



TITLE: Muslims and Social Justice Activism in the United States

Author/s: Rosemary Hancock

Affiliation/s: University of Notre Dame

This paper is a preliminary study into the involvement of US Islamic organizations in social justice activism. Through an analysis of the online presence of Islamic social justice groups, I seek to address whether these activists and organizations frame their activism as religious charity, political dissent, or both. Informed by social movement theory and recent research into online research methodologies, the paper examines the relationship between Muslim social justice activists and organizations with secular social justice groups, and public authorities in the US. To what extent do the activists and organizations critique the cultural, political, and economic values of the US? In what ways do they position themselves as unique contributors to the social justice movement? Do they support or critique public authorities and existing social justice networks? The paper analyses the websites, Facebook pages, and public documents of Islamic social justice groups in the US to seek preliminary answers to these questions, as well as to assess the extent of involvement of these groups in the provision of welfare to their communities. Islamic activism is, all too frequently, conflated with violent extremism. A small, but growing body of literature that seeks to engage with Muslim involvement in progressive activism informs this paper. The involvement of American Muslims in US civil society is an important way in which Muslim communities become involved in US politics and interact with non-Muslim Americans. Further, social justice activism gives Muslims an avenue in which they can safely express dissatisfaction with US cultural values and productively engage in activism to change those values.