

THE EMERGENCE OF TRANSNATIONAL ISLAM: A STUDY WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO NORTH AMERICAN MUSLIM COMMUNITY

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ABSTRACT

The disintegration of power following the dissolution of the First Islamic Caliphate in the 7th century CE wielded a profound and enduring influence on Islamic history. In the wake of ensuing political instability and conflict, the rise of novel Islamic dynasties and a more diverse Muslim community set the stage for the cultivation of a transnational Muslim identity. This identity has been instrumental in fostering a global Muslim community that surpasses national confines, thereby facilitating the worldwide dissemination of Islam. The ramifications of the demise of the First Islamic Caliphate persist in shaping contemporary Islamic thought and practices, exemplified notably by the emergence of the North American Muslim Community. An examination of the collapse of the Caliphate and the proliferation of transnational Islam in North America underscores the enduring significance of the transnational Muslim identity within the broader Islamic landscape. This identity serves as a linchpin, allowing the Muslim community to forge a collective sense of purpose and unity that transcends political and cultural diversities.

Key Words: Islam, Transnational Islam, North American Muslim Community, National Muslim-Christian Initiative, Religious Dialogue.

1. INTRODUCTION

The downfall of the First Islamic Caliphate, dominated by the Umayyad dynasty, marked a significant turning point in Islamic history. In 750 CE, the Abbasid dynasty rose to power and overthrew the Umayyads. While such an event was a considerable loss for the Muslim world, it also paved the way for the emergence of transnational Islam.

Before the fall of the Caliphate, the Muslim world was united under a single political entity, with religious and political authority closely intertwined. However, the dissolution of the Caliphate led to being broken into separate political powers, resulting in the

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creation of smaller, independent states across the Muslim world, allowing the spread of Islam beyond the boundaries of a single empire, creating a more diverse and decentralized Islamic community. The fragmentation of political power also meant that there was no longer a single, centralized authority to guide the development of Islamic thought and practice. As a result, various schools of Islamic thought emerged, each with its interpretations of Islamic law and theology, leading to a rich diversity of ideas and perspectives within Islam and paving the way for developing a more global and composed Islamic community. Through trade and travel, the spread of Islam facilitated the emergence of a transnational Muslim identity. Muslim merchants and scholars traveled across the Muslim world, spreading their ideas and interacting with people from different regions, facilitating the exchange of ideas. Thus, a shared Muslim identity developed that transcended national boundaries.

Today, while considered a significant loss for the Muslim world - the fall of the first Islamic Caliphate- its legacy can still be seen in the diversity and inclusiveness of the modern Muslim community. The concept of a transnational Muslim identity remains integral to the Islamic world, shaping the development of Islamic thought and practice.

2. ISLAMIC EMPIRE - *Rashidun* CALIPHATE

The Caliphate holds a significant place in Islamic teachings and is considered a crucial institution in Islam. According to Islamic beliefs, government sovereignty derives from the word of God (ar. Allah), and the Caliphate represents this authority. The Arabic term *khalifah* means representative, vicegerent, deputy, and successor, with the latter meaning primarily shaping political terminology. In Islam, the Caliph serves as the leader of the Islamic state and the representative of God's word on Earth. The existence of the Caliphate is divided into two periods: the period of the four righteous caliphs (Rightly Guided - *Rashidun*) - Abu Bakr, Umar, Uthman, and Ali - and the period of dynasties.¹ The Rightly Guided caliphs are some of Islamic history's most ethical and pious rulers. Their close relationship with the Prophet and unwavering commitment to upholding the values of Islamic education earned them immense respect and admiration from Muslims worldwide. As such, they take precedence as exemplary role models for the Caliphate. The Caliphate remained a crucial institution in Islam, with a lasting impact still evident today. Its reputation for adhering closely to Islamic principles inspires Muslims worldwide, and its legacy is a powerful reminder of the importance of ethical and just leadership.

The first Caliph - Abu Bakr (l. 573-634 CE, r. 632-634 CE)

Abu Bakr ('Abdu'llah ibn Abi Quhafah) was born into a prominent Banu Taim family from the Quraysh tribe. He was a respected member of the community, wealthy,

and, at the same time, composed and modest, and he was the first to accept Islam. He was the Prophet's best friend and father-in-law - his daughter Aisha was married to Prophet Muhammad. Abu Bakr's attitude in life was to yearn only for the reward of Allah the Merciful, which is why he freed weak, enslaved people, such as older people, women, and others who were tortured by the polytheists when they accepted Islam. Prophet Muhammed once said about Abu Bakr (R.A.): "No one has helped me without reciprocating it, except for Abu Bakr, who has given me help, which Allah will reciprocate to him on the Day of Resurrection. No one's property has benefited me to the extent of Abu Bakr's. And if I were to take a Khalil (friend), then I would have taken Abu Bakr as a Khalil, and indeed your² companion is Allah's Khalil." (Tirmidhi: 3661)ⁱⁱ

When Muslims left Mekka due to the extreme cruelty of the Meccans, the first groups of Muslims went to Abyssinia, and after 13 years of Prophet Muhammed receiving God's messages, then to Medina, Abu Bekar was one to stand by the Prophet's side and help him out escape. He participated in many battles during the time of the Prophet, such as the Battle of Bedr and the Battle of Uhud. In addition to personally participating in battles, he pledged his wealth to fight in the path of Allah. Shortly after the death of the Prophet in 632 CE, there were disagreements between the Muslims over who would assume the right to rule the Caliphate. However, in the end, they all agreed that Abu Bakr would be the best fit as his closest companion. While the Muslims were preparing for the battle at Yermuk, Abu-Bakr r.a. got sick and immediately named his successor Umar ibn al-Khattab, as he firmly believed that one was needed for Muslims to stay on the right path. A few days later (634 CE), he died and was buried as he wished next to the Prophet.ⁱⁱⁱ

The second Caliph - Umar ibn al-Khattab (r. 634-644 CE)

Umar ibn al-Khattab was a symbol of justice and a just ruler. He was a second Chaliph recommended and chosen by Abu Bakr (the first Caliph) before he died. Umar, recognized among his companions as the most knowledgeable in the Qur'an, was known to work consistently according to the Holy Book and understood Islam the most. During his caliphate reign, he made Medina the Muslim capital; he made the mosque a place where general Muslim problems were under review. In Umar's time, the mosque was the place where the administration of the state took place. He appointed first judges and required them to adhere to justice in their judgments. He took his role as an example of righteousness that Muslims looked upon very seriously!

During Umar's reign, the Muslims conquered Persia, the Persian Empire, and Egypt

(642 CE). Before Muslims conquered Egypt, tyrants appropriated other people's property. They terrorized residents with various levies and high taxes. However, when the Muslims conquered Egypt, they guaranteed people the freedom to practice their religion and reduced their taxes. He was a skilled politician and a just ruler. His righteousness was a turning point for non-Muslims in their speedy acceptance of Islam and one of the essential da'wah (preaching and invitation to Islam) components gracing this Caliph. The second Caliph - Umar - was murdered in 634 CE by an enslaved Persian as a retaliation for the loss of the Persian Empire.^{iv} Prophet Muhammed said a prayer to the God day before Umar accepted Islam: "O Allah honor Islam through Abu Jahl bin Hisham or through Umar bin Al-Khattab." (Tirmidhi: 3683)^v

The third Caliph - Uthman ibn Affan (l. 576/583-656 CE)

Uthman ibn Affan was born in 576/583 CE into a wealthy merchant family. He inherited a considerable fortune from his father 'Affan, making him one of the richest of the Quraysh, and accepted Islam through Abu Bakr, the first Caliph, in 611 CE. Uthman was one of the rare literate people of that era and was also a scribe who wrote down the Revelation as it came down to Prophet Muhammed, a messenger of God. He was the Prophet's son-in-law and was married to two of his daughters - after the first one passed away (Ruqayyah), he married her sister (Kulthum). After the Quraysh's pressure on the Muslims increased and their hostilities metastasized into torturing, persecuting, and killing them, Uthman and his wife Ruqayyah made the hijra to Abyssinia (Ethiopia) in 615 CE. Later, when the hijra (migration) to Medina took place in 611 CE, he and his wife were among the first to perform it. Prophet Muhammed said: "O Uthman, Jibreel has told me that Allah wants you to marry Umm Kulthoom for a dowry (Mehr) similar to that of Ruqayyah and to treat her with similar kindness." (Ibn Majah: 110)^{vi}

He was elected the third Caliph after the second Caliph - Umar ibn al-Khattab's death and ruled for twelve years (the longest reign). The Islamic Empire expanded greatly under his rule. The most notable achievements of the third Caliph were the conquest of Turkey, Alexandria, Armenia and the compilation of the Quran, among many others. During his rule, Uthman adhered to the practices of previous Caliphs and the late Prophet, such as comprehensive justice, humane policies, and the expansion of Islam, caring for Muslims, and expanding the Muslim Caliphate. The first half of his reign relished with stability and tranquillity.

In contrast, internal conflicts and uprisings marked the second half as he favored his relatives, the Umayyads, over others, and money wasted on military battles instead of the financial stability of the Empire itself. He was remembered as a humbled person with a powerful personality but failed in a leadership role as he was prone to nepotism. In 656 CE, a group of rebels killed him.^{vii}

The fourth Caliph - Ali ibn Abi Talib (1. 601-661 CE)

Ali ibn Abi Talib was a son of Ebū ṭālib, one of Prophet Muhammed's uncles, son-in-law of the Prophet, the second person to accept Islam and later became the fourth Caliph of the Rashidun Caliphate. When he was little, the Prophet and his wife Kadhija took Ali in to live with them as his father was experiencing financial hardship. Ali was a courageous and skilled warrior. He participated in almost all battles with the Messenger of God. Ali was an intelligent, educated, and pious friend of the Messenger of God endowed with much knowledge. He married Fatima, Prophet's daughter, and they had four sons.

Ali ibn Abi Talib was elected the fourth Caliph in 656 CE, shortly after the death of the third Caliph, Uthman. In those days, there was neither order nor law in Medina, and Ali chose the city of Kufa in Iraq as his capital instead of Medina. After he was elected Caliph, Ali faced demands to punish the murderers of Uthman immediately. Still, he announced that his priority was to restore law and order so that he would then be able to bring them to justice properly. Close friends of Prophet and Uthman were unhappy with his decision and made plans to overthrow him to avenge the late third Caliph. However, all of Ali's attempts failed as he tried to avoid fighting and bloodshed among the Muslims.

Furthermore, unfortunately, the battle began. The acquaintances of the late Prophet and Uthman were defeated, and Ali, after this battle, asked Amir Muawiyah (governor of Syria and a close cousin of Uthman), who had not yet taken the oath of allegiance (bayat), to recognize him as Caliph, which was in the best interest of Islam. However, Muawiyah refused on the pretext that Uthman, who also came from the Umayyad family, must be avenged first. Ali's refusal to bloodshed made him a target of Muawiyah's avenge. After fighting in Syria against each other and making a treaty to stop the battle, they agreed to specific terms. Unfortunately, this arbitration failed because Muawiyah deviated from the treaty. In the meantime, a large group of people (Kharijites) who were against the proposal of arbitration separated from Ali and chose Muawiyah as their leader. Ali was trying to persuade the group to accept him as a fourth Caliph, but to no avail, and he had to fight them in the battle where most of them died. After this defeat,

the Kharijites prepared the assassinations and murders of Ali, Amir Muawiyah, and Amr Bin Aas (Umayyad's representative). The last two escaped assassination, but the attackers wounded Ali while he went to the mosque for the morning prayer. Two days later, this brave, pious Caliph died, thus no doubt sacrificing his life for the integrity of the Caliph.^{viii} Prophet Muhammed said: "Ali is my brother, my executor, and my successor among you."^{ix}

3. THE FALL OF THE *Rashidun* CALIPHATE

The *Rashidun* Caliphate fell due to a series of events that began with the apostasy wars, which started after the death of the Prophet when Muslims disagreed on who would succeed him (632–633 CE). In addition, tribal uprisings in Arabia, the first Muslim civil war (656–661 CE), and the death of the fourth Caliph, Ali ibn Abi Talib, in 661 CE all contributed to the end of the *Rashidun* Caliphate. It would be an understatement to say that power, corruption, war, and betrayal did not cause its downfall.

The first and second Caliphs were known for their leadership roles and expanding the Islamic Empire. However, the third Caliph, Uthman, lacked these skills and was manipulated by his family into giving them more power and wealth at the expense of others. While prohibited in Islam, nepotism was a weak point of this Caliph, and he failed to establish a strong Islamic Empire based on peace, solidarity, and harmony among Muslims like his predecessors.

When the fourth Caliph, Ali, came to power, he tried to reverse the corruption and unrest of his predecessor. He attempted to incorporate the rule of law that the late Prophet had established during his time, but unfortunately, it proved impossible, and he was later assassinated for his efforts. After Ali's death, the Rashidun Empire ended, and his opponent, Amir Muawiyah, established the Umayyad Caliphate.

The death of Ali ibn Abi Talib marked another setback for Islam - a schism. Muslims disagreed over who was to succeed the Prophet Muhammad (s.a.w.), with some believing that his close companions should be Sunni Muslims and others arguing that a blood relative, in this case, Ali, should be the one, and these became the Shi'ite Muslims. This disagreement created a significant rift in Islamic unity, and the theological divide still exists today.^x

4. THE RISE OF TRANSNATIONAL ISLAM

There has been a marked increase in the number of Muslim individuals and families immigrating to Western countries, particularly the United States, for decades. While many come with hopes for better educational and lifestyle opportunities, others are fleeing war-torn regions.

Despite the United States' reputation for diversity and equality, Muslim immigration has generated controversy due to the varying beliefs and values held by Americans and Muslim immigrants. This cultural divide often leads to misunderstandings and stereotypes, which can result in discrimination and bias towards Muslim individuals and their communities.

The issue of Muslim immigration is multifaceted and involves various factors, including economic, political, and cultural considerations. It is crucial to approach these issues with an open mind and a desire to learn about the experiences and viewpoints of all involved parties. By doing so, we cultivate greater understanding and appreciation for diversity.^{ix}

Islam is a religion that transcends national boundaries, emphasizing social relations, ethical conduct, and universal appeal. Muslims consider people of different nationalities who share their faith as their brothers and sisters, a sentiment that reflects the Islamic transnational movement's core philosophy. Such a movement emerged in the 18th century after the fall of the Caliphate and dynasties, seeking to resist colonialism and Western imperialism. It characterized itself by the global transmission of Islam, an international network, and the transfer of ideas between groups worldwide.

Transnationalism is a modern concept that refers to exchanging people's ideas, technology, and financial resources between nations, and it is mainly associated with immigrant diasporas, mixed cultural communities, and complex economic relations. Today's world, characterized by rapid communications and sophisticated transportation systems, has created interdependence among nations. As the youngest of the major world religions, Islam recognizes God's prophets and messengers before Prophet Muhammad and teaches that the Qur'an, the Christian Bible, the Old Testament, and the New Testament are all sacred books.

Muhammed, peace be upon him, God's messenger, preached the message of God despite severe and hostile opposition. He believed that the message of God provides humanity with the means to distinguish between good and evil and that on the Day of Judgment, God will hold people accountable for their actions. The Prophet's message initially met tremendous resistance but eventually gained traction, allowing him to create the first Muslim community and Islamic State in Medina. Since then, Islam has spread rapidly through conquest, peaceful conversions, pilgrimage, and missionary activities.

For Muslims, the absence of war does not necessarily equate to peace. Muslims perceive insecurity when they feel that their way of life is in danger or when the environment and community they live in seem unsafe. Such perceived insecurity is not limited to Muslim nation-states but is a common feature of the Muslim global community. Islam is a universal religion that promotes social relations and a code of conduct beyond worship. Thus, Muslim transnational organizations, communication networks, and ideas have spread throughout national borders, indicating the existence of an avid sense of the Muslim community. Despite the challenges posed by the nation-state system, the Islamic goals of the global Muslim community are desirable and attainable. The spread of Islam has had a

range of economic and political outcomes locally and globally, as Muslims began crossing linguistic and political borders before modern nations formed. Muslims in North America have built cultural communities defined by religion and family while maintaining their relationship with their homeland. They also familiarize themselves with other cultures and learn to navigate them, building trust with other communities.^{xiii}

5. BEYOND BORDERS: COSMOPOLITAN AND TRANSNATIONAL ISLAM IN NORTH AMERICA

Transnationalism versus cosmopolitanism has been a widely debated issue in North America. The divide between traditionalists and reformists remains visible. However, transnationalism has brought together Muslim communities globally to some extent, while they are becoming increasingly cosmopolitan in the West as their institutions and structures are decentralized from their origins.

It is important to note that the Islamic community of North American Bosniaks (ICNAB)^{xiii} serves as an umbrella organization for Bosniaks (Bosnian Muslims) in North America and the Islamic community of Bosniaks in Bosnia and Herzegovina. On the other hand, organizations such as the Islamic Circle of North America (ICNA)^{xiv} and Malikah^{xv} are American institutions that cater to American Muslims of diverse ethnic backgrounds who consider America their home.^{xvi}

In North America, the politics of identity and citizenship have gained increased salience as political organizations have become considerably more culturally, ethnically, and religiously diverse. Muslim community leaders in North America have endeavored to construct a version of cosmopolitan Islam through a collaborative agenda shared by their state and religious leaders of interfaith communities. It is particularly crucial in light of adverse events such as the 9/11 attacks that have negatively affected Muslim communities in North America and created a need for greater inclusivity and understanding.

Notably, Muslim communities across America are not only involved in prayer but are also active in politics, activism, and community work. As such, they have become vital spaces where basic civil skills develop and discussions on political issues and public affairs occur. North American politicians have recognized the significance of promoting social interaction between politics and religion despite any discrepancies they may have with the belief system espoused by religious institutions.

Moreover, the generational divide in various parts of the world has given rise to new forms of religiosity and views of political authority among younger generations. These emerging trends in America, particularly, are challenging existing institutional structures and seeking individual authority. It is imperative to consider them when discussing the relationship between cosmopolitanism and transnationalism in North America.

The discourse surrounding cosmopolitanism versus transnationalism is elaborate and multifaceted. It requires ongoing dialogue and analysis to understand better the various dynamics at play, including the influence of identity politics, the role of religious institutions in promoting social interaction, and the emergence of new forms of religiosity and political authority among younger generations.

One significant factor contributing to the debate is the increasing diversity of Muslim communities in North America. Muslims in North America come from diverse ethnic, national, and linguistic backgrounds, and their experiences of immigration and settlement in North America differ. The diversity of Muslim communities in North America has given rise to debates on the meaning of - Muslim identity - and how it relates to various aspects of identity, such as ethnicity, race, and nationality.

The emergence of new forms of religiosity and views of political authority among younger generations is another significant factor. Younger Muslims in North America are more likely to adopt a more cosmopolitan worldview than their parents and grandparents. They are more likely to embrace diversity and pluralism and are less likely to identify with their ethnic or national origin.^{xvii}

The North American Muslim community faces a significant challenge demanding thoughtful leadership to navigate a complex landscape. Among the most pressing issues is bridging the gap between traditionalists and reformists. The task necessitates delivering an inclusive and cosmopolitan interpretation of Islam that invites all and cultivates a culture of acceptance toward other faiths and communities.

To accomplish this objective, community leaders must engage in respectful and transparent dialogues that embrace diverse perspectives and viewpoints while remaining true to the essence of Islam. As such, it will require being open to listening and engaging with those who hold different opinions and being able to bridge differences to adapt to the demands of a multicultural society.

Creating a more cohesive community that is welcoming to all while upholding the fundamental values of Islam is a manageable challenge. It necessitates a collective effort and a commitment to building bridges between various factions within the community. Additionally, it demands a willingness to confront the challenges that arise from living in a pluralistic society and discover ways to adapt to the community's changing needs.

Succinctly, the discourse surrounding cosmopolitanism versus transnationalism in North America is complex and multifaceted. It requires ongoing dialogue and analysis to understand better the various dynamics at play, including the influence of identity politics, the role of religious institutions in promoting social interaction, and the emergence of new forms of religiosity and political authority among younger generations. The challenge for Muslim community leaders in North America is to find a way to create innovative sermons of Islam that are inclusive and cosmopolitan while respecting the diversity of Muslim

communities in North America.^{xviii} The North American Muslim community is navigating a complex landscape that requires careful guidance from its leaders. Nevertheless, with the right strategy, it is feasible to create a more comprehensive and united community that acknowledges diversity while staying true to the essence of Islam.

6. UNITY IN DIVERSITY: TRANSNATIONAL ISLAM AND INTERFAITH COMMUNITIES

In recent years, there has been a rise in Islamophobia in the Western world, particularly in the United States post-9/11. This concerning trend has led to discriminatory policies and the exclusion of Muslims from various aspects of society. The consequences of Islamophobia are far-reaching, including religious and sectarian hatred, racism, fanaticism, and discrimination. These harmful effects undermine peaceful coexistence and integration and promote false allegations against the peaceful teachings of Islam.

Despite the damaging stereotypes that perpetuate about Muslims, the teachings of Islam promote peace and encourage followers to act as peacekeepers and mediators between those in strained relationships. Muslims must coexist peacefully and respectfully with others, and forgiveness plays a significant role in Islamic teachings. Within the Muslim community, there is a responsibility to ensure harmony and protect community members from harm. Such includes accepting the repentance of offenders who show genuine remorse for their actions and engaging in healthy dialogue to foster understanding.

The fight against Islamophobia and racism is crucial for building interfaith harmony, and interreligious leaders have a vital role to play in prioritizing this fight within their respective communities. Promoting interfaith communities and intra-religious harmony in our globalized society is essential. By developing mutual understanding and empathy for each other's religious and cultural backgrounds, we can create a healthy, pluralistic global society where community members of diverse ethnic, religious, racial, or social groups maintain and develop their traditional culture while working together to create one great global society.

Ultimately, the worrisome trend of Islamophobia poses significant harm to society. It is crucial to acknowledge the peaceful tenets of Islam and strive for interfaith unity and comprehension amongst diverse communities. Through promoting harmony within religious groups and constructive conversation, we can establish a peaceful and inclusive world where individuals from all walks of life can prosper. The fight against Islamophobia and racism must be prioritized, with emphasis placed on fostering genuine relationships and encouraging mutual respect and acceptance.

The importance of interfaith dialogue for Muslims in North America cannot be emphasized enough by their religious leaders. Presently, where religious tensions and conflicts are on the rise, Muslims must engage in dialogue with followers of other faiths to

foster mutual understanding, promote social harmony, and contribute to a more just and equitable global society.

The main principle of interfaith dialogue is building bridges of understanding between people of different creeds. For Muslims, this means working to dispel the myths and stereotypes that often surround Islam in order to promote a more accurate and positive understanding. Through interfaith dialogue, Muslims can share their beliefs and values with others and learn from the perspectives of people of other faiths. Such exchange of ideas and perspectives helps build mutual respect and appreciation as well as break down barriers of misunderstanding and mistrust.

In addition to promoting understanding, interfaith dialogue can help promote social harmony and reduce tensions between religious communities. By coming together and working towards common goals, people of different faiths can build stronger and more cohesive communities and help prevent conflicts and misunderstandings. Moreover, this can be particularly important in contexts where religious tensions are high and where there is a need for more dialogue and cooperation between different faith communities.

Finally, interfaith dialogue can help promote peace and justice in our society. Interfaith communities can contribute to the common good and address issues such as poverty, hunger, and environmental degradation by working together and sharing each other's perspectives on important issues. Furthermore, interfaith dialogue can promote respect for human rights and religious freedom and contribute to a more just and equitable society.

Ultimately, interreligious dialogue is essential to Muslims in North America. By engaging in dialogue with followers of other faiths, Muslims can promote understanding and social harmony and contribute to a more just and equitable society. As such, it is incumbent upon Muslims to actively seek opportunities for interfaith dialogue and to work towards building bridges of understanding and cooperation between different religious communities. An example of such interfaith dialogue is visible through ICNA work, where they engage in various interfaith dialogues - National Muslim-Christian Initiative, Judaism and Islam in America, and National Baptist-Muslim Dialogue- to name a few.

7. TRANSNATIONALISM AND MUSLIM WOMEN: UNDERSTANDING THE COMPLEXITIES

The phenomenon of transnationalism poses unique challenges for Muslim women, who must navigate a range of obstacles in their daily lives. These obstacles can stem from education, employment, marriage, or seeking refuge and require a nuanced understanding of the lived experiences of these women. Cultural dislocation, language barriers, social disconnection, and prejudice are all obstacles that can hinder the ability of Muslim women to prosper in their new surroundings. Cultural dislocation is a key challenge faced by Muslim

Muslim women in transnational contexts. The experience of moving to a new country can be a jarring one, mainly if the cultural norms and values that govern daily life are unfamiliar, making it difficult for women to establish a sense of belonging in their new community, hindering their ability to connect with others.

Language barriers are another significant obstacle that Muslim women face when living in transnational contexts. If they are not fluent in the language spoken in their new home, they may face challenges in communicating effectively with others, including employers, educators, and healthcare providers. An obstacle that can limit their ability to fully participate in these contexts and hinder their ability to achieve their goals.

Social disconnection is also a significant issue that Muslim women face when living in transnational contexts. They may feel isolated and disconnected from others, mainly if they cannot establish strong social networks in their new community. Thus, isolation makes it particularly challenging for women used to close-knit communities in their home country.

Finally, prejudice and discrimination can be a significant obstacle for Muslim women in transnational contexts. They may face negative stereotypes and assumptions about their culture, religion, and way of life. An obstacle that can make it difficult for them to feel accepted and valued in their new community and hinder their ability to participate in social, economic, and political life fully.^{xx}

As a society, it is imperative that we prioritize the well-being and success of all individuals, regardless of their background or circumstances. For Muslim women who have migrated to new surroundings, we must work collaboratively to provide them with the support they need to thrive in their new environment. It will require a committed effort to understand their unique experiences and needs and develop responsive policies and programs that can effectively address their challenges. By working together in a transnational context, we can create a more inclusive and supportive society that values and celebrates the diversity of all individuals. It is achievable through mentorship programs, language classes, and community outreach programs that can help connect Muslim women with their new communities, provide them with the resources they need to navigate their new environment and foster a sense of belonging and support. Moreover, one such organization in Vermont, the Vermont Refugee Resettlement Program (VRRP), offers ESL classes, translation services, and case management for newly arrived refugees throughout the year. In doing so, we can create a more equitable and just society that prioritizes the well-being and success of all individuals, regardless of their background or circumstances. By prioritizing the needs of Muslim women who have migrated to new surroundings, we can create a more responsive, supportive, and inclusive society that values and celebrates the contributions of all individuals.

8. CONCLUSION

The Caliphate has been a vital institution within the Islamic faith, representing government sovereignty emanating from the word of God. The Caliphate's fall reverberates through today's Islamic world's religious, political, and cultural landscape. The subsequent emergence of transnational Islam has given birth to a more diverse and decentralized Islamic community, which has transcended national borders to create channels of communication and connection, encouraging cooperation and constructing transnational networks that facilitate the movement of people, ideas, and goods across borders. Thus, Islam's guiding principles, such as social justice, altruism, and community, have inspired Muslims to engage in transnational endeavors to address the pressing issues of poverty, inequality, and conflict, significantly impacting the global transnational landscape by promoting cross-cultural understanding and collaboration.

In North America, the debate between cosmopolitanism and transnationalism in Islam has sparked heated discussions within academic circles. The cosmopolitan approach advocates for the integration and assimilation of Muslims into Western society while retaining their Muslim identity. This approach encourages Muslims to participate in the broader culture and society while preserving their religious beliefs and practices. Conversely, the transnational approach prioritizes the preservation of cultural and religious ties with one's country of origin, urging Muslims to support their native communities from afar and preserve Muslim culture and identity by sending remittances and supporting charitable causes in the country of origin.

The debate between these two approaches is complex and nuanced, with compelling arguments for and against each. Supporters of the cosmopolitan approach argue that it promotes interfaith dialogue and fosters greater understanding between Muslims and non-Muslims. Conversely, supporters of the transnational approach argue that it is necessary to protect Muslim communities from the adverse effects of Westernization and maintain cultural and religious traditions over time. Ultimately, the decision rests with individual Muslims to decide which approach is most appropriate for their life and circumstances. It is essential to approach this issue with sensitivity and respect, recognizing the multiple perspectives and opinions on both sides of the debate. Regardless of the chosen approach, Islam's impact on transnationalism is significant, fostering a collective understanding and solidarity among Muslims worldwide, thereby promoting cross-cultural understanding and collaboration.

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