

Report Number 1 from the US Mosque Study 2011

The American Mosque 2011

Basic Characteristics of the American Mosque
Attitudes of Mosque Leaders



Ihsan Bagby

The American Mosque 2011

Report Number 1 from the US Mosque Study 2011

Basic Characteristics of the American Mosque Attitudes of Mosque Leaders

Ihsan Bagby

January 2012

Contents

Introduction	2
Major Findings	4
Basic Characteristics of the American Mosque	5
Number of Mosques	5
Jum'ah Attendance	7
Total Number of Participants	9
Founding Decade of Mosques	9
Regional Distribution	10
Rural–Urban Location	10
Mosque Structures	11
Conversion to Islam	12
Mosque Ethnicity	13
Sunni-Shi'ite Mosques	15
Attitudes of Mosque Leaders	18
Islamic Approaches	18
Muslim Involvement in Society	20
American Society and Hostility to Islam	22
American Society and Immorality	23
Radicalism	25
Map: Location of Muslim Congregations	26
Map: Estimated Muslim Adherents	27
Map: Change in Estimated Adherents, 2000 to 2010	28
Map: Population Penetration	Back Cover

Copyright © 2011 by CAIR

Photos printed with permission from Riad K. Ali, © www.MuslimGuide.com • Graphic design by Richard Houseal

Introduction

The US Mosque Survey 2011 is a comprehensive study of mosques in America. The Survey consisted of (1) a count of all mosques in America and then (2) a telephone interview with a mosque leader (Imam, President or board member) from a large sample of mosques. The mosque count was conducted from February to July 2010 and the mosque leader interviews were conducted from August 2010 to November 2011. A total of 2,106 mosques were counted. From this list, a random sample of 727 mosques was selected. 524 interviews were then completed, which means that the margin of error for the Survey is within the range of +/- 5 percent.

The sponsors of the US Mosque Survey 2011 include a coalition of many organizations: the Hartford Institute for Religion Research (Hartford Seminary), Association of Statisticians of American Religious Bodies (ASARB), Council on American-Islamic Relations (CAIR), Islamic Society of North American (ISNA), Islamic Circle of North America (ICNA), and the International Institute of Islamic Thought (IIIT). The Research Committee for the Survey was:

Ihsan Bagby (Associate Professor of Islamic Studies, University of Kentucky)

David Roozen (Director, Hartford Institute for Religion Research)

Richard Houseal (Association of Statisticians of American Religious Bodies)

Nihad Awad (Executive Director, Council on American-Islamic Relations)

Zahid Bukhari (President, Islamic Circle of North America)

Ingrid Matson (Professor of Islamic Studies, Hartford Seminary)

Iqbal Unus (Director, The Fairfax Institute)

Safaa Zarzour (Secretary General, Islamic Society of North America)

Ihsan Bagby was the Researcher for the Survey

The US Mosque Survey 2011 is part of a larger study of American congregations called Faith Communities Today (FACT), which is a project of Cooperative Congregational Studies Partnership, a multi-faith coalition of denominations and faith groups. The FACT series of national surveys includes massive surveys of all religious congregations in 2000 and 2010. The strategy of the FACT surveys is to develop a common questionnaire and then have the member faith groups to conduct their own study with their respective congregations. The US Mosque Survey has participated in both studies in 2000 and 2010.

The results of the US Mosque Survey 2011 will be compared with two other mosque surveys, the US Mosque Survey 2000 which was conducted with FACT 2000, and a 1994 study of mosques which was conducted by the Islamic Resource Institute under the direction of Ihsan Bagby. The 1994 mosque study followed a similar methodology of the other studies: all mosques were counted, a sample was taken, and mosque leaders were interviewed by telephone. The US Mosque Survey 2000 can be found at: http://www.cair.com/Portals/0/pdf/The_Mosque_in_America_A_National_Portrait.pdf. The 1994 Mosque Survey can be found at: <http://faithcommunitiestoday.org/mosque-report-1994>.

For the purposes of this study, a mosque is defined as a Muslim organization that holds Jum'ah Prayers (Friday Prayers), conducts other Islamic activities and controls the space in which activities are held. This definition excludes places where only Jum'ah Prayers are held like a hospital, and it excludes organizations that do not control the space that they use, such as a Muslim student organization

which uses a room on their university campus. In the 2000 US Mosque Survey, Muslim Student Associations were included as mosques but in the 2011 Survey these groups were not included if they did not control a building or room off-campus. Some Shi'ite organizations function like a mosque but they do not conduct Jum'ah Prayers because they do not have a Resident Scholar to conduct the services. These Shi'ite organizations were included in the Survey. Organizations that were not included in the Survey include Nation of Islam, Moorish Science Temple, Isma'ili organizations, and the Ahmadiyyah.

This report is the first report from the US Mosque Survey 2011. Other planned reports include Muslim Women and the American Mosque; Mosque Administration and Imams; and Mosque Programs.

Thanks go out to Riad Ali of the website Muslim Guide who was invaluable in the mosque count, Bahauddin Bade of ISNA who handled all the financial matters, the numerous CAIR chapters who helped in identifying mosque leaders, the Islamic Shura Council of Southern California who had the vision to provide crucial support for the Survey, and the many interviewers who conducted the phone interviews.

Online copies of this report and subsequent reports are available on the websites of CAIR, ISNA and ICNA: www.cair.com, www.isna.net, and www.icna.org. Hard copies can be obtained from CAIR and ISNA.

Note: Percentages throughout this report may not total to 100% due to rounding.

Major Findings

- The number of mosques and mosque participants continue to show significant growth. The US Mosque Survey 2011 counted a total of 2,106 mosques; as compared to the year 2000 when 1,209 mosques were counted—representing a 74% increase from 2000.
- Muslims who attend Eid Prayer (the high holiday prayers after Ramadan and Hajj) increased from about 2 million in 2000 to about 2.6 million in 2011. The total Muslim population cannot be determined by this figure, but it does call into question the low estimates of 1.1-2.4 million Muslims in America. If there are 2.6 million Muslims who pray the Eid prayer, then the total Muslim population should be closer to the estimates of up to 7 million.

The vast majority of mosque leaders do not feel that overall American society is hostile to Islam.

- The American mosque is a remarkably young institution: over three-fourths (76%) of all existing mosques were established since 1980.
- The vast majority of mosques are located in metropolitan areas but the percentage of mosques in urban areas is decreasing and the percentage of mosques in suburban areas is increasing: in 2000 16% of mosques were located in suburbs and in 2011 28% of mosques are now located in suburbs.
- Mosques remain an extremely diverse institution. Only 3% of mosques have only one ethnic group that attends that mosque. South Asians, Arabs, and African Americans remain the dominant groups but significant numbers of newer immigrants have arrived, including Somalis, West Africans and Iraqis.
- Shi'ite mosques are also expanding in numbers, especially since the 1990s. Over 44% of all Shi'ite mosques were established in the decade of the 1990s.
- The majority of mosque leaders (56%) adopt the more flexible approach of looking to interpretations of Quran and Sunnah (the normative practice of Prophet Muhammad) that take into account the overall purposes of Islamic Law and modern circumstances. Only 11% of mosque leaders prefer the more traditional approach of the classical legal schools of thought—madhhabs. A little over 1% of all mosque leaders follow the salafi way.
- Mosque leaders endorse Muslim involvement in American society. Over 98% of mosque leaders agree that Muslims should be involved in American institutions; and 91% agree that Muslims should be involved in politics.
- The vast majority of mosque leaders do not feel that overall American society is hostile to Islam. Only 25% of mosque leaders in 2011 believe that American society is hostile to Islam. In 2000 the majority of mosque leaders (54%) agreed that American society is hostile to Islam.

Basic Characteristics of the American Mosque

Number of Mosques

Over the past decade, the total number of mosques in the US has continued to grow at a tremendous rate. As part of this Survey, a count of all mosques in the US was conducted and 2,106 mosques were identified. A total of 1,209 mosques were counted in 2000, and 962 mosques were counted in 1994.

The methodology of the mosque count was: survey three web sites, Muslim Guide, Islamic Finder and Salatomatic for their mosque lists; send a first class letter to all sampled mosques in order to determine bad addresses; consult CAIR Chapters and local mosque leaders; and finally telephone mosques to ascertain their existence. The same methodology was used in 2000. However, the web sites have improved greatly since 2000 in the number of mosques reported and in the accuracy of their information.

Although the increase in the number of mosques can be partly explained by the greater ability to identify mosques in 2011 than in 2000 due to better web sites that chart the existence of mosques, the fact remains that new mosques are springing up throughout America. In this 2011 Survey, 26% of all the mosques studied were established from 2000-2011.

The emergence of new mosques can be attributed to a number of factors.

- The increased number of Muslim refugees and new immigrant groups has led them to establish their own mosques where they can feel more comfortable in their own language and cultural environment. The new groups that are starting their own mosques are Somalis, Iraqis, West Africans and Bosnians.
- The expansion of the Muslim population into new areas of a city, suburb or town has motivated Muslims to found mosques in these new areas where no mosques exist. In other words, Muslims get tired of driving an hour to the closest mosque and they decide to found a mosque closer to where they live.
- Being a richly diverse community, the ethnic and religious divisions within the Muslim community has led Muslims to leave a mosque in order to establish their own mosque which better reflect their vision and understanding of Islam.
- A final type of new mosque is the one started by a Muslim leader or scholar who left a mosque to start his own mosque.

<i>Year</i>	<i>Number of Mosques</i>	<i>Percentage Increase</i>
1994	962	
2000	1,20926%
2011	2,10674%

States with the Largest Number of Mosques

<i>Rank</i>	<i>State</i>	<i># of Mosques</i>
1 . . .	New York	257
2 . . .	California	246
3 . . .	Texas	166
4 . . .	Florida	118
5 . . .	Illinois	109
5 . . .	New Jersey	109
7 . . .	Pennsylvania	99
8 . . .	Michigan	77
9 . . .	Georgia	69
10 . . .	Virginia	62

Metropolitan Areas (Metropolitan Statistical Area-MSA) with the Largest Number of Mosques

<i>Rank</i>	<i>MSA</i>	<i># of Mosques</i>
1 . . .	Greater New York City	192
2 . . .	Southern California	120
3 . . .	Greater Chicago	90
4 . . .	Greater Philadelphia	63
5 . . .	Greater Detroit	62
5 . . .	San Francisco-Bay Area	62
7 . . .	Greater Atlanta	55
8 . . .	Northern New Jersey	53
9 . . .	Greater Houston	42
10 . . .	Greater Dallas/Fort Worth	39

Mosque Count by State

<i>State</i>	<i># of Mosques</i>	<i>State</i>	<i># of Mosques</i>	<i>State</i>	<i># of Mosques</i>
Alabama	31	Kentucky	27	North Dakota	3
Alaska	3	Louisiana	27	Ohio	60
Arkansas	13	Massachusetts	39	Oklahoma	17
Arizona	29	Maine	5	Oregon	12
California	246	Maryland	54	Pennsylvania	99
Colorado	17	Michigan	77	Rhode Island	6
Connecticut	36	Minnesota	45	South Carolina	21
District of Columbia . . .	7	Missouri	39	South Dakota	5
Delaware	5	Mississippi	16	Tennessee	38
Florida	118	Montana	2	Texas	166
Georgia	69	Nebraska	8	Utah	9
Hawaii	2	New Hampshire	3	Vermont	1
Idaho	6	New Jersey	109	Virginia	62
Illinois	109	New Mexico	10	Washington	37
Indiana	33	Nevada	7	West Virginia	7
Iowa	17	New York	257	Wisconsin	23
Kansas	21	North Carolina	50	Wyoming	3

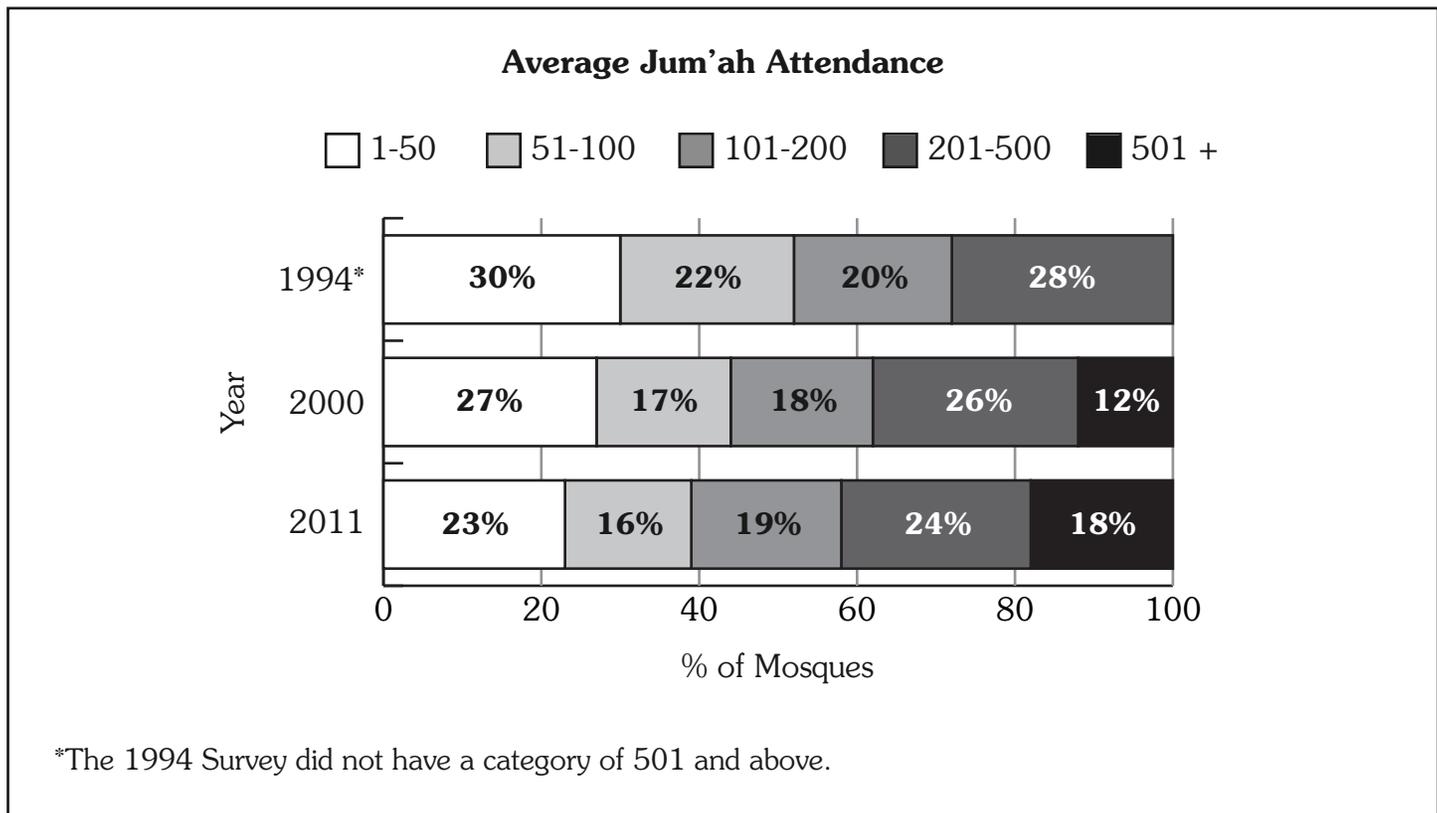
Jum'ah (the weekly congregational prayer) Attendance

Jum'ah attendance has also continued to increase over the past decade. The average Jum'ah attendance is 353 attendees as compared to 292 in 2000. The median Jum'ah attendance is 173 as compared to 135 in 2000. The 2010 FACT Survey found that the median attendance for all religious congregations is 105.

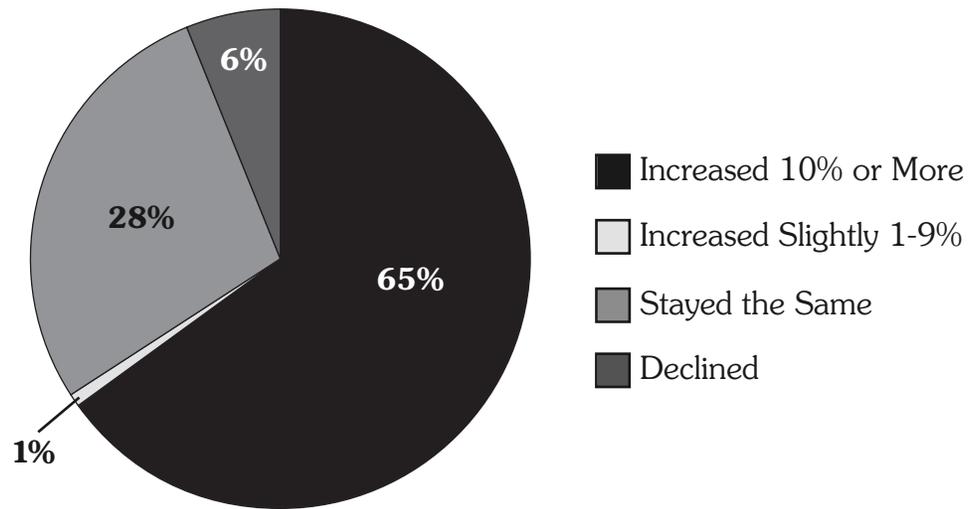
As might be expected, the number of mosques with large attendance has increased. In 2000 there were only 12% of mosques with attendance over 500 and in 2011 there were 18% with attendance over 500 people. Over 2% of American mosques can be classified as megachurches or megamosques which are defined as a congregation with attendance of 2000 or more people. The increased Jum'ah attendance is also reflected in the finding that 11% of mosques have more than one Jum'ah service.

Jum'ah Attendance			
	1994	2000	2011
Average Attendance	. .150	. .292	. .353
Median Attendance	. . . . .	.135	. . .173

Almost two-thirds of mosques (65%) experienced an increase in Jum'ah attendance of over 10%. Only 6% have experienced a decline. In comparison, 31% of all religious congregations in the FACT 2010 survey have declined by 10% or more. However, the Jum'ah attendance in 28% of all mosques has stayed the same—a major increase from 2000 when only 4% of mosques had their Jum'ah attendance stay the same. African American mosques are especially likely to experience a plateau and decline in Jum'ah attendance. A half of African American mosques (50.5%) have a Jum'ah attendance that has increased 10% or more, and a half (49.6%) have a Jum'ah attendance that has stayed the same (35.8%) or decreased (13.8%).



**Percentage of Mosques With Increase or Decrease
in Jum'ah Attendance: 2011**



States with Largest Attendance at Eid Prayers

Rank	State	# of Masjids	Jumah Avg. / Total	Eid Avg. / Total
1.	Texas	166	.624 / 103,584	.2,542 / 421,972
2.	New York	257	.408 / 104,856	.1,529 / 392,953
3.	Illinois	109	.908 / 98,972	.3,296 / 359,264
4.	California	246	.345 / 84,870	.1,109 / 272,814
5.	Virginia	62	.792 / 49,104	.3,436 / 213,032
6.	Florida	118	.406 / 47,908	.1,397 / 164,846
7.	New Jersey	109	.420 / 45,780	.1,474 / 160,666
8.	Michigan	77	.411 / 31,647	.1,563 / 120,351
9.	Pennsylvania	99	.261 / 25,839	.813 / 80,487
10.	Georgia	69	.270 / 18,630	.762 / 52,578

Total Number of Participants

Mosque leaders were asked to estimate the total number of attendees in a recent Eid Prayer or to estimate the total number Muslims associated with the mosque, and we used this as our measure of total mosque participants. The average number of participants per mosque has dropped from 1,625 participants per mosque in 2000 to 1,248 participants in 2011. The median of mosque participants in 2011 is 400. The larger number of mosques has thinned out the total number of participants who at least pray Eid with the mosque.

The total number of mosque participants or “mosqued Muslims” has increased from 2 million in 2000 to over 2.6 million Muslims in 2011.

Number of Mosque Participants

	1994	2000	2011
Average Per Mosque	485	1,625	1,248
Median Per Mosque			400
Total Mosque Participants*	500,000	2,000,000	2,600,000

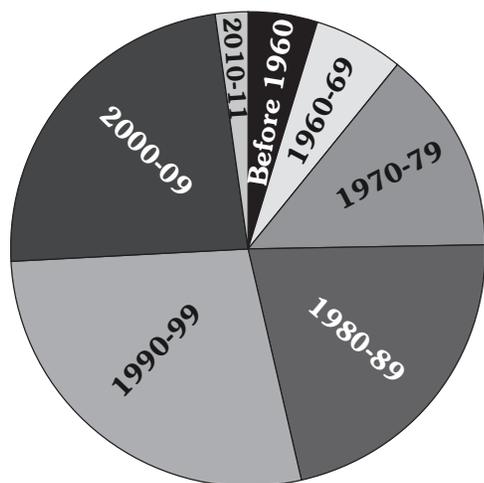
*Multiplying the average participants by the number of mosques.

Founding Decade of Mosques

The growth of mosques in America started in the 1970s and it has not abated. Every decade since the 1970s has witnessed substantial growth.

A remarkable 26% of all mosques were established from 2000. These figures also highlight the youth of mosques as an institution in America. Over three-fourths of all mosques were started since 1980.

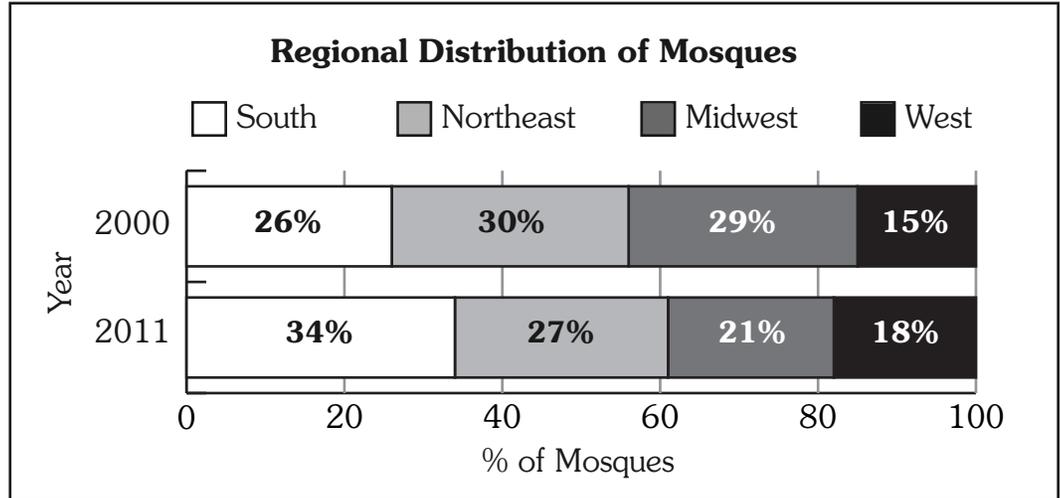
Decade Mosque Founded



Decade Founded	% of Mosques
Before 1960	5%
1960-69	6%
1970-79	14%
1980-89	22%
1990-99	28%
2000-09	24%
2010-11	2%

Regional Distribution

Mosques are well distributed throughout America. Similar to the population shifts in the US over the past decade, the percentage of mosques in the Northeast and Mid-West has decreased and the percentage of mosques has increased in the South and West. In 2000 the region with the largest number of mosques was the Northeast but in 2011 the largest region is the South—Texas, Florida and Georgia have been the driving force behind this growth.



Rural-Urban Location

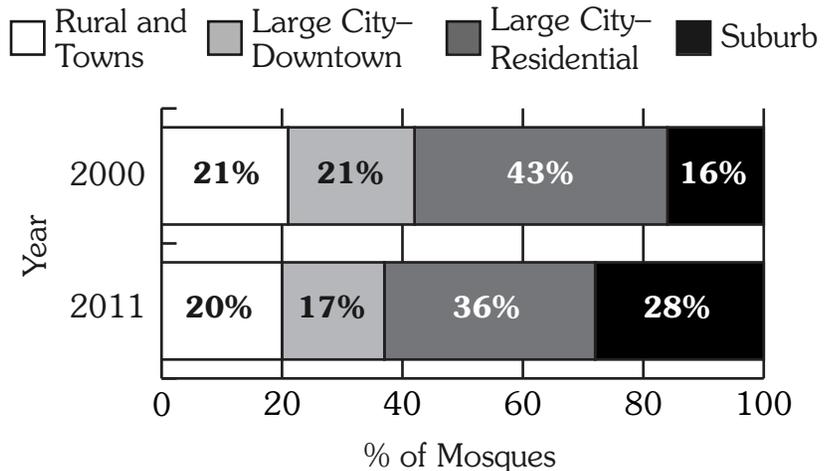
The majority of mosques (53%) are located in urban areas, but mosques are located in virtually every corner of the American landscape except rural areas and villages.

Compared to 2000, the percentage of mosques located in urban areas is decreasing and the percentage in suburban areas is increasing. The percentage of mosques in suburban areas is now 28% as compared to 16% in 2000. The percentage of urban mosques has dropped from 64% to 53%.

Rural-Urban Location of Mosques

Rural and Villages	1%
Town (10,000-50,000) . . .	19%
Large city–downtown area . .	17%
Large city–residential area . .	36%
Older Suburb	21%
New Suburb	7%

Rural-Urban Location for 2000 and 2011 Survey



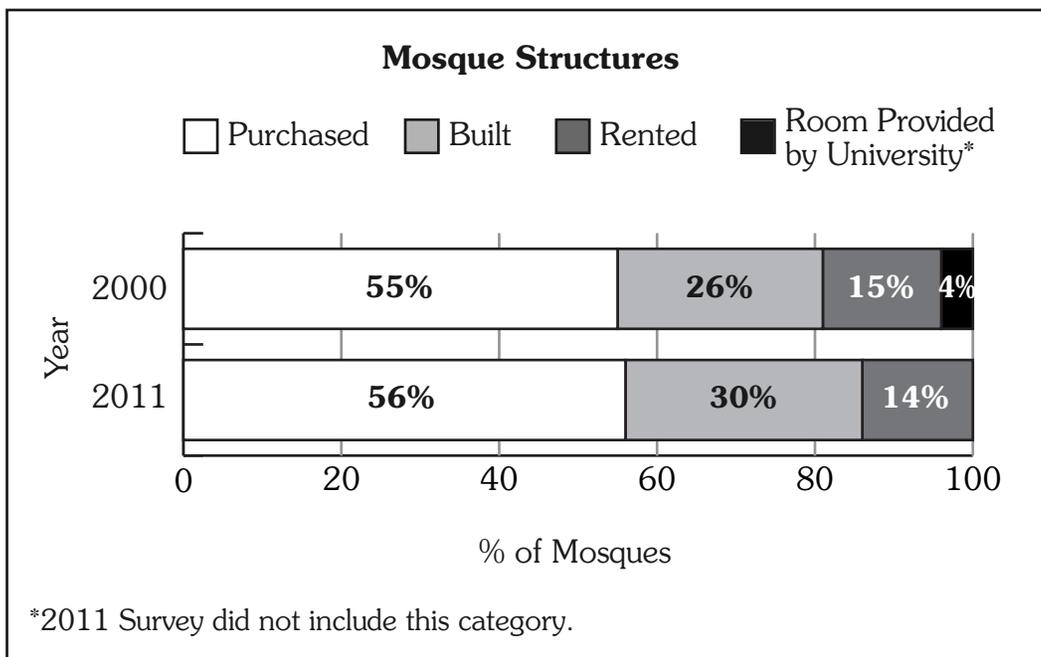
Mosque Structures

The majority of buildings used as mosques (56%) were purchased. The purchased buildings range from former churches to store fronts to houses to commercial structures. Approximately 30% of all mosques were built as mosques.

Although the percentage of mosques that were built as mosques did not increase substantially in 2011, the actual number of built mosques increased dramatically. In 2000, 26% of all mosques represented 314 mosques whereas in 2011, 30% of all mosques represent approximately 632 mosques, which represents slightly over a 100% increase. This increase is reflected in the survey result that 56% of all built mosques were constructed since 2000. The first decade of the new millennium has, therefore, represented a remarkable boom era for the construction of mosques. This building boom is indicative of the growing financial resources of the Muslim community as many Muslims have lived in the US for many decades now and their financial resources have improved.

The newly built mosques were not mainly constructed in suburbs. Since 2000, 49% of the newly built mosques were constructed in cities, and 40% were constructed in suburban areas. Mosques that were located in cities are in most cases building on the same plot of land or near-by, maintaining a tie to the original site of the mosque. Suburban mosques are re-tracing the old pattern of purchasing or renting a building initially and then embarking at a later date on building their own facility. This process is likely due to the fact that almost all mosques do not seek loans from financial institutions, because of the Islamic ban on interest (riba). Mosques must, therefore, first increase membership and confidence in order to start the process of building a mosque.

The first decade of the new millennium has witnessed a boom in the construction of mosques.



Conversion to Islam

The conversion rate per mosque has remained steady over the past two decades. In 2011 the average number of converts per mosque over the last 12 month period was 15.3. In 2000 the average was 16.3 and in 1994 it was 16.5.

African American mosques do the best in attracting new Muslims. Their average is 20.3 new converts per year, and one-third of all converts come from African American mosques. All other mosques, whether South Asian or Arab, are close in their rate of conversions.

The location of mosques—urban, suburban, town—does not seem to affect the conversion rate. However, since there are more mosques in the urban area, 64% of all conversions take place in urban mosques and 29% take place in suburban mosques.

More female converts in mosques were recorded in the 2011 survey than in the 2000 survey. Whereas only 32% of all converts in 2000 were female, 41% of converts were female in 2011.

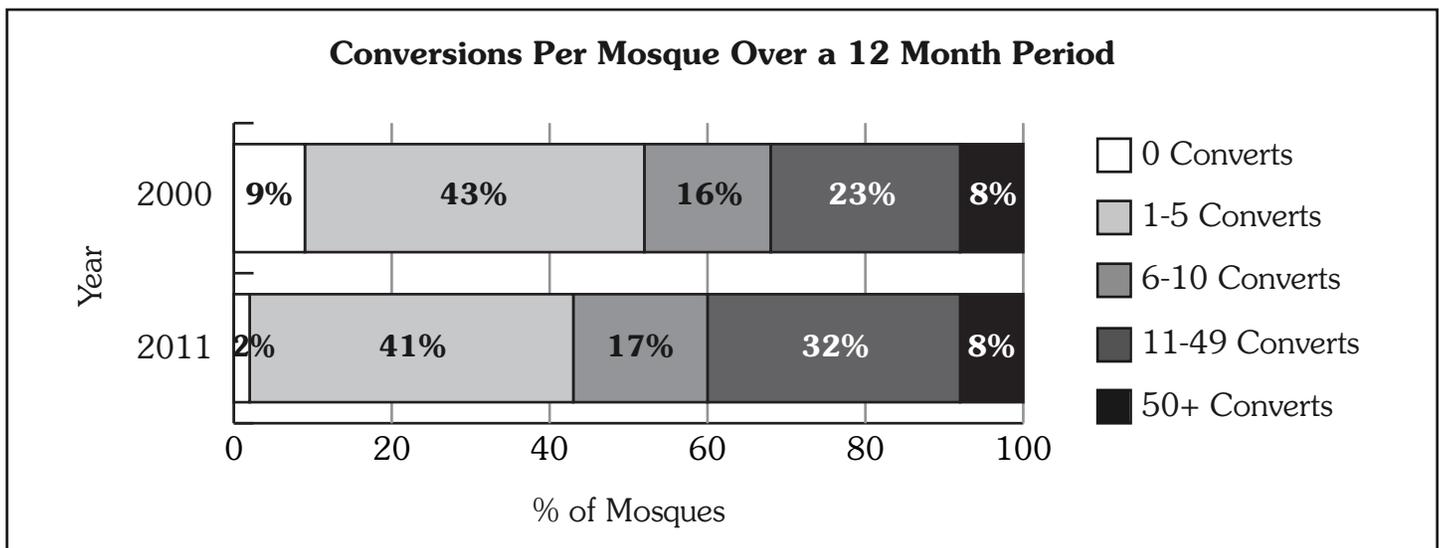
The ethnicity of new converts remained the same except for an increase among Latinos from 6% of all converts in 2000 to 12% of all converts in 2011, and a slight decrease of white American converts.

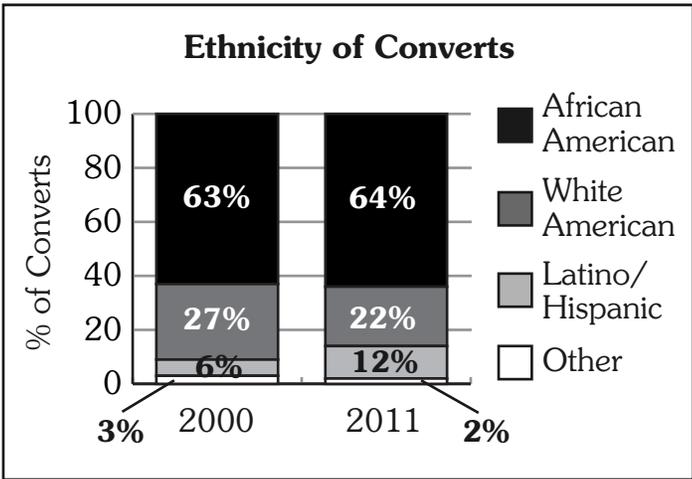
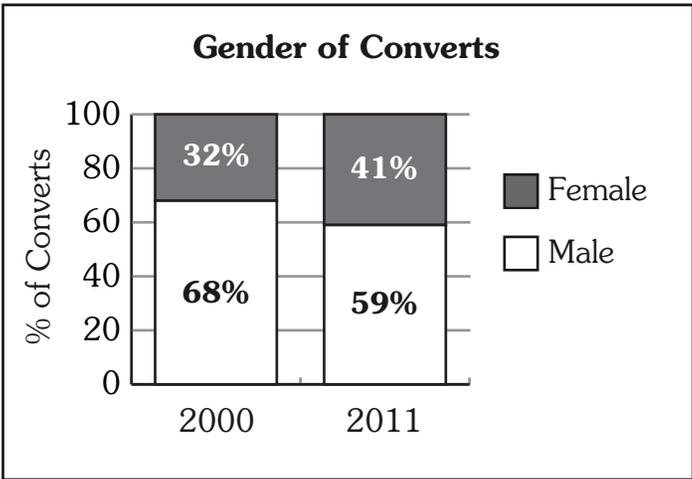
The majority of African American converts (52%) chose Islam in non-African American mosques.

Over 82% of all mosques had at least one African American convert. The vast majority of African Americans converted in urban mosques.

Whites converted to Islam in all types of mosques except African American mosques. The highest conversion rate for whites is found in suburban mosques, especially mosques located in new suburban areas. While new-suburban mosques represent only 7% of all mosques, 16% of whites converted in mosques located in new suburban areas. As mosques continue to be established in the suburbs, it might be expected that the conversion of whites will increase.

Likewise, Latinos converted in all types of ethnic mosques except African American mosques. Mosques that are roughly evenly mixed between South Asian and Arab have the highest rate of conversion among Latinos. In terms of mosque location, the best rate of conversion for Latinos is among suburban mosques, whether in new or older suburban areas.





Mosque Ethnicity

The US Muslim community is arguably the most diverse religious community in America. The main groups that comprise the American Muslim community are South Asians (Pakistanis, Indians, Bangladeshis, and Afghanis), Arab (prominent groups include Egyptians, Palestinians, Lebanese, Yemenis; 22 Arab countries are represented), and African Americans. Many of the South Asians and Arab mosque-goers have been arriving in America since the 1960s and 1970s, and their second-generation children are now taking prominent roles in the US Muslim community. African Americans have been converting to Islam in relatively large numbers since the 1960s and 1970s, and now their second-generation Muslim children are now in adulthood. Other significant groups include Iranians who came in large numbers since 1979 and many recent arrivals such as West Africans, Somalis and Bosnians.

	2000	2011
South Asian33%	.33%
Arab25%	.27%
African American30%	.24%
African (sub-Saharan)3%	.9%
European (Bosnians, etc)2%	.2%
Iranian1%	.2%
White American2%	.1%
Caribbean1%	.1%
Southeast Asian1%	.1%
Latino1%	.1%
Turkish1%	.1%

Of note is the decrease in the percentage of African Americans and the increase of sub-Saharan Africans including Somalis and West Africans. The decline of African American mosque participants coincides with the decline in the percentage of African American mosques, which will be discussed later. The increase of sub-Saharan Africans is the result of the relatively recent arrival of West Africans and Somalis to America.

Mosques of America reflect the great diversity in the Muslim community, and compared to the 2000 study, mosques are becoming even more diverse. Only 3% of all mosques in 2011 have only one ethnic group that attends the mosque—compared to 7% in 2000. Only 16% of all mosques have one ethnic group that composes 90% or more of its attendees—compared to 24% of all mosques in 2000. More than 90% of all mosques have some Arab or South Asians as regular attendees; 81% of all mosques have some African Americans who attend.

While Sunday might be the most segregated time for American society, Friday and its Friday congregational service might be the most diverse time for the Muslim community. Undoubtedly this is due in part to the fact that a significant percentage of Muslims pray their Friday Prayer near their work but attend another mosque near their home. This trend is supported by a theology, which states that “mosques belong to God” and therefore Muslims do not have a strong sense that they belong to one particular mosque. Saying, for example, that a particular mosque is “my” mosque sounds strange to most Muslims. Thus it is psychologically easier to attend a convenient mosque as opposed to one’s home mosque.

Nevertheless, three-fourths of all mosques are dominated by one ethnic group. In most cases this one group is either South Asian, Arab or African American.

Of note are the slight decrease in the percentage of African American mosques and the increase in mosques classified as “other groups and combinations.” For the total mosque count, we tried to identify all the African American mosques through various means—past knowledge, name of mosque or location of mosque. Only 15% of the mosques in the total mosque count were identified as African American mosques. Undoubtedly we missed identifying some mosques as African American in the total count but this figure seems to confirm that the percentage of African American mosques is declining. The increase in the percentage of “other” mosques again reflects the arrival in America of newer immigrant groups especially Somalis, West Africans and Bosnians who tend to found their own mosques.

Mosques Grouped According to Dominant Ethnic Groups*

	1994	2000	2011
South Asian mosques . . . . .	.29%	.28%	.26%
Arab . . . . .	.21%	.15%	.17%
African American . . . . .	.29%	.27%	.23%
Mixed evenly South Asian and Arab** . . . . .	.10%	.16%	.16%
Other groups and combinations . . . . .	.11%	.14%	.19%

* Dominant groups are calculated by: any group over 55% of all regular participants; 50-59% of one group and all others less than 40%; 40-49% of one group and all others less than 30%; 35-39% of one group and all others less than 20%.

** Mixed groups calculated by two groups with at least 30% of participants each.

Sunni-Shi'ite Mosques

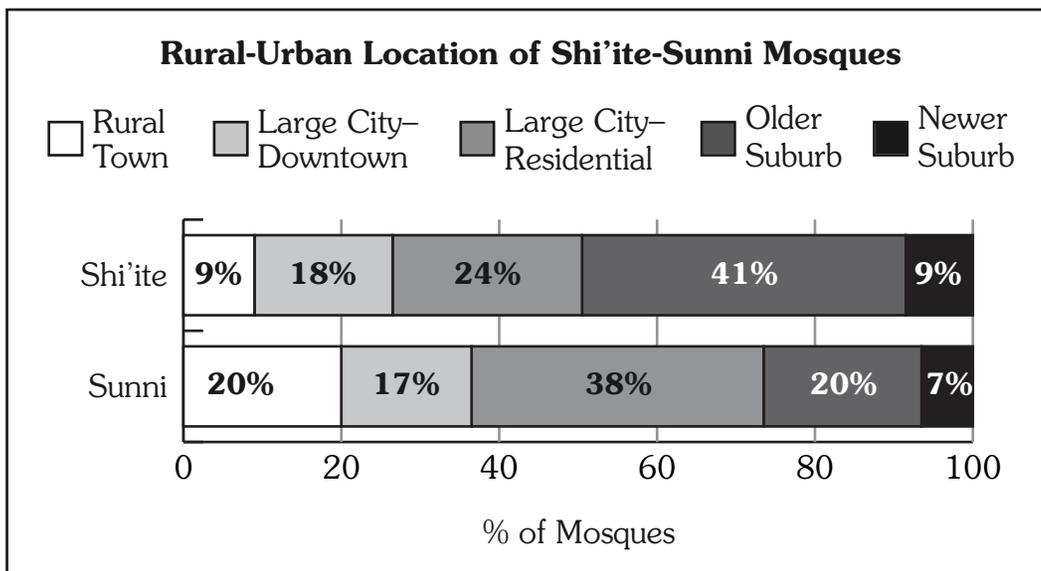
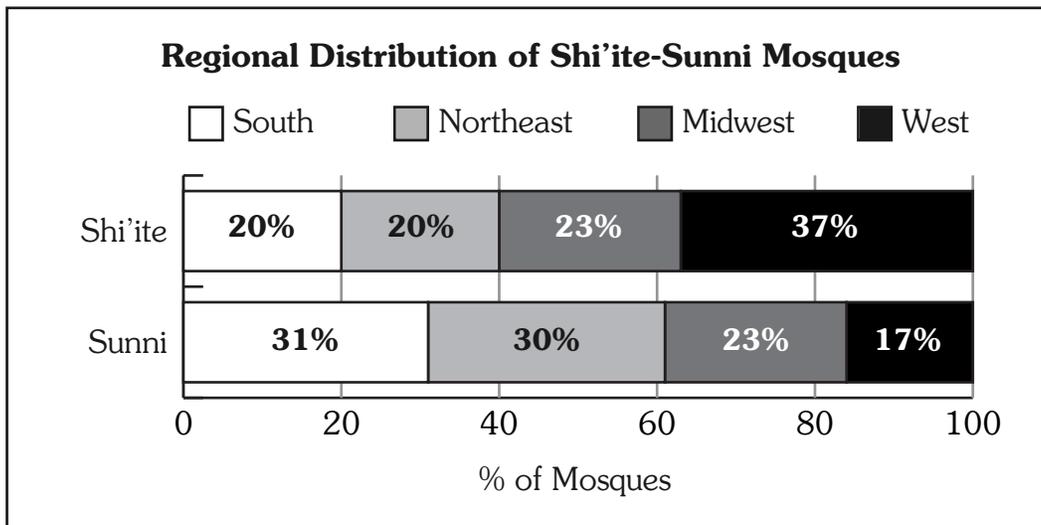
Approximately 7% of mosques identified themselves as Shi'ite mosques. In the total mosque count, we tried to identify all Shi'ite mosques, and we found 6% of all mosques were Shi'ite. Thus the 7% figure in the Survey indicates a realistic number.

Shi'ite mosques, like Sunni mosques, are located throughout America, but a larger number of Shi'ite mosques are located in the West. Approximately 37% of all Shi'ite mosques are located in the West, especially California, as opposed to 17% of all Sunni mosques.

Shi'ite mosques tend to be located in older suburbs, more so than Sunni mosques. Approximately 41% of Shi'ite mosques are located in older suburbs as compared to 20% of Sunni mosques.

Correspondingly there are fewer Shi'ite mosques in small towns—only 9% of Shi'ite mosques are located in towns as compared to 20% of Sunni mosques. Most likely the reason is that Shi'ites do not have a critical mass of members in towns, and therefore they tend to pray in the one mosque in town which is ostensibly Sunni.

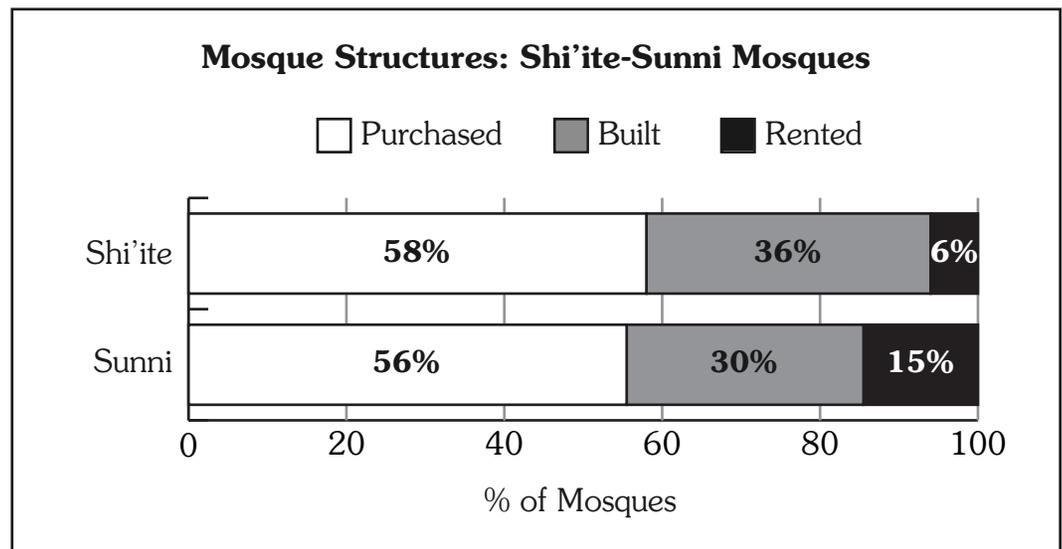
Shi'ite mosques, like Sunni mosques, are located throughout America, but a larger number of Shi'ite mosques are located in the West.



Shi'ite mosques are even younger than Sunni mosques. The major decade for establishing Shi'ite mosques was the 1990s—44% of all Shi'ite mosques were established in that period in comparison to 27% of Sunni mosques. The reasons for this spurt in the 1990s is not clear but possible factors include the increased number of Shi'ites through immigration and the growing financial resources of Shi'ites who immigrated earlier. The increased size of the Shi'ite community has also led to ethnic splits in the community. Earlier one mosque might serve all Shi'ites in an area but increased numbers can lead Pakistanis, Afghans, Iraqis and Iranians to want their own mosque.

The late start of Shi'ite mosques might explain in part why more Shi'ite mosques are located in older suburbs. When Shi'ites were financially able to establish a mosque they were already living in suburbs, and therefore it was natural for them to establish their mosque there.

A slightly larger number of Shi'ite mosques are built as mosques in comparison with the Sunni community. A full 36% of all Shi'ite mosques were built as mosques, compared to 30% of Sunni mosques.

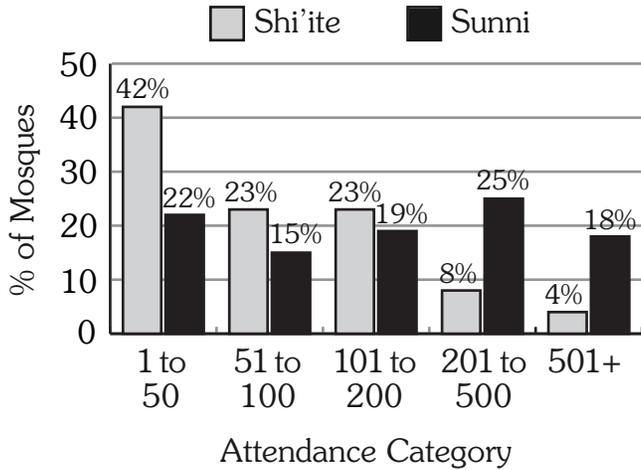


Shi'ite mosques have fewer participants than Sunni mosques. The average number of Shi'ite Muslim participants associated with their mosques is 693 people per mosque as compared to 1,288 per Sunni mosque. In the Survey this figure was tied to a question which asked for the number of Muslims who attend the Eid Prayer. In retrospect the question when directed to Shi'ite mosque leaders should have included Ashura celebrations which often attract more attendees than Eid Prayers in Shi'ite mosques.

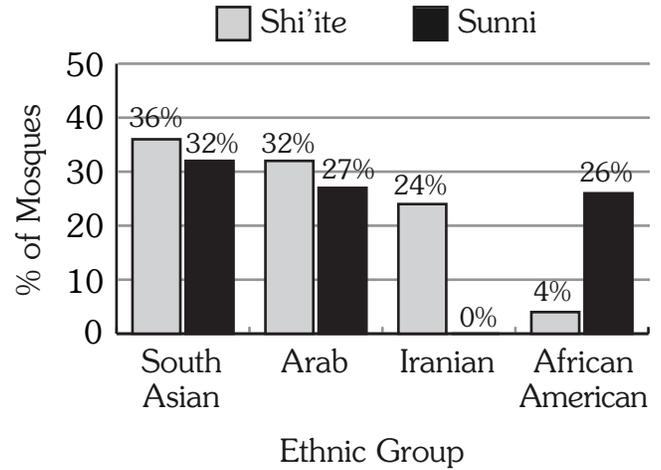
Jum'ah attendance in Shi'ite mosques is also lower than Sunni mosques, even taking into consideration the smaller size of Shi'ite mosques. On average about 138 people attend Jum'ah service in Shi'ite mosques as compared to 364 in Sunni mosques. The lower attendance rate might be the result of the fact that Jum'ah attendance is not stressed in Shi'ite theology as it is in Sunni thought. The size of Jum'ah attendance in most Shi'ite mosques is under 50 people.

Shi'ite mosques are extremely diverse like Sunni mosques. South Asians, Arab and Iranians are the main groups. Unlike Sunni mosques, however, there are few African Americans who attend Shi'ite mosques.

Categories of Jum'ah Attendance in Shi'ite-Sunni Mosques



Percentage of Ethnic Groups that Attend Shi'ite-Sunni Mosques



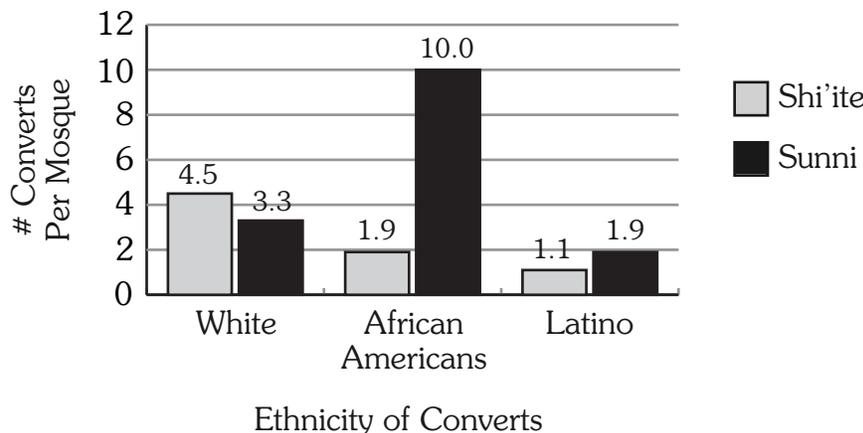
These figures are reflected in the overall ethnicity of Shi'ite mosques, where most mosques are either dominated by South Asians, Iranians or Arab.

The conversion rate for Shi'ite mosques is also lower than Sunni mosques. Whereas the average number of converts per mosque over a 12-month period is 15.6 for Sunni mosques, the figure is 8.7 for Shi'ite mosques. The major difference is that Shi'ite mosques attract fewer African Americans. While Sunni mosques average about 10 African American converts per year, Shi'ite mosques average 2. However, Shi'ite mosques attract slightly more white Americans.

Shi'ite-Sunni Mosques Grouped According to Dominant Ethnic Groups

	Shi'ite	Sunni
South Asian mosques . . .	.31%	.26%
Iranian . . . . .	.26%	.0%
Arab . . . . .	.23%	.16%
Mixed South Asian and Arab . . . . .	.11%	.16%
Other combinations . . . . .	.6%	.18%
African American . . . . .	.3%	.24%

Average Number of Converts per Shi'ite-Sunni Mosques



Attitudes of Mosque Leaders

Islamic Approaches

To gauge how mosque leaders interpret Islam, which roughly measures a conservative-moderate continuum, the US Mosque Survey asked which Islamic approach best describes how the mosque leader makes an Islamic decision. The four categories are as follows:

- “Refer to Quran and Sunnah (the normative practice of the Prophet Muhammad) and follow an interpretation that takes into account its purposes (maqasid) and modern circumstances.” This approach prefers to go back to Quran and Sunnah as their authority as opposed to following a traditional madhhab, but in understanding the Quran and Sunnah they are open to interpretations—mainly by modern scholars—that look to the overall purposes of the texts, as opposed to looking only to the literal meaning, and modern circumstances. This approach is typically a more flexible approach.
- “Refer to Quran and Sunnah and follow an interpretation that follows the opinions of the great scholars of the past.” This approach does not look to one madhhab but looks to all the madhhabs and all the great scholars of these madhhabs in the past. This approach is more comfortable in looking to the past and its great scholars, but they more flexible in taking into consideration all the views of the past as opposed to one particular madhhab. This approach varies a great deal in application but for the most part it is more conservative than the approach that is open to the consideration of the purposes of the Law and modern circumstances.
- “Follow a particular madhhab” (a traditional legal school of thought). Overall this approach means the mosque leader prefers to follow the traditional way of doing things like it was done back in the old country. A madhhab refers to a legal school of thought in Islamic Law which developed and solidified in the classical period of Islamic Civilization. Most mosque leaders who opt for this approach tend to be traditionalists and therefore fairly conservative in their practice of Islam. One important qualifier, which will be discussed later, is that the majority of Shi’ite mosque leaders (66%) chose the madhhab approach—the Shi’ite madhhab being the Jafari madhhab.
- “Follow the salafi minhaj” (way of thought). The salafi approach is akin to Wahhabi thought, and is associated with a more literal understanding of Islam, in an effort to follow strictly the ways of the first three generations (the salaf) of Islam.

The majority of mosque leaders (56%) follow a more flexible approach in Islam. The next largest group is those who follow the great scholars of the past.

In 2000 a slightly different question was asked. The categories of “follow a madhhab” and “refer to Quran and Sunnah and look to purposes and modern circumstances” were exactly the same in both 2000 and 2011. However, the third and last category in 2000 was “refer to Quran and Sunnah and follow a more literal interpretation.”

**Islamic Approaches in Making Islamic Decisions in
2000 Compared to 2011**

	2000	2011
Refer to Quran and Sunnah and look to purposes and modern circumstances . . . . .	.71%	.56%
Refer to Quran and Sunnah and follow a literal interpretation . . . . .	.21%	.NA
Refer to Quran and Sunnah and look to great scholars of past . . . . .	.NA	.31%
Follow a particular madhhab . . . . .	.6%	.11%
Follow salafi way . . . . .	.NA	.1%
None of above . . . . .	.2%	.1%

NA=not asked in particular year.

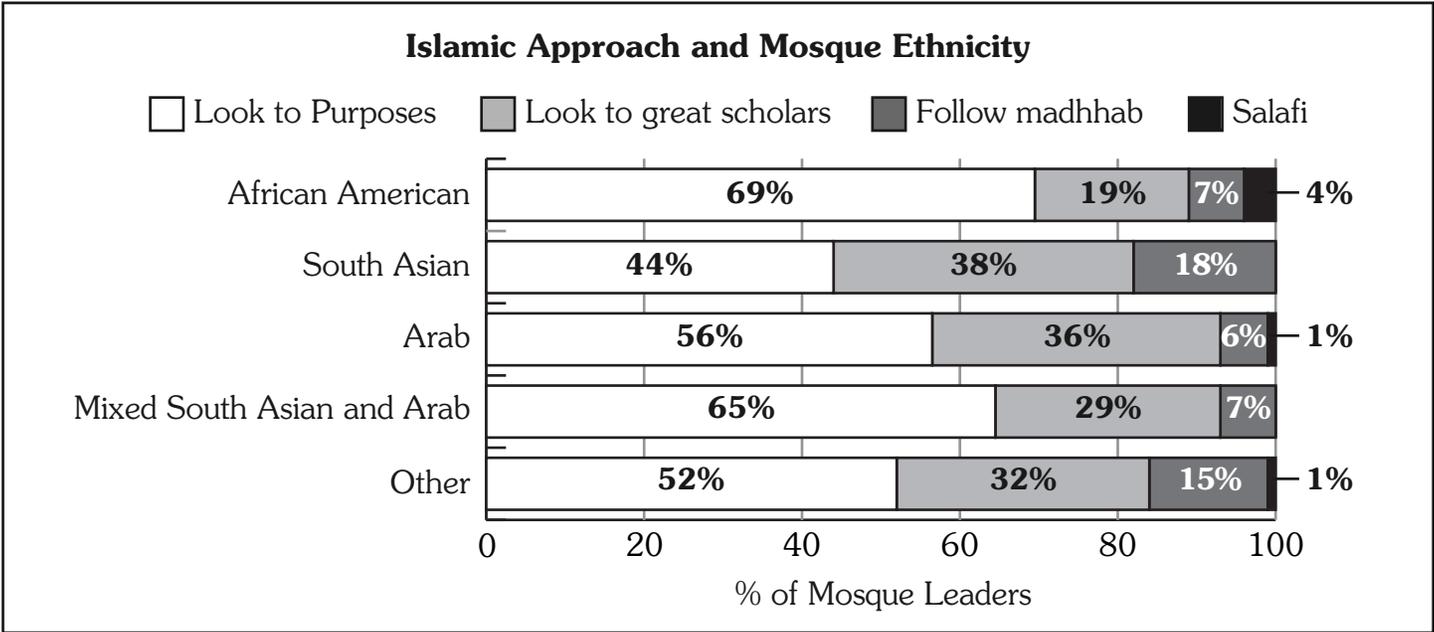
Apparently most of those in 2000 that chose “follow a literal interpretation” and a smaller number of those that chose “look to purposes” preferred in 2011 the category of “follow the great scholars.” This again indicates the conservative nature of the “follow the great scholars of the past” response.

Only a small percentage of mosque leaders (11%) follow a traditional madhhab approach. The increase from 2000 when the figure was 6% probably is best explained by the better representation of Shi’ite mosques in the 2011 Survey, and the fact that most Shi’ite mosques prefer the madhhab choice. In addition newer immigrant groups like the Bosnians and West Africans tend to prefer the madhhab approach.

An even smaller proportion (1%) follows the salafi approach. For the total mosque count, we tried to identify all the salafi mosques, and the result was that 3% were identified as salafi mosques. The Survey undoubtedly, therefore missed some salafi mosques, but the fact remains that the percentage of salafi mosques in America is extremely low.

As already mentioned, the majority of Shi’ite mosque leaders respond that they prefer a madhhab. Unfortunately the question is less meaningful for Shi’ites because the more relevant question is which *marji’* does the leader follow—if any. A *marji’* is the living Shi’ite scholar whose interpretations are considered authoritative, and the vast majority of Shi’ites believes that it is obligatory for a Shi’ite to follow a *marji’*. Nevertheless, over one-fourth of Shi’ite mosque leaders (28%) chose “refer to Quran and Sunnah and look to purposes.”

***Only a small percentage of
mosque leaders (11%) follow a
traditional madhhab approach.***



The above chart shows Islamic approach by mosque ethnicity.

All ethnic categories follow the same pattern of preference in Islamic approach, choosing first purposes, then great scholars, then madhhab and lastly salafi. African American mosques and those mosques that are evenly divided between South Asians and Arab adopt more often than other mosques the “purposes” approach.

A greater percentage of South Asian and “other” mosques, which are the newer immigrant groups and Iranian mosques, chose the madhhab approach than the other mosques.

Although salafi mosques are few, most salafi mosques are African American.

Muslim Involvement in Society

Mosque leaders were asked two questions concerning their views on Muslim involvement in American society. The first question asked whether the mosque leader agreed with the statement that “Muslims should be involved in American institutions.”

The second question asked the mosque leader if they agreed with the statement “Muslims should participate in the American political process.”

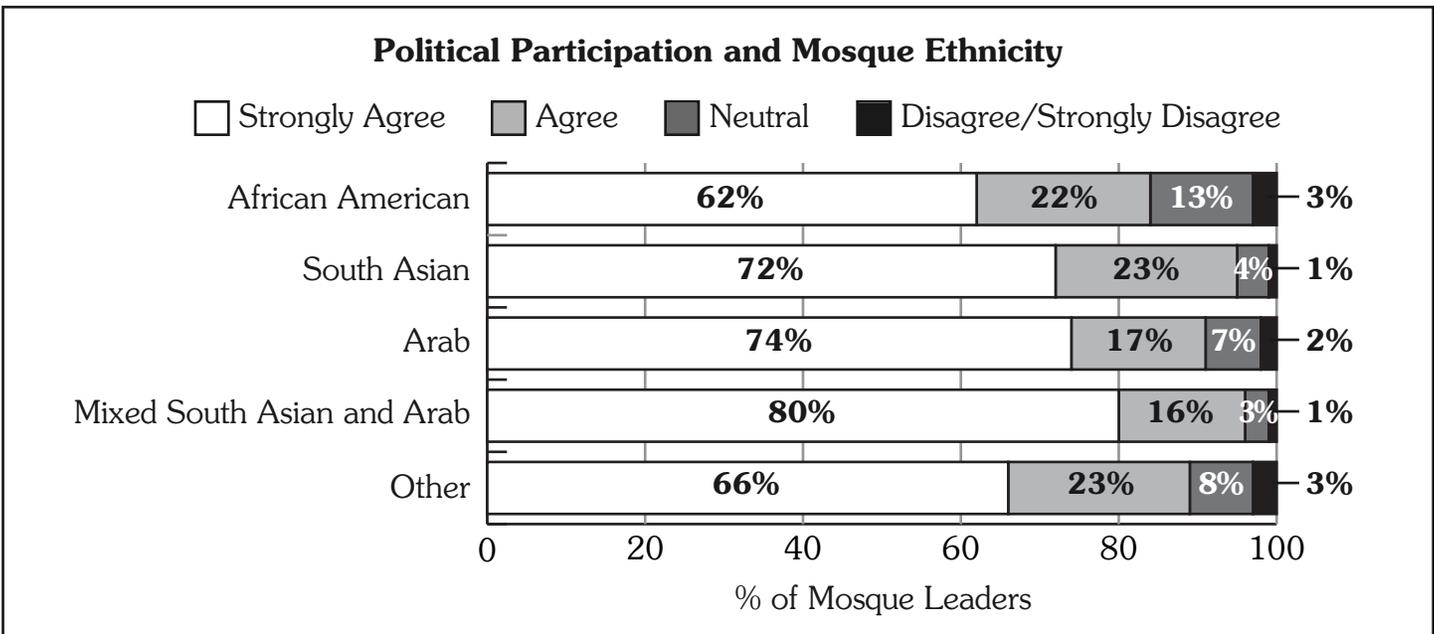
Involvement in American Society	
	<i>% of Mosque Leaders</i>
Strongly agree . . . . .	.81%
Agree . . . . .	.17%
Neutral . . . . .	.2%
Disagree . . . . .	.1%
Strongly disagree . . . . .	.0%

Political Participation in American Society	
	<i>% of Mosque Leaders</i>
Strongly agree . . . . .	.70%
Agree . . . . .	.21%
Neutral . . . . .	.8%
Disagree . . . . .	.2%
Strongly disagree . . . . .	.1%

As in 2000, the vast majority of mosque leaders agree that Muslims should be involved in American society: 98% agree that Muslims should be involved in American institutions, and 91% agree that Muslims should be involved in politics. In 2000, the responses were virtually the same, but slightly lower.

Involvement in Society: 2000 Compared to 2011		
	2000	2011
Agree to involvement in American institutions . . . . .	.96%	.98%
Agree to involvement in politics . . . . .	.89%	.91%

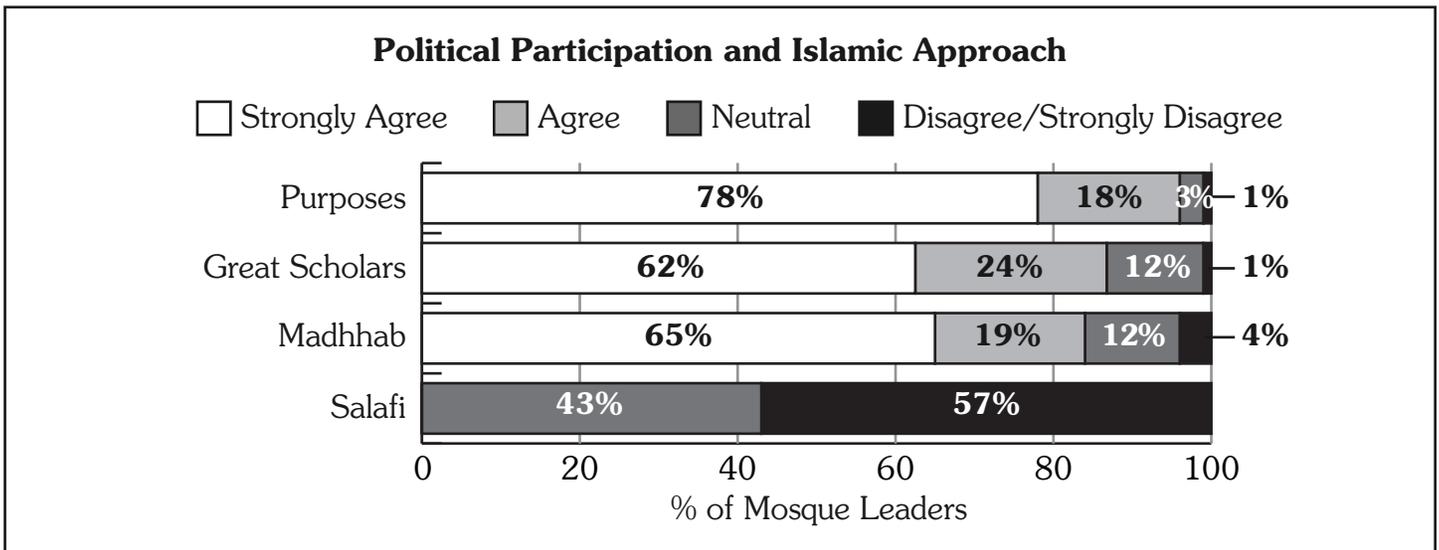
The following chart compares the responses to the question of political participation across mosque ethnicity categories.



Mosques which have mixed South Asian and Arab attendees have the highest percentage that strongly agrees that Muslims should be involved in politics. African American mosques have the largest percentage of mosque leaders—albeit a small percentage—who are neutral or disagree with political participation. Many of these mosque leaders joined Islam in the more radical days of the 1960s and 1970s when participation in mainstream politics was viewed as compromising, corrupting and ineffective.

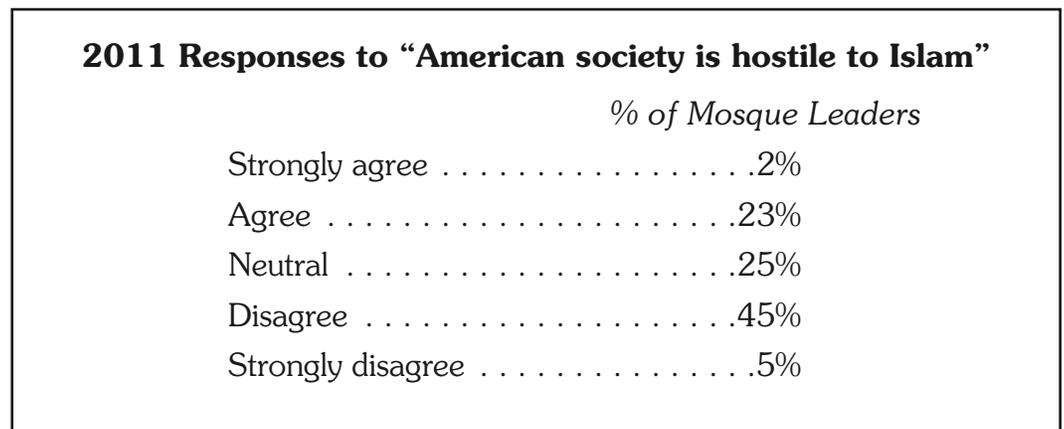
Islamic approach has an especially strong effect on the openness of mosque leaders to political participation.

The first thing to notice is the strong support for political participation across the board except for salafi mosque leaders. Mosque leaders who adopt the more flexible approach of considering the purposes and modern circumstances in the texts are the most likely to strongly agree with political participation. Salafi mosque leaders are unanimous in their opposition to political participation. In comparison to 2000, the mosque leaders who follow the madhhab approach showed the greatest change. In 2000, 46% of their mosque leaders strongly agreed with political participation and in 2011 65% strongly agreed. Clearly, the mosque leaders who follow the more conservative madhhab approach are more convinced of the need for Muslims to be involved in the American political process.



American Society and Hostility to Islam

The 2000 and 2011 Surveys asked mosque leaders whether they agreed or disagreed with the statement that “American society is hostile to Islam.” Unfortunately the response categories were slightly different in 2000 and 2011.



The results, methodological differences notwithstanding, appear to show a remarkable shift from the 2000 results.

Whereas in 2000—before the tragedy of 9/11—over half of mosque leaders agreed that American society is hostile to Islam, in 2011 only one-fourth (25%) agreed with that statement. In fact, half of all mosque leaders disagree with the statement that American society is hostile to Islam.

Based on comments during the Survey interview, most mosque leaders viewed the statement as too blanket, and they would say that the majority of America people are not hostile to Islam. Ignorance of Islam is the real problem in the eyes of many mosque leaders. They would mention some media outlets and certain Islamophobic groups as being the real culprits in inciting hostility to Islam, but they add that they have been treated well by the people in their own area. Some mentioned incidents after 9/11 when people came forward to offer their support. Surprisingly, even mosque leaders who were embroiled in contentious neighborhood battles at the time of the interview recognized the many good people in the area, and therefore chose to disagree with the statement that American society is hostile to Islam.

2000 and 2011 Responses to “American society is hostile to Islam”

	<i>% of Mosque Leaders 2000</i>	<i>% of Mosque Leaders 2011</i>
Agree . . . . .	.56%	.25%
Neutral*	—	.25%
Disagree . . . . .	.44%	.50%

*Neutral was not a response category in the 2000 Survey.

American Society and Immorality

The Survey asked mosque leaders whether they thought “American society is immoral.”

The majority of mosque leaders (55%) disagree that America is immoral. Again this is a marked shift from 2000 when the majority of mosque leaders agreed with that statement. In 2011 only about one-fourth agreed that America is immoral.

American Society is Immoral

	<i>% of Mosque Leaders</i>
Strongly agree . . . . .	.3%
Agree . . . . .	.21%
Neutral . . . . .	.21%
Disagree . . . . .	.49%
Strongly disagree . . . . .	.6%

2000 and 2011 Responses to “America is an immoral society”

	% of Mosque Leaders 2000	% of Mosque Leaders 2011
Agree . . . . .	.56%	.24%
Neutral*	—	.21%
Disagree . . . . .	.44%	.55%

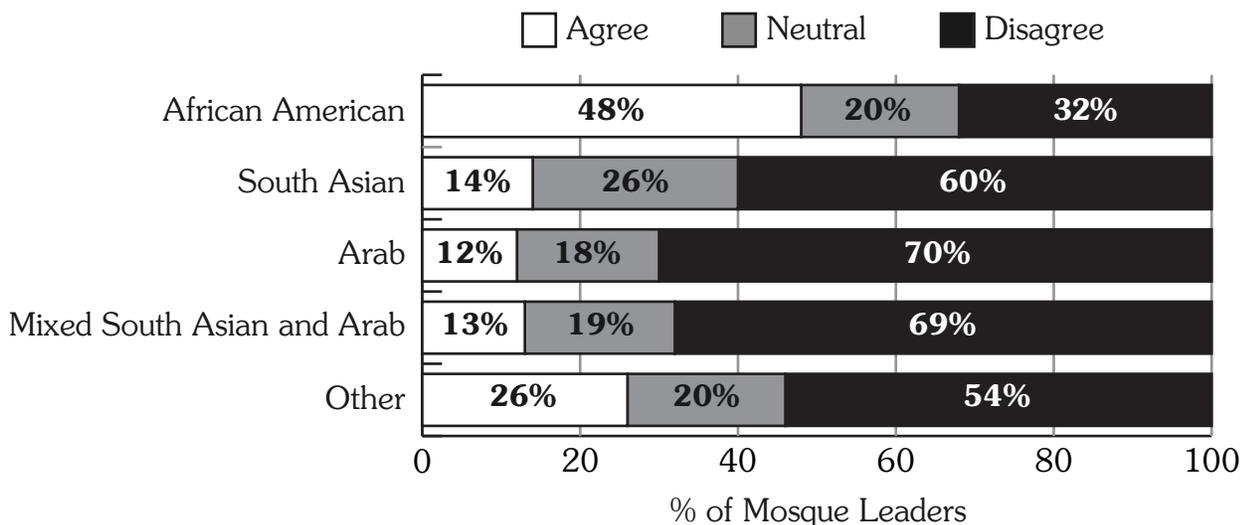
*Neutral was not a response category in the 2000 Survey.

Islamic approach does not seem to affect the responses—those who follow madhhab, great scholars or purposes all have a similar pattern of response. Only salafi mosque leaders differ: over 57% of them agree that America is immoral as opposed to 23% of all the other leaders.

Mosque ethnicity does seem to effect the responses.

As in 2000, African American mosque leaders are much more likely than other leaders to agree with the statement that American society is immoral. Almost half of African American mosque leaders (48%) agree with the statement as compared to 13% of all the other mosque leaders. Obviously African American leaders are much more openly critical of America than other leaders.

America is Immoral and Mosque Ethnicity



Radicalism

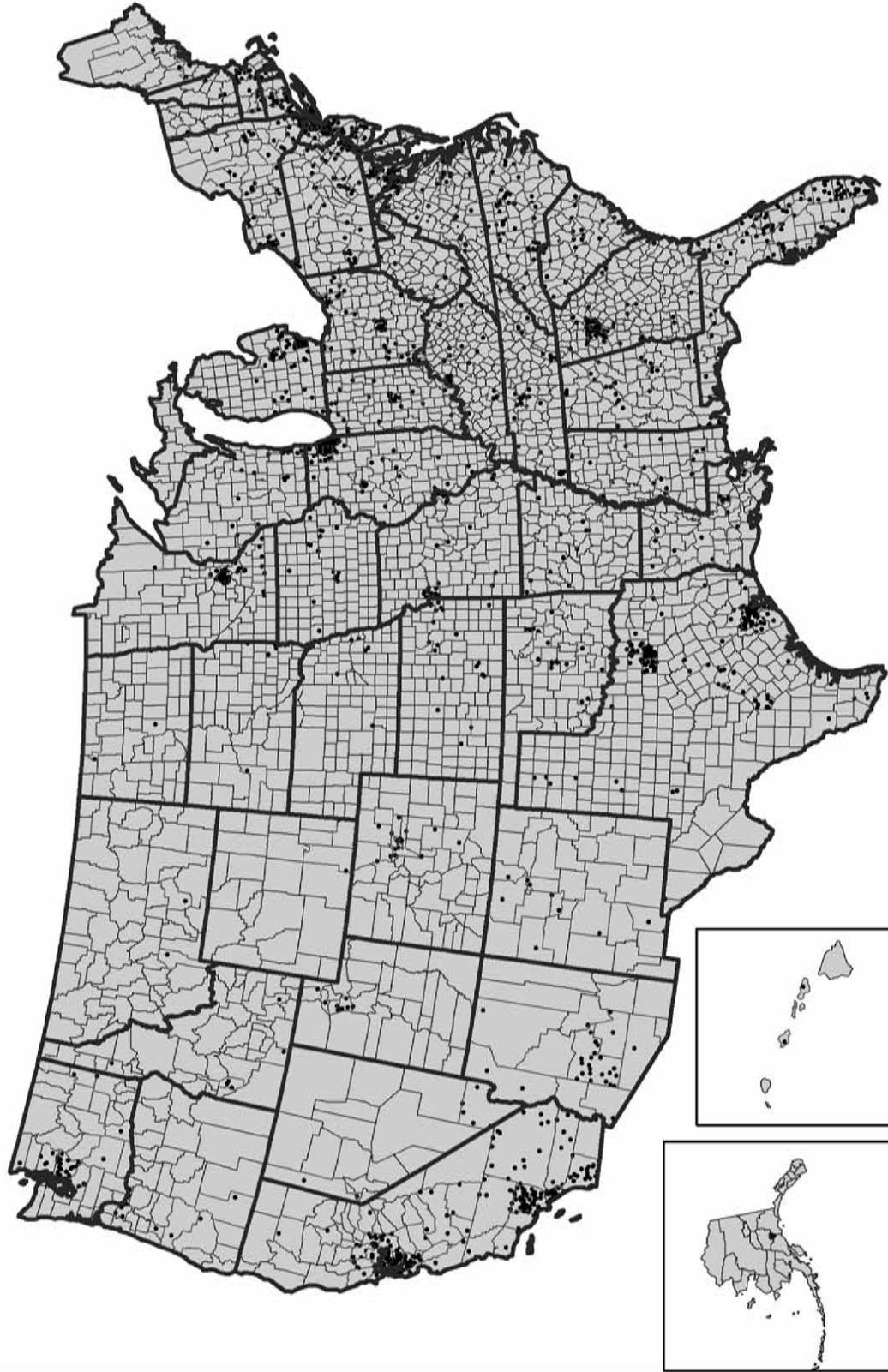
The Survey asked mosque leaders whether they agreed with the statement that “radicalism and extremism is increasing among Muslim youth—in their own experience in their area.” The vast majority (87%) disagreed that radicalism is increasing among Muslim youth. Many mosque leaders would comment that the real challenge for them is not radicalism and extremism among the youth, but attracting and keeping them close to the mosque.

Radicalism is Increasing Among Muslim Youth

% of Mosque Leaders

Strongly agree	<1%
Agree . . . . .	.6%
Neutral . . . . .	.7%
Disagree . . . . .	.55%
Strongly disagree . . . . .	.32%

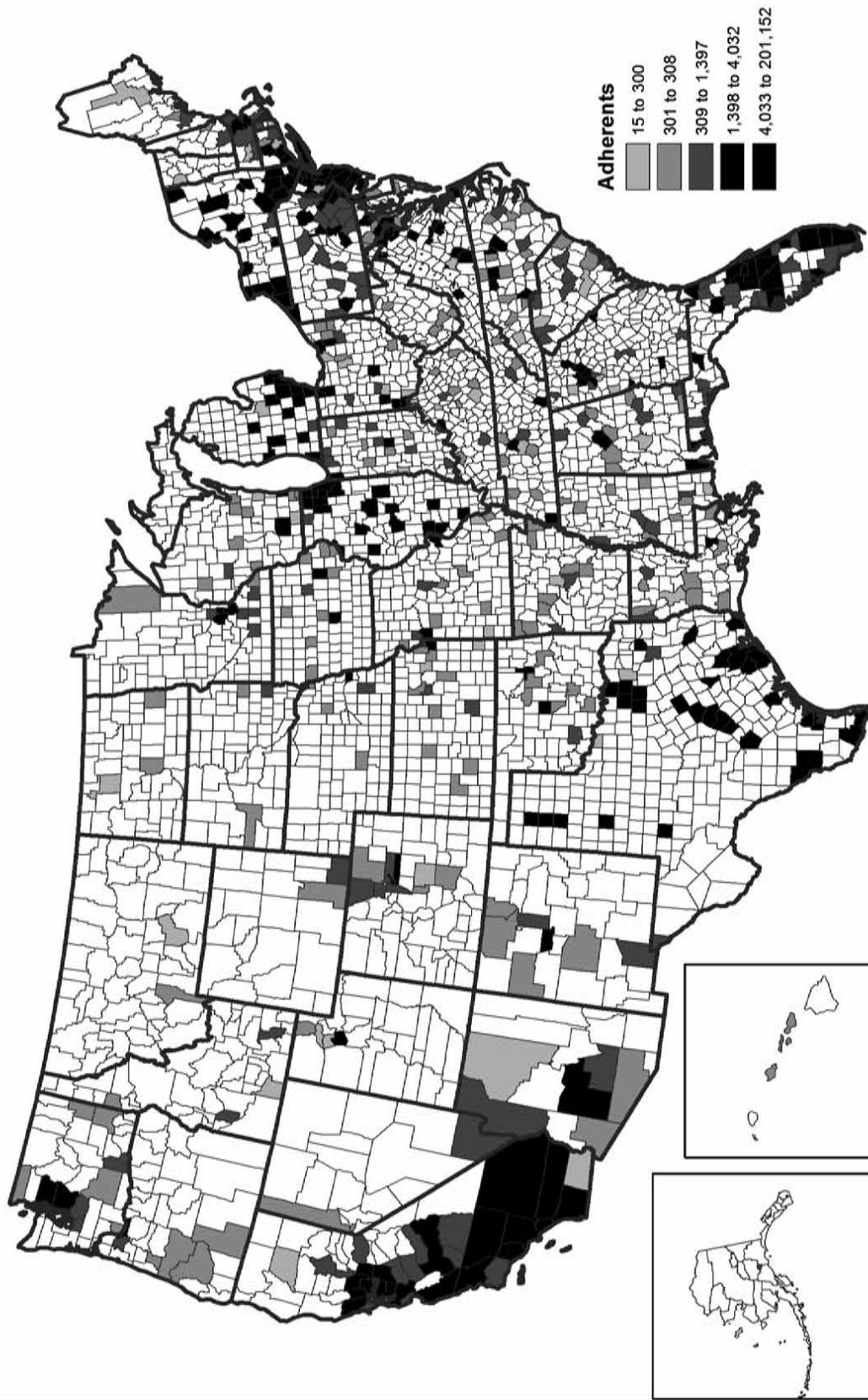
Location of Muslim Congregations in the United States, 2010



2,106 congregations and 2,600,082 adherents were reported in 592 counties.

© Association of Statisticians of American Religious Bodies, 2012
Religious Congregations & Membership in the United States: 2010
Created by Research Services using ESRI ArcMap 10.0

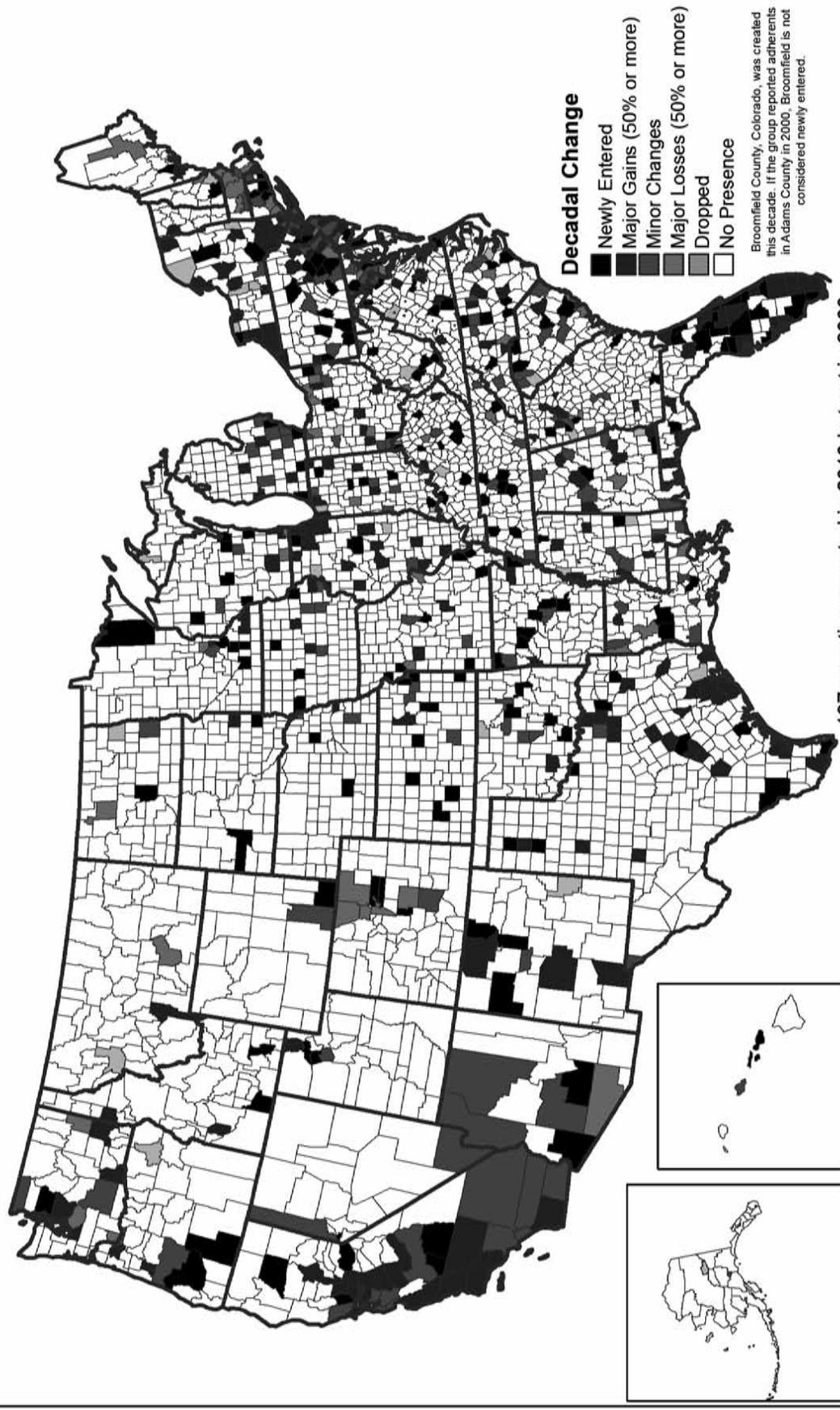
Estimated Muslim Adherents in the United States, 2010
 Counties Grouped into Five Equal-sized Categories



© Association of Statisticians of American Religious Bodies, 2012
 Religious Congregations & Membership in the United States: 2010
 Created by Research Services using ESRI ArcMap 10.0

2,106 congregations and 2,600,082 adherents were reported in 592 counties.

Change in Estimated Adherents, Muslim Congregations, 2000 to 2010



Decadal Change

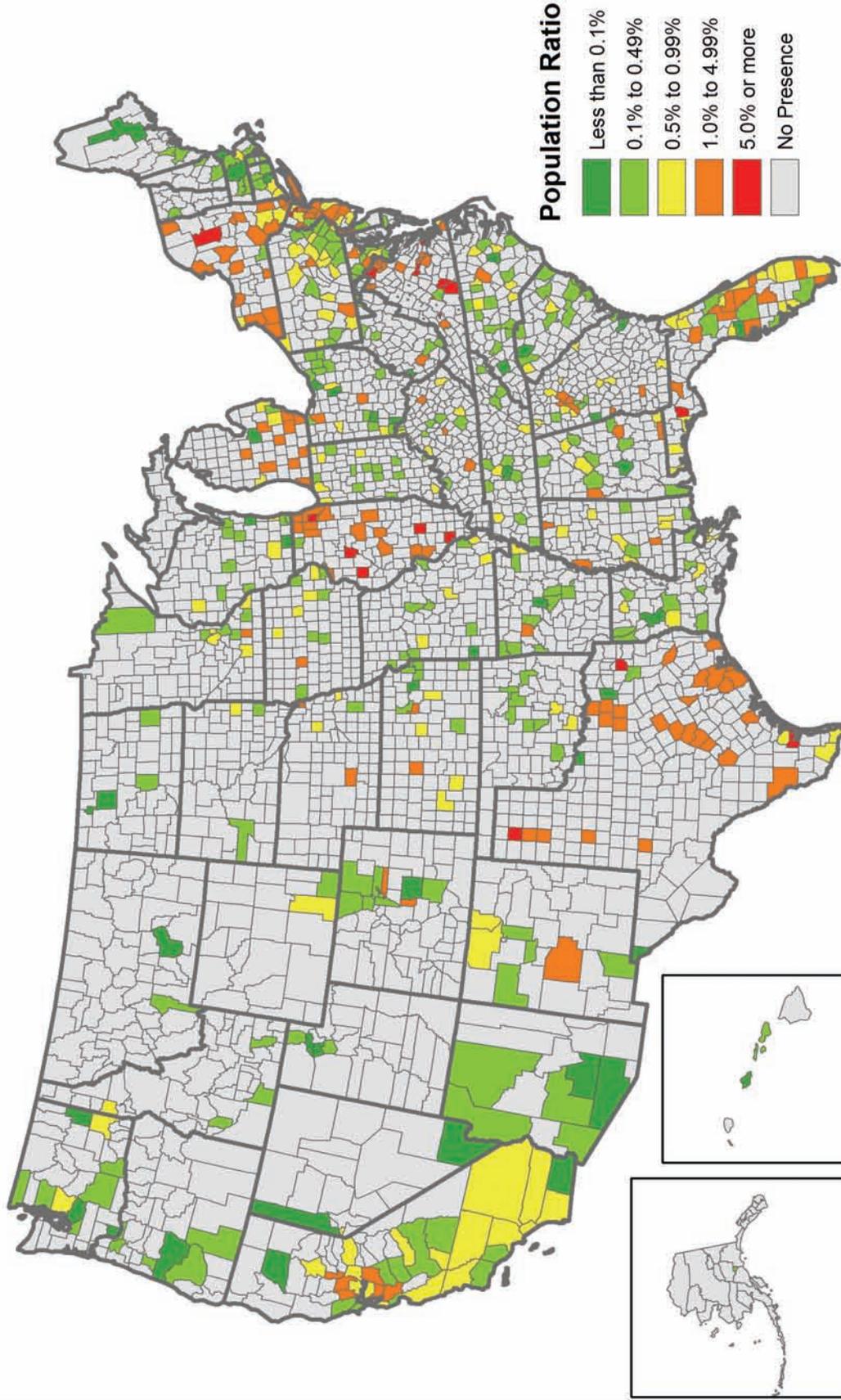
- Newly Entered
- Major Gains (50% or more)
- Minor Changes
- Major Losses (50% or more)
- Dropped
- No Presence

Broomfield County, Colorado, was created this decade. If the group reported adherents in Adams County in 2000, Broomfield is not considered newly entered.

197 counties reported in 2010 but not in 2000.
29 counties reported in 2000 but not in 2010.

© Association of Statisticians of American Religious Bodies, 2012
Religious Congregations & Membership in the United States: 2010
Created by Research Services using ESRI ArcMap 10.0

Population Penetration, Estimated Muslim Adherents in the United States, 2010



2,106 congregations and 2,600,082 adherents were reported in 592 counties.

© Association of Statisticians of American Religious Bodies, 2012
Religious Congregations & Membership in the United States: 2010
Created by Research Services using ESRI ArcMap 10.0