

## Book Review

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# Khan, Sabith Siddiqui, Shariq: Islamic Education in the United States and the Evolution of Muslim Nonprofit Institutions: New Horizons in Nonprofit Research

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Khan, Sabith, and Siddiqui, Shariq. *Islamic Education in the United States and the Evolution of Muslim Nonprofit Institutions: New Horizons in Nonprofit Research*. Cheltenham, UK and Northampton, MA, USA: Edward Elgar Publishing, 2017, 145 pp.


In a concise book, Sabith Khan and Shariq Siddiqui manage to present both a historical and an empirical study of Islamic education and Islamic philanthropy in the United States. Using a Foucauldian approach, the authors explain the complexity and discursiveness of Islamic philanthropy as a discourse that has emerged in a context of, and in a dialogue with, a number of other discourses of race, philanthropy ethics, international affairs, civic engagement, immigrant integration, and community building. Across their study, the authors carefully examined the effect of two important crises on Islamic communities in the U.S., namely, the terrorist attack of 9/11, and the Gulf War, and examine how the “war against terrorism,” and Islamophobia have shaped the agenda and discourse of Islamic activism. The diversity of Islamic communities’ experiences is clustered in the book around two paradigmatic cases: the African American Sunni Muslims, and the Muslims of immigrant background. Neither of these communities had a non-changing discourse. If the African American Muslims moved from a discourse of isolationism to one of integration, the Muslims of immigrant backgrounds have also moved from parochialism to cultural pluralism.

The book provides a brief, but fairly comprehensive view of the history of the emergence of non-profit and philanthropic Islamic organizations in the U.S., explaining their rising professionalism, and civic engagement. Central to the discussion of philanthropy and Islamic schools, the authors examine and problematize identity construction and transformations among Muslims in America. They situate this process in a developing American context of cultural pluralism, youth activism, race and ethnic relations, as well as in an encounter with global Islamic movements.

The book explores and ties two issues: institution building among Muslim communities, and legitimacy. The authors explain the multiplicity of factors that play into these questions, as they ground their research empirically in a quantitative study of Islamic schools in the U.S., as well as in 22 semi structured interviews with the staff and administrators of these schools. The authors learn that the vast majority of these schools were founded since the 1990s, that they are not controlled by the Islamic centers that could have created them, but by a board of parents and donors, and that financially donations, though important, never exceed 20 % of the schools’ budgets. Parents send their kids to these schools basically because they have better performance and better academic achievements than alternative public schools, and because they support the Islamic identity of their children. These schools, like other American philanthropic associations, were negatively affected by the 2008 economic crisis, but they continued their successful work by playing a central role in preserving Islamic tradition, on the one hand, and supporting the socialization of Muslim children of immigrant background into American society on the other hand.

The book is an excellent read and is essential to researchers of American Islam, Islam and education policy, as well as Islamic philanthropy.

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