbon (2003) asked the participants this question: “How worried are you about the threat of another terrorist attack—extremely worried, very worried, somewhat worried, not very worried, or not at all worried?” The study reveals that the fear of a possible threat is significantly related to maintaining the anti- Islam sentiment.

Another study conducted by Kevin Dunn in 2005 in Australia on the causes of Islamophobia supported the findings of the previous analysis. The study found that the majority of the participants (67 percent) specified that they had ‘never’ (30 percent) or ‘rarely’ (37 percent) had any interactions and communication with Muslim people. Twenty-three percent listed that they interacted and dealt occasionally with Muslims, while 10 percent specified that they did so ‘a lot’ (8 percent) or ‘constantly’ (2 percent).

Addressing Islamophobia

Tracing all the theoretical and empirical studies listed above, fear and ignorance are the main factors behind the growth of Islamophobia. Fear plays an important role in producing bias and prejudice, ignorance further fans it (Stephan & Stephan, 1999). Stephan & Stephan added “if the fear is the father of prejudice, ignorance is the grandfather” (Stephan & Stephan, 1999). Counteracting Islamophobia requires counteracting and modifying the feelings of threat and educate people about Islam. The

threat's feeling is cognitive and depends on the evidence that ignorance leads to bias (Stephan & Stephan, 1999). If the goal of an anti-Islamophobia approach is to counter prejudiced behaviors towards Muslims, the only way possible is to help and encourage people to become incremental theorists by teaching them to see human nature as flexible and changeable rather than fixed. Furthermore, understanding that Islam and Muslims are heterogeneous and very diverse rather than a homogeneous and similar challenging the generalization that Muslim individuals are monolithic. Additionally, Muslims are dynamic and active rather than immovable, they are not fixed individuals with static qualities, and they willingly and enthusiastically adapt to new situations and embrace changes (Johnson, 2012). In this regard, a rich exploration acknowledged the effectiveness of incremental implicit theory interventions, the belief that intelligence is a malleable quality that can increase and rise through efforts and determinations (Hong et al., 2004; Blackwell, Trzesniewski, & Dweck, 2007; Yeager, Trzesniewski, Tirri, Nokelainen, & Dweck, 2011). Additionally, holding an incremental implicit theory of moral character may reduce stereotype, the homogeneousness perceptions on outgroup, exposure to the generalization based on inaccurate information, and discriminating behavior towards others (Chiu & Hong, 1999; Chow, 1996; Hong & Yeung, 1997; Levy, 2001). Furthermore, according to Dunn, interaction and communication or direct experience, is a fundamental element in increasing pleasant and positive perceptions and attitudes toward Muslims and decreasing negative ones (Dunn, 2005). From the time when Allport first expressed his contact theory, several studies have confirmed the importance of contact in reducing prejudice. Pettigrew and Troup (2006) further suggest that interaction is useful in reducing prejudice and hatred because familiarity nurtures

comfort and liking. "Direct experience consists of integrated opportunities for active arrangement in a learning setting to gain a clear understanding" (Ewell, 1997). Positive interactions and contact experiences have repeatedly demonstrated a significant decrease in self-reported prejudice towards many groups including: Black neighbors, the disabled and Muslims (Works, 1961; Caspi, 1984; Vonofako, Hewstone, & Voci, 2007; Yucker & Hurley, 1987).

Various procedures have been offered to elucidate how contact relations decreases prejudice. In this regard "four processes of change" have been offered: learning about the out-group, changing behavior, producing emotional relations, and In-group reevaluation (Pettigrew, 1998). Pettigrew and Tropp (2008) reinforce this view by specifically focusing on the interceding mechanisms in contact, they add that if contact contexts reduce negative impacts and enhance positive ones are most likely able to help reduce prejudice. Contact contexts are expected to be efficient in improving intergroup relations by decreasing negative effects such as anxiety or threat and promoting positive attitudes (Pettigrew and Tropp, 2008). In acquiring direct experience, significant studies bring into line four different techniques.

The four technique focus on the importance of education in countering Islamophobia and anti-Muslim sentiment. The first technique is known as multicultural education curricula, it is very effective in reducing prejudice, and it consists of presenting history from the minority group perspectives (Banks, 1988, 1997; NCSS Task Force, 1992). However, some studies indicate that this initiative may not have positive effects (Banks & McGee-Banks, 1995; McGregor, 1993; Stephan & Stephan, 1984). Second,

cultural diversity training, it is usually given in organizational locations to teach employees and help them understand their behavioral attitudes (Ellis & Sonnefield, 1994; Hollister, Day, & Jesatis, 1993). It increases the familiarity and knowledge of others and help reduce prejudice (Tan, Morris, & Romeo, 1996). This technique is also known as “Strategies of collective action” according to Runnymede Trust. The report advised legal and policy changes to recognize Muslims ‘identity. These changes incorporate regulations on providing the same religious opportunities as other faith tradition and by respecting the cultural and religious Islamic standards and norms. Runnymede Trust added that Islamophobia is the result of two main elements, prejudice and power formulating as follow “prejudice + power = discrimination”.

Islamophobia is the responsibility and accountability of those with control and power, rather than only Muslim organizations and leaders’ responsibility. A third method in battling prejudice, is intergroup dialogue programs that are usually conducted in community locations, colleges and universities (Gurin, Lopez, & Nagda, 1998; Schoem, Frankel, Zuniga & Lewis, 1993). The participants in the dialogue discuss different topics related to the intergroup challenges. Such discussion often reduces discrimination and bias (Gurin, Lopez, & Nagda, 1998; Schoem, Frankel, Zuniga & Lewis, 1993). Fourth, Interfaith dialogue, dialogues are crucial today to understand other religions and cultures (Esposito, 2013). Runnymede Trust similarly noted the significance of the inter-faith movement and joint actions in achieving incredible outcomes and goals, such as adapting common depictions to public forms, bodies, and to the press in the challenging times of fear and bigotry. Improving Muslim/non- Muslim relations through the faith leaders is viewed as a group’s participation and not individual initiative. Muslims’ contribution in

interreligious movement and dialogue will be surely perceived as a whole Muslim categorization (RT, 2010).

Esposito and Tariq Ramadan urge all Muslim leaders and Islamic institutions to adopt and adapt the four techniques listed above, Muslims' leaders must speak out publically at assemblies, workshops, and conferences, engage politically and speak to officials and governmental agencies as well as joining hands with various civic and religious organizations and participate in media functions (2014). Active participation and dialogue enable Muslims to clear misconception and answer the misunderstandings people hold about Islam and Muslims. It is an opportunity to nurture relationships and increase the knowledge of other people's faith, culture and concerns. It also helps build trust, address stereotypes and strengthen societal interconnection between people from different backgrounds. Sharing stories, asking questions, addressing and challenging the socially constructed views are the steps to grasp a sound and fair judgment.

Rahim (2009) argues that Wilber's AQAL model (2000) can further be a suitable model to challenge Islamophobia. He added that, in his book, "*A Brief History of Everything*" Wilber (2000) argues that, AQAL model is a practical method where science and religion can be incorporated and used as complementary instructional tools. In this context, Wilber's AQAL model can effectively help build inclusive communities through the process of education, awareness, acceptance and collaboration between Muslims and non-Muslims (Rahim, 2009). The Islamic faith encourages Muslims to create an equilibrium between science and faith in all aspects of their lives, as emphasized by Wilber "integrated force" (Rahim, 2009). Using AQAL model as a way to balance

science and spirituality between different groups, it could help find tolerance, respect, sympathy and acceptance of our differences.

More deeply, an examination of viewpoints on human development and change is clearly explained by the four quadrants of AQAL approach. It offers a powerful way to draw the different beliefs about how to allow change in individuals' life.

Figure 1. AQAL Model

The Upper-Left (UL) quadrant: explores the inner sphere of Muslim individuals who might act in response to Islamophobia. Their values and their emotions have an impact on how they see specific situation and how they frame their own potential reactions. I see the following elements important in this context. Possible steps in this quadrant can include:

- 1- Islamophobia awareness: awareness on how Islamophobia is affecting the Muslim community and society at large.
- 2- Emotions: emotions can empower and motivate Muslims to recognize and face the emotional work involved in finding creative ways to challenge prejudice.
- 3- Acting meaningfully in response to Islamophobia by educating people and increasing positive contact.
- 4- Capability to conceptualize and developing a vision of creative possibilities

Upper-Right Quadrant (UR): This quadrant emphasizes on the functioning of the brain and the differences in behavior. Other measurable issues that are related to each Muslim individual's work on Islamophobia that can be added in this quadrant. Possible steps in this quadrant can include:

- 1- Knowledge on Islamophobia phenomenon: effective outcome depends on having access to suitable understanding of the significance of the Islamophobia.

- 2- Technical and Interpersonal skills: measurable and technical ability are needed to clear the misconception about Islam.

Lower-Left Quadrant: This quadrant emphasizes on the Collective Subjective Factors. How discussions on Islamophobia are engaged in the community and society as well as the ability of this groups to create and support inventive and unique action. Below are some elements:

- 1- The importance of groups in change: According to this quadrant, Muslims and Non-Muslims in their collaborative efforts could focus on the similarities among them and the common good. Recognizing the similarities help establish a mutual interest and develop strong relationships able to change individual behavior to effective collective action.
- 2- Mental Model: mindsets are based on assumptions that are seen as facts, consequently, no additional justification is needed. These assumptions are usually shared by society's efficient leaders too (Scheer, 2007). In this case, it is evidently crucial for some Muslim experts to develop the necessary competence to help people recognize their own assumptions about Islam and Muslims and test alternatives to gain better understanding.
- 3- Organizational Culture: An organizational culture with a fixed belief based on its own assumptions, doesn't respond productively to the challenges of Islamophobia. However, religious or civic organizations able to see the challenges of Islamophobia can respond usefully and choose to be active and productive regarding Islamophobia challenges.

Lower-Right Quadrant: includes the social dimension, in other words it constitutes the external patterns and behaviors of the group. Possible steps in this quadrant can include:

- 1- Technological possibilities: social media is an effective way to spread the information quickly.
- 2- Systems Delays: many decisions that helps reducing Islamophobia may go on hold for years. For instance, cases related to discriminations against Muslims.
- 3- Muslims political engagement: mobilize Muslims to the political life is important to challenge some politicians who are beyond the growth of the Islamophobia. Furthermore, Muslims involvement should occur in all aspects of the American society,
- 4- Encouraging organizational diversity: Diverse organizations help broaden the awareness of others.

Below is a summary table on how the four quadrants provide a map that serves as a practical method to clear the misconceptions about Islam and Muslims and allow accurate information to flourish.

Figure 2. AQAL Structure for Change

At this critical time, Muslims must transcend their mindset and believe in their ability to change and challenge prejudice. According to Korten, individuals and minority groups can achieve their full potential by exercising an influential power that can affect the social change (2006). Gladwell (2002) uses great examples of ordinary people often inadvertently, provide unpredicted and surprising changes in societies.

Appreciative Inquiry (AI) is another useful model to challenge Islamophobia. Cooperrider and Whitney (2005) defined Appreciative Inquiry (AI) as obliging quest for the best in people, their organizations, and the relevant environment. Appreciative Inquiry consists of methodical approach of what makes a system alive and prosperous economically, ecologically, and in human relations by using the practice of asking questions that reinforce a system's ability to increase positive potential (Cooperrider & Whitney, 2005). "It activates inquiry by shaping an unconditional positive question' often involving hundreds or sometimes thousands of people" (Cooperrider & Whitney, 2005).

The purpose of AI is to identify the "positive core" of an organization to bring about true change within the organization and for developing systems in synergistic alignment within their environment and people (Cooperrider & Whitney, 2005, p. 3). Barrett (1995) argues that change management theories often neglect the importance of symbols and conversations as core change resources, "symbols and conversations, emerging from all our analytic modes, are among the world's paramount resources." (p.49). AI embraces inclusive approach that builds awareness and consciousness of all the cultures and societies within organizations. Applying AI as a method requires

identifying and developing four key stages: Discovery, Dream, Design, and Destiny.

Cooperrider & Whitney (2005) illustrate the meaning and usage of the four key stages (4-D Framework) of AI in the following:

Discovery—mobilizing a whole system inquiry into the positive change core;

Dream—creating a clear results-oriented vision in relation to discovered potential and in relation to questions of higher purpose, i.e., “What is the world calling us

to become?” **Design**—creating possibility propositions of the ideal organization, an organization design which people feel is capable of magnifying or eclipsing the positive core and realizing the articulated new dream; and

Destiny—strengthening the affirmative capability of the whole system enabling it to build hope and momentum around a deep purpose and creating processes for learning, adjustment, and improvisation like a jazz group over time (p. 5-6).

Given the rise of Islamophobia, American Muslims missed many opportunities to promote the values and principles of Islam, as well as its association and contribution to the American history. American Muslims seem to keep away from emerging in the larger society and building relationships beyond their racial and ethnic spectrum. For example, the members of the Nation of Islam, a longstanding African American Muslims group, similarly chose to live exclusively within their own communities.

Today, American Muslims must work hard and strive to protect their civil rights and ensure that their civil liberties are protected as well. American Muslims are struggling to be accepted and included within the American fabric, while upholding their religious distinctiveness as Muslims, however they are frequently repulsed and

misconstrued (Jamal, 2009). Furthermore, the western culture is misleadingly observed as fundamentally anti-Islamic by many Muslims and Non-Muslims and few efforts are dedicated to clear this misconception (Rahim, 2009). Meanwhile the U.S. was created based on the concept of the separation of church and State, and for that if any religious group regardless its core belief gets engaged in the political ground, this action is perceived with distrust and suspicion (Rahim, 2009).

Therefore, American Muslims particularly faith leaders known as “Imams” are responsible for raising global consciousness and awareness about the Islamic beliefs and principles that are based on the values of acceptance, tolerance, peace and respect for other religious beliefs. Imams are extremely needed in every community to challenge Islamophobic attacks and provide correct information on Islam by building relations based on mutual respect and understanding. The responsibility of Muslim clerics in our time is enormous, given the current opportunities available for lasting and positive social change. It is therefore imperative that visionary Imams and Muslim clerics transcend the cultural boundary, and work with Muslims and Non-Muslims to establish justice and mutual understanding which requires a change in approaches.

The Vital Role of Faith Institutions and Faith Leaders

Research has been able to determine the vital role that faith institutions and faith leaders play in the lives of individuals and communities. Sheehan (1989) states that faith institutions uphold the honor and dignity of the individual, connect the individual to the group or community, and offer direct services. Rowles (1986) added that congregants had

"embarrassingly high levels of faith" in their faith leader". Other authors have reported that the faith leader is often the first to be called when a family is having difficulties (Gulledge, 1992). Hunter in 1998, states that church "faith" leader should "serve". He defined leadership in this contest as the ability to influence others, an ability that can be learned and attained, and modeled to others. Whittingham (2007) added that individuals decide willingly to shadow those faith leaders, in a time where decisions are respected. Today, faith community expects more from church, faith institution, and its leaders than institutional convention and administrative competence (Whittingham, 2007).

In a study released in January 2012, Dr. Ihsan Bagby states that about 2,106 mosques were recognized in the United States representing 74% increase over 1,209 mosques were in 2000, and 962 in 1994 (Bagby, 2011). According to the same source the increase in number of Mosques is due to the growth in number of Muslim refugees and new immigrants. Establishment of new mosques is needed to help the refugees and new immigrants feel comfortable in preserving their cultural environment and using their home language (Bagby, 2011). Hirschman added that, for immigrants who are distant from their native land and from many relatives, religious organizations help create a refuge and a sense of belonging and contribution in the face of loss and the pressures of change (Hirschman, 2004). Because religious organizations offer an inclusive system of belief, and a community where immigrants gather and develop networks of mutual care and support with co-ethnics, they offer a psychological balance helping decrease the sufferings of initial settlement and the discrimination that many immigrants encounter (Ebaugh and Chafetz, 2000). "Churches and temples offer opportunities for fellowship and friendship, often in a familiar cultural environment, and are a source of solace and

shelter from the stresses, setbacks, and difficulties of coming to terms with life in a new country “(Portes and Rumbant, 2006:301, 329). Religious organizations can also ease the rising mobility of the second generation (Foley and Hoge, 2007). They protect young individuals from “immoral” inspirations of American culture, reinforced their integration into the ethnic group and strengthened parental ambitions for educational success (Min Zhou and Bankston, 1998). According to Diana Eck, religious institutions provide many immigrants with “one of their first training grounds in participatory democracy” as they practice being involved in boards of directors, membership, elections, and accountability (Eck, 2001). Religious communities, she continues, are “precisely the places where new immigrants gain their feet and practice the arts of internal democracy. Long before they stand for election to the school board, they will stand for election in the governing body of the Hindu temple. Long before they enter the fray of local and state politics, they argue fiercely about their internal Sikh, Hindu, and Muslim politics” (Eck, 2001:336). In this regard, Foley and Hoge argue that religious leaders including Imams’ appeals to ethnic identity to stimulate action on behalf of the larger ethnic community – on behalf of homeland reasons or in defense of the Muslim immigrant civil rights in the US – “paradoxically... integrate immigrants more deeply into American civic and political culture even as they preserve and reinforce their sense of difference” (2007).

Moreover, the European Monitoring Center on Racism and Xenophobia, EUMC (2006) states that unlike Europe, where Muslims are often trapped in poor neighborhoods and low-paying jobs and high ranks of unemployment, Muslims in the United States have achieved better and have done rather well. They are among the high socioeconomic status

(EUMC, 2006), they graduate from college at a greater rate than the national average, with a third making a yearly household income of at least \$50,000 (Kosmin and Keysar, 2006). Mosque-goers in United States appear to do even better (Kosmin and Keysar, 2006). According to statistics, the average mosque-goer in the United States is a married man with children who has a bachelor's degree or higher and earns about \$74,000 a year (Portes and Rumbaut, 2006).

According to Cesari, in United States, the protection of religious minorities by law and the philosophy that religious freedom is a “cornerstone of individual dignity” has functioned in Muslims’ favor (Cesari, 2004). “They are able to use America's long history of judgments supporting the free expression of religion to their advantage, even when Islamic beliefs themselves are ridiculed or disparaged” (Cesari, 2004). Pluralism, Wuthnow maintains, works great in the United States in protecting and defending the civil rights of people of non-Western religions (Wuthnow, 2005). Actually, Wuthnow argues that, today, the new immigrant religions, including Islam, are having and enjoying the same liberties to organize themselves and to protect and support the beliefs and religious practices of their members the same way did the religions of former immigrants (Wuthnow, 2005).

Tracing back the role of the Religious institutions in United States for immigrants and the second generation as a bridge to integration and inclusion in the new society, the mosque in the midst of the Islamophobia and the growing number of hate crime against Muslims and the attacks on Mosques (CAIR, 2015), is extremely vital to facilitate adaptation process, strengthening Muslim individuals and increasing awareness about the Islamic faith. This institution head by the Imam is very significant religiously, socially,

and politically for Muslims. It is a place where Muslims can come together as congregation to pray, learn and educate themselves about their faith, their community, society and their country. The Imam is initially expected to have a pastoral role, and then lead the community at a political and social level. He is expected, in the wake of the massive anti- Islam sentiment, to reach out, build multi-faith and multicultural relations, answer many of the misunderstandings of what people might have of Islam and Muslims, He is expected to expand the knowledge of other people's faith and concerns, address stereotypes and promote community cohesion between groups of people from diverse backgrounds through dialogue and social action programs.

The Current Study

I conducted two-phase study to gain a clarity about Islamophobia and the role of the Muslim community in helping dispel prejudice. The first study aims to evaluate the effectiveness of the educational and outreach programs provided at Islamic Center of San Diego. The second study examines the role of the faith leaders, or "Imams," in raising global awareness and providing accurate information about Islam by building relations based on mutual respect and understanding.

CHAPTER 3

Methodology

Study 1: The Islamic Center of San Diego

As presented above, in this challenging time for American Muslims, the mosque has an important role as an Islamic institution to increase awareness about the Islamic faith and strengthening Muslim individuals. The Mosque is very significant religiously, socially, and politically for Muslims. It could be modest and simple edifice or an architectural masterwork, such as the blue Mosque in Turkey or the Great Mosque of Córdoba in Spain. In United States the number of Mosques and Mosque members continue to increase meaningfully (Bagby, 2011). Establishment of new mosques is needed to help the refugees and new immigrants feel comfortable preserving their cultural environment and using their home language. Most of these groups are Somalis, Iraqis, West Africans and Bosnians (Bagby, 2011). Seventy to eighty percent of the Muslim Leaders participants in Bagby's study express the importance of a political and social involvement of the Muslims in the American society (Bagby, 2011).

The Islamic Center of San Diego is one of the Mosques counted in Bagby's study. It was established in 1988 to accommodate the need of the Muslim community in San Diego. The Islamic Center partners with many religious and civic organizations. These organizations include:

- Faith Leaders for Peace, it's a coalition of Leaders from the Christian, Muslim, Jewish, and other faiths against the war on Iraq.

- Interfaith Center for Worker Justice of San Diego County, ICWJ which is a representation of clergy, churches, synagogues, mosques, it's a faith and justice organizations in San Diego to support the workers in their struggle.
- Interfaith Worker Justice, based in Chicago, IL.
- Girls Scouts of San Diego.
- Advisory Board of the San Diego Police Department representing the Muslims community.
- Advisory Board of District Attorney.

The center is also part of the west coast Muslim-Catholic dialogue, Muslims and Catholics gathered annually to promoting understanding between the two religions tradition and to increasing acceptance and respect; Inter-Religious council; it's a coalition of Buddhists, Mormons, Catholics, Muslims and other faith working together to promote respect among different religions. Furthermore, the center is engaged in interfaith dialogue with different faith leaders to build positive and constructive relations, mutual respect and the culture of peace and understanding among different ethnic and religious groups in our nation and to promote mutual understanding and raising global consciousness and awareness about the Islamic beliefs and principles that are based on the values of acceptance, tolerance, peace and respect for other religious beliefs, such as Muslims/Jews; Muslims/Catholics; Muslims/ Methodists and Muslims/ Quakers.

The Leaders of the center are occasionally invited to conduct a talk and presentation about the Islamic Faith in schools, colleges, churches, synagogues, hospitals, nursing home, military institutions. The Islamic Center has joined hands with religious, civic and political organizations in many sectors of American Life, working all together for the betterment of our society. Holding open house is one of the services the center offers to clear the misconception about Islam, increase awareness. In addition to the outreach program listed above. The center is committed to fulfilling and accomplishing the religious and spiritual needs of the Muslim community including the youth. It encourages Muslim youth to build a strong Muslim identity while acknowledging the need to adapting, adjusting, and contributing to the American life. Encouraging Muslim youth to a smooth and pleasant integration rather than assimilation to increase their visibility. Integrating succeeding generations of Muslim youth in the United States is challenging but attainable and realizable if Islamic institutions help Muslim youth to learn and grow in their faith (Alba & Foner, 2008). Colleen Ward, James Liu, Tagaloa Peggy Fairbairn-Dunlop & April K Henderson in their study in 2010 on Muslim youth in New Zealands state that 85% of Muslim youth are easily integrated, defining themselves as Muslim New Zealanders. Another study proposes that members of a particular stereotyped ethnic or social group, they demonstrate behavioral changes equivalent to a motivational phase to achieve high standards and increase their performance if that stereotype is self-relevant (Levy, 1996). Furthermore, various studies have shown that many minorities can overcome their difficulties and disadvantages by changing the constructed social views and perceptions of their group (Reischer, 2008).

At this challenging time for American Muslims, the Islamic Center of San Diego is currently experiencing an increasing number in visits by non-Muslims. Statistical data from the center's administration confirms that between November 1st and November 20th of 2014 one hundred and ten people visited the center. The visitors are eager to learn about the Islamic belief and Islamic practices. A study is conducted in this focus to examine the demographics of people visiting the Islamic Center of San Diego. The method used is an exploratory mixed method, descriptive statistics will be collected on a variety of visitor variables including demographic data will be collected from all willing participants at the center. A five minutes' interview was conducted with the Imam at the Islamic Center of San Diego to understand the nature of the relationship between the teacher who referred the visitors to the center and the Imam.

What it takes to move from a "phobia" from Islam to a "philia" towards Islam? What to do to move from fear to love? Many studies elaborated on the growth of Islamophobia in United States and its impact on the Muslim community and the society at large. However, few studies focused on the role of the Muslim community in lessening the gap between the Islamophobia and Islamophilia by helping Muslims transcend their mindset and believe in their ability to challenge prejudice and promote mutual understanding. The study aimed to assess the impact of contact relations and education in reducing Islamophobia. The purpose of this study was to examine the reasons why visitors they attended or continue to attend the center. Additionally, the study further sought to help the center's leaders to better understand the insights gained by participants after having completed their visit.

Procedures and Instrument

As a follow-up of the research method listed above surveys were used. Surveys are defined by Dale and Volpe (2008:29) as “questionnaires which sought to tap into personal experiences and shed light on participants’ perceptions”. The use of surveys then meant the use of quantitative study as this then improves validity and reliability on the statistical elements of the study on evaluating the perceptions of the visitors to the Islamic Center of San Diego. Including survey is essential as they have a unique place in the study’s methodological plan, in that, firstly, the perceptions of the visitors can only be measured through surveys, secondly they can be used to investigate whether the visit substantively changed the stereotypical thoughts of the participants on Islam and Muslims and helped them gain a balanced view of the Islamic faith as a result of their visit.

A two pages’ questionnaire was handed out to the visitors who agreed to participate as they enter the center, the data collection occurred between September and November 2014. The questionnaire was later collected on the visitors’ way out. Following a brief overview and an assertion of confidentiality and anonymity, individuals agreeing to participate were asked to complete the survey (see Appendix A). It included four sets of questions. The first gathered information about the demographics of visitors to the Islamic Center of San Diego. The second set of questions inquired about the reasons visitors came to the center. The third set of questions inquired about their experience at the center in terms of awareness, understanding, knowledge/facts, appreciation and perceptions of Islam, and Muslims. And, questions inquired about the participants’ thoughts about Islamophobia after having visited the centers.

Study 2: The Survey of Imams

The second study is an exploratory method to measure the Imams' insights on reaching out to other faith traditions and building multi-faith communities based on respect. After the rise of Islamophobia, faith leaders known as "Imams" are more likely responsible for raising global consciousness and awareness about the Islamic beliefs and principles. Imams are extremely needed in every community to challenge Islamophobic attacks and provide correct information about Islam and Muslims.

According to the report "The American Mosque 2011" by Professor Ihsan Bagby, from the University of Kentucky, He counted 2,106 mosques in the United States, commonly located in or around large cities, with New York State and California Bagby counted about 503 mosques. While various mosques have historically been built by South Asian immigrants, the same study found that the new immigrant groups such as Somalis, Iraqis, West Africans and Bosnians have initiated to establish their own mosques since 2000. Additionally, half of all mosques in the U.S. have no full-time staff, and only 44 percent of imams in the U.S. work as paid, full-time leaders. Bagby added that 48 percent of imams had at minimum a bachelor's degree in Islamic studies. And only 6 percent of them, earned their degree in the U.S. Based on the same source, Bagby's study added that only 36 percent of mosques with members' attendance that vary between 101 and 200 have a full-time, paid imam position. More than 98 percent of mosque leaders, including imams or responsible of operating boards, said in the survey that Muslims should be involved in American society, while 91 percent said that Muslims should be involved in

politics. Surprisingly, Bagby's previous survey, conducted a year before 9/11, found that a majority of mosque leaders, about 54 percent of Muslim leaders believed that America was hostile toward Islam. Today, only a quarter of the Muslim leaders surveyed said they feel that way.

Using Bagby's detailed information on the Muslim leaders in the U.S. as well as the model of leader at the Islamic center of San Diego, this study aims to gain a better understanding and elaborate on the current efforts lead by the Imams to reduce prejudice about Islam and promote positive intergroup relation as well as grasp their vision at a time where American Muslims and mosques have come under a close lens, from congressional hearings on home grown terrorism, radicalization to movements against mosques' building projects and anti-Sharia legislation proposals in some states.

Procedure and Instrument

A questionnaire was used to assess the activities of Imams in regards to addressing Islamophobia (See Appendix B). It was sent via email to 25 Imams, and hand delivered to 5 other Imams in mosques located in Garden Grove. Including survey is essential as they have a unique place in the study's methodological plan, in that, firstly, the existing Imams' interfaith and civic engagement can only be measured through surveys, secondly surveys can help investigate whether the Imams substantively carry a long term vision using evaluative strategies to challenge Islamophobia and promote mutual understanding.

After a brief overview and an assertion of confidentiality and anonymity. Using an easy language, the Imams were asked, through a selection of choices, about

demographics data: age, the city of residence, the country of origin and the time of entry to the U.S., the age of their children and the schools' enrolled in. Additionally, eleven questionnaire items were included to measure the contemporary Imams' efforts to educate and combat racism and discrimination against Muslims as well as their vision in a sense of challenging any misconception, extending awareness and help people gain a better understanding about the Islamic faith.

A two pages' questionnaire in English language using an easy and accessible wordings was sent to Imams. However, only 9 participated in the process. The data collection occurred between January and April 2016. The questionnaire was later collected through the same way it was initially given. In addition to the demographics data on age, marital status, country of origin, the time of entry to the U.S, the years serving as Imams were asked about their views on the interfaith involvement, the political engagement and the Imams 'roles in current situation.

CHAPTER 4

Analysis

Study 1: The Islamic Center of San Diego

Participants

One hundred and eighty-nine visitors to the Islamic Center of San Diego participated in the survey. Ninety-two were male and ninety-three were female; 4 declined to state. The overall mean age was 27.02.

The results were tabulated using chart. The findings for each of the questions are presented below. Table 4 presents the referral to the Islamic Center of San Diego. According to the survey, 134 participants 70.89% were referred to the Islamic center through the teacher. To gain a better understanding, I conducted a 5 minutes' interview with the Imam of the center on the teachers who referred those students. The result of the interview indicates that the teachers and the Imam have already a good relationship, some teachers were themselves referred through their religious leader to the Imam in order to gain a better understanding on the Islamic faith. Others were referred through friends who had the opportunity to meet the Imam and listen to his talk on Islam. 11.64% of the participants were referred to the center through their Non-Muslims friends who had already the opportunity to experience a direct interaction with Muslims. 3.70% of the participants were referred to the center by their Muslim friends, it's very stimulating to see the percentage of the referral by Non-Muslims is higher than the percentage of the referral by Muslim friends. 8.46% were referred by their workplace for cultural sensitivity training in an initiative to gain a better understanding in serving their Muslim

constituents. 6.87% for of the participants were referred to the center through the internet and social media while only 3.17% participants were referred through their places of worship. Knowing that the center has consistent relationship with different faith communities based on interfaith dialogue forums, community services to the larger society, exchanging social gatherings during the religious holidays, help us understand the low percentage in referral through the place of worship.

Table 1

Demographic Information of Participants

Gender		Age		Occupation	
Female	(49.20%)	18 to 30	(76.19%)	Students	(56.08%)
Male	(48.67%)	31to 40	(6.34%)	Teachers	(12.16%)
Declined to state (2.11%)		41 to 50	(2.11%)	other	(24.58%)
		51 to 60	(6.34%)		
		over 60	(6.34%)		

Note. Teachers include all grade levels from elementary school to college. Other refers to different occupation, health, law enforcement, technology, self-employed, unemployed and retired

Table 2

Religious Affiliation of the visitors

Note. The religious affiliation of the visitors is graphed as stated by the visitors themselves.

Table 3

Number of visitors

93.12% of the participants were visiting the center for the first time and 6.3% have been at the center before: 4 returning participants have been at the center one time, 3 participants have visited the center in the past two times, 3 others stated that they visited the center 3 to 4 times before and 1 participant has been at the center 10 times while another participant visited the center many times.in the past

Table 4

The Referral to the Islamic Center of San Diego

The results of the question about the purpose of the visit are summarized in Table 5. Many participants selected more than one option among the three first options displayed in figure above. 60.31% of the participants visited the center to learn more about Islam and Muslims. 48.14% of the participant's state that their purpose of the visit is to complete a research for a class. 24.33% of visitors stated that their purpose was the curiosity to meet Muslims and listen to their stories. The majority of the participants said

that they are aiming to enhance their knowledge by learning and satisfying their curiosity on topics related to Islam and Muslims. 13.75% of the participants indicate that having Muslim friends was the motivation to visit the center. Only 2.11% of participants have at least one family member who is a Muslim while 0.52% declined to state.

Table 5

The Purpose of the Visit

Tables 6 and 7 provide information about the participants' evaluation of the programs they attended. On the whole, the majority of participants evaluate the presentation as interesting and perceived the presenter was well prepared and knowledgeable on the subject. The presenter is often the Imam of the Mosque who has been speaking out in public at seminars, workshops, conferences, classrooms and interfaith events, as well as speaking to officials and governments, civic and religious services and organizations and participating in media, however when the Imam is not available two involved and educated members from the community (a male and a female) fulfill the Imam's task. The male is a professor at University of California, San Diego, and the female is an instructor at a Community College.

On the whole, the majority of participants evaluate the presentation as insightful and constructively helpful. 61.37% of the visitors strongly agree that the presentation was interesting and 38.05% agree that the presentation was interesting. However, only 0.52% of the participants disagree that the presentation was interesting. I attended the presentation to elaborate on the visitor's responses in this section. The presentation is a brief overview on the Islamic faith then an open discussion and finally a session of questions & answers. The Q&A session was the most vibrant part of the presentation. Allowing the visitors to ask questions was a great way to clarify and clear the misconception about Islam and Muslims. Many of the questions that were asked in this forum were related to the stereotypes about Muslims that are media based fear such as: terrorism, women in Islam, Sunnis and Shiites conflict and Muslim's hatred towards Americans.... Other questions generated in this forum were related to cultural differences

and prejudices amongst Muslims that had nothing to do with the Islamic religion. The presenter was well prepared and knowledgeable on the subject.

Visitors Comments on the presentation:

“Enjoyed the presentation” Catholic male student, 20.

“Very good presentation, really enjoyed the discussion” Christian male public safety officer, 26.

“The presentation was well done and I learned much from it about Islam and Muslims” Christian male nurse, 24.

Table 6

The Visitors’ Insights on the Presentation.

Table 7

The Visitors 'Insights on the Presenter

Visitors Comments about the presenter

Very good presentation, enjoyed the discussion” Christian male public safety officer, 26.

“The presentation was well done and I learned much from it about Islam and Muslims” Christian male nurse, 24.

““Great speaker” Christian male student, 21.

“Good speaker and very informative” Male student, 18.

“The presenter was very friendly and open to questions, lovely experience” Secular female student, 19.

“Imam Taha’s talk was terrific, very informative, very clear” College professor female, 57.

Tables 8 through 14 present the data about the impact of the program on the participants’ view of Islam. They address the key goals of this research: to see if education can reduce negative views of Islam. The majority of the participants affirm that the program had a positive impact on their view of Islam. They generally feel that the visit helped them gain factual information about Islam (see Table 8); increased their understanding about the Islamic faith (see Table 9); changed their views of Islam for the better (see Table 10); changed their stereotypes about Islam (see Table 11); provided them with a more balanced view of Islam (Table 12); and increased their knowledge of Islam (Table 13). All these point to the effectiveness of the program presented in the Center. Additionally, as can be seen from the data in Table 14, observing the prayer also had a positive impact on the visitors.

Visitors’ comments

“Very interesting visit, I have always been interested in Muslim religion. Learned a lot” Christian female student, 21

“I didn’t expect to learn a huge amount of information in a short time, it was really interesting and well worth the time spent” Christian female University lecturer, 69.

Table 8

Gaining Factual Information about Islam

Table 9

Increasing the Visitors' Understanding of Islam

Table 10

The Visitors' Views of Islam after the visit

Table 11

The Visitors' Stereotype about Islam

Table 12

Gaining a More Balanced View about Islam and Muslims

Table 13:

Knowing More about Islam as a Result of the Visit

Table 13 lays emphasis on the relationship between contact and prejudice. In sum, the visit helped the participants learn about the outgroup, and generate affective view about Islam. Below are the comments expressed by some visitors:

“Very interesting visit, I have always been interested in Muslim religion. Learned a lot”
Christian female student, 21

“I didn’t expect to learn a huge amount of information in a short time, it was really
interesting and well worth the time spent” Christian female University lecturer, 69.

“Everything went well, I learned a lot and my views towards this culture changed”
Christian male student, 20

“It was very informative, I learned a lot” Christian male student, 26.

My hypothesis is that the proportion of people who disagree that their understanding about Islam increases after their visit could belong to the group of people who expressed their familiarity with Islam and their awareness about the fundamental Islamic teaching. It’s important to note that the presentation given at the center included the basic information about Islam and Muslims and for that this proportion of the participants were unable to enhance their learning on the Islam faith.

In table 11, about 9.52% participants disagree and state that the visit didn’t challenge their stereotypical thoughts about Islam. According to these visitors, they listed that, they initially didn’t have any stereotype about Islam, some of them had the opportunity to visit Muslim countries such as Turkey, Egypt and Morocco and others had the opportunity to interact with Muslims prior to their visit.

“I have no stereotype, I have already studied Islam in Morocco and Turkey, I am familiar
with the faith” Agnostic female student, 22.

Similarly, in table 12 and table 13, the proportion of people who disagree that they learned and gained a balanced view about Islam as a result of their visit could belong to the group of people who, in the preceding question indicate that they are aware about the fundamental teaching of Islam and they don't have any stereotype about the Islamic faith. This proportion of visitors represent a category of people who had the opportunity to meet Muslims and learn about Islam as they mention in the survey paper. And, as the presentation include the basic information about Islam, their knowledge didn't expand following their visit to the center.

The survey included the option of observing the prayer and touring the Mosque if the time of the visitors permit to include it during their visit. About 184 of the participants were able to observe the prayers and tour the Mosque and only 5 were not able to participate. Based on the survey, 57.67% of the participants strongly agree and 36.50% agree that observing the prayer and touring the mosque were very effective. However, 2.11% strongly disagree and 1.05% disagree that observing the prayer and touring the Mosque were effective.

“The service was beautiful, thank you for allowing us to visit” Catholic female student, 17.

“It was incredible to see the prayer” Catholic female student, 22.

Table 14

Observing the Prayer and Touring the Mosque

Table 15

Positive Remarks from the Visitors

“Great job” Greek Orthodox female student, 25.

‘Great center’ Agnostic male student, 20.

“Good, keep it up” Catholic male student, 20.

“You aid everything, great. I enjoyed it” Female student, 20.

“I would like to have the class longer for more detail” Christian Physical Therapist male, 57.

“It was really educational” Catholic recruit police male, 23.

“I really appreciate the time spent learning of this religion and how respectful everyone was” Christian male salesman, 24.

“The Islamic center was very informative” Catholic Accountant male, 27.

“Thank you for welcoming me so warmly” Christian childcare coordinator female, 28.

“We were made to feel welcome” Mormon female, 60.

“Thank you for your hospitality and learning” Christian female, 63.

“Keep up the good work” Christian male teacher, 29.

“I loved it” Catholic male, 19.

“Continue to have this event more often, so the community can get the opportunity to know your community” Catholic male student and Restaurant host, 32.

“Please consider Open house four times a year” Female, 50.

“Keep up the productive work” Protestant male consultant, 60.

“Really informative and welcoming” Buddhist female student, 21.

“I enjoyed learning about the religion” Christian male, law enforcement, 34.

“Keep the good work” Teacher female.

“It was very eye-opening” Female student, 19.

“Lovely ceremony, everyone was friendly” Atheist female, 20.

“Everyone was very friendly” Catholic female music teacher, 47.

“Thank you for being open and share about Islam.” follower of Jesus male Refugee Network, 25.

Study 2: Survey of Imams

The first three Tables (16 to 18) provide a summary of the demographics of the sample of Imams who responded to the survey. As expected, according to table 16, about 66.66% of the participants are immigrants and 33.33% are American born and raised in United States. Additionally, all the immigrants surveyed Imams are of Arab origin: Syria, Iraq, Algeria, Libya, and Egypt while the US born Imams are children of immigrants who are originally from the Sub-continent (India and Pakistan). The experience at workplace is important in all situations, and knowing that all the Imams surveyed have an experience of 3years or more (see Table 18).

The questions regarding children (see Tables 17) were designed to provide information regarding the parents' awareness on the external environment. Imams who had children can be assumed to be more aware on the society.

The overall mean age was 43.11. About 33.33% of the Imams were from Garden Grove, 33.33% were from Los Angeles, 22.22% from San Diego and 11.11% from Colorado. Age was banded as follows: 28 to 40 = 33.33%, 40 to 50 = 44.44%, 53 to 60 = 22.22 %. All the participants selected "married" as marital status. The family size varies between 2 and 7 and the children age as follow: under 2years=1, between 2-5 years= 5, between 5-10 years= 4, between 10-15 years = 8, between 18-25=4 and between 25-30=3. Among the kids' proportion 29.16% are in college or professional career, 29.16% are enrolled in public school, 25% attend private Islamic school while one Imam, a parent of 4 kids answered that his kids are in both institutions, public and private school. About

66.66% of the participants are immigrants and 33.33% are American citizens, born and raised in United States. 50% of the immigrants moved to the U.S. seeking a better life, 33.33% of them moved to pursue their studies and 16.66% moved to the U.S. for work. The proportion of the participants listed as immigrants said that 33.33% of them have been in the U.S between 15-20 years, 50% have been in the U.S. between 20-25 years and 16.66% have been for more than 35 years.

Table 16

Imams' Country of Origin

Table 17

Imams' Children Age

Table 18

The Number of Years Serving as Imams

The next tables (19 to 20) summarize the data regarding the level of interfaith activities and the various activities of the Imams in promoting their faith and combatting Islamophobia.

The vast majority of the Imams surveyed that they are part of the interfaith work, through the mosques. The chart below shows that 88.88% of the Imams are part of an

interreligious efforts to provide solid foundations for a better understanding of different religions to promote peace. However, 11.11% of the Imams are not involved in any interfaith initiative. Despite the differences in worship and theology, almost 89% of the Imams believe in reaching out to all religions, make relations and promote the shared and common values of peace, justice and respect to build strong community.

Table 19

Imams' Involvement in the Interfaith Work

The vast majority of the Imams are openly involved with different faith groups. About 75% of the Imams said that they are engaging in an interfaith work with Christians, Catholics, Jews, Methodists, Mormon, Buddhists, and Hindus.... However, 12.50% of the Imams said that they are only involved with Christians and the same proportion of Imams shared that their interfaith work consists on Catholic group only.

Table 20

The Faith Groups

In 2011 professor Bagby conducted a study where he asked Imams on the hostility towards Muslims in United States and more than 75% believed that U.S. is not hostile towards Muslims. Five years later, in this small study, all the surveyed Imams agree that the Muslims in United States are facing hostility and prejudice or “Islamophobia”. Based on the survey, 55.55% of the participants strongly agree and 44.44% of the surveyed Imams agree that Muslims are facing Islamophobia.

Table 21

American Muslims & Islamophobia

Data indicates that all the Imams surveyed (100%) strongly agree that the Mosque has an important role as an Islamic institution to increase awareness about the Islamic faith and strengthening Muslim individuals. According to the survey, the Imams believe in the double tasks they carry, clearing the misconceptions and educating the Non-Muslims about Islam and Muslims as well as empowering the Muslim community through education and communication.

Table 22

The Role of Mosques in Increasing Awareness about Islam

Results summarized in Table 23 below show that all the Imams surveyed (100%) strongly agree that an active Imam or leader is instantly needed in every community to challenge Islamophobia. Based on the survey, the Imams are confirming their responsibility in building internal and external relationships by engaging and increasing their visibility in the community.

Table 23

The Need for an Active Imam in our Time

As can be seen from Table 24 below, all the surveyed Imams, 100% of them strongly agreed that in this challenging time the responsibility of Muslim Imam in our time is enormous. This is another declaration from the Imams on the massiveness of their task. This task is beyond the conventional meaning of “pastorship” or “Imamship”. At this critical time, a new vision and strategy are required.

Table 24

The Enormous Responsibility of Muslim Leaders in our Time

Table 25 shows that the vast majority of the surveyed Imams strongly agree that the Imams must reach out to other faith communities and join hand with religious, civic and political organization. 77.77% of the Imams strongly agree and 22.22% agree that the Imam must engage in all religious, civic and political engagement. Understanding that Interfaith dialogue goal is not preaching or converting others to one religion or one culture. Within the religions a myriad of differences exists, however the core value of the interfaith work is to observe dignity in our difference. Interfaith work is a station of learning about those that are completely different from ourselves and our community and it's also learning how to coexist.

Table 25

Imams Reaching out to Religious, Civic and Political Organizations

Information summarized in Table 26 below, more than 50% of the participants disagree that the Mosque should have a consistent interfaith work. In the survey a question was related to how often do you meet? The answers were various and different. Some answers listed that they meet once a month, others said “not regularly”, “twice a year”, “2 to 3 times and a month”. However, 33.33% agreed that the Mosque should carry a consistency tune in the interfaith work while 11.11% strongly agree on the interfaith consistency as well.

Table 26

The Mosque Consistency in Interfaith Programs

According to the survey 77.77% of the surveyed Imams believe that the relationship between Muslims and Non-Muslims should not be limited to the Interfaith dialogue (see table 27 below). Communities can be creative and create various events to strengthen the relationship. However, 22.22% of the participants disagree on looking beyond the interreligious dialogue. The Imams believe in moving beyond the dialogue. The common goods and shared values of different faiths and traditions will ultimately inspire us to work for the common good of the larger society.

Table 27

Strengthening Muslims / Non-Muslims Relationship

Open Mosque day is an initiative where Mosques around the country open their doors to the wider American public, in an attempt to improve mutual understanding, social cohesion and breaking down different misconceptions and stereotypes. It's usually done by allowing an engaging opportunity for discussion and education between Muslims and non-Muslims. In Southern California, Open Mosque Day is in October where all the Mosques open their doors on the same day. Based on the table below, the participants disagree that an open Mosque Day is enough to clear the various misconceptions about Islam while 11.11% strongly disagree.

Table 28

Open Mosque Day

Considering the growth of the anti- Islam sentiment in United States, should the Islamic institutions expand the interfaith relations by setting goals and objectives?

According to the chart below (table 29) 55.55% of the participants disagree that the Mosque should have a yearly interfaith goal in regards to reaching out to new faith communities. However, 33.33% of the participants agree that the Mosque must have a strategical goal in interfaith relations while 11.11% declined to state. This question instigated a divergence in the Imams' thoughts between disagreeing, agreeing and staying neutral.

Table 29

The Annual Interfaith Goal

The vast majority of the participants support the idea that Imams must take any given opportunity of speaking engagement to clear the misconceptions about Islam and Muslims (table 30 below). Imams must speak out in public at seminars, workshops, and conferences, speak to officials and governments, civic and religious services and organizations and participate in media. Based on the survey 33.33% strongly agree and 55.55% agree that speaking is an important technique to help people gain a better understanding on Islam and Muslims.

Table 30

Imams' Speaking Engagement

Finally, according to the data summarized in table 31 below, less than half of the Imams strongly agree that the political engagement is important. However, the majority, about 67% of the Imams, see the need on engaging with politicians to build relationships and mobilize.

Table 31

Mosques and Politics

CHAPTER 4

Conclusions, Discussion, Contributions, and Limitations

Discussion

Study 1:

In this study I examined the relationships between contact and prejudice within institutional and contextual frame to enhance positive effects. Perhaps the most important finding is that contact relations helped reduce prejudice across all samples of participants including different age groups, socioeconomic groups, education groups and religious group.

Knowing that prejudice is a cultural attitude embedded in negative stereotypes about people or groups because of their religious, cultural, racial, or ethnic background, discrimination refers to the notion of rejection of valued goals from individuals because of their ethnicity, religion, language, socioeconomic status and more. Prejudice and discrimination can be experienced at the individual level as well as societal one. Reducing prejudice and discrimination consists of challenging some constructed beliefs or ideologies, and social structure.

The result of the research conducted at the Islamic Center of San Diego is a model on changing individuals' negative perceptions on Islam and Muslims and addressing specific issues that shape intergroup relations. Institutional and contextual forces in the research are highly considered in the process to improve intergroup relations. These forces include structures and practices in recognizing the power differences residing within the group because the differences are often the core of intergroup tensions. The findings revealed in

this study shed light on some strategies that can be used as instrumental tools to clear the misconceptions and develop more favorable attitudes towards Muslims. Based on the survey, the intergroup strategies involved in this research produced more balanced perceptions of Islam and Muslims, changed the stereotype and fostered learning about the Islamic faith. These are some of the visitors' positive remarks across the diverse sample:

“That was quite engaging learning experience” Roman Catholic male student, 19.

“Do this more often” Hindu male analyst, 64.

“Thank you for enlightening experience” Lutheran male musician, 67.

“Keep doing this, it's very helpful” Atheist female student, 20.

“Keep up the good work, how can I donate for your community program” Episcopalian priest, 57.

The main effective strategies extracted from this research can be summarized as follow:

Contact theory

Contact Relations is of utmost significance in decreasing prejudice and building a more tolerant and cohesive society. The Intergroup contact theory was first suggested by Allport (1954), who argued that positive impacts in intergroup contact may occur if four

key conditions: equal status, intergroup cooperation, common goals, and support by social and institutional authorities (Allport, 1954). Since Allport offered his contact theory, many other researches confirmed the importance of contact in reducing intergroup prejudice. Some researchers proposed that “interracial experiences could lead to mutual understanding and regard” (Lett, 1945, p. 35) and that when groups “are isolated from one another, prejudice and conflict grow like a disease” (Brameld, 1946, p. 245; see also Watson, 1946). Others, have constantly revealed that more exposure to the “targets of fear” can meaningfully increase” liking for those targets” (Bornstein, 1989; Harmon-Jones & Allen, 2001; Lee, 2001; Zajonc, 1968; see also Homans, 1950). Furthermore, more studies have shown that the increasing familiarity through direct experience can lead to liking even those who are related and identified as “unknown”, (Rhodes, Halberstadt, & Brajkovich, 2001).

Studies on the connection between familiarity and liking propose that decreasing uncertainty is a significant mechanism appealing in contact relations (e.g., Lee, 2001). In addition, to this opinion, recent studies have noted that decreasing intergroup anxiety is an important step to decrease prejudice from direct experience (Dijker, 1987; Islam & Hewstone, 1993; Stephan & Stephan, 1985; Stephan et al., 2002). In this regard, Intergroup anxiety means the feelings of threat and uncertainty that individuals experience in intergroup contact situations. Stephan, Stephan, and Gudykunst (1999) developed a new perspective that combines the uncertainty reduction and threat reduction theories. Studies have clarified that direct experience can challenge and diminish the feelings of threat and anxiety about intergroup relations (Blair, Park, & Bachelor, 2003; Blascovich, Mendes, Hunter, Lickel, & Kowai-Bell, 2001; Islam & Hewstone, 1993;

Paolini, Hewstone, Cairns, & Voci, 2004; Stephan & Stephan, 1985). Furthermore, the intergroup anxiety is the key element in reducing prejudice through intergroup contact (Paolini et al., 2004; Stephan et al., 2002; Voci & Hewstone, 2003).

Results from this research, show the relations between contact and prejudice remain important across samples including different age groups, socioeconomic groups, education groups and religious groups. Based on the survey, the majority of the participants, more than 90% assumed that following their visit, their stereotype about the Islamic faith changed, and that they gained a balanced view about Islam.

Contemporary study has deeply looked at a variety of additional mediators that affect the contact relations, counting perception taking (Craig, Cairns, Hewstone, & Voci, 2002), expanded opinions of the in-group (e.g., Gaertner & Dovidio, 2000; Pettigrew, 1998; Sherif, 1966), and the perceived significance of the contact (Van Dick et al., 2004). Furthermore, scholars have examined not only the impact of contact on prejudice, but also the effects of contact relations on the variables involved in the context such as intergroup differences and outgroup changeability (Islam & Hewstone, 1993; Oaker & Brown, 1986; Paolini et al., 2004), in-group pride (London & Linney, 1993), and a willingness to trust and forgive the outgroup (Hewstone et al., 2005).

In the research, joining the Muslims in their prayers and touring their place of worship, are additional mediators used by the Islamic Center of San Diego to increase the positive impact of the contact. Based on the survey, more than 90% of the participants said that observing the prayer and touring the Mosque were effective. Intergroup contact remains useful for reducing prejudice in different intergroup situations and contexts. This

result increases the potential of intergroup contact to be useful and valuable to reduce prejudice and improve intergroup connections. The findings also reveal that intergroup contact effects in this case expand beyond participants in the direct contact context. The expansion of contact's effects in this case, seems to be far broader than what the center expect. The research shows that the extension of the intergroup contact impact can extend to include different intergroup contexts, further than the initial focus. Not only do attitudes toward the direct participants become more favorable, but so do attitudes toward outgroups not involved in the contact. Many participants in our research were referred to the center by Non-Muslim teachers and friends who visited the center before or met the Imam and since then they hold positive views towards Islam and Muslims. For instance, this is a visitor comment that explain to expansion of contact's effect "I visited the Mosque four times before and wanted to invite others to meet Muslims and observe practices" Jesus follower female nurse.

Generalizing the effect

The positive effects after contact can be expanded and extended to include other members of the outgroup. Although direct contact may decrease a person's prejudice towards Muslims involved in the intergroup contact, however, does the contact also reduce prejudice towards other Muslims? Contact with each and every member of an outgroup is evidently impracticable and for that an essential question in intergroup contact stands up, is how the positive effect can be generalized?

An abundant quantity of studies has been developed to explain how the positive experience of contact, counting the importance of creating small group saliency in order

to help individuals within the group focus on the personal characteristics rather than the group-level qualities (Brewer & Miller, 1984), creating big group saliency so that the effect gets extended and generalized to others (Johnston & Hewstone, 1992), and making the main common in-group appeal salient (Gaertner, Dovidio, Anastasio, Bachman, & Rust, 1993). Each method listed above has both positive and negative consequences, and each method used by a specific person may be most efficient at different phases of an expanded intergroup contact context. To deal with this matter, Pettigrew (1998) suggested a three phase technique to take place over time to enhance positive contact and generalization. The first phase is known as the decategorization stage (as in Brewer & Miller, 1984), the people involved in the intergroup contact must emphasize on their personal identities to diminish anxiety and enhance liking. The second phase is when the people involved in the intergroup contact show salient societal categories to attain generalization of positive experience to the entire group as a whole (as in Johnston & Hewstone, 1992). And finally, there is the recategorization phase, is when the characteristics of the people involved in the intergroup contact are substituted with a higher group ranking: exchanging group characteristics from 'Us vs. Them' to a more comprehensive concept 'We' (as in Gaertner et al., 1993). This phase technique could help build a successful method of generalizing the positive experiences of intergroup contact. In this focus, the Islamic Center is a religious institution representing the Muslim community in San Diego, and the Imam is the leader who speaks on behalf of more than 120,000 Muslims residing in San Diego. Ultimately, the center as an entity and the Imam as a leader cohesively send a message of comprehensiveness and inclusiveness.

Friendship

Friendship between members of different groups is another way of contact that helps reduce prejudice. Friendships are helpful because of “self-expansion,” which is an essential inspirational process that pushes people to grow, mature and incorporate new things into their lives (Aron, Norman, & Aron, 1998). When individuals learn and acquire something or experience something new for the first time, ultimately their mind grows. When friendships are very close and intimate, people embrace features of their friends in their own self-notion (Aron, Aron, Tudor, & Nelson, 1991). In another study, (Davies, Tropp, Aron, Pettigrew, & Wright, 2011) argued that spending quantifiable time with intergroup friends and having lots of profound communication with them, remain the two solid indicators of a positive change in attitudes and a decrease in prejudice. For example, many participants in our research state that their motivation behind the visit is having Muslim friends, almost 14% of the surveyed visitors while few of them, about 3.7% were referred to the center by their Muslim friends. Building a close friendship with Non-Muslims, might help them grow to appreciate Islamic faith because of the intimacy. Even the word “Muslim” or “Islam” become part of the Non-Muslim friends’ own self-concept. The friendship will have more positive feelings and attitudes toward Muslims as a group. For instance, this is a comment exploring the importance of building relationship

“We came as classmates, some want to learn about Islam, about myself. I am Muslim and it’s always nice to learn more about my religion” Muslim female student, 19 yrs.

Education

Although there is no consensus on to the "cause" of prejudice and stereotype, there is an agreement that they are found to be a learned behavior. Initially, the internalization of the concept of prejudice is constructed and can be deconstructed as well. The best way to reduce prejudice and discrimination is through education. Klineberg argued that intergroup contact alone is not enough to reduce prejudice (Klineberg, 1968: 441). On one hand, education, whether direct or indirect, constitute an important way of educational efforts to reduce prejudice.

In this study, educational strategies aim to enhance knowledge about Islam and Muslims and changing or reducing stereotypes by presenting non-stereotypic information about Islam. Providing stereotype-disconfirming information is more efficient when the information concerns a larger group or community rather than when the information concerns an individual who is not necessarily representing the whole group. The effectiveness of the education programs at the Islamic center of San Diego is supported by the results of study. The findings reveal that educating people about Islam and Muslims through presentation and dialogue was effective and helped the vast majority of the participants learn and enhance their knowledge while clearing the misconceptions, more than 90% said that they gained factual information about Islam and their understanding increased. Moreover, about the same proportion (more than 90 percent) added that the presentation was interesting and stimulating and they have learned and gained more knowledge about Islam and Muslims. Below are few comments of the participants:

“It was very informative, I learned a lot” Christian female student, 16.

“Great experience” Female student, 19.

“Very informative and I am thankful for the time you gave us to share about Islam”

Catholic male student, 18.

Cultural diversity

Cultural diversity workshops, given at the center is an effective way to teach employees and help them understand some behavioral attitudes (Ellis & Sonnefield, 1994; Hollister, Day, & Jesatis, 1993). It also, increases the familiarity and knowledge of others and reduce prejudice (Tan, Morris, & Romeo, 1996).

The result from the research indicate that 16% of the visitors were referred to the center from their workplace to broaden their awareness about the Muslim community in San Diego. Bringing awareness about racial and ethnic provides an opportunity for learning and for comparison that will certainly help avoid generalization or stereotyping. The groups who visited the Islamic center to increase their awareness on the Muslim community were from law enforcement, Medical schools and religious architecture group.

Exposing the misconception that sustain stereotypes and prejudices

Many stereotypes and prejudice against Muslims are based on misconception and misinformation. It is by challenging these misconceptions directly that we confront the reasons for prejudice. For example, assumptions many American hold about the proportion of Muslims who commit violent attacks, the percentage of Muslim women who are uneducated subjugated and oppressed, the myth that all Muslims are Arabs as well as Muslims and Non-Muslims cannot coexist are invariably incorrect, and considerably so. Learning what individuals believe about people of other different races and ethnic groups, and being prepared to correct adequately the misconceptions, help improve intergroup relations.

Experience, knowledge & preparation

It is understandable that the more knowledgeable, experienced and prepared the speaker is to foster learning that improves intergroup relations, the more effective that person will be. Experience, knowledge and preparation are important when the specific strategies focus on sources of prejudice or involve confronting stereotype. The speaker must understand the importance of relating strategies to the context in which the visitors are permanently involved. The significance of this opinion depends on the competencies of the speaker to adapt the approach that fits the situation.

The finding of the research shows that more than 90% of the participants said that the speaker was interesting and engaging. He was fully committed and communicated high commitment to participants. Participating and allowing dialogues with the visitors enable him to clear misconceptions and answer the misunderstandings the visitors hold about Islam and Muslims. The speaker was able to create an opportunity to nurture relationships, construct trust, address stereotype and increase the knowledge of the Islamic faith, culture and concerns. Sharing stories, asking questions, addressing and challenging the socially constructed views were the steps to grasp a sound and fair judgment and strengthen societal interconnection between people from different backgrounds. The dialogue and Q&A sessions helped people articulating their views openly and in all conscience.

Actions have more power

People in authority position send messages more by their deeds than by their words. Those attending the center would ask on the role of the center in improving intergroup relations, they will usually want to know if the values of love, justice, compassion and mercy mentioned by the speaker are demonstrated in the society at large. People usually wonder if the Imam as a religious leader and authority figure is modeling appropriate behaviors and “walking the talk.” They will also want to know whether the Islamic Center is partner with many religious and civic organizations and whether its programs are increasing acceptance and respect among all faiths and building positive and constructive relations, mutual respect and the culture of peace and understanding among different ethnic

and religious groups in our nation and whether the center is promoting mutual understanding and raising global consciousness and awareness about the Islamic beliefs and principles that are based on the values of acceptance, tolerance, peace and respect.

The result of the research shows that the vast majority of the participants were referred to the center by Non-Muslims. For instance, when some participants heard favorable views about Islam and Muslims following their friends 'visit to the Islamic Center of San Diego or meeting the Imam in a religious or community event, this experience motivated the participants to personally visit the center as well. The positive experience of others heard prior to their visit was considerably important. This finding supports the study conducted in 2008 on Muslim Australians. Randjelovic (2008) in his study, found that people develop substantially favorable attitudes towards Muslim Australians when participants heard on others who had previously favorable attitudes. Therefore, this is a method which would be very useful for anti-prejudice strategists to take into consideration. This method might also be useful for Muslim leaders in workshop and speaking engagement forum to suggest to participants that when they hear inaccurate information, or racist talk, to correct and provide alternative solutions in an attempt to change social norms (Guerin, 2005).

Study 2

In this study I examined the role of the Mosque as an Islamic institution led by the Imam in reducing prejudice and discrimination against Muslims. The most important finding is the Imams recognition of the growth of the anti- Islam sentiment. Different studies emphasized on the importance of problem recognition before problem solving (or decision making). Mintzberg, Raisinghani & Théorêt (1976) suggest that any decision-making process must begin with an identification phase. Mintzberg et al. decompose the procedure into two sequences: decision recognition and diagnosis. Decision happens when some stimuli reach the level of importance in the mind of the decision-maker, creating the assumption that an action is necessarily needed. This assumption will ultimately lead to an analysis, when the decision maker tries to completely understand the stimuli in question. Schneider & Shiffrin (1977) explain this process in their argument of information-processing techniques. Problem solving relates to “the controlled mode”, deep reflection and mindful control of a complete attention because a person is searching to improve an understanding about a specific problem (Schneider & Shiffrin, 1977). Recognizing the problem relates to allowing an unconscious or conscious processing approach that helps decision-makers to extend their consideration on a selection of ideas, making it more challenging to separate the issue from its contextual range. Berthon, Pitt and Morris (1998) similarly added that recognizing the problem is an important initial step in the decision-making process, this process help scanning the problem, noticing it and building reference about external change and progress. Kiesler & Sproull (1982) describe the process alike, knowing differences between detecting the problem, understanding it and including motivational steps for change.

The results of the study reveal that all the Imams surveyed recognize the existence of the anti- Islam sentiment in the United States. 100% of the participants said the American Muslims are facing a growing discrimination. In 2011, Bagby conducted study on the Mosques in America and surprisingly, the finding showed that only a quarter of the Muslim leaders surveyed said they feel that America is hostile towards Muslims while the vast majority, 75% don't believe that America is hostile towards Muslims. However, in another study conducted by Bagby a year before 9/11, revealed that the majority of Mosque leaders and Imams, about 54 percent of Muslim leaders believed that America was hostile toward Islam.

The recognition of the existence of the Islamophobia as a problem is very important. It is a motivational stage to purposeful actions taken to solve the problem by exploiting opportunities to reduce prejudice and discrimination against Muslims. My hypothesis on the Imams' recognition of the Islamophobia in this survey, in comparison to professor Bagby's study can be linked to: Firstly, the small number of participants in this study. Secondly: The media coverage after the violent attacks in Paris on November 13, 2015, San Bernardino on December 2nd, 2015 and most recently Brussels attack on March 22nd, 2016. For example, after Paris attack, news outlets dedicated continuous coverage. Facebook launched a feature letting its users to "check-in" to inform their family members and friends that they were safe. It also launched a feature that allowed its users to overlap the colors blue, red and white representing the French flag on their profile pictures showing solidarity with the victims of the attacks. Twitter adopted the same strategy to show solidarity with France.

Another factor could be the children, the immigrant children or the U.S. born children of immigrant parents who become involved in the American culture relatively fast, and become socially integrated into the American society which is the case in our study. The vast majority of the Imams' children are socially involved through school or work. They consciously or unconsciously expose their parent to the reality of the American society and help them build new ways of understanding the world.

Espoused Values and Enacted Values

Values are defined as “espoused as well as the enacted ideals of an institution or group [that] serve as the basis on which members of a culture or subculture judge situations, acts or objects” (Matthews et al., 2009, p. 30). Espoused values according to Schein are defined as “the norms and practices that organizations develop around their handling of people or as the espoused values and credo of an organization”. Furthermore, these espoused values can contain “ideals, goals, values, aspirations, ideologies, and rationalizations” on the other hand, they “may or may not be congruent with behavior and other artifacts” (Schein, 2010, p. 504). Schein defines the enacted values as “the implicit standards and values that evolve in working groups” or “unconscious, taken-for-granted beliefs and values” that determine “behavior, perception, thought, and feeling” (Schein, 2010, p. 24). In this context it's extremely important to make distinction between personal, organizational and faith values.

Branson describes personal values as: ... the importance or worth we attach to particular activities, objects, or outcomes. They are principles and standards that we consider worthwhile and intrinsically desirable and, therefore, are conceptions of what is

ultimately good, proper, or desirable in our life. Personal values are our individually selected preferences for achieving success and influence our behavior in every aspect of our daily activities. (Branson, 2010, p. 7)

However, organizational values according to Lawrence are: “the standards to which reference is made for judging acceptable behavior of relevance to the company, both the behavior acceptable for the organization as it interacts with its external environment, and the norms of behavior for individuals within the organization. Values are inherent in a firm’s mission and goals; its strategies and structure; allocation of resources; codes of practice, policies and procedures; and its actions” (Lawrence and Lawrence, 2009). Another definition that is important to add in this context is faith values. It was hard to find a clear definition on faith values, although I came across many definitions on faith and values separately.

“Faith values are often referred to as religious values and share the nature of all human values in that they are a conception of the desirable with motivating force” (Hodgkinson, 2004, p. 6). Faith values appear from reflective contemplations on the religious beliefs and offer rules for choices followed by actions. Faith values according to Deborah Robertson are both personal and organizational.

Espoused values in the context of Mosques as an organization can be seen through the explanation of Arnold & Kuh, they argue that the espoused values are at the origin of constructing assumptions and beliefs about how the relations among people have to be (Kuh & Arnold, 1993). This definition includes the actions and relations of and between people in an organization. These assumptions and beliefs “constitute a world-view shared

by the members of the group [and] are so strongly held by group members that any other way of thinking or behaving is practically inconceivable” (Kuh & Arnold, 1993, p. 331). Because of this idea, these values grow into the organizational “reality,” [or] the creation of the shared “reality construction” (Kuh & Arnold, 1993, p. 331). Sometimes, when one person believes in a set of values, another person may believe in them, not because they believe in the same values but because they value that person. These are the factors that create a gap between enacted and espoused values and how they affect the organization. Espoused values “may not be reflected in the actions of everyone in the group” (Matthews et al., 2009, p. 30). This explains that there are frequently irregularities between what people say are the organization’s values and what they actually do.

In the research the difference between espoused and enacted values is significant. Based on the study, while all the Imams surveyed believe that Muslims are facing an increase in hate and prejudiced and that the responsibility of the Mosque and the Imams in our time is enormous, more than 50% of the Imams disagree on the need for setting a consistent interfaith work as well as an annual concrete goals. In the same study, while the majority believe that the Open Mosque Day, which it’s a once a year interfaith event, doesn’t help dispelling the misconceptions about Islam and Muslims, in a question related to how often do the Imams meet with their interfaith partners? The Imams’ answers were various and different, some answers listed that they meet once a month, others said “not regularly”, “twice a year”, “2 to 3 times a month”. In another question related to the faith groups with whom they are involved in the interfaith dialogue, twenty five percent of the Imams are engaged in a limited dialogue with the Christians and the Catholics only.

When inconsistencies between actions and espoused values surface, espoused values can be identified as “creeds, mission statements, and purpose statements of the inter/national organizations” (Matthews et al., 2009, p. 31) and are a public “concentrated source of an organization’s espoused values” (Matthews et al., 2009, p. 31). These values are constantly revealed in all written documents, services, and other public speeches or events associated with the institutions.

Imams as well as all Muslims are required to align their values with the Qur’an as the initial and primary source for doctrine and norms. In chapter 49, verse 13, God says “Oh Mankind, we created you all from a single man and a single woman, and made you into races and tribes so that you should get to know one another. In God’s eyes, the most honored of you are the ones most mindful of Him: God is all knowing, all aware” (al-Hujurat, 49:13). This verse is a call from God to explore the human diversity, the diversity of culture, beliefs and faith while engaging peacefully and respectfully with different groups. Imams as faith leaders are expected to embody the prophetic guidance of reaching out and engaging with non-Muslims using the virtue of justice, kindness, civility and courtesy. They have to act in harmony with the faith values espoused by the Mosque because there is an expectation that Imams will act in accordance with the espoused faith values of the Islamic institution. Imams in Mosques and Islamic centers need to understand the power of faith values (Islamic values) in influencing expectations of Imams and their actions. They also need to realize that the identity of these institutions is connected to the practice of faith values (Islamic values).

Interfaith dialogue

The term interfaith dialogue refers to collaborative, productive and positive interactive relations between people of different faith traditions at individual and institutional levels aiming to facilitate understanding and tolerance between religious communities. Professor Sulayman Nyang defines dialogue as “a process by which members of the two religious communities try to build bridges between their respective groups as they jointly and separately grapple with the basic issues of life, individually and collectively, in the United States and seek to bring about greater understanding between the two communities not only in terms of their different definitions of self and community, but also in terms of their attitudes toward each other’s beliefs, rituals and festivals, and behavioral patterns.”

David Bohm, one of the most interesting modern theorists, defined dialogue as free flowing conversation, without setting boundaries or restrictions on the discussed themes or the outcomes of the conversation. In an intergroup dialogue, Bohm added that, people can increase their understanding on themselves and on the themes placed to discussion as well as clearing the misconceptions and prejudices. People achieve this result by considering all the participants’ contributions and their own intellectual and emotional answers. When individuals participating in dialogue make a sincere effort to recognize the emotional dynamics of the dialogue and their own answers, the space offers a unique situation that fosters open-mindedness and honesty. Recognizing the mental and emotional people hold often help people see beyond their limited lenses and start looking at others more truthfully and compassionately.

Muslims in United States have acknowledged the need to express themselves through a correctly spoken intellectual dialogue to increase their physical and intellectual visibility. Muslims and Non-Muslims in America have realized the importance to engage in a face to face dialogue. Dialogue between people of different faiths is a relatively new phenomenon that becomes commonly practiced by many faith groups (Kasim, Kurun 2012). Engaging in dialogue, Muslims can increase their understanding of themselves because, to be in a context with individuals who are different, Muslims can identify their values, and personalities (Kasim, & Kurun, 2012). And more importantly, dialogue help others to gain a better understanding on who Muslims are and what Muslims stand for, dialogue challenge stereotypes, clear misconceptions and decrease prejudice (Kasim, & Kurun,2012). The main tension and mistrust that occasionally occurs between different groups are rooted in misunderstanding and can be effectively challenged through dialogue (Kasim, & Kurun, 2012). Additionally, dialogue can help maintain steady, peaceful relations between different groups (Kasim, & Kurun, 2012). Many Islamic institutions in United States have practiced dialogue following the footsteps of Prophet Mohammed. Their deep understanding is that the Islamic teachings inspires them to get involved in interfaith dialogues and demonstrate the Islamic values of respect, generosity and kindness while engaging with other groups. As a result of this dialogue, this experience contributes to a better and accurate understanding of the Islamic faith. Muslim leaders involved in of dialogue express a profound appreciation of the divine purpose of the human diversity expressed in many verses in the Quran. In responding faithfully to the teachings of the Qur'an and following the footsteps of prophet Mohammed, Muslim leaders engage in this dialogue to build sincere relationships with diverse groups, to expand the knowledge of

both groups about each other and clear the misconceptions hold by others on Islam and Muslims.

The result of the study reveals that the vast majority of the Imams surveyed understand the need to engage in interfaith dialogue. About 75% of the Imams are openly involved in dialogue with different faith groups. They are engaging in an interfaith work with Christians, Catholics, Jews, Methodists, Mormon, Buddhists, and Hindus.... However, 12.50% of the Imams said that they are only involved with Christians and the same proportion of Imams (12.5%) shared that their interfaith work consists on Catholic group only. According to the study about 25% of the Imams have engaged in a limited interfaith dialogue. Understanding the need of the dialogue in a time where many misconceptions have been brought to the Islamic faith and what a dialogue can achieve, Imams must expand their interfaith work to different faith traditions, they are required to be effectively integrated and propagate the reel picture of the Islamic faith.

For example, there is a greater importance on interfaith dialogue at the Islamic Center of San Diego. The center believes that Islamic institutions must move beyond dialogue. The leaders at the center believe that faith leaders should act cohesively to promote the common goods of different faith traditions that will ultimately emerge to many values that religions share and have in common, however the most important value is the call to service. Many passages in the holy book “Quran” share the value to stand for social justice and help the poor and needy. The service makes Muslims acting out the faith, not just talking about it. Through projects which bring groups of different religious and cultural backgrounds together, nurturing good will, confidence and cooperation, they see and

experience exactly how much can be learned, shared and attained when diverse groups develop familiarity. This is an important subject to consider as a group.

Civic and Political Engagement

According to several studies, the general relationship between religious and political engagement is a strong constructive connection. Wald (2003) using the contributions of some scholars draw this conclusion as well (Cassel, 1999; Hougland and Christensen, 1983; Macaluso and Wanat, 1979; Martinson and Wilkening, 1987; Rosenstone and Hansen, 1993). These studies offer a number of arguments and explanations on the constructive relationship, including the improvement of civic skills (Verba, Schlozman, and Brady, 1995), making decision through democratic process (Peterson, 1992), and improvement of relations between community members (Strate et al., 1989). Wald also added “Churches serve as social networks that seem to draw participants into public affairs” (2003, p. 37). On another hand, Faith groups have been seen by officials and political leaders as important agents in promoting “community cohesion”. Faith leaders in this context, such as Imams act as intermediaries between political leaders and Muslim citizen. The civic and political engagement of the Imams helps addressing issues of public concern, facilitating mobilization of the Muslim community beyond local interests and supports their integration.

The result of this study is encouraging as the vast majority of the Imams emphasize on the importance of the political and civic engagement. About 67% of the surveyed Imams agree that Mosques and Imams must build relations with officials and

politicians in order to mobilize the Muslim community while more than 99% of Imams confirm that Imams must move beyond the dialogue and engage civically in issues related to public concern. The civic engagement and political participation of the Imams will lead not only to clear the misconceptions and reducing prejudice against Muslims, but also to participate in the decision- making as well as integrating the Muslims in the civic and political sphere of the American society.

Understanding Leadership role in a time of crisis:

D. Ramarajan and M. Runell in their report “Confronting Islamophobia in Education” shared the story of Imam Ashafa, a Muslim faith leader, and Pastor Wuye, a Christian faith leader from Kaduna, Nigeria who were at war with each other for years and once they decided to use resources from their religious teachings to end their long term conflict. This decision not only helped Imam Ashafa and Pastor Wuye but helped two communities to understand how assumptions of the ‘other’ impact the dynamics of interreligious conflict. When these two religious leaders decided to change their perspective their communities changed ultimately. In addition, Imam Ashafa and Pastor Wuye act as powerful examples of adaptive leadership, two faith leaders were able to transform two communities from fighters to peacemakers and from enemies to friends. This model of leadership relates to the Five Practices of Exemplary Leadership by Kouzes and Posner that offers the following steps:

- Model the Way: Leaders who model the way display a clarity of their Values and Set an example for others to follow. Their actions should be aligned with their values.
- Inspire a Shared Vision: It is essential in a crisis that leaders and followers share the same goal. They may have different reasons for the goal but they have common goal. Kouzes and Posner identify “Envisioning the Way” and “Enlisting Others” as two means leaders can inspire a shared vision.
- Challenge the Process: A leader in crisis must look for creative ways to adapt to the situation. This process requires flexibility and risk taking which involve mistakes and failures.
- Enable Others to Act: In a time of crisis, much more than in normal situation, efficient and effective collaboration and partnerships are critical to the success.
- Encourage the Heart: in a time of crisis the community is under a stress waiting for the change to happen. A leader in crisis needs to be fully conscious of the physical, mental, and emotional condition of the community and respond to that.

Although the rules for leading in a crisis are different, they are not far from Kouzes and Posner five practices. And yet one leadership style does not fit all, dealing with a crisis situation, “The Leadership Challenge” serves as an easy model of crisis response and recovery.

The results of the study show a gap between the Imams’ espoused and enacted values between what they say they believe in and what they really do. In this time of Islamophobia Crisis, Imams are expected to follow the Five Practices of Exemplary

Leadership, by first clarifying their values, and setting an example within the community and leading a consistent envisioned interreligious work. Second communicate their vision to the community and encourage more community members to join and effectively collaborate to help dispel the prejudice and discrimination against Muslims. Third, Imams in this phase are required to take risks and involve mistakes in their decisions making however they have to accept the unavoidable dissatisfactions and celebrate the mistakes as learning opportunities. Fourth, in this challenging time, Imams cannot do the work by themselves, they need to nurture team work and actively involve other members. Imams' role is also strengthening team members and making each member feel skillful and powerful. Mutual respect is what endures extraordinary efforts. And Finally, Imams must recognize the hard work and contributions that members make. They must celebrate every accomplishment. Imams need to make members of the team feel like heroes.

The Blame Theory

Below are two comments I collected from two Imams:

“I think each Mosque should make a long term plan to address spreading knowledge about Islam and educate the surround community. I think that most Mosques are trying to serve their Muslim community as a survival offering, only the most basic” Imam, Los Angeles, 60.

“The responsibility should not be placed on the Imam only” Imam, Anaheim, 34.

The first Imam is a volunteer Imam, He often offers Friday sermon and gives speeches irregularly, and however the second Imam is currently serving in a large Mosque in Anaheim.

Many researches elaborated on the concept of attributing the responsibility while examining on the phenomenon of the blame theory. Hamilton (1986) reported “that people in higher positions of a social hierarchy are subject to stronger obligations for preventing negative outcomes and are blamed more for those outcomes when they occur. Similar effects of role position were found in organizational contexts when causality was ambiguous (Gibson & Schroeder, 2003) and even in cases of vicarious responsibility (Shultz, Jaggi, & Schleifer, 1987)”. Shaw and Sulzer (1964) added that “When one person attributes responsibility for an event to another individual, he blames that person if the outcome is negative”

Figure 3. Path Model of Blame

Path Model of Blame explains how the blame is generated in this context.

According to the model when people acknowledge the existence of the problem which all the Imams do, as they recognize the escalation of the anti-Islam sentiment that swept United States. The concept of allowing causation (even if they did not cause the problem) appear clearly in the two Imams statement. They distinct themselves from the

responsibility to challenge “Islamophobia” while in fact every Muslim has a role to play. Based on the same model if the agent’s causal involvement is apparent, the next selections are to reject “intentionality” and provide excuses for the unintentional problem (Markman & Tetlock, 2000) or to acknowledge intentionality and offer justifications for the intentional problem (Gollan & Witte, 2008). The Path Model describes justifications as socially acceptable explanations and excuses as unavoidable causes for unintentional events (Fillmore, 1971).

Blame through mitigation is an important process of social blame. For this process, the cognitive construction of blame offers a well-organized framework. After the blame, reconciliation appears in different forms including apology, regret, and compensation. These steps can effectively repair relationships through moral reliance (Allan, Allan, Kaminer, & Stein, 2006; McCullough, Kurzban, & Tabak, 2013).

Islamophilia

Philia is an ancient Greek word for love. Philia according to Aristotle is usually translated as “friendship” or “affection”. Also, Philia in this context refers to “brotherly love” where people show warm love for each other and everyone strives to make the other happy. Islamophilia literally means “love of Islam” and could be defined as the expression of affection and adoration of Islam. Douglas Murray in his book *Islamophilia, A Metropolitan Malady* says: “I don’t think – that Islam has no redeeming features or that the religion has achieved nothing. But it seems strange to me that so many people today can be quite so asinine and supine when it comes to the religion. No other religion in the world today receives the kind of pass that Islam gets. Most religions currently get a hell of a time. But Islam does not”.

My intent in this study is to provide a map that serves as clear evidence that Islamophilia is attainable. Muslims have the ability to challenge prejudice, enhance and raise global consciousness and awareness about the Islamic beliefs and principles that are based on the values of acceptance, tolerance, peace and respect for other religious beliefs.

Based on this study, the educational and outreach programs used at the Islamic Center of San Diego show effective outcomes across all the sample despite the religious affiliation, socioeconomic status and educational level. Using the model of the Islamic Center of San Diego, the key point to achieve Islamophilia can be summarized as follows:

Educational Programs

- 1- Contact Relations:

Islamic institutions and Imams must provide a welcoming place and allowing a space of conversation and interaction to flow, for those willing to learn about the Islam. Touring the Mosque and observing the prayer, are additional tools that help enhance the contact relations. Positive interaction is of utmost significance in decreasing prejudice across samples including different age groups, socioeconomic groups, education groups and religious groups. The effect of the intergroup contact can also expand the positive impact beyond the initial focus.

2- Education:

Imams and Muslim leaders must see the Mosques as the only facilities that provide accurate information about Islam. Mosques are expected to be a learning center where schools, universities and different workplaces visit constantly to learn about the Muslim community. The internalization of the concept of prejudice is constructed and can be deconstructed using efficient educational strategies. Educating people about Islam through presentation and dialogue is an effective way to help people enhance their knowledge and change their view to the better.

3- Exposing the misconception that sustain stereotypes and prejudices:

Stereotypes are usually sustained because of the misconceptions people hold about Islam. The Imam in his speech to the Non-Muslims has to expose eloquently the misconceptions associated to Islam and help people change their views.

4- Experience, knowledge & preparation:

A knowledgeable, experienced and well prepared Imam in his speaking engagement helps improve intergroup relations.

5- Actions have more power:

Non-Muslims usually wonder if the values of love, justice, compassion and mercy mentioned by Muslims or Muslim Imam in our case are practiced and demonstrated in the society at large. Aligning the values with the actions is important in reducing prejudice.

Outreach Programs

6- Consistency in interreligious and interracial movement:

Understanding the need of the dialogue and building relationships in a time where many misconceptions have been brought to the Islamic faith and what a dialogue can achieve, Imams must engage in a consistent interfaith work with different faith traditions as well as setting goals to evaluate their work.

7- Political and civic engagement:

This is a very important step to mobilize the Muslim community and help its integration. Imams are expected to build consistent relationship with politicians and officials as well

as addressing issues of public concern to foster the Muslim community involvement and participate in the decision making process.

8- Speaking engagement:

Imam must accept any invitation to speak outside the Mosque. Speaking to others about Islam, is an important way to grow the audience. It's a great space to share ideas or concepts and an important way for building relationships.

In addition to the educational and outreach programs other important elements must be taken into consideration:

9- Understanding the mutual responsibility:

Muslims in general and Imams in particular must avoid falling unconsciously in the blame game. Successful leaders are constantly in search for creative ways to improve the organization. In doing so, the Imams may experience mistakes and failures that are inevitable in the learning process.

10- Implementing a leadership model in crisis:

In this study, I offered The Five Practices of Exemplary Leadership as a practical model for the Imams. Knowing that leadership is about behavior, skills and abilities associated to effective leadership can be taught and learned by anyone willing to change and improve his/her leadership style, despite the differences in culture, gender, or age. In doing so, Imams will define their values and principles concerning the way of serving the Muslim community and the society at large as well as the way of pursuing their goals in battling Islamophobia, to merge the gap between their espoused and enacted values.

11- Friendship:

Building friendship with Non-Muslims is an inspiring process that help people to self-expand and learn about their friends. Therefore, the word “Muslim” and “Islam” become part of the friends’ own self-concept.

Conclusions

This thesis has sought to examine what it takes to move from Islamophobia to Islamophilia, on paper it seems easy, only two letters differ between the two words yet in reality moving from Islamophobia to Islamophilia requires collective efforts to dispel the misconceptions about Islam and Muslims. All the stereotypes attributed to Islam and Muslims are socially constructed and can be deconstructed. Muslims must overcome their wounds and turn their challenges into opportunities and allow their inner power to surface.

To address such notion, this study was designed to provide fresh insights into, first, the nature of educational and outreach programs used at the Islamic Center of San Diego to clear the misconceptions about Islam and reduce prejudice and discrimination.; secondly, the role of the Imams within the faith communities to engage in an Interreligious movement. The coping strategies that show great result are contact relations and education. The Islamic Center of San Diego is led by an active Imam who was able to build good relationships with faith leaders, educators and officials. These

long term relations helped decrease many of the stereotypes about Islam and helped directly or indirectly to attract Non-Muslim visitors to visit the center for multiple reasons but mainly learning about Islam. Another important factor that has to be taken into consideration and that shows prominent result is the presenter, the knowledge and preparation of the presenter can affect the outcome. As such, the Imams experience and commitment to the interfaith movement. Imams have been assessed in an analysis of their notions on the number of times an interfaith effort is conducted, the consistency, and the goals and objective of the interfaith work? This section explored the gap between the Imams' espoused and enacted values. A big distinction between what they say that they believe in regarding interfaith movement and what they actually do. Education, vision, structure, time and skills are all essential to successfully change attitudes and mindsets of the Imams roles and responsibilities. By providing these necessary tools, the Imams will ignite the initial flame of desire to learn techniques and strategies needed to build positive and constructive relations, mutual respect and a culture of peace, respect and understanding among different ethnic, racial and religious groups in United States, and to foster mutual understanding and raising global consciousness and awareness about the Islamic beliefs and principles that are based on the values of acceptance, tolerance, peace and respect for other religious beliefs.

Implications

My research on "Islamophilia" will make a good contribution to the understanding of how Muslims can help United States move beyond the prejudice,

discrimination and fear of the Muslim community. The survey given to the people who visited the Islamic Center reveals that many are open to be educated about the Islamic faith and admit that they have learned something new, changed their stereotype and gained a balanced view about Islam following their visit to the center. The study provides a strong case that the relationships between contact, education and prejudice remains significant across all participants regardless age, socioeconomic status, education level and religious affiliation.

Although the patterns contact, education -prejudice cannot be adequately examined in a single study. I believe that the study provides considerable evidence that intergroup contact can contribute effectively to decrease prejudice through a general variety of groups and contexts. For that, the information from the study can be used as a motivation for other Islamic institution to engage in a well prepared educational program and propose ways to increase contact relations. Islamic institutions can build on this study to create strategic approaches that fit their communities to respond to stereotype by openly challenging these constructions.

In conclusion, Muslims' passive response to Islamophobia and their fear from the Islamophobia, contributed to the growth of the anti-Islam sentiment. However, although Islamophobia definition lack scholarly accuracy and consistency, the study reveals that the techniques proposed by social scientists to decrease prejudice and discrimination can be useful in the case of Islamophobia. Contact theory approach based on interaction is beneficial in this context to reduce prejudice and hatred because

familiarity nurtures comfort and liking (Pettigrew and Trop, 2006). Education, whether direct or indirect, also showed productive result to reduce prejudice. In the study, educational strategies helped enhance knowledge about Islam and Muslims and reduced stereotypes by presenting non-stereotypic information about Islam.

Similarly, the second phase of the study on the Imams shows that there is hope in interfaith dialogue. The study shed light on the Imams' role as leaders of the community in reducing anti-Islam sentiment. Why Imams? I believe that Imams and faith communities play a significant role in this context. I was not successful finding any study elaborating on the Imams' role in confronting Islamophobia. However, according to Frank Fredericks, the founder of World Faith, he believes that faith communities matter today because "we have three main assets that allow us to do so. Number one: we have narratives, histories and value structure that we can lean on to help support [disadvantaged] people. Secondly, we have relationships, networks and communities of people who know each other and can create opportunities to innovate and build around these issues. If you know someone who cares about something, who knows somebody and who cares about something, it's easy to create a groundswell around what you're trying to do. Lastly, I believe faith communities have institutions that should and really must support these types of issues. To me I think faith communities play a key role".

In sum, the two-phase study was able to show that the contact relations and education are practical and useful in confronting Islamophobia and clearing the misconceptions about Islam and Muslims. The role of the Imams is extremely important as well. Interfaith groups are the first line of solidarity and protection when an

Islamophobic calamity, such as hate crime against Muslims or attack on Mosques occur. The interfaith movement might look ineffective at the national level in terms of using media and marketing however, locally is very effective and productive (Daniel Tutt, Unity Productions Foundation).

My hope is that this work is just the beginning of persistent efforts to change the discourse in United States regarding Islam and Muslims.

Limitations

Although the research has reached its aims, there are some inevitable limitations. First, the first study was conducted in one location, The Islamic Center of San Diego. Generalization of these findings to other Islamic institutions should be made with thoughtfulness. Additional research in other Islamic institutions is needed to identify the useful educational and outreach programs to dispel stereotype and reduce prejudice. The second limitation is associated with the homogeneity of the participants in the first study, most of which were students. Although the study may be representative, because not all the students attended the center are part of the religion class as a required class. Regarding the second study, the relatively small response rate presents a limitation. To fully assess the attitudes and behaviors of the faith leaders, a much larger sample would be needed. Finally, the analyses conducted in this study were fully based on surveying data, which might have introduced another limitation. While not critical, since highly consistent data were found, more in-depth discussion and data gathering through interviews and focus groups could further shed light on the issues that were studied.

Future Research

Finally, I offer few suggestions for future research that will expand this study and overcome some of its limitations. (1) It is important to expand this research and examine other Islamic institutions to understand the validity of the techniques used by the Islamic Center of San Diego. (2) It is also important to think of the Islamic institutions as nonprofit organization where the board of governance has a big influence on the Imams performance. Future research should investigate whether the board of governance objectives are aligned with those of the Imams to reduce prejudice and discrimination about Islam.

References

- Abdalla, M., & Rane, H. (2007). The Impact of media representations on the understanding of Islam and attitudes toward Muslims in Queensland. *Griffith Islamic Research Unit Griffith University for Multicultural Affairs Queensland*.
- Abdul Rahim, E. The growing epidemic of “Islamophobia” in America social change through appreciative inquiry.
- Allport, G. W. (1954). Nature of prejudice. Cambridge, MA: Addison-Wesley
- Allen, C. (2010). Islamophobia. ISBN 978-1-4094-1757-6 (ebook), C Allen
2010books.google.com.
- Amir, Y. (1969). Contact hypothesis in ethnic relations. *Psychological Bulletin*, 71, 319–342
- AMP book, (September1, 2011). Islam & Muslims in the post 9/11 America.
- Ansari, H. (2004). The infidel within: Muslims in Britain since 1800. London: Hu
- Bagby, I. (2012). The American mosque 2 011. Basic Characteristics of the American Mosque. Attitudes of Mosque Leaders. Report Number 1 from the US Mosque Study 2 011. Report Number 1 from the US Mosque Study 2011.
- Bleich, E. (2011). What is Islamophobia and how much is there? Theorizing and measuring an emerging comparative concept. *American Behavioral Scientist* 2011 55: 1581 originally published online 26 September. doi:
10.1177/0002764211409387 2011.

- Blue & Gray. (2008, Jan 28). Muslim-West report released (incl. John Esposito),
Findings Indicate More Interreligious Dialogue Needed. (Georgetown Univ.).
- Carr, J. (2010). Measuring Islamophobia. Volume2, Issue 2
<http://www.ul.ie/sociology/socheolas/vol2/2>
- CAIR, & UC Berkeley report on Islamophobia, titled “*Same Hate, New Target*” – June 24, 2013. CAIR. (2013). *Annual report*
- Cesari, J. (2010). Muslims in the West after 9/11. *Religion, Politics and Law*.
- Cesari, J. (2012). Why the West Fears Islam. Qantara.ed.
- Clegg, B. (2009). Can you have religious phobia? brianclegg.blogspot.com/.../can-you-have-religious-phobia.html.
- Colleen Ward, James Liu, Tagaloa Peggy Fairbairn-Dunlop, & April K. Henderson.
(2010). Youth voices, youth choices: identity, integration and social cohesion in culturally diverse Aotearoa/ New Zealand's Center for applied cross-cultural research & Va'aomu Pasifika Victoria university of Wellington.
- Cooperrider, D., Whitney, D. (2005). Appreciative inquiry: a positive revolution in change. Berrett-Koehler Publishers, Inc. CA.
- Da Fonseca, D. , Cury, F. , Bailly, D., & Rufo, M. (2004, Sept- Oct). Role of the implicit theories of intelligence in learning situations. (456-63).

Esposito, JL. (2011). Islamophobia and the challenge of pluralism. 9-10. *Prince Alwaleed Bin Talal Center for Muslim-Christian Understanding Georgetown University.*

Esposito, JL. (February, 2014). Islam in the public square. Retrieved from
www.oxfordislamicstudies.com/publisher/editor_letter.html.

Ewell, PT. (1997). organizing for learning: A point of entry. Draft prepared for discussion at the 1997 AAHE Summer Academy at Snowbird. National Center for Higher Education.

Foner, N, &, Alba, R. (2008, May 22). Immigrant religion in the US and Western Europe: Bridge or Barrier to Inclusion?

Gladwell, M. (2002). The Tipping point: how little things can make a big difference. Little Brown & Company. NY. USA.

Jamal, Z (2009). Embodying ethics, performing pluralism: Volunteerism among Ismailis in Houston, TX. The Pluralism Project. Retrieved March 10, 2009, from:
<http://www.pluralism.org/research/profiles/display.php?profile=72666>

Johnson, R. (2012). A Theoretical framework for Anti-Muslim prejudice: framing tolerance via moral malleability and entitativity perceptions. *Stanford University.*

Kumar, D. (2011). The rise of anti-Muslim hate. Issue #74.

Kreamelmeyer, K. (2011). Islamophobia in post 9-11 America. *Journal of International Diversity*, 2011 issue 4, 42-48.

Lean, N. (2012). The Islamophobia industry. How the Right Manufactures Fear of Muslims?

Malik, T. (April 29, 2014). Bay Area Muslims face ongoing Islamophobia.

Malik, N. (2001). Religious discrimination. Historical and current developments in the English legal system. *Encounters*, 7, 57-78.

Morrison, KR; Stephan, WG; Ybarra, O. Intergroup threat theory. To be published T. Nelson (Ed.), *Handbook of Prejudice*. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.

Nick, H, & Hopkins, VK. Minority group members' theories of intergroup contact: A case study of British Muslims' conceptualizations of 'Islamophobia' and social change. DOI: 10.1348/014466605X48583.

Oxford Dictionary,

<http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/248449?redirectedFrom=islamophobia#eid>,
(accessed June 7, 2013).

Rebecca A, C. (2011). Muslims in America, post 9/11. Vol 42, No. 8.

Sayyid, BS. (2003). A fundamental fear: Eurocentrism and the emergence of Islamism.
BS Sayyid-2003-books.google.com.

Stephan, & Stephan. (1999). Reducing prejudice and discrimination. Edited by Stuart Oskamp.

Smith, J. (2009). Islam in America, second edition. Retrieved from https://cup.columbia.edu/.../islam-in-america.../excer_

Touwen, CL. (September, 2009). Ernesto burning an analysis of Dutch print media on the 2008 xenophobic violence in South Africa.
<http://www.digitaljournal.com/image/47012>.

Wald, Kenneth D. (2003). Religion and politics in the United States. 4th ed. Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield.

Watt, D. (2008). Challenging Islamophobia through visual media studies: inquiring into a photograph of Muslim women on the cover of Canada's national news magazine.

Williams, S. (2002) Strategic planning and organizational values: Links to Alignment. In Human Resource Development International 5(2), 220. Management Systems (NCHEMS). Available:

Wright, S. C. (2001). Strategic collective action: Social psychology and social change. In R. Brown & S. Gaertner (Eds.), Blackwell handbook of social psychology: Intergroup processes (pp. 409–430). Oxford: Blackwell.

Appendix A: Survey 1

Peace Be Upon You

My name is Lallia Allali. I am a graduate student at the University Of San Diego School Of Leadership Studies. As part of my masters' thesis, I am conducting a survey about the reasons why visitors come to the Islamic Center of San Diego and to an evaluation of the visitors' program. Your answers will be completely **anonymous**; the results will be combined and aggregated in a summary report in my thesis and provided to the Islamic Center to help them better address the needs of the visitors in the Center. Participation in this survey is voluntary and you can withdraw at any time without penalty. If you have any questions regarding this survey, or if you would like a summary of the survey results, you can contact me at allali@sandiego.edu.

I would really appreciate it if you take few minutes to fill up this questionnaire. Thank you for your time and input.

Date: _____

Is This Your First Time Visiting the Center?   Yes   No

If you are returning, how many more times have you visited the Center in the past?

_____

How did you hear about the Center? (Please circle all that apply)

- ☐ From my own place of worship (specify) _____
- ☐ From a friend (specify) Muslim   Non -Muslim
- ☐ From research on the Internet
- ☐ From teachers or professors in my classes
- Other (please specify): _____

What was the primary purpose of your visit? (Please circle all that apply)

- ☐ I wanted to learn more about Islam in general
- ☐ I was doing research for a class
- ☐ I was curious about religions other than my own
- ☐ My family/relatives are Muslims
- ☐ I have Muslim friends
- Other (please specify):

_____

_____

Could you please answer the following questions about your visit?

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
The overall presentation was very interesting.	1	2	3	4
I gained a lot of factual information about Islam.	1	2	3	4
My understanding of Islam increased.	1	2	3	4
My views of Islam changed for the better.	1	2	3	4
Some of the stereotypes I had about Islam changed.	1	2	3	4
I gained a more balanced view of Islam and Muslims.	1	2	3	4
I know much more about Islam as a result of my visit.	1	2	3	4
The presenter was interesting and engaging.	1	2	3	4
Observing the prayer and touring the Mosque were very effective.	1	2	3	4

Could you please provide us with some general demographic information?

Are you?   Male   Female

Age: _____ Occupation: _____

Religious Affiliation: _____

Do you have any suggestions or feedback for the Center?

_____
_____

Thank you for your time and your input. You can contact me at allali@sandiego.edu, if you have any questions, concerns, or if you would like a summary of the survey results.

Survey 2

Peace Be Upon You

My name is Lallia Allali. I am a graduate student at the University Of San Diego School Of Leadership Studies. As part of my masters' thesis, I am conducting a survey about the Imams and their involvement in the interfaith work. Your answers will be completely **anonymous**; the results will be combined and aggregated in a summary report in my thesis and provided to the Islamic Centers and Mosques to help them better understand their role in dispelling stereotype and reducing prejudice. Participation in this survey is voluntary and you can withdraw at any time without penalty. If you have any questions regarding this survey, or if you would like a summary of the survey results, you can contact me at allali@sandiego.edu.

I would really appreciate it if you take few minutes to fill up this questionnaire. Thank you for your time and input.

Date: _____ Age: _____ The city? _____

1- Are you married?   1-Yes   2- No

2- Do you have kids?   1-Yes   2- No

If your answer is yes, how many kids do you have? _____ What's their ages: -----

3- Are your kids in   private school   public school?

4-Where are you originally from? -----

5- When did you move to the US? -----

6- Why did you move to the US?

1-seeking better life   2- pursue studies   3-as a refugee

7-For how long you have served as an Imam in this Mosque? -----

8-Where were you before? -----For how long? -----
--

9-Is the Mosque involved in any interfaith work? 1-yes 2- No

If the answer is yes, how often do you meet? -----

Indicate the faith groups you have reached out-----

Could you please answer the following questions about your visit?

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
Muslims in the US are facing discrimination “Islamophobia”	1	2	3	4
The Mosque has an important role as an Islamic institution to increase awareness about the Islamic faith and strengthening Muslim individuals	1	2	3	4
An active Imam or leader is instantly needed in every community to challenge Islamophobia	1	2	3	4
The responsibility of Muslim Imam in our time is enormous,	1	2	3	4
Imam must Reach out and join hands with religious, civic and political organizations	1	2	3	4
The Mosque has consistent community interfaith programs.	1	2	3	4
Muslims meet the mosque with Non-Muslims in different occasions and events	1	2	3	4
Is an open Mosque day enough to clear the misconceptions about Islam?	1	2	3	4
the mosque has an annual interfaith goal to reach out to new faith				

tradition				
The Imam is invited to different places (school, church...) to speak on Islam.	1	2	3	4
The mosque invites official during elections				

Do you have any additional information? _____

_____

_____

Institutional Review Board Project Action Summary

Action Date: July 23, 2014

Note: Approval expires one year after this date.

Type: ☐ New Full Review ☒ New Expedited Review ☐ Continuation Review ☐ Exempt Review
☐ Modification

Action: ☒ Approved ☐ Approved Pending Modification ☐ Not Approved

Project Number: 2014-07-296

Researcher(s): Lallia Allali Graduate SOLES
 Dr. Afsaneh Nahavandi Fac SOLES

Project Title: ISLAMAPHILIA, San Diegans challenging prejudice & promoting mutual understanding

Note: We send IRB correspondence regarding student research to the faculty advisor, who bears the ultimate responsibility for the conduct of the research. We request that the faculty advisor share this correspondence with the student researcher.

Modifications Required or Reasons for Non-Approval

None

The next deadline for submitting project proposals to the Provost's Office for full review is N/A. You may submit a project proposal for expedited review at any time.

Dr. Thomas R. Herrinton
 Administrator, Institutional Review Board
 University of San Diego
herrinton@san Diego.edu
 5998 Alcalá Park
 San Diego, California 92110-2492

Institutional Review Board Project Action Summary

Action Date: April 24, 2015

Note: Approval expires one year after this date.

Type: ☐ New Full Review ☒ New Expedited Review ☐ Continuation Review ☐ Exempt Review
☐ Modification

Action: ☒ Approved ☐ Approved Pending Modification ☐ Not Approved

Project Number: 2015-04-249

Researcher(s): Lallia Allali Grad SOLES

Dr. Afsaneh Nahavandi Fac SOLES

Project Title: Islamaphilia, San Diegans challenging prejudice & promoting mutual understanding

Note: We send IRB correspondence regarding student research to the faculty advisor, who bears the ultimate responsibility for the conduct of the research. We request that the faculty advisor share this correspondence with the student researcher.

Modifications Required or Reasons for Non-Approval

None

The next deadline for submitting project proposals to the Provost's Office for full review is N/A. You may submit a project proposal for expedited review at any time.

Dr. Thomas R. Herrinton
 Administrator, Institutional Review Board
 University of San Diego
herrinton@san Diego.edu
 5998 Alcalá Park
 San Diego, California 92110-2492