

**Paper Presented at
The AMSS 33rd Annual Conference
George Mason University
Arlington Campus – Virginia**

Sept. 24 - 26, 2004

**“More than the Umma:
An Exploratory Study of Muslim Identities”**

**By: D. Jason Berggren, Ph. D. Candidate
(Florida International University, FL)**

Abstract

Many scholars have ascribed to Islam a transnational capacity other religions lack. That is to say that Muslims are more likely than non-Muslims to identify themselves in religious terms than as members of particular national political communities. As such, it may be hypothesized that since Muslims are more likely to claim a transnational, religious identity than non-Muslims, they should consistently show weaker claims of national, regional, and municipal identity, be less willing to fight for their country, and show lower levels of national pride than non-Muslims, regardless of country, region, and majority or minority status.

Using data from the 1995-1997 World Values Survey, these propositions were examined. While the findings show that Muslims tend to be very religious, it is particularly revealing that the evidence also shows that Muslims do not exceptionally claim a transnational identity, that most Muslims have strong national feelings and are willing to fight for their country, even if it is a non-Muslim country and a non-Islamic state, and that there was often very little difference between the national feelings of Muslims and non-Muslims. Thus, it may be said that a gap exists between the ideals of faith and the realities in the world. Muslims apparently have multiple, if not overlapping, attachments to their hometowns, their countries, their country's region, and the transnational *ummah*. Islam does not necessarily eliminate or mitigate other identities. Rather, Islam appears to co-exist with other identity forms. If so, the “civilizational” approach to Islam may distort more than it reflects the attitudes of individual Muslims and particular Muslim communities.

Short Bio

D. Jason Berggren is a Ph.D. student and instructor in Political Science at Florida International University. He holds a B.A. from Eckerd College and an M.A. from Florida State University, with both degrees in religion. He was an adjunct professor of Religion at Broward Community College (1997-2002). He has published articles in the *Middle East Affairs Journal*, *The Political Bandwagon*, *The Keynote*, *Adjunct Info*, and was the editor and publisher of *Religion Matters* (2000-2002). His research interests include the American presidency, Southern politics, and religion and American politics.

More Than the *Ummah*: An Exploratory Study of Muslim Identities

Islam is a transnational, global religion. It is also the world's second largest religion, behind Christianity, and the fastest growing. But what is of particular interest here is not Islam's rise and size, but its transnational, civilization-making potential.

Many scholars, Muslim and non-Muslim alike, have ascribed to Islam a transnational capacity that other religions lack. That is to say that Muslims are more likely than say Christians or Buddhists to identify themselves in religious terms than as members of particular national political communities. The reason for this is because, as Bernard Lewis explained, "Islam is not only a matter of faith and practice; it is also an identity and a loyalty."¹ In fact, Islam is to be the highest marker of one's identity, the *ummah Islamiyya* or Islamic community of believers.² As stated in the Quran, "Ye are the best of peoples, evolved for mankind, enjoining what is right, forbidding what is wrong, and believing in Allah" (3:110).³ By implication, since Islam is a transnational religion, the *ummah* is a transnational community bound by ties of faith than by blood or civitas. "Know that every Muslim is a Muslim's brother, and that the Muslims are brethren."⁴ Therefore, intranational and national identities are to be subordinated to, if not rejected in favor of, a pan-Islamic identity which ideally will culminate in a world of peace when "all people come under the protection of an Islamic state," when the whole world is *dar al-islam* (house or territory of submission).⁵ Mir Zohair Husain wrote, "the primary loyalty of Muslim citizens is to the *ummah*, rather than the [non-Islamic] state, and to the *Shariah* [Islamic law], rather than the ruler."⁶ Nonetheless, the ruler did foster ummahic ties. For many centuries in the history of Islam, many Muslims did live under the earthly protection and authority of a single ruler, such as the Ottoman sultan, who

was viewed as the legitimate successor to the Prophet Muhammad (*khalifa*), “the commander of the faithful” (*amir al-mu'minin*), and was “a potent symbol of Muslim unity, even identity.”⁷ It may be said, then, that if there is an “Islamic exceptionalism,” Islamic transnationalism may be one of its cornerstones.⁸

Descriptively and empirically, some scholars have apparently found this to be true. Bernard Lewis explained that unlike Christianity, which converted an empire and blended with Greco-Roman civilization, “Islam in contrast created a world civilization, polyethnic, multiracial, international, one might even say intercontinental.”⁹ Moreover, when nationalism did emerge in the Middle East and in other corners of the Islamic world, Lewis says, it was imported from Europe.¹⁰ Mansoor Moaddel and Taqhi Azadarmaki found that among the Muslim populations in Egypt, Jordan, and Iran religious identity was by far a more important source of identity than national origin, and James Zogby has reported, based on survey data collected in 2002 by Zogby International, that Muslims in several Arab countries have very strong Muslim identities, too.¹¹

The purpose of the *ummah* is twofold: 1) reflect the oneness and indivisibility of God (*tawhid*) on earth, 2) to serve as “the vehicle for realizing God’s will on earth.”¹² Many Islamic practices are intended to reinforce ummahic ties among Muslims, such as reading and memorizing the Quran in Arabic, praying five times daily in Arabic in the direction of the holy city of Mecca, attending *jumab* services on Friday, celebrating the annual *eids* or holidays, and taking part in the *hajj* or pilgrimage to Mecca at least once in a lifetime.¹³ For instance, Malcolm X once said that what impressed him most about making the *hajj* was its transnational character: “The brotherhood! The people of all races, colors, from all over the world coming together as one! It has proved to me the power of the One God.”¹⁴

But even more than the religious rituals that promote the ummahic ideal, experts contend, is the comprehensive, organic character of Islam. Unlike the Christian tendency to divide what is sacred from what is profane, what is religious from what is political, Islam brings together.¹⁵ In Islam, as was originally established by the Prophet Muhammad, there is to be no separation of mosque and state, God and Caesar, laity and citizenry.¹⁶ As Bernard Lewis wrote, “From the lifetime of its founder, Islam was the state, and the identity of religion and government is indelibly stamped on the memories and awareness of the faithful from their own sacred writings, history, and experience.”¹⁷ In effect, then, Islam de-legitimizes the secular, or “religiousless,” state.¹⁸ The *ummah*, then, is intended to be as much “a political society” as it is to be “a religious community.”¹⁹ In short, Islam is frequently envisioned as a transnational religio-political project and to this end individual Muslims, wherever they may be, are to strive.²⁰

The purpose here is to explore whether or not the Islamic ideal of transnational, ummahic identity is confirmed empirically at the micro-level. According to James Piscatori, this is a crucial academic task and one he has tackled qualitatively.²¹ It may also be of consequence to policymakers who have tended in the recent past to overlook religion’s capacity to provide a political community its ultimate source of identity.²² Far too frequently, the ideal of Islam is taken as a truism without taking into account as to what Muslims across the Islamic world actually say their primary markers of identity are. But more specifically, the purpose here is to explore whether or not Muslims in multiple national/regional contexts are more likely to identify themselves in transnational, rather than national, terms and they are more likely to do so than non-Muslims. Additionally, one should discover that Muslims in one country, regardless of region or continent and regardless of majority, plurality, or minority status, should express different opinions from non-Muslims and similar opinions to other Muslims. If so, then, Islam could be said to be

an exceptionally, transnational faith as is often said in descriptive accounts. Beyond just exploring the micro-level opinions of Muslims in Muslim-majoritarian countries²³; the opinions of Muslim minorities will be explored as well.

Data and Cases

Data for this article comes from the 1995-1997 World Values Survey (WVS), which provides a useful and representative geographic sampling of the Islamic world.²⁴ Data are available to examine and compare countries with Muslim minorities and majorities. Specifically, sizeable data are available on Muslim majorities and minorities in South Asia (India, Pakistan, and Bangladesh), one sub-Saharan African country (Nigeria), and Muslim majorities and minorities in and around the Balkan-Caucasian region (Bosnia-Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Macedonia, Georgia, Azerbaijan, and Turkey) and will be examined and compared here using frequencies and percentages. Such comparisons, based upon the data available, may show to some extent whether or not Muslims in one part of the Islamic world hold unique religious attitudes and sources of identity or they may provide insights as to whether there is something truly transnational about Islam.

In the six cases where there are significant Muslim minorities, a Muslim plurality, or a bare Muslim majority, three have Orthodox Christian majorities (Bulgaria, Georgia, Macedonia), one a Hindu majority (India), one with two major Christian minorities (Bosnia), the four Balkan-Caucasian countries with sizeable Secular or non-religious minorities, and one with three major Christian minorities (Nigeria). Four of our cases have Muslim supermajorities: Azerbaijan, Bangladesh, Pakistan, and Turkey. Of these, Bangladesh, Pakistan, and Turkey are among the top five largest Muslim countries in the world, preceded only by Indonesia. The cases included here additionally reflect an even balance, five each, of industrial and agrarian states.²⁵

The cases here also reflect different periods of independence. Based on the Samuel Huntington's classification scheme, two of the cases (Bulgaria and Turkey) here became independent in the first global wave of democratization, four during the second wave (India, Pakistan, Nigeria, and Bangladesh), and four during the third wave (Azerbaijan, Georgia, Macedonia, and Bosnia).²⁶

Six of our cases are also member or observer states within the Organization for the Islamic Conference, an international organization of 57 member states and three observer states committed to strengthening "Islamic solidarity among Member States" and "pool their resources together, combine their efforts, and speak with one voice to safeguard the interests and secure the progress of and well-being of their peoples and of all Muslims in the world."²⁷ One major limitation in the 1995-1997 WVS data is that no Arab Muslim countries were surveyed.

For six of the ten countries examined here, Azerbaijan, Bangladesh, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Georgia, Macedonia, and Pakistan, the 1995-1997 wave was the first time they were included in the World Values Survey project. In fact, for Azerbaijan, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Georgia, Macedonia, and Pakistan, the 1995-1997 wave was the only time they were included in the survey project; they were not included in the 1999-2001 wave. Consequently, no time series analysis could be provided for these cases. Only four countries of the ten countries, Bulgaria, India, Nigeria, and Turkey, were included in previous surveys, the 1990-1993 wave, and only Bangladesh, Bulgaria, Nigeria, and Turkey are available in the 1999-2001 survey.

The samples for each country are as follows: 2,002 Azeris (November 1996), 1,525 Bangladeshis (August 1996), 1,200 Bosnians (April 1998), 1,072 Bulgarians (December 1997), 2,593 Georgians (December 1996), 2,040 Indians (1995-1996), 995 Macedonians (December 1997), 2,769 Nigerians (Fall 1995), 733 Pakistanis (March-September 1997),

and 1,907 Turks (December 1996-January 1997). For the six heterogeneous or minority Muslim states, the Muslim samples were: 326 Bosnian Muslims or 27% of the national sample, 126 Bulgarian Muslims or 12% of the national sample, 102 Georgian Muslims or 4% of the national sample, 245 Indian Muslims or 12%, 239 Macedonian Muslims or 24%, and 310 Nigerian Muslims or 11% of the sample. Based on the religious percentages for each country provided by the CIA World Factbook 2002, Bosnia is 40% Muslim, Bulgaria 12%, Georgia 11%, India 12%, Macedonia 30%, and Nigeria 50%.²⁸ As such, four of these six cases the Muslim samples are undersampled.

Test Hypotheses

According to various scholars, Muslims have historically been less likely to identify with non-Islamic entities, such as the state or nation, than non-Muslims. This implies that Muslims are more likely to identify with Islam than more secular entities. Based upon the data available from the 1995-1997 WVS survey, the commonly held assumptions about Muslim identity may be presented in the following four hypotheses:

- H1) Since Islam is an exceptional source of identity, Muslims are more likely to claim a religious identity than non-Muslims.*
- H2) Because of the transnational character of Islam, Muslims are more likely than non-Muslims to claim a transnational, religious identity than a national, regional, or municipal identity.*
- H3) Because of the transnational character of Islam, Muslims are more likely to be less willing to fight for their country than non-Muslims.*
- H4) Because of the transnational character of Islam, Muslims are more likely to express lower levels of national pride than non-Muslims in multi-religious states.*

To measure individual religio-political identity, four variables were selected: religious identity (V182), primary and secondary geographic identity (V203 and V204), pride in national identity (V205), and willingness to fight for one's country (V110). For V182, the

specific question was, “Independently of whether you go to [religious services] or not, would you say you are...(1) a religious person, (2) not a religious person, (3) a convinced atheist.” For V203, the specific question was, “To which of these geographical groups would you say you belong first of all? (1) Locality or town where you live, (2) state or region of the country where you live, (3) [country] as a whole, (4) [continent country belongs], (5) the world as a whole.” For V204, respondents are asked their second geographic identity. For V205, the specific question was, “How proud are you to be [nationality]? (1) very proud, (2) quite proud, (3) not very proud, (4) not at all proud.” For V110, the specific question was, “Of course, we all hope that there will not be another war, but if it were to come to that, would you be willing to fight for your country?” For this question, respondents could answer “yes-no-don’t know.”

If the hypotheses are true, the data should show that Muslims are more likely to consider themselves religious than non-Muslims, less likely than non-Muslims to identify with the nation and show significant levels of transnational identification, should be less likely than non-Muslims to be willing to fight for their country, and express low or lower levels of pride in their country.

Muslim Identity

Data from the 1995-1997 World Values Survey reveals that Muslims, whether in the majority or minority, whether in Europe, Africa, or Asia, overwhelmingly considered themselves religious. In fact, they were more likely to express a personal religious identity than a national identity (Table 1). In the nine countries where the religious identity question (V182) was asked, more than three-quarters of Muslims said they were religious, and in eight cases less than half of the respondents claimed the nation as their

prime geographic identity (V203). And of those eight countries, less than 20% of Muslims in four (Bangladesh, India, Macedonia, and Nigeria) claimed national identity as their prime geographic identity. Conversely, in only one case, Turkey, did a majority of respondents claim ties to the nation as being their prime geographic identity (V203). In three cases, Azerbaijan, Bosnia, and Georgia, though, sizeable numbers did choose the nation as their principal geographic identity, 46%, 48%, and 42% respectively. Interestingly, these four countries are all located in and around the Balkan-Caucasian region.

{Insert Table 1 Here}

To some extent, Table 1 confirms the findings of Moaddel and Azadarmaki, Zogby, and Gallup that Muslims decidedly consider religion “a more important basis of identity than nationality.”²⁹ However, it should be noted that it was not possible to use here the precise measure Moaddel and Azadarmaki used because the 1995-1997 WVS survey did not include a question that asked respondents to choose between being religious above all or being nationalist above all. Nevertheless, the measures used here do show that Muslims in these nine cases clearly and overwhelmingly cite some sort of personal religious identity as opposed to a national identity.

But this is not the whole story on Muslims and identity. If we stopped here, it would appear that the conventional wisdom on Muslim attitudes toward the state and national identity are weak and tenuous, that Islam is inimical to non-Islamic sources of identity. However, the findings below show that Muslims do have a healthy attitude toward the state and nationality, regardless of majority-minority demographic status. If, for instance, we add the national identity results of V203 and V204, variables that asked

respondents to name their first and second geographic identity, one finds that many Muslims do indeed consider the nation an important, though not necessarily the most important, source of identity (Table 2). In two cases, Bosnia and Turkey, more Muslims identified themselves with the nation than considered themselves personally religious. In three other cases, Azerbaijan, Georgia, and India, more than 75% of Muslims claimed national identity. Interestingly, of these five cases, Muslims are only a supermajority in two. In the others, Bosnia, Georgia, and India, Muslims are either a plurality or a distinct minority. Consequently, majority-minority status, in and of itself, does not appear to affect identity responses. Only in Macedonia and Nigeria did less than a third and less than half of all Muslims identify with the nation. At least among the cases here, Muslim and national identity were on the whole compatible. Only in Macedonia and Nigeria was the conventional wisdom upheld.

{Insert Table 2 Here}

V205 and V110 are additionally useful measures in uncovering Muslim ties to the nation-state; it measured the level of one's national pride and willingness to fight one's country. Table 3 compares the percentage of those who said they were religious and those who said they were "very proud" to be their respective nationality and the percentage of those willing to fight for their country. Again, Turkey stands out. In fact, more Turks were "very proud" in being Turkish than claim to be a religious person and 97% would fight for their expressly secular state. Furthermore, more Azeri, Bangladeshi, Bosnian, and Indian Muslims were willing to fight for their country than claim to be religious, and nearly as many Pakistanis expressed national pride as those who claimed religious identity (85%, 90%). It is also interesting that more than two-thirds of Muslims

in Bosnia (83%), Bulgaria (77%), Georgia (68%), India (97%), and Nigeria (78%) were willing to fight for non-majoritarian Muslim countries. Once more, Macedonian Muslims were the most likely to confirm to the conventional wisdom; barely half said they would fight on behalf of their country.

{Insert Table 3 Here}

Muslim Identity Versus Non-Muslim Identity

Are Muslims less likely to express national pride and a willingness to fight for their country than non-Muslims? Table 4 shows that Muslims and non-Muslims were “very proud” of their national identity. A supermajority of Muslims in Pakistan (85.3) and Turkey (79.1) were “very proud” of their nationality. In three cases, Azerbaijan (+7.6), Bosnia (+23), and Nigeria (+14.4), Muslims had significantly more national pride than non-Muslims. In three cases, Bangladesh (-1.2), Georgia (-1.3), and India (-2.8), Muslims and non-Muslims were equally proud of their nationalities. Only in Bulgaria (-33.7) were non-Muslims significantly more proud of their nationality than Muslims.

{Insert Table 4 Here}

Table 5 shows that for the most part Muslims were as willing as non-Muslims to fight for their country, even if they lived in a majoritarian non-Muslim country. In five cases, Azerbaijan (+3%), Bangladesh (-2.4), Bosnia (+1.3), Bulgaria (+2.9), India (+2.5), and Nigeria (+10.7), Muslims were either as likely as non-Muslims or more likely than non-Muslims to express a willingness to fight. In one case, Georgia (-7.0), Muslims were slightly less likely to fight than non-Muslims. The only case where Muslims were

significantly less likely to fight for their country than non-Muslims was in Macedonia (-38.6).

{Insert Table 5 Here}

Transnationalism

On the question of transnationalism, Muslims, contrary to conventional expectations and descriptions, are not unusually transnational. Table 6 shows that in all cases, except Bangladesh, less than 20% of Muslims claimed transnational identity as their primary identity over intranational and national identity. In four of the nine cases (Bulgaria, India, Macedonia, and Nigeria), clear majorities indicated that intranational identity (town or country region) was paramount. In fact, more than 90% of Indian Muslims and nearly 80% of Nigerian Muslims identified themselves in intranational terms. In three other cases (Azerbaijan, Bosnia, and Georgia), identities among Muslims were roughly split between intranational and national, with a plurality of Azeri and Bosnian Muslims choosing national identity over intranational and a plurality of Georgian Muslims choosing intranational identity over national. Only in Turkey did national identity receive a majority of the responses. Overall, in the Balkans-Caucasus region, a plurality of Muslims were more likely to express national identification (46.1%), as opposed to intranational or transnational identification. Less than 20% of Muslims in every case, except Bangladesh, expressed transnational identity as the most important form of personal identity. The findings here may reveal a gap between the Islamic ideal of the ummah and the reality of low Muslim transnational identity. Instead, it is found that Muslims were quite attached to their towns, national regions, and nation-states.

{Insert Table 6 Here}

Challenging another core component in the conventional wisdom of Islam, Table 7 shows that Muslims were no more likely than non-Muslims to express transnational identity. In fact, in Azerbaijan, Seculars were significantly more likely than Muslims to claim transnational identity, and in Bosnia, Bulgaria, Georgia, and Macedonia, Seculars were either slightly more likely than or just as likely as Muslims to claim transnational identity. In Nigeria, Orthodox and Protestant Christians were more likely than Muslims to claim transnational identity; Catholics were just as likely as Muslims to be transnationalist. In India, there was virtually no difference between Muslims and Hindus on transnationalism; transnational identity barely registers in either community. In the lone case where Muslim transnational identity prevailed, Bangladesh, Hindus were also transnational. More than 97% in each community expressed transnational identity.

{Insert Table 7 Here}

If one looks at this from the perspective of Samuel Huntington, this must be surprising. Huntington, for instance, wrote that the Bosnian war in the mid-1990s was “a war of civilizations,” a war among the Islamic, Western, and Orthodox Christian civilizations.³⁰

“Muslim states and organizations universally rallied behind Bosnian Muslims and opposed the Croats and Serbs. Orthodox countries and organizations universally backed the Serbs and opposed the Croats and Muslims. Western governments and elites backed the Croats, castigated the Serbs, and were generally indifferent to or fearful of the Muslims. As the war continued, the hatreds and cleavages among the groups intensified, most notably among Muslims.”³¹

However, the Bosnian war may not have had the effect of intensifying transnationalism among Bosnian Muslims. Instead, the experiences of war and fighting for national

survival may have intensified a “Bosnian” identity among Bosnian Muslims than a pan-Islamic one.³² For according to the 1995-1997 World Values Survey, 72.4% of Bosnian Muslims were “very proud” and 22.9% were “quite proud” being Bosnian. Consequently, Bosnian Muslims may be exhibiting an attitude often thought to be typical of “the modern West”—“loyalty to the nation state.”³³ The Bosnian case, at least, may represent a monumental breaking of the historic Islamic model of tribalism and transnationalism.³⁴ If so, Bosnia would represent an interesting example of political-cultural transformation.

Conclusion

Scholars and students of Islam have frequently argued that Islam is more than a religion, it is also an identity—the highest level of identity a human being can acquire. Muslim identity, it is said, transcends other forms of identity, such as national and intranational, and even de-legitimizes them. It is further said that Islam fosters a transnational identity, the *ummah*, to an extent unrivaled by other faith traditions. In this respect, Islam is and Muslims are said to be “exceptional.”

But is Islam “exceptional”? In terms of identity, do Muslims have weak ties to national and intranational communities and strong ties to a transnational community? Are Muslims less likely than non-Muslims to claim national affiliation and loyalty and more likely claim a transnational one? If so, then, Muslims, regardless of whether they are in the majority or minority, regardless of time and space, should hold similar attitudes toward non-Islamic sources of identity. In this piece, answers were sought to these questions based on empirical data from the 1995-1997 World Values Survey, by examining individual responses from ten countries that have sizeable Muslim populations.

Because the data examined here were from only one phase of the World Values Survey project, the conclusions are obviously tentative and incomplete. As such,

incorporation of data from other phases of the World Values Survey is certainly warranted and encouraged. Be that as it may, the data presented here from 1995-1997 show, at the very least, that Muslims are quite religious. In each case, more than three-quarters of Muslims, where they were European, African, or Asian, claimed to be personally religious. Furthermore, when compared with the percentage of Muslims who claimed the nation as their first source of geographic identity, personal religious identity was the more compelling. With the exception of Turkey, less than half of Muslims in the other cases claimed the nation as their primary geographic identity. It would appear, then, that the findings of Moaddel and Azadarmaki and Zogby, and the conventional wisdom on Muslim religious identity, are confirmed.

Other findings reported here, however, show that Islam and the nation-state are not necessarily attitudinally antithetical at the individual level. For instance, if the first and second sources of geographic identity are considered together, one finds that many Muslims do have strong national ties. More Bosnian and Turkish Muslims have stronger national ties than religious ties. More than 75% of Azeri, Georgian, and Indian Muslims claim the nation as a key source of identity. Only in two cases, Macedonia and Nigeria, do less than a majority of Muslims identify with the nation. Consequently, for the most part, Islamic and national identity, even if they are in the minority, may be compatible sources of identity for Muslims. This seems to confirm Eickelman and Piscatori's observation that Islam is not "particularly hostile to ethnic and cultural variations" or "abnormally resistant to nationalism", hence, not exceptionally unique.³⁵

Using two other indicators of national identity, national pride and the willingness to fight on behalf of one's country, additionally shows that Islam is not necessarily hostile to or eliminates individual Muslim bonds to the nation-state. In eight cases, solid majorities of Muslims said they were "very proud" of their nationality, with Bangladeshis,

Nigerians, Pakistanis, and Turks leading the way. More Muslims in Turkey, Azerbaijan, Bangladesh, Bosnia, and India said they would fight for their country than claimed to be personally religious. Of particular interest, minority Muslims are also willing to fight for non-Muslim countries. More than two-thirds of Bosnian, Bulgarian, Georgian, Indian, and Nigerian Muslims said they would fight for their countries, even though they do not constitute a clear majority of the population nor live in an Islamic state.

The findings reported here further reveal that non-Muslims are not more likely to express national pride or express a willingness to fight for their country. Muslims in Azerbaijan, Bosnia, and Nigeria have more national pride than non-Muslims. Muslims in Bangladesh, Georgia, and India were as likely as non-Muslims to be “very proud” of their national identity. Only in Bulgaria were Muslims substantially less likely than non-Muslims to have national pride.

Muslims were also no less likely than non-Muslims to say they would fight for their country, even if that country had a non-Muslim majority. Azeri, Bosnian, Bulgarian, Indian, and Nigerian Muslims were more likely than non-Muslims to fight for their country. Bangladeshi and Georgian Muslims were only slightly less likely. Macedonian Muslims were the lone exception that conformed to conventional wisdom.

Transnationally, contrary to conventional expectations and descriptions, Muslims were not exceptional, either. In all cases, except Bangladesh, less than one-in-five Muslims cited a transnational identity, “continent” or “world,” as their primary geographic identity. In four cases, Bulgaria, India, Macedonia, and Nigeria, clear Muslim majorities cited intranational identity, “town” or country “region,” as primary, with Indian and Nigerian Muslims being the most intranational. In three cases, Azerbaijan, Bosnia, and Georgia, primary Muslim identities were nearly evenly divided between intranational and national. Overall, however, in the Balkan-Caucasian region, a plurality of Muslims chose

national identity over intranational and transnational identities. In addition, Muslims were no more likely than non-Muslims to claim a transnational identity. Seculars, for instance, were in five cases either more likely or just as likely as Muslims to claim transnational identity. Only in Bangladesh did some form of transnational identity appear in Muslim responses. However, it appeared equally so for Hindus as well. Consequently, a gap seems to exist between the expressed ideals of faith and the realities in the world, commonly-held scholarly assumptions and individual Muslim attitudes. Muslims apparently have multiple, if not overlapping, attachments to their hometowns, their country's regions, their countries, and the transnational *ummah*.

If the analysis presented here is accurate, Islam does not necessarily eliminate or mitigate other identities. Rather, Islamic identity appears to co-exist with other forms of identity and other factors beyond Islam may influence which identity or identities move to the foreground and background in the minds of individual Muslims at any given moment. If so, the "civilizational" approach to Islam can distort more than it reflects the attitudes of individual Muslims, and the views of those who have who have descriptively and theoretically critiqued the "civilizational" approach may be confirmed.³⁶ Muhammad Iqbal (1873-1938), "the spiritual father of Pakistan," once wrote, "It seems to me God is slowly bringing home to us the truth that Islam is neither Nationalism nor Imperialism but a League of Nations which recognize artificial boundaries..."³⁷ Iqbal may have been on to something. Obviously, this has implications for policymakers--it is a mistake to treat the Islamic world as a monolithic whole. Instead, as former U.S. president Richard Nixon once urged, U.S. policymakers must pursue a "Muslimpolitik" that is based on the recognition that Muslims and the Muslim world are not a unified, radical geopolitical force bent on confronting the West but rather a diverse cultural and ethnic grouping bounded by a faith in Islam."³⁸

Tables

Insert on page 8

Table 1
Muslim Identity: Religious versus National

<i>Country's Muslims Ranked By Religious Identity</i>		<i>Country's Muslims Ranked By National Identity</i>	
Nigeria	93.4	Turkey	52.2
Azerbaijan	90.8	Bosnia	48.1
Macedonia	90.8	Azerbaijan	46.4
Georgia	88.7	Georgia	41.6
Bulgaria	88.2	Bulgaria	28.2
India	87.4	Macedonia	15.8
Bangladesh	84.9	Nigeria	14.0
Bosnia	81.1	India	7.7
Turkey	77.4	Bangladesh	2.7

Source: Independent variable “Religious Denomination” and Dependent variable “primary geographic identity” (V203), World Values Survey, 1995-1997. V203 was not available for the Pakistan.

Insert on page 9

Table 2
Muslim Identity: Religious versus Aggregated National

<i>Country's Muslims Ranked By Religious Identity</i>		<i>Country's Muslims Ranked By Aggregated National Identity*</i>	
Nigeria	93.4	Bosnia	84.5
Azerbaijan	90.8	Turkey	83.6
Macedonia	90.8	Azerbaijan	81.2
Georgia	88.7	Georgia	79.6
Bulgaria	88.2	India	76.3
India	87.4	Bulgaria	63.2
Bangladesh	84.9	Nigeria	37.6
Bosnia	81.1	Macedonia	30.5
Turkey	77.4		

Source: Independent variable “Religious Denomination” and Dependent variable “primary geographic identity” (V203), World Values Survey, 1995-1997. V203 was not available for the Pakistan.

Insert on page 10

Table 3
Muslim Religious Identity, National Pride, and Willingness to Fight for Country

<i>Country's Muslims Ranked By Religious Identity</i>		<i>Country's Muslims Ranked By Level of National Pride</i>		<i>Country's Muslims Ranked By Willingness to Fight for Country</i>	
Nigeria	93.4	Pakistan	85.3	Azerbaijan	97.6
Azerbaijan	90.8	Turkey	79.1	Turkey	96.9
Macedonia	90.8	Bangladesh	78.2	India	96.7
Pakistan	89.7*	Nigeria	75.9	Bangladesh	88.8
Georgia	88.7	Bosnia	72.4	Bosnia	83.1
Bulgaria	88.2	India	69.5	Nigeria	78.2
India	87.4	Azerbaijan	64.9	Bulgaria	77.0
Bangladesh	84.9	Georgia	59.2	Georgia	67.5
Bosnia	81.1	Bulgaria	29.3	Macedonia	51.9
Turkey	77.4				

*Note: For Pakistan, V190 was used instead of V182. For V190, the question was, "How important is God in your life? Please use this scale to indicate - 10 means very important and 1 means not at all important." Only the percentage of those who chose "10" is recorded here. V182 was not available for the Pakistani sample. The national pride question (V205) was not fully available for Macedonia; only 18% of the Muslim sample was available.

Table 4
Comparing Muslim and Non-Muslim National Pride

<i>Country</i>	<i>Muslim National Pride</i>	<i>Non-Muslim National Pride</i>	<i>+/- Advantage</i>
Azerbaijan	64.9	57.3	+ 7.6
Bangladesh	78.2	79.4	- 1.2
Bosnia	72.4	49.4	+ 23.0
Bulgaria	29.3	63.0	- 33.7
Georgia	59.2	60.5	- 1.3
India	69.5	72.3	- 2.8
Nigeria	75.9	61.5	+ 14.4

Note: Non-Muslims include only the major non-Muslim groups in each country. Only respondents who answered "very proud" are included here. Turkey was excluded here for lack of non-Muslims in sample. V205 was unavailable for Pakistan and Macedonia.

Insert on page 11

<i>Country</i>	<i>Muslim Willingness to Fight for Country</i>	<i>Non-Muslim Willingness to Fight for Country</i>	<i>+/ Advantage</i>
Azerbaijan	97.6	94.6	+ 3.0
Bangladesh	88.8	91.2	- 2.4
Bosnia	83.1	81.8	+ 1.3
Bulgaria	77.0	74.1	+ 2.9
Georgia	67.5	74.5	- 7.0
India	96.7	94.2	+ 2.5
Macedonia	51.9	90.5	- 38.6
Nigeria	78.2	67.5	+ 10.7

Note: Non-Muslims include only the major non-Muslim groups in each country. Turkey was excluded here for lack of non-Muslims in sample. V110 was unavailable for Pakistan.

Insert on page 12

<i>Country</i>	<i>Intranational[^]</i>		<i>National</i>		<i>Transnational*</i>		<i>Total % and N</i>	
	% Per.	N	% Per.	N	% Per.	N		
<i>Balkans-Caucasus</i>								
Azerbaijan	37.1	675	46.4	843	16.5	300	100	1818
Bosnia	42.3	137	48.1	156	9.6	31	100	324
Bulgaria	64.5	80	28.2	35	7.3	9	100	124
Georgia	44.5	45	41.6	42	13.9	14	100	101
Macedonia	75.2	176	15.8	37	9.0	21	100	234
Turkey	32.7	465	52.2	743	15.1	215	100	1423
Region Totals	39.2	1578	46.1	1856	14.7	590	100	4024
<i>South Asia</i>								
Bangladesh	0.1	2	2.7	33	97.2	1200	100	1235
India	91.9	214	7.7	18	0.4	1	100	233

Insert on page 12

**Table 7:
Intranational Religious Groups and Transnational Identity***

Azerbaijan		India	
Seculars	27.7% (33)	Muslims	0.4% (1)
Muslims	16.5% (300)	Hindus	0.1% (1)
Bangladesh		Macedonia	
Hindus	98.3% (171)	Seculars	11.4% (31)
Muslims	97.2% (1200)	Muslims	9.0% (21)
		Orthodox	8.6% (39)
Bosnia		Nigeria	
Muslims	9.6% (31)	Protestants	13.9% (64)
Seculars	9.5% (33)	Orthodox	12.7% (79)
Catholics	5.3% (9)	Catholics	6.9% (51)
Orthodox	4.8% (15)	Muslims	6.9% (21)
Bulgaria		Turkey	
Seculars	8.3% (29)	Muslims	15.1% (215)
Orthodox	7.7% (43)		
Muslims	7.3% (9)		

NOTES

* I express my sincerest thanks to Timothy J. Power, Associate Professor of Political Science at Florida International University, for his helpful comments, encouragement, and criticisms for this piece, for introducing me to the issue of comparative political culture, and for making available the 1995-1997 World Values survey. I also would like to thank John F. Stack, Jr., Professor of Political Science and Law at Florida International University, for introducing me to the issue of ethnic/national identity and nurturing my interest to further explore it. And finally, I would like to thank Mohiaddin Mesbahi, Associate Professor of International Relations at Florida International University, for introducing me to and encouraging me to explore the issue of Islam in international relations and American politics.

¹ Bernard Lewis, *The Crisis of Islam: Holy War and Unholy Terror* (New York: The Modern Library, 2003), 17.

² *Ibid.*, xx. According to Bernard Lewis, unlike the West, which views “the basic unit of human organization” as the nation-state, Muslims see the *ummah* as the basic unit.

³ The version of this Quranic verse comes from ‘Abdullah Yusef ‘Ali, *The Meaning of the Holy Qur’an* (Beltsville, MD: Amana Publications, 1989).

⁴ Cited in Karen Armstrong, *Muhammad: A Biography of the Prophet* (New York: HarperCollins Publishers Inc., 1992), 254.

⁵ John Kelsay, *Islam and War: The Gulf War and Beyond: A Study in Comparative Ethics* (Louisville, KY: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1993), 34.

⁶ Mir Zohar Husain, *Global Islamic Politics* (New York: HarperCollins Publishers, 1995), 31. Some have even argued that “defense of the *ummah*... is a prime religious duty.” See Ismail R. al Faruqi, “Islam and Zionism,” in *Voices of Resurgent Islam*, 262.

⁷ Lewis, *The Crisis of Islam*, xvii-xviii.

⁸ Though not examined here, some scholars have proffered the case that one element of Islamic exceptionalism is found in Muslim attitudes towards women, especially in the Arab world. See Ronald Inglehart and Pippa Norris, *Rising Tide: Gender Equality and Cultural Change Around the World* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 49, 130, 134; Bernard Lewis, *What Went Wrong? The Clash Between Islam and Modernity in the Middle East* (New York: HarperCollins Publishers Inc., 2003), 66-67. In addition to low levels of sexual tolerance and gender equality, Yilmaz Esmer found that Muslims are also more likely to exhibit higher levels of religiosity, lower levels of secularism, and lower levels of efficacy or acceptance of fate than non-Muslims. See Esmer, “Is There an Islamic Civilization?” in *Human Values and Social Change: Findings from the Values Surveys*, ed. Ronald Inglehart (2003), 35-68.

⁹ Lewis, *What Went Wrong?*, 6; Armstrong, *Muhammad*, 165.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 47-48, 61-62; Bassam Tibi, “Islam and Modern European Ideologies,” *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 18 (1986): 15-29.

¹¹ Mansoor Moaddel and Taqhi Azadarmaki, “The Worldviews of Islamic Publics: The Cases of Egypt, Iran, and Jordan,” in *Human Values and Social Change: Findings from the World Values Surveys*, ed. Ronald Inglehart (Boston, MA: Brill Academic Publishers, 2003), 70; James J. Zogby, *What Arabs Think: Values, Beliefs, and Concerns* (Utica, NY: Zogby International, 2002), 49-59.

¹² Armstrong, *Muhammad*, 250-251; John L. Esposito, *Islam: The Straight Path* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998), 8.

- ¹³ See Frederick Mathewson Denny, *An Introduction to Islam* (Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall, Inc., 1994).
- ¹⁴ Malcolm X with Alex Haley, *The Autobiography of Malcolm X* (New York: Ballantine Books, 1973), 338.
- ¹⁵ Mir Zohar Husain, *Global Islamic Politics* (New York: HarperCollins Publishers, 1995), 27; Lewis, *What Went Wrong?*, 96-116.
- ¹⁶ James P. Piscatori, *Islam in a World of Nation-States* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1986), 11; Bernard Lewis, *Islam and the West* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993), 4-5, 135, 181. Samuel P. Huntington has argued that this basic difference in religion-politics models is at the heart of the historic civilizational conflict between the Christian West and the Islamic world. Huntington, *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1996), 210, 212. And, as Bernard Lewis argued, the Christian West legitimately feared Islamic conversion, expansion, and conquest in Europe for a thousand years “from the advent of Islam in the seventh century until the second siege of Vienna in 1683.” Lewis, *Islam and the West*, 127.
- ¹⁷ Lewis, *Islam and the West*, 135.
- ¹⁸ Bassam Tibi, “The Crisis of the Nation-State,” chap. in *The Challenge of Fundamentalism: Political Islam and the New World Disorder* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1998), 114-137. “Religionless” was the description used by Abul Ala Mawdudi, the founder of Pakistan’s Jamaat-i-Islami, to describe the secular state. See Charles J. Adams, “Mawdudi and the Islamic State,” in *Voices of Resurgent Islam*, ed. John L. Esposito (New York: Oxford University Press, 1983), 103. Given this, it should not be surprising that Islam lacks an independent academic tradition of political study. Instead, “the study of politics” is subsumed in the “religious disciplines of jurisprudence (*fiqh*) and theology (*kalam*).” Tibi, “Islam and Modern European Ideologies,” 15.
- ¹⁹ Husain, *Global Islamic Politics*, 31.
- ²⁰ Karen Armstrong even described the pursuit of *ummah* as having an almost “sacramental importance” for Muslims as the individual and collective effort “to redeem history” for God. Armstrong, *Muhammad*, 259.
- ²¹ Piscatori, *Islam in a World of Nation-States*, 8.
- ²² Edward Luttwak, “The Missing Dimension,” in *Religion, The Missing Dimension of Statecraft* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1994), 9; Barry Rubin, “Religion and International Affairs,” in *Religion, The Missing Dimension of Statecraft*, 20-34; Mark Juergensmeyer, “Islam’s ‘Neglected Duty,’” chap. in *Terror in the Mind of God: The Global Rise of Religious Violence* (Berkeley and Los Angeles, CA: University of California Press, 2000), 67-69.
- ²³ See Pippa Norris and Ronald Inglehart, “Islamic Culture and Democracy: Testing the ‘Clash of Civilizations’ Thesis,” in *Human Values and Social Change: Findings from the Values Surveys*, ed. Ronald Inglehart (2003), 5-33. In their analysis, Norris and Inglehart examined the attitudes of nine majoritarian Muslim countries (Albania, Azerbaijan, Bangladesh, Egypt, Iran, Jordan, Morocco, Pakistan, and Turkey).
- ²⁴ More countries in the Islamic world were included in the 1999-2001 World Values Survey, Albania, Egypt, Iran, Jordan, and Morocco. Unfortunately, however, the data were not available to the author at time of this writing. See Inglehart and Norris, *Rising Tide*, 24-27, 165-167.
- ²⁵ *Ibid.*, 21-27, 165-167.
- ²⁶ Samuel P. Huntington, *The Third Wave: Democratization in the Late Twentieth Century* (Norman, OK: University of Oklahoma Press, 1991).
- ²⁷ The Organization of the Islamic Conference, <http://www.oic-un.org/about/over.htm>.
- ²⁸ “CIA-The World Factbook 2002,” <http://www.cia.gov/cia/publications/factbook/>.
- ²⁹ Moaddel and Taqhi Azadarmaki, “The Worldviews of Islamic Publics: The Cases of Egypt, Iran, and Jordan,” 70; Zogby, *What Arabs Think: Values, Beliefs, and Concerns*, 49-59; Richard Burkholder, “Turkey: Secular and Firmly Grounded in Islam,” The Gallup Organization, September 3, 2002, <http://www.gallup.com/poll/tb/goverpubli/20020903.asp>.
- ³⁰ Huntington, *The Clash of Civilizations*, 288.
- ³¹ *Ibid.*, 289.
- ³² See Tone Bringa, *Being Muslim the Bosnian Way: Identity and Community in a Central Bosnian Village* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1995).
- ³³ Huntington, *The Clash of Civilizations*, 174.
- ³⁴ *Ibid.*, 174-175. Huntington argued that Muslim loyalties sway between or is a mixture of tribalism and transnationalism. “Throughout Islam the small group and the great faith, the tribe and the ummah, have been the principal foci of loyalty and commitment.”
- ³⁵ Dale F. Eickelman and James Piscatori, *Muslim Politics* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1996), x.
- ³⁶ See, for instance, John L. Esposito, *The Islamic Threat: Myth or Reality?* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995); Mahmood Monshipouri and Gina Petonito, “Constructing the Enemy in the Post-Cold War Era: The Flaws of

the 'Islamic Conspiracy' Theory," *Journal of Church and State* 37.4 (Autumn 1995): 773-792; Lisa Wedeen, "Beyond the Crusades: Why Huntington, and Bin Laden, are Wrong," *Middle East Policy* 10.2 (Summer 2003): 54-61.

³⁷ John L. Esposito, "Muhammad Iqbal and the Islamic State," in *Voices of Resurgent Islam*, 183. Evidence is available that shows that even Islamists, such as Egypt's Muslim Brotherhood, who ultimately desire a transnational Islamic state, are working on transforming one state or one civil society at a time, Islamization from above or from below. See Sheri Berman, "Islamism, Revolution, and Civil Society," *Perspectives on Politics* 1.2 (June 2003): 257-272.

³⁸ Richard Nixon, *Beyond Peace* (New York: Random House, 1994), 141.