



**Indonesian Muslims in New York City:
A Transnational Community in the Making?***

Putut Widjanarko, Ohio University

Mosque. *Pronunciation: 'mäsk. Function: noun*
Etymology: Middle French mosquee, from Old Italian moschea,
from Old Spanish mezquita, from Arabic masjid temple, from sajada
to prostrate oneself, worship.
: a building used for public worship by Muslims.
—Merriam-Webster Dictionary (2000).

The earth has been made for me [and for my followers] a "masjid," and
a means of purification. Therefore, my followers can pray wherever the
time of a prayer is due.
—Prophet Muhammad's saying. Recorded in *Shahih Bukhari*,
Vol. 1, Book 7, No. 331.

* Presented at the Muslim Peace Building and Interfaith Dialogue Conference, April 28-29, 2006, American University, Washington DC, organized by Salam Institute for Peace and Justice

This essay discusses how the Indonesian Muslim community in New York City, as a part of the larger Muslim community in the US, as well as a part of what Forner (2000) calls the second wave of immigrants in the country, deals with community building efforts. Consequently, it also discusses how they locate themselves in the larger American society, among other things is their inter-religious interactions. In the wake of September 11 attacks on American soil, the nature of the relationship between Muslims in the United States and American society in general has changed. Ba Yunus and Kone (2004) estimated that there are at least 5.7 million Muslims living in the United States. Meanwhile, there are more than 2,100 mosques and Islamic Centers in the US, although many of them are concentrated in several states, i.e. California, Illinois, New York, Michigan and Texas (Lotfi, 2001). Originating from many different countries, cultures, and various schools of thought in Islam, a monolithic perspective and treatment towards Muslim communities in the US will not help us in understanding the aspirations and internal dynamics of each community. Therefore, this essay, which deals with a small fraction of Muslim communities in the US, is expected to challenge such a monolithic perspective.

According to Ba Yunus and Kone (2004), the largest ethnic group is Arabs, which are 32 percent, or 1.8 million, of American Muslims, followed by the American Muslims (mostly African American) with 29 percent or 1.7 million. The Muslims from South Asian countries (Pakistan, India, Bangladesh, Ceylon, Afghanistan and Maldives) rank third with 28.9 percent or 1.6 million people. Then, they are followed by the Turks (5 percent, or 290 thousands), Iranians and Bosnians (each 2 percent, or 115 thousands people). The rest are Malays, Indonesians, Kosovars and others. With regards to their age, 25 percent of them are under 20 years old, 22 percent are between 21 to 40 years old, 29 percent are between 41 to 60 years old, and 24 percent are over 60 years old.

Furthermore, this study will also enrich the body of knowledge on transnational communities—peoples who live outside of their home cultures. As globalization has increased people’s mobility across national boundaries, the advancement of communication technology has enabled them to remain deeply connected with events in their countries of origin. Indeed, the flow of people across borders has intensified in the last several decades and has greatly increased encounters between cultures. These phenomena pose numerous questions for migrants in regard to cultural identities (ethnic, nationality, religious) and community participation.

There have been some studies on transnational Muslims on both sides of the Atlantic. While an anthropological approach has been used in research on Muslim migrants in Europe (e. g. Allievi & Nielsen, 2003; Vertovec and Rogers, 1998; Werbner, 2002) in addition to political, sociological, and demographical approaches, most studies in the United States have focused on the latter approaches (e. g. Bagby, 2004; Bukhari et al, 2004; Cesari, 2004; D’Agostino, 2003; Haddad & Smith, 2002; Khan, 2002; Leonard, 2003; Mohammad-Arif, 2002; Moore, 1995; Nyang, 1999; Verbrugge, 2005). The focus on Muslim’s transnationalism, however, has been persuasively taken up by Mandaville (2001) and Roy (2004). Mandaville elaborates upon the politics and political identity of transnational Muslims by examining the circulation of ideas and images among Muslims, especially those living in Europe. By doing so, he claims that he provides alternative perspectives on the “political” Islam, “focusing not on militant movements and their struggles against ‘the West’ and/or various state of governments, but rather on the politics which constitute the daily lives of the vast majority of the world’s Muslims” (p. 1). Meanwhile, Roy (2004) argues that in many Muslim communities, primarily those in Europe where he conducted most of his study, a kind of transnational identity has emerged. This identity is based on a

deterritorialized Islam, in which Islam is delinked from the cultures in which Muslim communities originate. In other words, transnational Muslims from various countries are forged in Islam, in which Islam is treated as a “mere” religion that does not have culturally local attachments. This characteristic, according to Roy, enables among other things the cultivation of transnational organizations, ranging from the fundamentalist Al-Qaidah to neo-Sufi brotherhoods.

I argue that there are some lacunas in the existing studies of transnational Muslims. When transnational Muslims are mentioned in the works mentioned above, they mostly referred to the Muslims who originated from the Middle East, North Africa, and the Indian sub-continent. The Muslims who originated from the Malay-Indonesian world, a region which is inhabited by approximately 20% of the world’s Muslim population and have different characteristics in practicing Islam, have been overlooked. Indeed, the number of migrants from the Malay-Indonesian region of course is far fewer compared to transnationals who originated from other areas, but studies on transnational Muslims originating from outside of the regions commonly associated with the Islamic world will undoubtedly give us a broader understanding on this issue and the dynamic relationships between Muslims and the West.

This study concentrates on Indonesian transnational-Muslims. With respect to its number, Indonesian Muslims in the United States are small in number compared to other transnational Muslims from other regions, e. g. the Middle East, South Asia, etc. Nevertheless, Indonesian Muslims have a unique position in the Muslim world. To begin with, Indonesia is frequently mentioned as the biggest Islamic country in the world with regard to population. Moreover, there has been a growing interest in Islam and Muslims living outside its “centers” (Arab, the Gulf of Persia, North Africa, and South Asian

regions), and living on the “periphery” (Central Asia, China, and Southeast Asia, including Indonesia). Indeed, studies on the diversity of Muslims have become increasingly more important to better understand Islam and Muslims in a global context. Finally, Indonesian Muslims are considered to be more moderate as they live in, more or less, a democratic country.

Although Asians are frequently lumped into one racial category, they are very diverse. Therefore, although studies on pan-ethnic Asians in the United States (e.g. Danico & Ng, 2004; Fong, 2002) are important, equally important is to treat each ethnicity closely and separately to understand their internal dynamics. There has been a burgeoning study on many aspects of Asian ethnic groups, especially such studies which deal with larger ethnic groups such as Indians, Chinese, Japanese, Filipinos, Koreans and Vietnamese (e.g. Espiritu, 2003; Manalasan IV, 2000; Lee & Zhou, 2004). I have not found any single study on Indonesians in the United States, and therefore this study, although focusing on Indonesian Muslims in New York City, will contribute as well to the growing body of knowledge in so called Asian-American studies.

New York City is chosen as the research location because it is the quintessential transnational city, with around 28 percent of its inhabitants being foreign born (Foner, 2000). Unlike most other cities in the United States, New York City has immigrants from just about every ethnicity. There are about 579 thousand Muslims (Ba Yunus & Kone, 2004) and more than 100 mosques in New York City alone (Dodds and Grazda, 2002). The Indonesian Islamic Center is located in Queens, one of the boroughs that make up New York City, and is ethnically much more diverse than the other four boroughs. Within reasonable walking distance from the Center, there are four Bengali mosques, two Arab mosques, one Bosnian mosque, one Pakistani mosque, and two Islamic primary schools

(D'Agostino, 2003). Ethnically diverse exposure, albeit belonging to the same religion, will make this particular borough interesting to be observed in regard to its inhabitants' negotiation and expression of Indonesian Muslim identity and their bridging with religiously different environments.

Indonesians in the United States: Demographic Status

At the beginning of the 1960s, there was a fundamental shift in the immigration pattern to the US, in what Forner (2000) calls the new wave of immigration. No longer did the majority of immigrants come from Europe, they came from Latin America, the Caribbean, and Asia (including Indonesia). The US Census 2000 showed that around 4.2 percent (or 11.9 million) of the United States population (281.4 million) was Asian from various nationalities. The growth of the Asian population in the United States grew rapidly, especially after the liberalization of the US immigration law under what was commonly called the Immigration and Nationality Act of 1965, which brought an end to the discriminatory immigration policies based on national origin (Fong, 2002; Min, 2006).

According to the 2000 census, 82.8 percent of Indonesians in the United States were not born in this country (Garoogian 2005). Moreover, fewer Indonesians have become naturalized citizens compared to all Asian populations in the United States. The proportion of Indonesians who finished college is 46.60 percent, which is higher than the respective proportion of all population in the United States (24.4 percent). This proportion, as well as the proportion of Asians who completed college (44.06 percent), is also higher than Latino immigrants (10.4 percent) (Ramirez, 2000). With regards to the economic condition, although the median income of Asian families (\$51,908) is over \$9,000 higher than the median for all families, the median of Indonesian families is \$39,338, slightly lower than

those of all families. This median household income, however, is higher than the median household income of Latino populations (\$34,397) (Ramirez, 2000).

According to the latest census, the number of Indonesians who live in New York City is 1,816 people (Garoogian 2005). This number is far below the estimation made by a high ranking official from the General Consulate of Republic Indonesia in New York City. According to Harbangan Napitupulu (personal communication, August 1, 2005), then the Acting Consul General, it is estimated that there are around ten thousand Indonesians in the fifteen states the Indonesian General Consulate in New York City covers. However, Indonesians are concentrated in only a few places, namely Philadelphia and New Jersey (each has three thousand people), and New York City and New Hampshire (each around two thousands people). Napitupulu states that the estimate is based upon the number of Indonesians, which is around four thousand people, who have registered with the General Consulate Office. Most of them register themselves because they have to renew their expiring passport. Moreover, more than ninety-five percent of them are undocumented immigrants, or, in a more derogatory term, illegal aliens. With regards to ethnicity, Napitupulu estimates that around fifty percent of those ten thousand Indonesians are Indonesian-Chinese, followed by Minahasan (the people from the northern part of the island of Sulawesi), which is around thirty five percent. The other fifteen percent come from various different ethnicities in Indonesia, i.e. Javanese, Achehnese, Bataknese, Minangkabaus, Bugis, etc. In terms of religion, it is estimated that the proportion is sixty percent Christian. Buddhists and Muslims are each twenty percent. Moreover, more than ninety percent of Indonesians take blue-collar jobs, such as working in restaurants, construction, and other minimum wage jobs.

Masjid Al-Hikmah:

Calling Mankind unto the Sustainer's Path with Wisdom

August 17, 1995 is a historic date for the Indonesian Muslim community in New York City. On that day, which coincided with the celebration of the fiftieth anniversary of Indonesian independence, the community bought a previous chemical material warehouse on 4801 31st Avenue, Long Island City, Queens, New York City (see Figure 1). The six thousand square foot building on ten thousand feet of land and only one block from the 46th street subway station was the place where they were going to have their mosque, later named Masjid Al-Hikmah. Achmad Padang, who is the Indonesian community leader and serves as the Chairman of the Board of Directors of the mosque, said that the day of purchase was chosen for reason. He stated: “We picked that particular date, in order to have a more historical value” (personal communication, August 1, 2005). The purchase was a culmination of previous efforts of Indonesian Muslims in New York City to have their own house of prayer.

The exact number of Indonesian Muslims in New York City is not known. The Masjid Al-Hikmah database has over four hundred addresses, and therefore it might be quite safe to estimate that the number of Indonesian Muslims is well over two thousand. The number of people who attend to the Idul Fitr Prayer (which is the main holiday for Muslims) and to celebrate the end of fasting in the month of Ramadhan, could be a good indicator of the Indonesian Muslim population in New York City. In Indonesia, as in many other Muslim countries in the world, the Idul Fitr is the time when people return to their home town to see and gather with their families who otherwise live scattered around different places. Far away from their homeland, the Indonesian Muslims have used Masjid Al-Hikmah as a focal

point where they can meet each other and celebrate the Idul Fitr. On this particular day, the main prayer rooms and basement as well as the parking lot are full of people. The prayer itself must be done two, and sometimes three, times, to accommodate the people who can't pray the first time because the mosque is full. It can be estimated that at least two thousand Indonesians attend every Idul Fitr celebration (see also "Masjid Indonesia," 2004). This small number, however, has contributed to the diversity of around 600,000 Muslims population in New York City (Cristillo & Minnite, 2002).



Figure 1. Map of New York City

The effort to consolidate the Indonesian Muslim community in New York City started many years earlier. In the early 1980s some Indonesians began having what in Indonesia is called the *pengajian*, a gathering at which Islam is discussed. A *pengajian* usually

begins with the recitation of the Qur'an, followed by a talk on Islam, and continues to the question and answer session. The *pengajian* was informally called the Keluarga Pengajian Indonesia di New York City (the Family of Indonesians *Pengajian* in New York City). In the beginning, this monthly *pengajian* was held by turns in Indonesians' apartments or houses. After a while, the number of *pengajian* participants increased, so that a house or apartment could not accommodate them anymore. Therefore, they asked permission to use one of the rooms in the Indonesian Consulate office in New York City where then they had their monthly *pengajian* until the community had its own mosque. In addition, there were some other Indonesian Islamic activities as well which were conducted by the people who also regularly attended the monthly *pengajian*. For example, some Indonesian students gathered weekly in a *pengajian* to study Islam more intensively. Meanwhile, in the early 1990s some families had an initiative to teach their children about Islam, so they gathered weekly every Saturday to have their children learn to read Arabic as well as to perform the *shalat* (Islamic prayer). Again, after some years held in turns in these families' apartments and houses, they had to move to the Indonesian Consulate Office in the mid 1990s.

Naturally, the aspiration of having their own mosque where they could have their Islamic activities was running high. A money box was circulated for small donations in the *pengajian*, and different kinds of voluntary donations were pledged. Realizing that it would take forever to collect enough money to purchase property, the community founded the Indonesian Muslim Community, Inc. (IMCI), a tax exempt organization, on December 22, 1989. This time, the Indonesian government officials and employees of Indonesian corporate branches in New York City were involved. The Indonesian ambassador to the United States, the ambassador of the Permanent Mission of Indonesia to the United Nations, and Achmad Padang who represented the community, served as the Honorary



Chairman. Serving as the President of IMCI was Prang Sakirman, who was helped by, among others, Ibrahim Zarkasyi, then the head of the Bank of Indonesia branch office in New York, as the Director of Fundraising. The IMCI organized fundraising programs over several years. With its high profile figures, the IMCI was able to draw some large of donations, some of them from businessmen in Indonesia. In the mid 1990s, the IMCI finally had enough money to purchase a building in Queens, New York City, for US\$ 385,000. Achmad Padang recalled that after the purchase, “The atmosphere was very moving when many Indonesians went together to do some cleaning and painting” (personal communication, August 1, 2005). After spending US\$ 125,000 for the initial renovation, the former warehouse was used as a mosque for the first one and a half months after the purchase. On October 1995, an IMCI delegation met President Suharto, who was visiting New York for a summit meeting in the United Nations headquarters, and presented their plan for developing the mosque. President Suharto, then the Chairman of Yayasan Amalbakti Muslim Pancasila¹, a foundation that had been building hundreds of mosques around Indonesia, on behalf of the foundation donated US\$ 150,000 (Achmad Padang and Prang Sakirman, personal communication, July 27, 2005). Some members of Indonesian delegation, including business magnates Aburizal Bakri and Sudwikatmono, also gave a significant amount of donations (Pak Harto, 1995).

The renovation continued until the mosque more or less had its current final shape, followed by several minor renovations and maintenance. The mosque is named Masjid Al-Hikmah, which literary means The Wisdom Mosque. The name, according to Achmad Padang,² the Chairman of the Board of Directors, refers to the passage of the Qur’an 16:125, which is translated as “call thou (mankind) unto thy Sustainer’s path with wisdom (*bikmah*) and goodly exhortation.” He mentioned that there were several names proposed besides Al-

Hikmah, including Istqlal (which means independence), similar to the name of the main mosque in Jakarta. Today, Masjid Al-Hikmah is one of about one hundred mosques in New York City. “The Muslim in New York City Project,” which canvassed nearly every neighborhood from May 1998 to June 1999, found some 1,780 Muslim establishments, both religious and secular (Cristillo & Minnite, 2002). With regards to the mosques, the Project “found 28 mosques in Queens, 27 in Brooklyn, close to 20 each in Manhattan and the Bronx, and at least 8 in Staten Island” (Dodds & Grazda, 2002, p. 24). However, out of more than one hundred mosques in New York, no more than a half dozen mosques were built from the ground up. The rest, including Masjid Al-Hikmah, were other kind of buildings—stores, warehouses, apartments, lofts, basements, etc.—which were converted to mosques (Doods, 2002). According to Lotfi (2001), close to 90 percent of mosques and Islamic centers in the US are modified from previous buildings, not custom-built mosques which are built purposefully from the foundation. Lotfi (2001) and Slyomovic (1996) call this type of mosque a “storefront mosques.”

As such, the outer architecture of Masjid Al-Hikmah has not changed from the previous warehouse, except that it has added a simple green half-sphere dome and minaret. Both the dome and the minaret are adorned with Arabic calligraphy in Kufi style (Figure 2). Green is the color associated with Islam, because it is said that green was the Prophet Muhammad’s favorite color, and that he wore a green cloak and turban. This color has been adopted by most storefront mosques across the country (Lotfi, 2001). Therefore, had the building not had the dome, minaret, and of course the name plate, one would not recognize it as a mosque. The name plate on the wall under the dome reads “Masjid Al-Hikmah, Indonesian Muslim Community.” From the parking lot, there are two entrances to the mosque. Each entrance is appended by a green half-sphere dome-like canopy above it,

asserting the visual image of the building as a mosque (Figure 3). Besides the color green, domes of any kind have been used as an identity marker of storefront mosques, which could otherwise be mistaken for a warehouse or a store (Dodds & Grazda, 2002).

Masjid Al-Hikmah's prayer room can accommodate as many as 450 congregants (Figure 4.) Other smaller rooms are used for the office, meeting room, kitchen, caretaker room, and of course the place to take the *mudhu* (ablution). In the hallway, there is always a thermos bottle so that the visitors can help themselves to hot coffee or tea. The basement is used for general purposes, including where foods are served for special occasions such as *pengajian*, weddings, and other social gatherings. While there has not been much change to the building exterior except the signifiers dome and minaret, the interior of the mosque, especially the prayer room, has been the place in which the "purification of space" has taken place. On the right wall of the main prayer room, a poster of the whole of the Quran in fine print is hung—so fine that it could only be read by using a magnifying glass, which is also hung next to the poster. Above the *mibrab* (the niche in the mosques that indicates the direction of prayer), there is a woodcut of *Ayat al-Kursi* (The Throne Verse), one of the most popular verses among Muslims, from the Qur'an 2: 255, flanked by Arabic calligraphies in *thuluth* style which read *Allah* and *Muhammad* . Some posters of the Ninety-Nine Names of God (*Al-Asma Al-Husna*) are posted in several places. And the green carpet augments the religious ambience of the room. Indeed, a spatial separation between internal-religious and external-secular space can be strongly felt. Morley and Robins (1995) have reminded us that: "Purified identities are constructed through purification of space, through maintenance of territorial boundaries and frontiers" (p. 122). Such acts of purification of space can also be found in the Indonesian Muslims' homes.

Naturally, there is a plan to develop the mosque further. An architectural drawing and a scale model has been made, this time with distinctive characteristics of mosque architecture (Figure 5). Achmad Padang states, however, that they don't know yet when they will have enough money to build the mosque in its final form. With regard to the current look of the mosque, he says: "We thank God that we have a mosque now. And it is a relatively big mosque. Many mosques owned by other communities in New York City are smaller. As for the architecture, we don't really concern it. The most important thing is we have a place to pray" (personal communication, August 1, 2005). Therefore, whether Masjid Al-Hikmah will be renovated to the form as shown on the scale model and artist's rendering—i.e. a two floor mosque with completely different architecture (Figure 5)—still remains a big question. If the Indonesian community manages to renovate Masjid Al-Hikmah according to the new architecture design, it follows what pattern Slymovics (1996) has pointed out with regards to the development of mosques in the US. According to Slymovics:

. . . the movement . . . begins with interior space gutted, transformed and even acoustically reconfigured to Muslim sacred space, then expands outward according to the increased membership and prosperity of the community, and finally triumphantly rewrites US locales . . . permanently, as in the case of the new Manhattan All-Muslim mosque [the Islamic Cultural Center of New York]. (p. 214).



Figure 2. Front view of Masjid Al-Hikmah



Figure 3. Back view of Masjid Al-Hikmah



Figure 4. Main prayer room

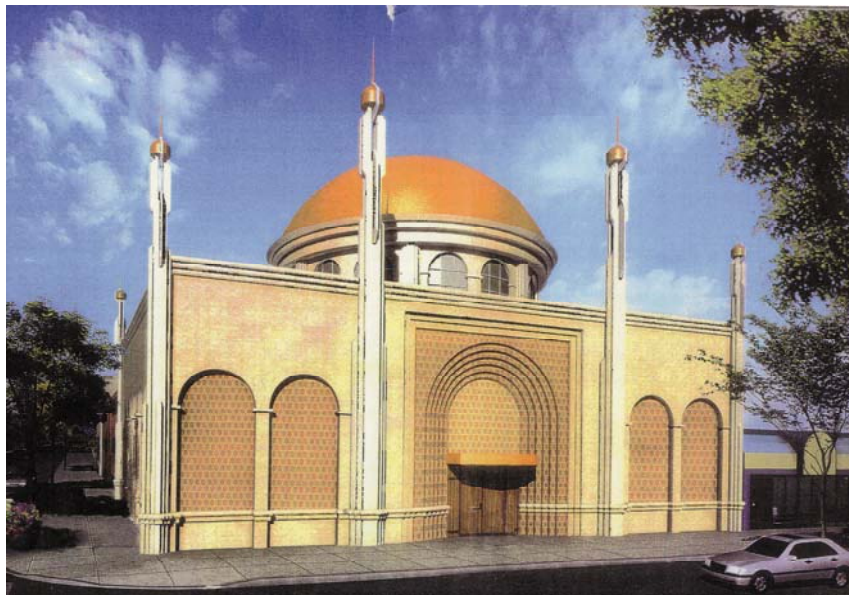


Figure 5. Artist's rendering of Masjid Al-Hikmah in the future

The choice of the future Masjid Al-Hikmah architecture design is also particularly interesting. Khalidi (1998) and Lotfi (2001) have reminded us that there are three basic

themes of custom-built mosque architecture in the United States, i.e.: idealizing traditional design (for example Islamic Centers in Washington DC and Toledo); reshaping traditional design (e.g. Islamic Cultural Center of New York); and new innovative design (e.g. the Islamic Center of Albuquerque, NM). The appropriation of architectural elements associated with mosques—dome, minaret, and arch—give Masjid Al-Hikmah its familiar mosque-look, and yet they are combined with modern design. However, it should be noted that the traditions Masjid Al-Hikmah architecture will reshape are not Indonesian traditions. Although domes and minarets have become favored expressions of newly-built mosques internationally (Dodds & Grazda, 2002), in Indonesia there have been different mosque architectural expressions based on the local traditions (Kusno, 2003). In a sense, it indicates the acceptance of some kind of Pan-Islamic visual signifier over those from national and ethnic traditions.

With its current as well as likely future demographical constraints, however, it is not clear whether the Indonesian Muslim community and Masjid Al-Hikmah will rewrite its neighborhood skyline. Indeed, one issue faced by the Indonesian Muslim community is the number of Indonesians in New York City, which certainly affects the number of people involved in the community activities. It also financially affects Masjid Al-Hikmah, because they have relied on the community donations to support their activities. The number of Indonesians in New York is unlikely to increase due to the stricter visa issuance regulation in the US. Regarding the future of Indonesian Muslim community in New York and Masjid Al-Hikmah, Achmad Padang states:

It really depends on the demography of Indonesians in New York in the future. As for our current second generation, when they grow up they might not live in New York because they might find jobs somewhere else. Moreover, the number of new

Indonesians does not increase significantly. Most of the new Indonesians in the US prefer to go to the West Coast, because there are more job opportunities there. Also, the weather is friendlier there. In New York, you have to do a lot of adjustments, and struggle. That's why Sinatra is right when he sang, "If you can make here, you can make in anywhere." (personal communication, August 1, 2005)

For the time being, with all its activities which I will describe below, Masjid Al-Hikmah has served as a spiritual and cultural focal point for Indonesian Muslims in New York City.

Activities at Masjid Al-Hikmah:

Looking for Signs of Deterritorialized Islam

From the beginning, Masjid Al-Hikmah has been engaged in community services, although in general the social services are aimed at Muslims, particularly, of course, Indonesian Muslims in New York. This is in line with what Bagby (2004) found in his study on the relationship of American mosques to the American public by surveying the attitudes and activities of mosques with regards to their community involvements in general American society. Bagby found that immigrants' mosques, although the vast majority of their leaders endorse community involvements and desire to do so, only a few of them are actually greatly involved in their general local communities. This is quite the contrast with most African American mosques, especially by virtue of their "nativeness" in the United States, which have more activities directed to their local communities. In proportion, African American mosques have served non-Muslims more than immigrants' mosques in programs such as economic assistance, counseling, prison visits, child care, social advocacy (anti drug programs), etc. Likewise, African-American mosques (71 percent) have been more active in outreach activities than immigrants' mosques (51 percent) (Bagby, 2004). Apparently, the

different milieu and challenges faced by the newcomers and African-American communities have produced a different emphasis with regards to general community involvements. Furthermore, Bagby pointed out that most leaders and imams of immigrants' mosque are trained overseas and serve in their traditional role as simply a prayer leader with little prior experience in community involvement activities. It is in this context of mosque participations in the general community that I will describe the activities and programs that Masjid Al-Hikmah has offered to its constituents.

Ritual Activities

First and foremost, a mosque is a place for praying, and Masjid Al-Hikmah is not an exception. Until the end of 2004, however, Masjid Al-Hikmah could not pay a full time imam, so it did not open regularly during the times of praying. The mosque would open if somebody from the community, especially the ones who were active members of the community, happened to be in the mosque, either because they wanted to go to the mosque or they needed to do some of the mosque's errands, or both. Thus, there were no regular *jamaah* prayers for the five-times-a-day obligatory Islamic prayers. Muslims are encouraged to perform the obligatory prayers, which are five times a day, in a group, or in *jamaah*, because this gives more reward from God to the congregants. This *jamaah* prayer is strongly encouraged to be performed in mosques.

After recruiting a paid, full time imam, who is a Acehnese and holds a Ph.D in Islamic History from Arkansas University, and whose main duty is to lead the *jamaah* prayer, Masjid Al-Hikmah opened for each and every *jamaah* prayer. Thus, Masjid Al-Hikmah opens for the *Fajr* (dawn) prayer, and then from about one hour before *Zubr* (noon) until the time after the last obligatory prayer of the day, *Isha*, in the evening. During my fieldwork, I

frequently attended the *jamaah* prayers, especially *Maghrib* (sunset) and *Isba* prayer. A few times I also was in the mosque to attend the Dawn prayer. The most interesting fact was that not many Indonesians were in the prayer out of around fifteen to twenty congregants. In most cases, however, there were only two or three Indonesians beside the imam. This is due to the fact that Indonesians in New York City do not live in a clustered area, and instead they are scattered in various places (mostly Queens and Brooklyn). In fact, there are only two Indonesian families living within walking distance from Masjid Al-Hikmah. Therefore in a typical *jamaah* prayer, the Indonesians are outnumbered by Muslims from other countries who live nearby, such as Algiers, Jordan, and Yemen, as well as African-American Muslims.

The proportion of Indonesian congregants is better on the Friday prayer, which is compulsory prayer for male Muslim and has to be done in the mosques. Around thirty percent out of about four hundred congregants are Indonesian, and many see it as the place and opportunity where they can see other Indonesians. The *khutba* (sermon) in the Friday congregation is delivered in English. The common topic delivered in the sermon is more about how Muslims can improve their *iman* (faith) and *taqwa* (piety) more than anything else. The larger and more complex issues—such as the development of Islamic intellectual thoughts, the discourse on “Pan-Islam” American beyond ethnicities, etc—are rarely touched upon. The donation boxes are circulated during the sermon, and typically Masjid Al-Hikmah receives around eight hundred dollars.

Pengajian Activities

Masjid Al-Hikmah is a home for several *pengajian* (a gathering in which Islamic teachings are discussed). A *pengajian* usually begins with the recitation of the Qur’an, followed by a lecture on Islam and continues with the question and answer session. The first is the



monthly *pengajian*, which is usually attended by about fifty Indonesians, and is held on the second Saturday of each month. This *pengajian* is considered to be the continuation of the monthly *pengajian* that used to be held at the Indonesian Consulate office prior the existence of Masjid Al-Hikmah. Furthermore, Masjid Al-Hikmah also offers its weekly *pengajian*, which is attended by a smaller number of Indonesians. While the monthly *pengajian* discusses general topics on how to improve the Muslims' faith and piety, the weekly *pengajian* is more focused on learning and interpreting the Quran. Masjid Al-Hikmah is also used by some Indonesian Muslim students who are studying in New York City for their own weekly *pengajian* every Friday evening, which is called *Pengajian Ulil Albab*. The word *ulil albab* is mentioned sixteen times in the Quran, which literally means a thoughtful person who can balance his intellectuality and spirituality. In this *pengajian*, which is attended by between five to ten people (only a couple of them is the second generation Indonesian migrants), they learn, among other things, how to read the Quran, followed by the interpretation of the verses. All of the *pengajian* mentioned above are mainly delivered in Bahasa Indonesia, because the addressed audience is Indonesian. Additionally, starting in the Summer of 2000, the Imam of Masjid Al-Hikmah initiated a *halaqa* (literally "circle") after the *Isha* (evening) prayer from Monday to Thursday. In this *halaqa*, the attendees will listen to a short talk, between ten to fifteen minutes, from appointed congregants or the imam about various aspects of Islam. The talk is in English, since the attendees, as mentioned above, are mainly not Indonesian. There are between five to ten people, out of fifteen to twenty congregants attending the *Isha* prayer remain in the mosque to participate in the *halaqa*.

Education Activities

One of the programs that is commonly launched once a mosque is established, regardless of its size, is to provide some sort of Islamic education for children and younger generations. Islamic education has been seen as one of the very important last bastions for maintaining Islamic identity. Many larger and financially stronger Islamic communities have established full-time Islamic private schools, so that in 2001 there were more than 170 such schools in the United States, of which about twenty schools were located in New York City (Nimer, 2002). Other mosques and Islamic centers, due to the constraints they have, provide the community with a more limited Islamic education. Masjid Al-Hikmah, for example, offers the Saturday School, where elementary and middle school children can learn about Islam. As mentioned previously, the Saturday School began even before Masjid Al-Hikmah was established, and stemmed from some parents' concern about the lack of Islamic teaching and values in their children's education. Currently, with about one hundred students, of which around fifteen students are non-Indonesians, Saturday School can be regarded as Masjid Al-Hikmah's spearhead of its community services. Achmad Padang states that: "Indeed, we thank to God that in such a society like New York, where the pull factors to other directions are strong, we manage to have the Saturday School, and to amass the human resources to do that" (personal communication, August 19, 2005).

Other Social Services

When the tsunami struck in late 2004, the Indonesian province of Aceh was hit the worst with more than 170,000 people killed compared to other affected areas. The effect of the disaster was also felt in New York City, where no less than fifteen Indonesian families lost hundreds of relatives back home (Eisenberg, 2005). The following months after the

tsunami, Masjid Al-Hikmah was the focal point of the relief efforts. It received a large amount of donations as well as other necessities such as clothes and medicines from many sources beside from the Indonesians themselves (such as from churches, other Muslim communities, schoolchildren, etc.) Volunteers, Indonesian and non-Indonesian, Muslim and non-Muslim alike, were flocking to the mosque to sort the clothes and other donated items. According to Imat Badrudin, the Coordinator of the relief effort, Masjid Al-Hikmah received donations as much as US\$ 250,000 and three shipments of supplies. Certainly, the scale of the tsunami disaster called for big attention. However, in the times of smaller disasters, such as the landslide in Central Java Province for instance, Masjid Al-Hikmah also collected donations from Indonesians to be sent to Indonesia.

Masjid Al-Hikmah is also the place where Indonesian families remember their relatives who passed away. During my fieldwork, for example, there were at least three *ghaib* prayers for those who have died in distant places. Masjid Al-Hikmah has also frequently been used for *tahlilan*, a gathering that is organized to remember the dead, in which the attendees will read the Quran, especially Chapter Yaa Sin. Interestingly, in Indonesia such a gathering is held in the home of the person who just passed away, and is rarely held by other family members in distant places.

Another important Masjid Al-Hikmah's community service is weddings. Not only do some Indonesians but also other Muslim immigrants have their *walima* (the wedding reception given to friends and family after the formal Islamic marriage contract has been done) held in Masjid Al-Hikmah. During my fieldwork, there were three Indonesian and one Bosnian wedding. Furthermore, Achmad Padang acquired a license that gives him the right to declare that a couple has married. That way, the couple that wants to get married can be

served better, because they can do the marriage contract according to Islamic teachings and then hold the wedding ceremony in the basement of the mosque.

Another well attended program of Masjid Al-Hikmah is the bazaars, which are usually held in the summer in its parking lot. I observed two bazaars that were held during my fieldwork. Masjid Al-Hikmah provided around twenty tables for the participants for 50 US dollars. One of the tables sold CDs of contemporary and old Indonesian music and DVDs of Indonesian movies. However, most of the participants sold traditional foods from various parts of Indonesia, such as *mpeke-mpeke* Palembang (South Sumatra), *sate* Padang (West Sumatra), *soto* Betawi (Jakarta), *coto* Makassar (South Sulawesi), *cendol* and *es campur*. In short, on that particular day Indonesians are gastronomic tourists on a piece of land in New York City, while meeting with old and new friends.

Interfaith Activities

On the first day I went to Masjid Al-Hikmah, I was struck by an inspiring mural on the wall of a carpet store in the corner between Broadway Avenue and 48th Street, Queens. Exiting the 46th street subway station, and then walking one block to Masjid Al-Hikmah, nobody, especially a newcomer like me, would fail to notice this mural. The stripes of the American flag dominated half of the wall. Interestingly, there were no stars on the blue rectangular part of the flag. Instead, some different images had replaced it, i.e. the Star of David, the Cross, the crescent and moon, the Omkar, the sculpture of Buddha, and some other religious images that I am not familiar with. On the left bottom, the artists had tried his/her best to draw some faces of people from different races. On the stripes of the flag, there is an imposing writing—it says “United We Stand.” Bearing in mind that Queens is so diverse, both in terms of religion and ethnic origins, I had expected that there was dynamic

and active interfaith activities undertaken by mosques, churches and other religious institutions.

Masjid Al-Hikmah, however, does not have a systematic and proactive interfaith program. When I asked Achmad Padang about this matter, he replied “Much of our energy is devoted to the internal community services, because no matter what we are still a small community with limited resources” (personal communication, August 19, 2005).

Nevertheless, it does not mean that Masjid Al-Hikmah was and is not involved in such programs. In the first years of its establishment, for example, Masjid Al-Hikmah hosted several meetings with Indonesian Christian representatives to share information and opinions. Achmad Padang asserted that kind of meeting should be the responsibility of the Consulate General office since it deals with the Indonesian community in general.

Furthermore, Masjid Al-Hikmah also has been the host of visiting Christian organizations several times. During my fieldwork, there were at least three such delegations visiting Masjid Al-Hikmah, where the Imam or Achmad Padang introduced Islam to them. Masjid Al-Hikmah’s experience is in concordance with what Bagby (2004) found in his study on American mosques. He found that 65 percent of the mosques had participated in different sorts of interfaith dialogue, which was much higher compared to all religious congregations in the “Faith Communities Today” study that found only 6 percent of these congregations participated in any interfaith programs. However, the great majority of the interfaith participations were passive ones, which is basically in response to, for example, invitations from churches or interfaith organizations to speak on Islam, or to be a host of people of other faiths as well as school visits. Such opportunities were increasing, especially in the wake of 9/11 attacks. Indeed, only a few mosques have takes the initiative in arranging interfaith activities.

Syamsi Ali: From Pakistan to Manhattan

Despite lacking organized interfaith initiatives, Masjid Al-Hikmah, however, used to be quite active in participating in such programs, especially through the involvement of Syamsi Ali. Born in South Sulawesi province, Syamsi Ali studied at the International Islamic University, Pakistan, both for his undergraduate in the Quran exegesis and masters in comparative religions. He came to New York City in the late 1996 as a local staff member of the Permanent Mission of Indonesia to the United Nations. He quickly became heavily involved in Masjid Al-Hikmah activities as the coordinator of the Education Department from 1996 to 1998, as well as the speaker in the *pengajian*. His latest position in Masjid Al-Hikmah was Vice Chairman of the Board of Trustees which he held until 2004. Currently, he is less directly involved in Masjid Al-Hikmah's activities, and is more active in his new position as one of the imams at the Islamic Cultural Center of New York³ and, starting on early Summer 2004, as the Director of Jamaica Muslim Center which was founded by South Asian immigrants. At the the Islamic Cultural Center, one of his duties is dealing with interfaith programs, such as a program called "Islamic Forum for non-Muslims."

Syamsi Ali has an eager interest to widen his networks, so that he was soon involved in some interfaith activities and made contacts with other Islamic community leaders in New York City. The interfaith NGO Inter-Religious Federation for World Peace (IWRP) appointed him as one of the Ambassadors for Peace on October 2002 for his involvement in the Muslim World Day Parade and other interfaith activities (Pohan, 2004). For several times he was the chairman of the organizing committee of the Muslim World Day Parade, which is held in every third week of September since 1986 emulating other famous civic parades such as St. Patrick's Day Parade, in New York (see Sylmovics, 1996). Furthermore,

for him, the 9/11 attacks have brought a blessing in disguise and opportunities for Muslims to come forward. On September 13, 2001, the Interfaith Center of New York held a press conference, where some community leaders of various religions spoke, including Syamsi Ali, to respond to the attacks.⁴ Several days later, on September 23, 2001, Syamsi Ali was one of the Muslims who took the stage representing Muslims in the interfaith services called “A Prayer for America” which was held in Yankee Stadium, where he read some passages of the Qur’an in Arabic. The service was held by the City, and was attended by about 20,000 people, including important figures such as Major Rudi Gulliani, Governor George Pataki, Oprah Winfrey, Placido Domingo, etc. (McFadden, 2001).

Indeed, it was the New York City atmosphere that actually had opened his eyes about the importance of interfaith dialogue. He said:

When I was in Pakistan and Saudi Arabia, my perception of other people of faith was quite different with what I have now. My field experience in New York City opened my eyes that we unavoidably have to interact with different peoples. Many of us were influenced by old conceptions towards Christians, especially who we see them as the colonialists. We are overworried that they will Christianize us, so we tend to be overprotective of ourselves. When I got here, the facts spoke differently. I realize that establishing relationships will result in many positive things. Indeed, for the *da’wah* [the propagation] of Islam, it will give more benefits. Besides, if we trace this issue to Islamic theological roots, we will find that the foundations to build mutual respectful relationships are very strong in Islam. The Qur’an mentions in several places that we need to invite people into the same platform, the common ground. This is a much better way to introduce Islam and to avoid the misunderstanding. So

I see interfaith dialog and activities as urgent for us. (personal communication, August 8, 2005)

Syamsi Ali's interfaith activities became more intensive after the 9/11 attacks. He was many times invited to speak with church groups (he, for one, gave a talk at the Cathedral of St. John the Divine, New York City, which is the biggest cathedral in the world), City officials, city police, and other communities. He asserted that the dialogue needs to be started from the common ground, such the fact that Muslims believe in Jesus' prophethood as one of the main prophets in Islam, the religious tolerance in Islamic history, etc. Much of the interfaith programs he participated in or managed were possible due more to his interests and networks rather than programs were assigned by the management of Masjid Al-Hikmah. Therefore, when he is more involved in his current position as an Imam at the Islamic Cultural Center and the director of Jamaica Muslim Center, his Masjid Al-Hikmah's involvement in interfaith activities is declining considerably. Syamsi Ali acknowledges that much energy needs to be devoted to the consolidation of the Indonesian Muslim community, which is still in its early development and small in number compared to other established communities. However, he asserts that to some extent the relationship with other communities, both Muslims and non-Muslims, needs to be cultivated, considering the diversity of New York City

Conclusion:

A Fragmented *Umma* and a Transnational Community in the Making?

In the previous discussion, I have shown that the Indonesian Muslim community in New York City has concentrated their activities to fulfill more the needs of Indonesian Muslims in particular, and Muslims who live in close proximity to the mosque. In other

words, its activities are directed toward its closest constituencies. Little attention and activities have been devoted to participate within the larger context of American Muslims (such as networks building with other Muslim communities or Muslim's interest groups and NGOs). Activities and attention to connect the Indonesian Muslim community to the American community in general (such as with interfaith or conflict management programs) are virtually absent in Masjid Al-Hikmah. Achmad Padang maintains, "Much of the resources are spent to keep the internal activities and the mosque running. Not only do we lack of human resources, but also financial resources" (personal communication, August 19, 2005). Although Syamsi Ali has emerged as one of the Muslim leaders in New York City from the Indonesian Muslim community with his activities in broader Muslim communities and involvement in many interfaith programs, this stems more from his personal concerns than from purposeful or systematic programs from Masjid Al-Hikmah.

In any case, with all the activities, from the Saturday School to *tablilan* and *yasinan*, Masjid Al-Hikmah has served the Indonesian Muslim community in fulfilling their "homing desire" (Brah, 1996). Transnational communities (some call them diasporic communities) do not necessarily hold a desire to return to their homeland, and instead they create avenues in many modes in which they can re-visit their original culture (Brah, 1996). In the month of Ramadhan, for example, Masjid Al-Hikmah is the host of large gatherings to break the fast of the day, when Indonesian traditional foods donated by congregants are served. One Indonesian commented: "Whenever I am here in the mosque, I do not feel that I am in America. New York has become my own village." Masjid Al-Hikmah has served as a kind of reterritorialized social, cultural and spiritual mooring post for Indonesian Muslims in New York City.

Another interesting issue is how Indonesian Muslims in New York see themselves within the *ummah*, the community of Believers. Indeed, Muslims always associate and identify themselves with the *umma*, referring to the phrase *umma wahida* (the one community) from Chapter Al-Baqarah: 213 in the Qur'an. Furthermore, Prophet Muhammad is frequently quoted as saying that: "You see the believers in regards to their being merciful among themselves and showing love among themselves and being kind, resembling one body, so that, if any part of the body is not well then the whole body shares the sleeplessness (insomnia) and fever with it."⁵ The solidarity with the plight of the Palestinians, for example, is based on the argument that they are Muslims needing help from their Muslim brothers and sisters around the world. While most Muslims believe that they are one community in the sense of one communion, some transnational radical groups such as Hizb ut-Tahrir (Party of Liberation) strive to materialize politically by establishing a global caliphate in which all Muslims are their subjects (Mandaville, 2001). The issue of American Muslim identity has also been the focus of several national conferences which were by Islamic organizations in the United States, and become topic of many public talks and lectures (Haddad, 2000). In this regard, Hathout (in Haddad, 2000) criticizes the development of ethnic mosques and ethnic-based Islamic Centers because, according to him, they are not built for driving and guiding American Muslims in the future. He argues: ". . . these were not built for America after all. They are built so that I do not feel lonely. I am scared out there and I need my buddies to come together the way we used to huddle back home" (quoted in Haddad, 2000, p. 35). Moreover, he states that while such mosques may provide comfort for the immigrant parents, they are giving their children an alienating experience because they are being raised in America. I second Hathout's view and see that Masjid Al-Hikmah has

given comfort for first generation Indonesian Muslims in New York City. It has served as their point of reference, their spiritual and cultural mooring.

However, although the conception of *umma*, Muslim's global community transcending national and ethnic groups, is very much alive in the imagination of Muslims in New York City (D'Agostino, 2003), there is a few active discourse in daily lives of ordinary Muslims to materialize it, in the sense of the creation of new "Pan-Islamic" American-Muslim identity. Indeed, there have been some efforts to create the sense of community among Muslims in New York City, as exemplified vividly in the annual Muslim World Day Parade in Manhattan, in which Syamsi Ali has been very active in organizing. The participants of this parade, which was held for the first time in 1986, are Muslims from different ethnic groups in New York City with their banners, signs and floats, which is also accompanied by an Irish Band (Mohammad-Arif, 2002; Slyomovics 1995, 1996). When asked why a parade, one of the organizers stated, "New York City is the city of parades. We saw other parades show their communities' strength, so we thought we have to do this too" (quoted in Slyomovics, 1995, p. 160). Furthermore, according to Mohammad-Arif (2002), although the number of participants is dropping year by year (indicating that the desire to demonstrate solidarity does not suffice to mobilize Muslims), the parade is significant because it enables Muslims to imprint their presence on the American landscape. The growing significance of Muslims in New York City might be shown through the avenue in which the parade is held (prestigious Madison Avenue), whereas previously it was held on Lexington Avenue. According to Slyomovics (1995), there is a type of hierarchy of New York City ethnic parades, in which the most prestigious Fifth Avenue is designated for older and more powerful groups (such as Irish, Jews, Polish, and Hispanics) by the provision of

the City Charter. The latecomers are relegated to other routes such as on Lexington Avenue or even Battery Park at the southern tip of Manhattan.

As I mentioned before, in their daily lives ordinary Muslims are more associated and identify themselves with their own ethnic groups or nationality instead of the Muslim *umma* in New York City. When I asked Achmad Padang about the involvement of Masjid Al-Hikmah in building the Muslim community in New York City, he replied: “We have participated sporadically in such efforts. We have not been involved that much. Basically, we are still concentrating on our intern activities” (personal communication, August 1, 2005). This tendency is also reflected in the *khutbah* (sermons) in Friday prayers. The topics of most *khutbah* in Friday prayers during my fieldwork were about the improvement of personal piety. Only one *khutbah*, which was delivered by an African-American Muslim, addressed the congregants about the issue of Muslims in America, among other things was the necessity of Islamic education for the next generations and the youths. My conversations with many first generation Indonesian Muslims revealed that they know famous Muslim preachers in Indonesia, such as Abdullah Gymnastiar, but they do not know well-known American Muslim preachers, such as Hamzah Yusuf. That is also the case with my respondents from 1.5- and second-generation Indonesian Muslims, with the exception of one person. In this regard, my observation has confirmed what D’Agostino (2003) and Mohammad-Arif (2002) have found which is, despite the effort of the elites and community leaders to bridge the communication among different ethnic groups of Muslims, they are in fact still fragmented. In other words, the sense of the part of global *umma* does not translate into similar connection within the same territory of New York City. Hence, it is a fragmented *umma*.

The activities I have described above also show the shortcomings of Roy’s (2004) discussion on deterritorialized Islam. Roy argues that in many Muslim diaspora communities

(primarily those in Europe where he conducted most of his study) a kind of transnational identity has emerged. This identity is based on a deterritorialized Islam, in which Islam is delinked from the cultures in which Muslim communities originated. Transnational Muslims from various countries are forged in Islam, in which Islam is treated as a “mere” religion that does not have culturally local attachments and insists on the local-culture-free universal Islam. While it is true that some transnational Muslim fundamentalist groups hold the deterritorialized Islam perspectives, and have attracted deterritorialized Muslim youths, Roy has overlooked the parallel logic of reterritorialization of transnational phenomenon. My description of Masjid Al-Hikmah activities show how contesting identities—Islam, homeland, ethnicity, and “host cultures”—are negotiated and reterritorialize in the transnational lives of Indonesian Muslims in New York City. The reterritorialized *yasinan* and *tahlilan* for the deceased, for example, are local-cultural Islamic practices in Indonesia, which are regarded as un-Islamic for some Muslims because they were not practiced by the Prophet himself. Therefore, Roy’s hurried association between deterritorialized Muslims and what he has called deterritorialized Islam (at least in the case of current Indonesian Muslims in New York City) does not always happen.

However, I think Masjid Al-Hikmah has served Indonesians differently than most mosques in Indonesia or other Muslim countries. As I have described above, the Indonesian Muslims’ attendance of the five times daily prayers and the Friday prayer are superseded by other congregants from various other ethnic and national origins. Since Indonesian Muslims live scattered around Queens (only two families live in walking distance of the mosque), Masjid Al-Hikmah is attended by Muslims from many nationalities who live nearby. There is no “little Indonesia” in Queens, New York City. Consequently, the question of whether Indonesian Muslims in New York City have formed a community which is centered, as in

other Muslim communities, in the mosque is justifiably raised. In this regard, I will draw on the social network perspectives on community, which was proposed by sociologist Barry Wellman (1999). Basically, he argued that we need to reconsider our association of community with neighborhood. While the essence of community is social relationships, the neighborhood is about boundaries and locality. While in the past, communities were confined to neighborhoods, today's transportation and communication technologies have transformed communities into social networks. Being in a different neighborhood than one's social network does not hinder one to develop intimate, sociable, and supportive relationships. However, Wellman asserts that "communities have not totally lost their domestic roots" (p. 27). I would argue that Masjid Al-Hikmah is the Indonesian Muslims' domestic root, where they can reterritorialize their sense of community in the yearly *Idul Fitr* prayer, Friday prayer, monthly *pengajian*, breaking fast together during the month of Ramadhan, *yasinan* and *tahlilan* for the dead in the community, wedding ceremonies, or when a disaster such as the tsunami struck their homeland. I come to this understanding from the conversations I had or overheard on several occasions. Some Indonesians who I had never met in the mosque during my fieldwork kept mentioning Masjid Al-Hikmah as "our mosque" or the "Indonesian mosque" in conversation. Thus, Masjid Al-Hikmah has become ingrained in the consciousness of the Indonesian Muslim community in New York City as a cultural and spiritual mooring in their social networks of their transnational lives.

Bibliography

- Allievi, S., & Nielsen, J. (2003). *Muslim networks and transnational communities in and across Europe*. Leiden and Boston: Brill.
- Ba-Yunus, I., and Kone, K. (2004). Muslims Americans: A demographic report. In Z. H. Bukhari, S. S. Nyang, M. Ahmad, & J. L. Esposito (Eds.), *Muslims' place in the American public square: Hope, fears, and aspirations* (pp. 299-322). Walnut Creek, CA: Altamira Press.
- Bagby, I. (2004). The mosque and the American public square. In Z. H. Bukhari, S. S. Nyang, M. Ahmad, & J. L. Esposito (Eds.), *Muslims' place in the American public square: Hope fears, and aspirations* (pp. 323-346). Walnut Creek, CA: Altamira Press.
- Barnes, J. S. & Bennett, C. E. (2002). *The Asian Population: 2000. Census 2000 Brief*. Washington DC: U.S. Department of Commerce. U.S. Census Bureau.
- Brah, A. (1996). *Cartographies of diaspora: Contesting identities*. London & New York: Routledge.
- Bukhari, Z. H., Nyang, S. S., Ahmad, M., and Esposito, J. L. (Eds.). (2004). *Muslims' place in the American public square: Hope, fears, and aspirations*. Walnut Creek, CA: Altamira Press.
- Cesari, J. (2004). *When Islam and democracy meet: Muslims in Europe and the United States*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Cristillo, L. A., & Minnite, L. C. (2002). The Changing Arab New York Community. In K. Benson & P. M. Kayal, *A community of many worlds: Arab Americans in New York City* (pp. 124-139). New York: Museum of the City of New York and Syracuse University Press.

- D'Agostino, M. (2003). Muslim personhood: Translation, transnationalism and Islamic religious education among Muslims in New York City. *Journal of Muslim Minority Affairs* (23)2, pp. 285-294.
- Danico, M. Y., & Ng, F. (2004). *Asian American issues*. Westport, CT: Greenwood Press.
- Dodds, J. D. (2002). NY-Masjid: The mosques of New York. In K. Benson & P. M. Kayal, *A community of many worlds: Arab Americans in New York City* (pp. 170-177-139). New York: Museum of the City of New York and Syracuse University Press.
- Dodds, J. D. & Grazda, E. (2002). *New York masjid: The mosques of New York City*. New York: Powerhouse Book.
- Eisenberg, C. (2005, January 9). Mosque community mourns family lost in tsunami. *NY Newsday*. Retrieved August 25, 2005 from <http://www.nynewsday.com/news/local/queens/nyc-mos0110,0,4373645.story>.
- Espiritu, Y. L. (2003). *Homebound: Filipino American lives accross cultures, communities and countries*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.
- Fong, T. (2002). *The contemporary Asian-American experience: Beyond the model minority*. 2nd ed. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall.
- Forner, N. (2000). *From Ellis Island to JFJ: New York two great waves of immigration*. New Haven and New York: Yale University Press and Russel Sage Foundation.
- Garoogian, D. (2005). (Ed.). *The Asian databook: Detailed statistics and rankings on the Asian and Pacific Islander population, including 23 ethnic backgrounds from Bangladeshi to Vietnamese, for 1,883 U.S. counties and cities*. Millerton NY: Grey House Publishing, Inc.
- Haddad, Y. Y. (2000). The dynamics of Islamic identity in North America. In Y. Y. Haddad & J. L. Esposito (Eds.), *Muslims on the Americanization path?* (pp. 19-46). New York: Oxford University Press.

- Haddad, Y. Y., & Smith, J. I. (Eds.). (2002). *Muslim minorities in the West: Visible and invisible*. Walnut Creek, CA: Altamira Press.
- Khalidi, O. (1998). Approaches to mosque design in North America. In Y. Y. Haddad & J. L. Esposito (Eds.), *Muslims on the Americanization Path?* (pp. 317-334). Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press.
- Khan, M. M. A. (2002). *American Muslims: Bridging Faith and Freedom*. Beltsville MA: Amana Publications.
- Kusno, A. (2003). 'The reality of one-which-is-two'—Mosque battles and other stories: Notes on architecture, religion and politics in the Javanese world. *Journal of Architectural Education* 57 (1), pp. 57-67.
- Lee, J., & Zhou, M. (Eds.) (2004). *Asian American youth: Culture, identity, and ethnicity*. New York: Routledge.
- Leonard, K. (2003). American Muslim Politics: Discourses and Practices. *Ethnicities*, 3(2), pp. 147-181.
- Lotfi, A. (2001). Creating Muslim space in the USA: *Masajids* and Islamic Centers. *Islam and Christian-Muslim Relations* 12 (2), pp 235-254.
- Manalansan IV, M. F. (Ed). (2000). *Cultural compass: Ethnographic explorations of Asian America*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press.
- Mandaville, P. (2001). *Transnational Muslim politics: Reimagining the umma*. London and New York: Routledge.
- Masjid Indonesia dipadati Jamaah Idul Fitri [The Indonesia mosque was full of Idul Fitri congregation]. (2004, November 14). *Gatra*. Retrieved December 15, 2005, from <http://www.gatra.com/2004-12-03/artikel.php?id=49060>

- McFadden, R.D. (2001, September 24). A Nation challenged: The service. *The New York Times*, Section B, Column 1, p. 7.
- Min, P. G. (2006). Asian immigration: History and contemporary trends. In P. G. Min (Ed.), *Asian-Americans: Contemporary trends and issues* (pp. 7-31). Thousand Oaks, CA: Pine Forge Press.
- Mohamad-Arif, A. (2002). *Saalam America: South Asian Muslims in New York*. London: Anthem Press.
- Moore, K. M. (1995). *Al-Mughtaribun: American law and the transformation of Muslim life in the United States*. Albany, NY: State University of New York.
- Morley, D., & Robins, K. (1995). *Spaces of identity: Global media, electronic landscape and cultural boundaries*. London & New York: Routledge.
- Nimer, M. (2002). *The North American Muslim resource guide: Muslim community life in the United States and Canada*. New York & London: Routledge.
- Nyang, S. (1999). *Islam in the United States of America*. Chicago: ABC International Group, Inc.
- Pak Harto akan Bantu Masjid Indonesia di New York [President Suharto will help Indonesian Mosque in New York]. (1995, October 27). *Republika*. Retrieved December 20, 2005 from <http://www.republika.co.id>.
- Pohan, R. (2004, October 8). Ust. Syamsi Ali, MA: Dubes untuk Perdamaian [M. Syamsi Ali, MA: The Ambassador for Peace. *Jawa Pos*.
- Ramirez, R. (2000). *We the people: Hispanic in the United States. Census 2000 special report*. Washington DC: U.S. Department of Commerce. U.S. Census Bureau.
- Roy, O. (2004). *Globalized Islam*. New York: Columbia University Press.

- Sejarah Siaran Bahasa Indonesia Suara Amerika [The History of the Voice of America's Broadcasting in Bahasa Indonesia]. (2002, March-April). *Dirgantara Online*, 12. Retrieved December 20, 2005 from <http://dirgantara.idxc.org/dirga12/1202e.shtml>.
- Selama Ramadhan New York Jadi Kampung Besar Bagi WNI [During the month of Ramadhan, New York became Indonesians' big Village]. (2004, November 24). *Media Indonesia*. Retrieved December 1, 2005 from <http://www.mediaindo.co.id/berita.asp?id=51625>.
- Slyomovic, S. (1995). New York City's The Muslim World Day Parade. In P. van der Veer (Ed.), *Nation and migration: The politics of space in the South Asian diaspora* (pp. 157-177). Philadelphia: University of Philadelphia Press.
- Slyomovic, S. (1996). The Muslim World Day Parade and "storefront" mosques of New York City. In B. D. Metcalf, *Making Muslim space in North America and Europe* (pp. 204-216). Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.
- Sudjarwo. (1954). *Illustrations of the Revolution: From a unitary state to a unitary state*. Jakarta: The Ministry of Information, Republic of Indonesia
- Verbrugge, A. (Ed.). (2005). *Muslims in America*. Detroit: Greenhaven Press.
- Vertovec, S., & Rogers, A. (Eds.). (1998). *Muslim European youth: Reproducing ethnicity, religion, culture*. Aldershot, England, and Brookfield, VT: Ashgate.
- Wellman, B. (1999). The network community: An introduction. In B. Wellman (Ed.), *Networks in the global village: Life in contemporary communities* (pp. 1-47). Boulder: Westview Press.
- Werbner, P. (2002). *Imagined diaspora among Manchester Muslims: The public performance of Pakistani transnational identity politics*. Oxford: James Currey.

Zimmerman, B., & Zimmerman, M. (n.d.). Retrieved December 15, 2005 from

<http://www.hpamoedjo.com/am.imam.html>.

ENDNOTES

- ¹ Yayasan Amalbakti Muslim Pancasila, was established in February 17, 1982, by former President Suharto when he was still in power. The foundation was controversial because it collected donations by automatically deducting from the monthly salary of civil servants and members of the Indonesian Armed Forces. Although the deduction was relatively small, its being mandatory raised some grumblings. The money was used to fund Muslim interests, such as building mosques (more than nine hundred mosques have been built), partially funding the development of Islamic hospitals, and other Islamic projects. For further information, see the organization's official website: <http://www.yamp.or.id/>.
- ² Achmad Padang is among the few successful Indonesians in New York City. He came to the US in 1956 and did his doctoral work in International Relations at Columbia University. He did not finish his Ph.D. because he worked at the United Nations headquarters, and reached the highest professional position as the Director of the Center for Science and Technology Development. He retired in 1989, but was then assigned as one of governors in Cambodia as part of the UN peace mission to restore the country devastated by civil war and the notorious Khmer Rouge regime.
- ³ The Islamic Cultural Center of New York, located at the intersection of 96th Street and 3rd Avenue, is a multinational US\$ 20 million purpose-built mosque officially opened in September 1991. The Center was funded by governments of Islamic countries, mainly from the Middle East, through their permanent mission to the

United Nations. With its contemporary mosque architecture, the Center now becomes one of New York's architectural landmarks (see Khalidi, 1998; Lotfi, 2001).

- ⁴ Visit <http://www.interfaithcenter.org/muslimsrespond.shtml> to listen to the statements made by the participants. Syamsi Ali, among other things, mentioned that more than 200 million Indonesian Muslims' hearts, minds, and prayers went to American families, condemned the atrocity, underlined the diversity of the people in the United States, and thanked the US government that had differentiated between the terrorists and the religion of Islam.
- ⁵ Shahih Bukhari, Volume 8, Book 73, Number 40. Taken from USC-MSA Compendium of Muslim Text Database [n.d].