

MUSLIM RAP, HALAL SOAPS, AND REVOLUTIONARY THEATER

Artistic Developments in the Muslim World

EDITED BY KARIN VAN NIEUWKERK

RITUAL AS STRATEGIC ACTION:
THE SOCIAL LOGIC OF MUSICAL
SILENCE IN CANADIAN ISLAM, by Michael Frishkopf

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RITUAL AS STRATEGIC ACTION: THE SOCIAL LOGIC OF MUSICAL SILENCE IN CANADIAN ISLAM

MICHAEL FRISHKOPF

LIVING IN EGYPT FOR MANY YEARS, I became accustomed to Islamic ritual as sonically rich, hence socially and spiritually compelling. From Qur'anic recitation (*tilawa*), to the Sufi liturgy (*hadra*), from the saint's day festival (*mawlid*) to ordinary congregational prayer (*salah*), Egyptian sounds of Islam are variegated, often moving, and frequently virtuosic. In short, they are often (though certainly not always) "music," if this word is understood in its broad English sense of "aesthetic sound," rather than as a cognate of the Arabic *musiqā* (implying instrumental music, a word not typically applied to Islamic practices). After moving from Cairo to Canada in 1998, and visiting numerous Canadian mosques, I was struck both by the social dynamism of Canadian Muslim communities (most of them established only recently) and by the relative *musical silence* of Islamic ritual there (sometimes actively applied, for instance in the lukewarm reception given by second-generation Muslims to a traditional Qur'anic reciter whom I brought from Egypt to Edmonton, due to expressed fears that his spiritual-musical practices may "transgress the boundaries of the Quraan and Sunnah").¹

Why is Islamic ritual practice in Canada comparatively bereft of musical sound? More generally, why is Canadian Islamic practice *relatively* lacking in those aesthetic media—especially architecture, calligraphy, poetry, and the vocal arts—whose practical procedural knowledge has been (for the most part) transmitted orally, and that have, for centuries, accompanied Islamic ritual, offering powerful means for gathering worshippers, and for developing, expressing, communicating, and instilling spiritual feeling, transmitting and catalyzing an immediate experience of the numinous, in its transcendent and immanent dimensions, the *mysterium tremendum et fascinans* (Otto and Harvey 1925; Nasr 1987)?²

In this chapter, I explore the relatively limited practice and acceptance of music—and more broadly, of aesthetic spirituality—in Islamic ritual in Canada as a consequence of (1) a distinctively modernist Islamic reform-

ism, one that developed in a dialectical relation with the West from the mid-nineteenth century onwards, and that persists today as one set of Islamic discourses (among many others); and (2) Canada's being a place of emigration that is particularly hospitable to these discourses, and particularly inhospitable to others.

Here, I'm not alluding to broader antimusic Muslim *discourses* for which music *qua* aesthetic entertainment is anathema (nowadays widespread via reformist propaganda—if relatively inconsequential—among segments of the Canadian Muslim population, as elsewhere in the world). Nor am I claiming that the Canadian Muslim population (more than others) actually avoids making or listening to music in *practice* (a statement that I believe would prove untrue). Rather, my discussion centers on music in Islamic ritual: I wish to interpret the absence of aesthetically compelling sound and, correspondingly, sonically generated affect in Canadian Muslim spiritual practice, as compared to Muslim practices in historically Islamic regions.

RITUAL TRANSMISSION: HUMAN MEDIATION VERSUS ORIGINARY MODELS

Islamic ritual almost invariably centers on the socially marked recitation (individual or collective) of sacred texts, what I have called *language performance* (Frishkopf 1999). Textual recitation entails pitched vocal sound, the paralinguistic carrier for vowels and voiced consonants. The resulting sonic contours offer potential parasemantic power—via tonal, timbral, temporal, and social organization—as moving aesthetic sound, transcending the assertional content of the text itself. This affective-aesthetic power, extolling the text through sonic adornment, serves both text and ritual, by drawing and focusing attention, clarifying meaning, facilitating retention, forging social solidarity among participants, and developing emotion confirming the felt certainty of the textual message and the efficacy of the spiritual practice in which its recitation is embedded (see Frishkopf 2002).

In Islamic ritual the full power of aesthetic sound appears in the intricate tonal arabesques of the call to prayer (*adhan*), in Qur'anic recitation (*tilawa*) performed in the *mujawwad* style, and in the elaborate echoings of the *muballigh*, responding to the imam of congregational prayer with “*Allahu akbar*” or “*assalamu ‘alaykum wa rahmatullah*” in melodic style. It includes the ascending tonal arches of the public *du‘a* (supplication) as performed by the prayer leader, and the otherworldly *ibtihalat*, ornamented predawn vocal solos performed by specialists (*mubtāhili*) in the mosques. It encompasses the wide range of musicality displayed in liturgies of the Sufi orders (*al-turuq al-sufiyya*), whether in the chanted textual formulae

of *dhikr*, *awrad*, and *hizb*; in accompanying religious hymns, *inshad dini*; or in spiritual-musical audition, *sama‘*. And it includes popular devotional songs—most commonly praise (*madih*) and petition (*istighatha*) directed to the Prophet (and sometimes to saints); and glorification (*tasbih*), supplication (*ibtihalat*), and *salawat* (requests to bless the Prophet) to God—ranging from simple call-and-response singing, to elaborate musical ensembles featuring song, as well as instruments (especially frame drums and flutes). Thus Islamic ritual, while invariably centering on text, is nearly everywhere embellished by paralinguistic sound.

In the Arab world, these forms exploit a range of familiar (if indescribable) vocal timbres and ornamental styles, along with the system of Arab musical modes, the heptatonic *maqamat*. Elsewhere in the Muslim world, tonal and timbral practices may be quite different. Thus Muslim Hausa speakers of West Africa deploy contrasting instruments, timbres, and tonalities (e.g., pentatonic scales) in their religious genres. In Turkey vocal characteristics may resemble the distinctive sound of the Mevlevi order, in Iran vocal ornaments used in religious recitations sound Iranian, and in Pakistan the musical style of Sufi performance is adapted from Hindustani traditions (Qureshi 1987). In many cases, the texts are the same, however; even when appearing in local languages, poetic themes (praise, supplication, exhortation, spiritual love) recur widely. The same Islamic messages, then, are projected in a multitude of sonic forms, which serve powerfully to channel the religious feeling of the performer, and to evoke religious feeling in the listener, by means of musical idioms that are available, local, familiar, and potent.

Because the aesthetics of these sonic forms—unwritten and passed through (usually informal) oral transmission—resist discursive specification, and because they defer to the referential texts they support, they tend to go unremarked among Muslims (as that which “goes without saying because it comes without saying,” as Bourdieu quipped [1977, 167]), as, for instance, in Sufi texts (including mystical manuals) or in guides for Qur'anic cantillation, where the melodic details of recitation are virtually always omitted. Furthermore, as they typically carry no particular referential meaning themselves, such forms cannot easily be contested via critical discourse, which (outside the hands of a few specialists) serves as a kind of blunt instrument capable only of accepting or rejecting them en masse (as attested by antimusical polemics). And yet these forms carry tremendous emotional force for those in whom they are inculcated—for those (to continue with Bourdieu) in whom they are inscribed, almost bodily, in the aesthetic habitus through repeated ritual practice, accumulating (via both individual memory and collective oral transmission) indexical meanings (by juxtaposition to use-contexts), while providing “presentational” (Langer 1960) and expressive ones, the combi-

nation generating the “effervescence” elaborated by Durkheim as crucial to the solidarity of social groups (Durkheim 1976).

As in other religious ritual, sonic forms are powerful forces in naturalizing embodied, affective social identities (at the phenomenological level), and thus (at the sociological level) in actually unifying or dividing socio-religious solidarities, despite their nondiscursivity—indeed all the more powerful for lying outside the discursive realm (Frishkopf 2009c). Aesthetic forms that cannot be expressed in language may nevertheless express one another very well.

All of these aesthetic-sonic practices of Islam, along with many intellectual ones, have been transmitted and developed across the centuries by chains (*silsilas*, *isnads*) of *human mediation*. By this I mean that the transmission path links a series of people, engaged in extended intersubjective relationships, sharing a lifeworld—and, consequently, soundworld (Frishkopf 2009b)—each receiving from a teacher (formally or not) through intensive social-sonic interactions and transmitting (in the same manner) to a relatively small number of students, rather than receiving a mass broadcast emanating directly from a privileged point of fixed cultural reference, an “originary model.”

Indeed it cannot be otherwise. In contrast to texts, such models have never existed for Islamic ritual sound, and as a result cannot exist, for the music of Islam (unlike, say, Protestant hymnals) has developed tremendous performative flexibility and adaptability, as a result of its freedom from fixed models, which can therefore no longer be easily recaptured in any model at all. If Islamic reformism has tended to postulate the early Muslim community, Qur’an, and Sunna as primary discursive reference points, the fact is that these have virtually nothing to say regarding so many matters of aesthetic content. The result of human mediation over many generations is thus a highly ramified transmissive genealogy, and a highly localized Islam, in which neighboring villages may boast of distinctive sonic styles, even while performing exactly the same texts.³ The process of human mediation not only produces continual sonic variation, in dynamic adaptive relation to local sociocultural circumstances (including acoustic ecologies), but also entails an accretion of meaning and practice, the continual “sedimentation of tradition” (Husserl 1970) across an entire history of such changes, which may be preserved beyond its immediate adaptive value through hysteresis, that is, a temporal lag reflecting respect for the practices of past venerable masters, i.e., a deference to the transmissive system itself.

Human mediation centers on the stability of an inner (*batin*) meaning, allowing outer (*zahir*) forms to vary adaptively throughout time and space (not least via translation), in part as a means of ensuring mediative continuity, relevance, and affective power across multiple social settings. In this

way, the process of human mediation (primarily via oral tradition, though often supplemented by technologies of writing) itself offers a metaphysical metacommentary, underscoring that that which is essential is not the variable surface, but the eternal core; not the symbolic form, but the interior substance—a proposition common to mystical interpretations of Islam, and perhaps to mysticism generally. Sufism, Islamic mysticism (*tasawwuf*), supplies the quintessential instance of such mediation in the *silsilas* (initiatory chains) of its social orders (*turuq*), transmitting gnosis (*maʿrifa*) and blessing (*baraka*), though Islamic tradition is full of other examples from other fields, including music itself.

This concept of human mediation—esthetic or intellectual—has always been counterposed by a completely different—indeed, converse—mode of transmission, through mass dissemination of *originary models*. Such models fix the form of a message, without ensuring uniformity of its interpreted meaning, thus precluding the ramifying genealogies of *human mediation*, ensuring an outward unity, without any guarantee of a corresponding inward one. In the past, these models (when they existed) necessarily assumed the linguistic form of a sequence of *discrete signs*, since it was only the sequence of sign pairs (signifier-signified) that could assure perfect reproduction, without change (much as digital media have enabled perfect reproduction today). Continuous aesthetic media (such as music) could not be reduced to such sequences, and, therefore, could not be fixed, without reductive quantization supplemented by additional technologies, either a rich symbolic notation approximating continuities (which the Islamic world, by and large, did not develop for music⁴), or—only recently—digital representations.

The outstanding example of an originary model is the Qur’an itself, required to appear always in Arabic, and to be recited in highly prescribed ways, as fixed by the so-called *ahkam al-tajwid* (Nelson 2001). The fact is that for many Muslims (the vast majority of whom are not fluent in Arabic), the text’s mystery is founded, in part, on the simple fact that they cannot comprehend its language, though they may be able to recite it; they master the sonic phenomenon without mastering the text itself. The experience—perhaps often quite moving—of pronouncing incomprehensible sequences of sounds, almost a kind of incantation, can have little in common, however, with its largely lucid meaning for an Arabic speaker.

In fact, early on, Qur’anic transmission was humanly mediated. Following an initial period of genealogical branching in both written and oral forms, the tree was quite suddenly and drastically pruned, resulting in a single *mushaf* (written text), qualified by multiple *qiraʾat* (readings), as human mediation threatened to split the nascent community (Frishkopf 2009c).

The Prophet Muhammad began to receive revelations around 610 CE, as a quasi-aural communication from the Angel Jibril (aka Gabriel, who received them, likewise quasi-aurally, from God), not as a written text. Muslims affirm this aurality as critical to the proof of the Qur'an's status as revelation (*wahy*). The Prophet Muhammad was completely illiterate, a fact understood by Muslims to substantiate the Qur'an's divine origins⁵ and the miracle (*mu'jiza*) validating his message (every genuine prophet being associated with one or more *mu'jizat*).

However, the Prophet's spiritual companions (*sahaba*) did write down his recitation of Qur'anic verses, using the simple Arabic script at their disposal (at this stage, Arabic letters not only omitted vowels, but also the dots that would later distinguish completely different consonants, such as /b/, /y/, /n/, /t/, /th/). Copies were made, and copies of copies, and soon variants were in circulation. The third caliph, 'Uthman, put a stop to this incipient diversity as a means of ensuring the unity of the Umma. As a *hadith* records:

Narrated Anas bin Malik: Hudhaifa bin Al-Yaman came to 'Uthman at the time when the people of Sham and the people of Iraq were waging war to conquer Arminya and Adharbijan. Hudhaifa was afraid of their (the people of Sham and Iraq) differences in the recitation of the Qur'an, so he said to 'Uthman, "O chief of the Believers! Save this nation before they differ about the Book (Quran) as Jews and the Christians did before." So 'Uthman sent a message to Hafsa saying, "Send us the manuscripts of the Qur'an so that we may compile the Qur'anic materials in perfect copies and return the manuscripts to you." Hafsa sent it to 'Uthman. 'Uthman then ordered Zaid bin Thabit, 'Abdullah bin AzZubair, Said bin Al-As and 'AbdurRahman bin Harith bin Hisham to rewrite the manuscripts in perfect copies. 'Uthman said to the three Quraishi men, "In case you disagree with Zaid bin Thabit on any point in the Qur'an, then write it in the dialect of Quraish, the Qur'an was revealed in their tongue." They did so, and when they had written many copies, 'Uthman returned the original manuscripts to Hafsa. 'Uthman sent to every Muslim province one copy of what they had copied, and ordered that all the other Qur'anic materials, whether written in fragmentary manuscripts or whole copies, be burnt. Said [Zaid] bin Thabit added, "A Verse from Surat Ahzab was missed by me when we copied the Qur'an and I used to hear Allah's Apostle reciting it. So we searched for it and found it with Khuzaima bin Thabit Al-Ansari. (That Verse was): 'Among the Believers are men who have been true in their covenant with Allah.'" (33.23) (Sahih Bukhari, Volume 6, Book 61, Number 510)

Thereafter, through 'Uthman's extraordinarily bold move, there emerged a single, authoritative, written text, an originary model known as the Uthmanic *mushaf* (Sa'id 1975).

Additional problems, however, developed with the recitation (*tilawa*) of this unitary written version, since the absence of dots and vowel markings could lead to multiple linguistic vocalizations within the oral tradition of Qur'anic recitation (*tilawa*). In this case, diversity could not be eliminated entirely, but the number of variant "readings" (*qira'at*), each with a number of subreadings (*riwayat*), was fixed, as attributed to established reciters in a genealogy (Sa'id 1975). Differences could also be legitimized by the theory of so-called *albruf*, which held that the Qur'an was revealed in seven different dialects as a means of enhancing comprehension among the various Arab tribes (*qaba'il*) of Arabia.

Narrated 'Abdullah bin 'Abbas: Allah's Apostle said, "Gabriel recited the Qur'an to me in one way. Then I requested him (to read it in another way), and continued asking him to recite it in other ways, and he recited it in several ways till he ultimately recited it in seven different ways." (Sahih Bukhari Volume 6, Book 61, Number 513)

With the addition of diacritical markings on the 'Uthmanic base, the *mushaf* could be notated so as to indicate acceptable readings, while all other readings were rejected. Finally, human mediation had been removed from these notated readings, corresponding to those discrete aspects of *tilawa* (mainly, phonemic) that could be notated: the *qira'at* henceforth comprised a set of originary models, with which no reciter could ever tamper. But other paralinguistic sonic aspects of recitation—continuous parameters such as melodic shape, timbre, and timing—remained as "free variables" (Frishkopf 2009c) and continued to be transmitted via human mediation, enabling stylistic localizations to occur.

Much the same process led to the codification of four schools of law (*madhabib*) among the Sunnis and the codification of Hadith. In this way, the inherent diversity of human mediation, if not eliminable, could at least be managed—with respect to the linguistic phenomenon of texts.

SONIC PRACTICES AND REFORM

If the unity of the core Islamic text—the Qur'an itself—and legal schools could be assured in this way, the same was certainly not true of paralinguistic sonic practices (most classed as "music"), continuous and unbound by reference, which could not be systematically codified, and which there-

fore depended entirely on human mediation. Even the sound of the recited Qur'an, whose tonal characteristics were never regulated (or regulable) by *ahkam al-tajwid*, was not immune to sonic diversity; the improvisatory character of *tilawa* was required by some scholars, on theological grounds, to avoid melodic associations with the Qur'an, considered nearly a kind of *shirk* (associationism; see Nelson 2001). Sonic flexibility in timbral, tonal, and temporal domains, allowed even for the Qur'an, was enacted, a fortiori, for sonic practices more remote from the sacred core, including *adhan*, *ibtihalat*, and *madih*, which developed completely different sounds in Egypt, Turkey, Iran, and West Africa, for instance. But these differences, not easily represented in verbal discourse, tended not to cause problems for theories of Muslim unity during the period of Muslim ascendancy, perhaps in part because the territorialized differences were rarely juxtaposed in practice.

Least regulable were the "popular" ritual-sonic practices that ramified worldwide through human mediation, primarily in oral form. Such localization of "popular Islam" occurred primarily in two species of context: birthday celebrations for the Prophet and saints (*mawlid*) (Schacht 1965; Hiskett 1973; Boyd 1981; Monts and Monts 2001; al-Hilawi 1984; Boyd 2001; Faruqi 1986; Giles 1989; *Égypte: ordre chazili* 1992; Karrar 1992; Kaptein 1993; *Comores* 2004; Shadhiliyah and Helbawy 1999; Corke et al. 2003; Foulani 2000; Orwin 2001; Topp Fargion 2000; Waugh 2005) and rituals of the Sufi orders (Gilsenan 1973; Qureshi 1987; Diagne 1996; Karrar 1992; Frishkopf 1999, 2001; Ben Mahmoud 2000; Aichi 2001; Duvelle 2003; Waugh 2005; Trimmingham 1998), since these occasions, themselves the result of human mediation, fell outside the scope of canonical Islam of the *madhabib*. Thus musical and ritual developments tended to accumulate, through human mediation, together. But they occurred more generally—because logically—in performance culture, especially music, that could not be fixed by written expressions.

Modern Islamic reform can be traced to nineteenth- and early-to-mid twentieth-century thinkers such as Sayyid Ahmad Khan (1817–1898), Jamal al-Din al-Afghani (1838–1897), Muhammad Abdu (1849–1905), Rashid Rida (1865–1935), Muhammad Iqbal (1876–1938), Sayyid Abu al-Ala Mawdudi (1903–1979), and Sayyid Qutb (1906–1966). Only since the mid-twentieth century have Islamic reform movements based on their ideas developed a mass appeal beyond a relatively narrow stratum of intellectuals. The real diversity of these movements—including what have been labeled Islamic reform (*islah*), revival (*tajdid*), Salafism, and Wahhabism—also masks a fundamental similarity, by comparison to earlier currents of reform and revival. These earlier waves of reform, having a primary objective of correcting spirituality, occurred while Islam was still globally ascendant to some degree, from the seventh-century al-Hasan al-Basri (Knysh 2000), to Ibn Taymiyya,

to eighteenth-century reformists such as Muhammad ibn Abd al-Wahhab (Haj 2009) and Ahmad al-Tijani (Abun-Nasr 1965).

By contrast, modern Islamic reform has developed as a strategy for a subaltern Islam, designed to homogenize ritual practice, unify the global Umma, and thereby re-empower Islam against the West, following a precipitous decline resulting from the onslaughts of European colonialism (and later from the spread of Western-originated secular-nationalist ideologies, capitalism, and globalization).

Where modern reform differed from earlier thinkers and movements was in its response to this decline (and the forces behind it), and in its ironic tendency to adopt paradigms and content—albeit selectively—from the very Western civilization it ostensibly opposed, stressing, in particular, reason over emotion, rationality over mysticism, unity over diversity, and derivations from first principles (in the Qur'an and Sunna). In search of exoteric social unity, modern reformers from the nineteenth century onwards emphasized replicable discursive messages—originary models—to the detriment or even exclusion of the spiritual-aesthetic riches carried by human mediation, since the latter, for all of their localized spiritual-social value, also underscored the outward cultural divisions of the Umma. If the way of spiritual feeling could demonstrate the inner, essential unity of Islamic spirituality as a single message clothed in multiple outward forms for the mystic, the same multiplicity—each form representing the localization effected by a long chain of human mediation—simultaneously contradicted that unity for the nonmystic more concerned with political empowerment than spiritual essences. Mystical ecstasy was henceforth to be perceived not only as antithetical to Islamic dynamism, unity, and empowerment, but to Western values of reason and modernity as well.

The new reformers, seeking unity (beyond culture) and reason (toward social action), became increasingly intolerant of Islam's cultural differences and impatient with mystical emotion (at best producing torpor and lassitude, at worst representing *shirk* of the most noxious kind, culminating in mystical identity with God). The diversity of ritual localizations was not only criticized as politically ineffective, but also charged as instantiating *bid'a*, "innovation." From early on, the Arabic concept of *bid'a* was developed in religious terms as denoting a practice (usually a ritual practice) not grounded in Sunna. Originally carrying a pejorative meaning, the term became nuanced through legal usage, with the differentiation of positive (*bid'a hasana*) and negative (*bid'a sayyi'a*) types (Fierro 1992; Rispler 1991). During this period, the *bid'a* label did not necessarily constitute a condemnation. Judgments about *bid'a* occurred throughout Islamic history as a corrective to spiritual practice.

However, in the modern period *bid'a* tends to be used increasingly in its

negative sense, and in a strategic manner: not as a means of fostering proper Islamic spirituality, but as a social tool for censure, seeking the elimination of ritual diversity and the unification of the Umma, as a strategy toward re-empowerment. In reformist circles one constantly hears a *hadith*, offered as a means of reducing ritual variety, emphasizing *bid'a* as unequivocally negative: "the worst of all things are novelties (*muhdathat*); every novelty is innovation (*bid'a*), every innovation is error (*dalala*) and every error leads to hell" (attributed to Imam Ahmad al-Nasa'i). While not all reformists uniformly reject *bid'a*, there is a general tendency to reject diversity of ritual practice through accusations of *bid'a*, while the most uncompromising reformists reject all *bid'a* absolutely.

Thus one contemporary reformist website asks, "WHY ARE WE SO DIVIDED?," answering, "Because of Shirk, innovations and leaving the Sunnah . . . Allah has informed us in the Qur'an that He has completed this religion of Islam. . . . Since the religion is complete how can it be that we need to add new things and ways of worship to Islam? . . . So how can we come together upon something as dangerous as innovations, such as the innovations of mystics, who practice all kinds of weird and innovated invocations?" (Hoor al-Ayn). The same website unequivocally denounces the *mawlid* as equally *bid'a*.

This tendency toward intolerance of religious differences, even those internal to Islam, could be supported through reference to another *hadith*, cited by al-Tirmidhi:

'Abdullah ibn 'Amr reported that Allah's Messenger (peace and blessings be upon him) said, "My Umma will face that which the Banu Isra'il faced. . . . the Banu Isra'il divided into seventy-two sects and my Umma will divide into seventy-three sects, all of whom will enter the Fire except one." (The Prophet's companions) asked (him), "Which one, O Messenger of Allah?" He said, "That of myself and my companions." (Sunan al-Tirmidhi, Book of Faith, 2641; translation by author)

Modern reformism became a mass political movement in the mid-twentieth century with the founding of the Muslim Brothers (*al-ikhwan al-muslimun*) by Hasan al-Banna in Egypt, cross-fertilizing with the older Wahhabi movement in Saudi Arabia and inspiring like movements elsewhere. Egypt's losses in the 1967 war with Israel, and the consequent discrediting of Nasserism, provided a boost to Islamism as a viable alternative.

However, the rise of global Islamic reformism only occurred after 1973, when Arab oil producers cut production and Saudi Arabia suspended petroleum shipments to the United States. The price of oil tripled overnight, and

producers—especially Saudi Arabia—enjoyed a dramatic increase in revenues and global influence (Vassiliev 2000, 401). King Faisal (r. 1964–1975) exploited post-1973 windfalls to develop his country, a policy continued by King Khaled (r. 1975–1982). Many Muslims interpreted this new wealth and power as a divine vindication of Saudi-style piety. Saudi Arabia's newfound wealth and global power modernized Wahhabism, which subsequently drew closer to Egypt's more progressive, and burgeoning, reformist trends. Through the early twentieth century, many Wahhabis had rejected even technological "innovations" such as electricity. From the mid-twentieth century, however, mainstream Wahhabi views were tempered—and empowered—by oil wealth (and concomitant close relations to Western powers), as well as by interactions with Egyptian reformism. Such "neo-Wahhabism" embraces modern technology, capitalism, and consumerism and, buoyed by oil, has become extremely powerful worldwide (Peskes and Ende 2006).

CANADA AS A MODERN REFORMIST LANDSCAPE

In traditionally Muslim regions of the world, modern reformism, with its emphasis on originary models, overlaid older Islamic cultural patterns, as evolved via human mediation, without ever erasing them entirely. In competition, each discourse laid its claims: one to the literate authority of the intelligentsia (typically educated in global centers such as Cairo or Saudi Arabia, and oriented toward an understanding of the West), the other to the localized heritage of "popular Islam" (Gaffney 1992). Frequently, discursive conflict would pit local Islamic culture against the reformist worldview, e.g., in Egypt, where dozens of Sufi orders thrive, and tens of thousands of *mawalid* are celebrated, if open to criticism (Johansen 1996; Frishkopf 1999), or in Ghana, where a well-established Sufi order, the Tijaniyya, regularly clashes with a Wahhabi-inspired reformist group, the Ahl al-Sunna wa al-Jama'a, over ritual differences, especially in regards to celebration of the Prophet's *mawlid*, veneration of *shaykhs*, use of musical instruments, and mixed-gender dance (Ryan 1996; Frishkopf 2009a). But Canada provides a receptive environment for a particular brand of reformist thought, one that is necessarily tolerant of non-Muslims, but not at all tolerant of Muslim difference, and which consequently provides little space for ritual diversity and its aesthetic elaborations, including musical ritual.

This fact is not merely a feature of Muslim communities in the West, for Canada evinces a stronger presence of reformism even when compared to other Western sites of Muslim immigration, especially in Europe, whose Muslim practices are more diverse. Why should this be the case? And why is musical ritual so scarce? Before exploring the social dynamics of Islam in

Canada, it is helpful to consider the historical and demographic dimensions of Muslim immigration there.

DEMOGRAPHIC BACKGROUND

Muslims began to emigrate to Canada during the late nineteenth century, though in 1931 there were still reportedly only 645 Muslim residents in Canada, mostly Arabs; Canada's first mosque (al-Rashid) was founded in Edmonton in 1938, by twenty Lebanese Muslim families (Abu Laban 1983, 80–81). Drawing heavily on the Middle East and South Asia, Muslim populations across Canada expanded rapidly after 1990 (see Figure 4.1 for the distribution of Muslims over the different provinces). In 2009, Canada's Muslim population was estimated at 657,000, or roughly 2 percent of the population, considerably higher than other immigrant societies of the developed world, such as those in the USA (0.8 percent, or 2,454,000 Muslims), Australia (1.7 percent, or 365,000), or New Zealand (0.9 percent, or 37,000), though not as high as those in the Netherlands (5.7 percent, or 946,000), Germany (5 percent, or 4,026,000), France (6 percent, or 3,554,000), or Britain (2.7 percent, or 1,647,000) (Mapping the Global Muslim Population 2009). As is shown in Figure 4.2, the ethnic background of the Muslim population of Canada is highly diverse.

Another important characteristic of the Canadian Muslim population is its high educational level. The Muslim full-time school attendance rate is more than double that of the general population, indicating a relatively well-educated population (see figure 4.3). Rates for master's and PhD degrees within the Muslim population are more than double those of the general population; bachelor's rates are 1.7 times the general rate (see figure 4.4).

By contrast, Muslims are far less likely to receive working-class credentials, such as a trades certificate (0.56 times the general rate; see figure 4.5) (StatsCan 2001c). The Muslim rate of employment in science and technology (mostly requiring postsecondary education) exceeds that of the general population by a ratio of nearly 2:1, while Muslims are proportionally under-represented in the trades, and primary industry jobs (StatsCan 2001c), most of them working-class. Muslim participation rates in social science and arts/culture are significantly below the national average, implying relative lack of participation in civil society, though Canadian Islamic organizations such as the Canadian Islamic Congress are actively addressing this issue.

Despite well-established roots, the bulk of the Muslim community is first-generation. As figures 4.6 and 4.7 indicate, immigrants among the Muslim population greatly exceeded (over 70 percent) those in the total population (less than 20 percent) in 2001, when measured as a percentage of the total number in each group.

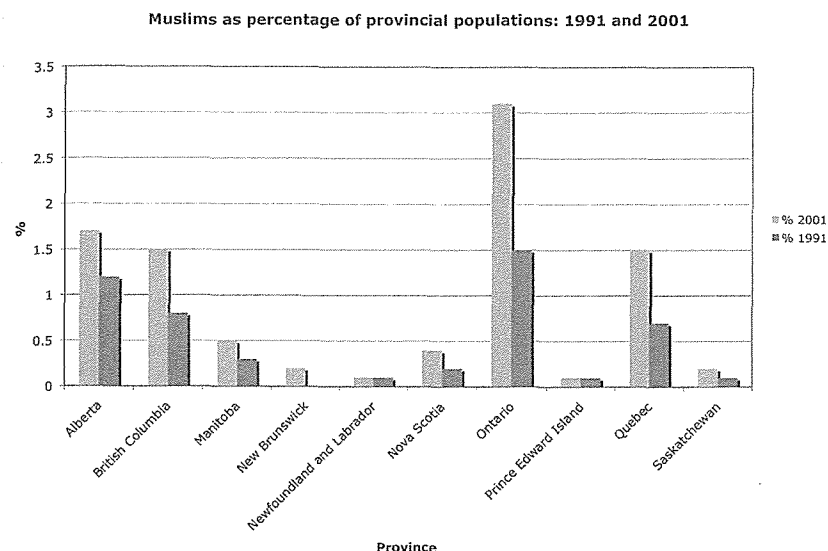


FIGURE 4.1. Muslims in Canada, as a percentage of provincial populations (1991, 2001) (StatsCan 2001b).

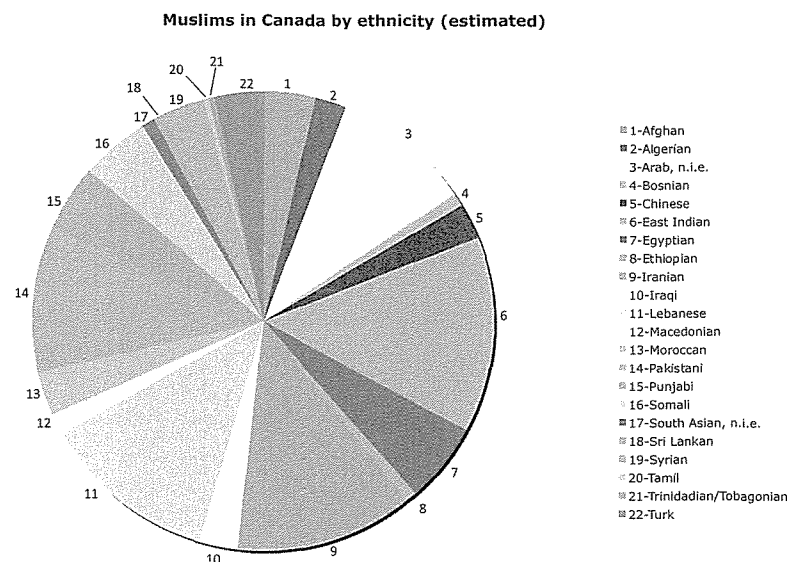


FIGURE 4.2. Muslims in Canada are ethnically diverse. Estimate derived from Pew Report (Mapping the Global Muslim Population 2009), combined with Statistics Canada 2001 census data on ethnicity (StatsCan 2001f). (n.i.e. = not included elsewhere)

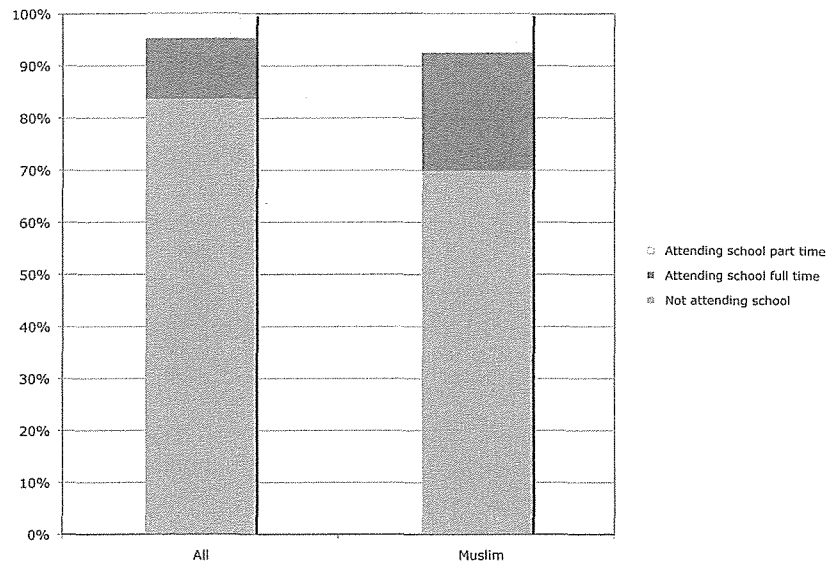


FIGURE 4.3. School attendance rates in Canada, Muslim vs. All (2001 census data) (StatsCan 2001e).

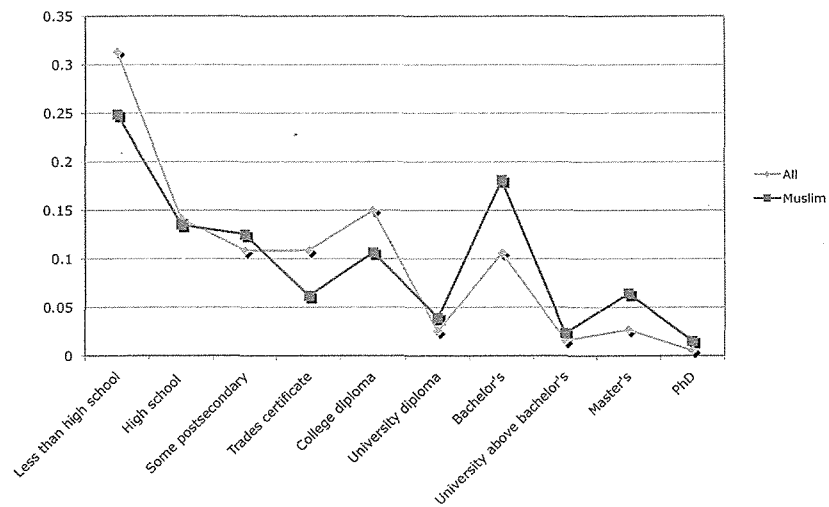


FIGURE 4.4. Educational level rates in Canada, Muslim vs. All (2001 census data), demonstrating Muslim professionalism in Canada (StatsCan 2001e).

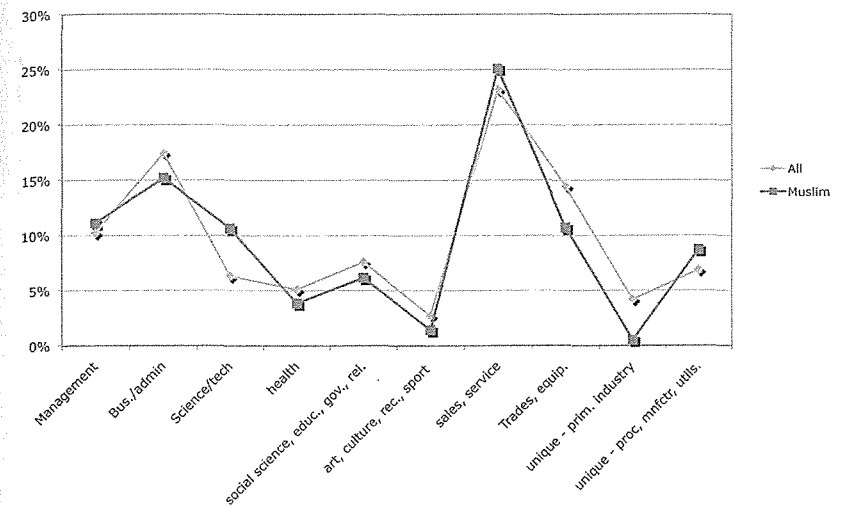


FIGURE 4.5. Census data indicate a high Muslim rate of employment in science and technology (StatsCan 2001c).

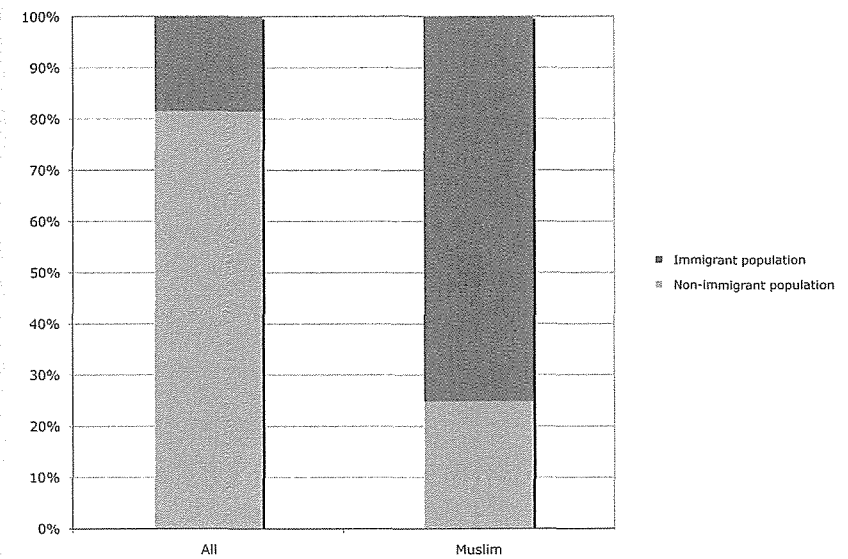


FIGURE 4.6. Immigration statistics from 2001 census (StatsCan 2001a).

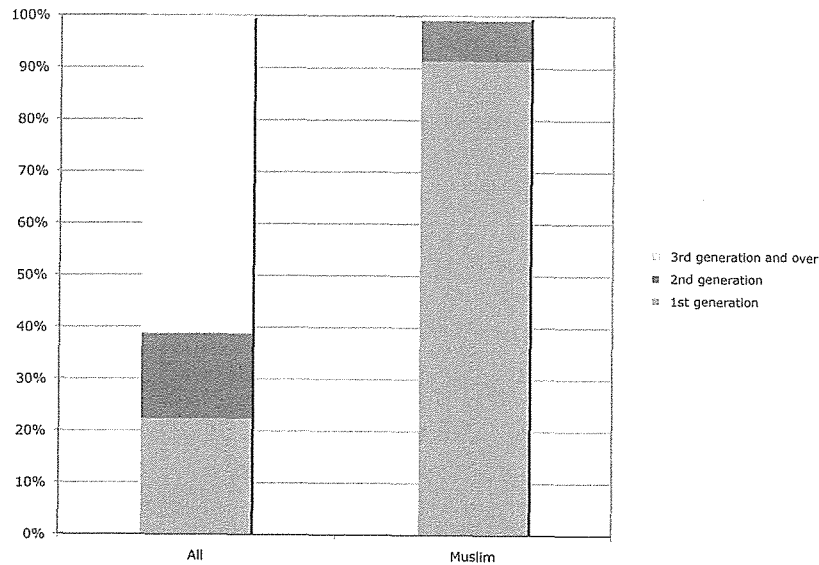


FIGURE 4.7. Proportion of Canadian Muslims in each generational bracket, as compared to the general population (2001 census data) (StatsCan 2001d).

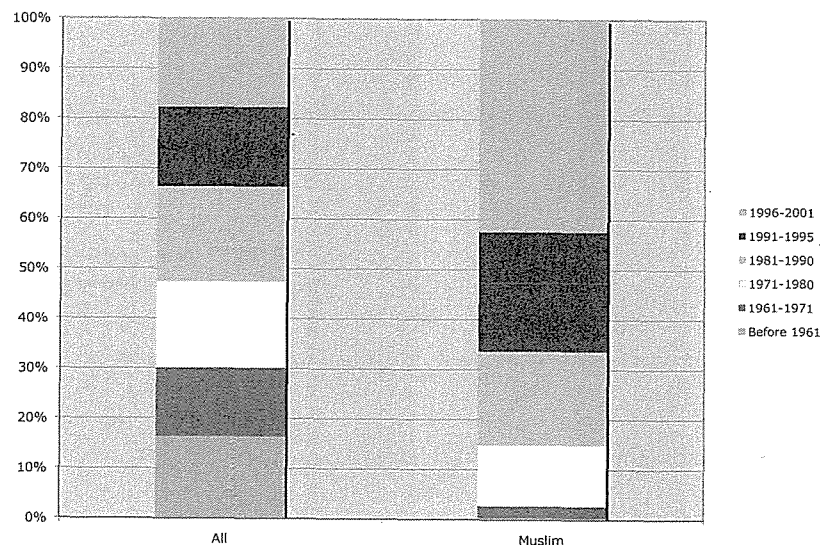


FIGURE 4.8. Proportion of Canadian Muslim immigrants by immigration period, as compared to the general immigrant population (StatsCan 2001a).

Muslim immigration in Canada is also comparatively recent: in 2001, nearly 70 percent of Muslim immigration had taken place in the previous ten years, as compared to only 32 percent for the general immigrant population (see figure 4.8).

In summary, Islam in Canada presents some *sui generis* demographic attributes: Canadian Muslim immigration is relatively recent, ethnically diverse, geographically far-flung, and significantly weighted toward higher educational levels and elite professions.

THE LOGIC OF MUSICAL SILENCE

In speculating about my opening “why” questions, I will rely on system theoretic concepts, applied to the particular context of the Muslim diaspora in Canada: as a religious minority (itself doctrinally heterogeneous), and as a diverse collection of linguistic-ethnic minorities, embedded within a multicultural, pluralistic, open civil society. This Canadian society is theoretically tolerant of difference, but rife with prejudice in practice, always rent not just by the contradiction between subcultural practices and the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms (Canada’s bill of rights), but also, at a logical level, by the paradox of “the tolerance of intolerance.”

Here I’ll introduce two key system theoretic ideas, one psychocultural and the other sociological.

On the psychocultural side is a kind of functionalism I derive primarily from anthropologist Mary Douglas, holding that the essential problem confronting human beings is to make sense of a chaotic environment, thus mitigating the existential strain of living. Social groups establish classificatory coherence by creating and maintaining sharply defined symbolic boundaries (establishing “pure” categories), and forbidding that which challenges their clarity: the danger of symbolic impurity (Douglas 2005). Ritual is a domain whose clear boundaries must be maintained by safeguarding the separation between ritual space-time and ordinary life. Music, while frequently crucial to the symbolic and affective power of ritual performance, also challenges ritual boundaries by crossing back and forth into entertainment, and many of the critiques hurled against ritual musical practices throughout Islamic history can be understood as a reaction to what may be perceived as a dangerous blurring of boundaries between ritual space-time and music’s profane environment. This psychocultural observation provides insights in many social contexts, but, I will argue, with special significance in the Canadian diaspora.

On the sociocultural side, I will invoke Gregory Bateson’s concept of schismogenesis, the progressive polarization of relations between social groups as a result of communicative feedback between them (Bateson 1972).

In this case, I'm interested in what he termed "complementary schismogenesis" between unequal groups, here between the Muslim diasporic community and the broader non-Muslim society. Indeed, the same cybernetic concept can help explain the progressive separation and crystallization of symbolic categories (such as what is ritually proper, and what is not) resulting from the dangers of symbolic impurity highlighted by Douglas.

ANTIMUSIC POLEMICS IN ISLAM . . . AND ISLAM IN CANADA

Certainly there is a long history of antimusic polemic in Islamic cultures (Shiloah 1997; Nelson 2001), and the contemporary Canadian case has to be interpreted in this context, which is, however, insufficient to explain it completely. In other words, the lack of musical ritual in Canada cannot be understood as yet another case of Muslim antimusic sentiment.

Within Islamic jurisprudence (*fiqh*) and Sufism, the question was often raised, throughout Islamic history, as to whether music is *halal* (acceptable). And the usual answer was "no," music is *haram* (forbidden), or (for the Sufis) "yes" but only under particular conditions.

The case against music was really twofold: (1) musical entertainment is a distraction from God, and guilty by long-standing association with other *haram* practices, particularly alcohol and illicit sex; (2) musical practice *qua* ritual worship (*sama'*) is a heretical innovation (*bid'a*), linked to the evils of music generally, and more specifically to fears, among *'ulama*, of deviation from Islam's straight path via aesthetic-mystical experiences. Even voices relatively favorable to *sama'*, such as that of al-Ghazzali, carefully circumscribed the proper conditions for its spiritual performance (al-Ghazzali and Macdonald 1901).

However, despite this long-standing and often fierce polemic, a few facts should be borne in mind: First, until contemporary times, neither Islam nor Islamic civilization could ever be characterized as predominantly antimusic, even if certain legists railed against particular practices.⁶ Second, throughout some 1,300 years of successful Islamic expansion, globalization occurred via localization, including absorption of local musical practices into Islamic ones. Rather than producing sectarianism and weakness, outward diversity became essential both in adapting to a wide array of pre-Islamic cultures and in demonstrating Islam's inner spiritual unity, and ironically supported the cohesion of the Umma through affective potency deriving from local rootedness. Third, musicality in Islamic ritual is carried by long-standing oral traditions; legal critiques from a small minority coexisted with acceptance, for centuries, from the vast majority.⁷ Besides, the intellectual sources of a widespread popular movement generally opposing accretion of diverse Islamic oral traditions (including musical rituals) as irrational, divisive, enfee-

bling, backwards, and heretical innovations (*bid'a*) and advocating a global return to origins (Qur'an and Sunna) only began to flourish in the late nineteenth century with modern reformists, such as Shaykh Muhammad Abdu. Moreover, these reformist trends only developed a mass popular following with the advent of the Muslim Brothers in Egypt, in the late 1920s. This movement focused on fostering an active, "rational," dynamic Islam and outwardly unified Umma, as opposed to what was perceived as a passive, mystical, emotional Islam of inaction, apparently divided by the highly ramified, localized oral traditions that had developed, over the course of many centuries, via human mediation.

As a consequence, global Islam shifted its preferred mode of transmission from the ramified and locally adapted "human mediation" mode of the past to a centralized, mass-disseminated originary model, to be imitated throughout the Umma for all time. That which could not be clearly established by reference to the Qur'an and Sunna, a vastly variegated spiritual heritage that had developed gradually over time through humanly mediated transmission, whose value and originary legitimacy could not be rationally demonstrated, was frequently eviscerated as *bid'a*. This originary model not only critiqued musical rituals, but was also intrinsically incapable of representing them. For instance, *tajwid* manuals, supposedly rooted in prophetic practice, never elaborate the melodic principles of recitation, despite the widely acknowledged importance of melody and melodic modes (*maqamat*) in *tajwid* (Nelson 2001).

Even then, the social scope of antimusic Islamic discourse remained relatively limited until the 1970s explosion of political Islam and the oil-fueled empowerment of conservative Wahhabi propaganda. Since then, a new global Islam has emerged, extending beyond political concerns, claiming for itself the label of a universal Islam, and seeking to erase its own historicity, as well as competing models.

Despite all this, one finds highly musical rituals throughout the Muslim-majority world, still carried via humanly mediated transmission, now operating in parallel with the newer originary, reformist models . . . and not only in narrowly defined Sufi contexts. Indeed, it would even be entirely wrong to stereotype Wahhabism as antimusic in the general terms I've outlined—by non-Muslim standards, at least, the call to prayer in Mecca is a musical masterpiece, performed by dedicated and widely appreciated specialists, who have developed their talents through humanly mediated oral traditions.

Thus the lack of musicality, the aesthetic deficiency, of Canada's Muslim community cannot be understood simply as a local manifestation of a global phenomenon. The particular dynamics of Islam in Canadian society require further scrutiny, with reference to the nature of Canadian society, and via theoretical recourse to concepts of purity, danger, and schismogenesis.

SYSTEM THEORY AND MUSICAL RITUAL IN CANADA

If modern reformism were strongly shaped by the challenges and values posed by the West, then logically reformism should thrive among Muslims based in the West, in a proximate environment placing primary value on reason, unity, and principles, rather than humanly mediated oral traditions. But Canada is also different than Europe.

Canada boasts an open immigrant society, multicultural, pluralistic, and theoretically tolerant. Ironically, however, the cultural politics of Canadian multiculturalism pushes minority groups toward closure, stifling internal diversity as a means of translating "minority capital" into political capital. Subgroups strive for internal unity in order to empower themselves within the broader multicultural social environment.

The Canadian Muslim community is unprecedented in its cultural diversity. But for many Canadian Muslims of reformist disposition, the intra-community juxtaposition of cultural contrasts highlights the need to unify Islam by excising humanly mediated localizations imported from immigrants' home countries, i.e., by differentiating "Islamic religion" (defined via originary models) from "Muslim cultures," in order to emphasize a "purely Islamic" basis for unity. This process, I would argue, is structurally compatible with the strategies of the Muslim reformers, who have for the past century likewise sought to erase internal difference: to homogenize via appeal to originary models as a means of unifying the Umma in practice. But the necessity for such an operation is accentuated when cultural differences are juxtaposed in a single community, a phenomenon that hardly arises in historically Muslim regions of the world, where localized practices are territorialized.

Since the prevailing globalized Islamic discourse is reformist, and because the intersubjective lifeworld processes of human mediation tend to be broken by Canadian immigration, which admits primarily well-educated professionals (this phenomenon is further discussed later on), reformist discourse, disseminated via circulation of an originary model independent of human mediation, has achieved a powerful sway in Canada.

Official Canadian tolerance also masks a logical paradox, the problem of the "tolerance of intolerance," an issue repeatedly raised with respect to Muslim communities regarded by many Canadians as hopelessly backwards in various practices, particularly regarding the status of women. Muslim communities are not pressured to assimilate, but neither are they generally accepted. Muslim communities, in turn, are rightly on the defensive, particularly in the wake of 9/11, due to the prevalence of stereotypes, Islamophobia, and resulting discrimination.

At the same time, the Muslim immigrant lacks the social connections to the broader society enjoyed by, say, a Christian Ghanaian, who may find a more ready social acceptance through church groups, or by Jews, most of whom are not visible minorities and who have been widely accepted (along with their interests) by the North American political-economic establishment for several decades. De facto anti-Muslim intolerance in the broader society is matched by Muslim intolerance, expressed in discourse about living in the *dar al-harb* ("land of war," i.e., outside Muslim rule) and *hadith* warning against mixing with non-Muslims.

As a result, a schismogenetic cycle emerges, pushing Muslim and non-Muslim communities apart. For their part, reformist Muslims may seize on any feature of the wider society by which to differentiate themselves, and one of these is the prominent role of music in both secular and Christian religious contexts. Proclaiming "music is forbidden in Islam" (among other reformist slogans) thus becomes one means of expressing Muslim identity within Canadian society, at once a statement of reformist identity and a force for unification by denying intrareligious cultural difference. It's also a way of prioritizing issues: as did Muslim modernists of the nineteenth century, members of Muslim organizations in Canada often feel more keenly the need to address social concerns—discrimination and stereotyping, and the dangers of assimilation—than to pursue pure spirituality, a fortiori the aesthetic kind. Thus schismogenetic differentiation is accompanied by a countervailing pursuit of power in Canadian society at large.

Nevertheless, I hold that ritual (even when drained of its sonic-aesthetic force) remains critical to the constitution of Muslim community in Canada. Whereas in Egypt or Syria one's Muslim identity can be taken for granted regardless of practice, the same is not so for Canada. Social theorists have recently emphasized performativity in the construction and maintenance of identity. I suggest that perhaps performativity plays a more critical identity-maintenance role for minority groups living within a multicultural secular society that constantly threatens to absorb them. If this is so, then ritual purity is likewise more critical than it would otherwise be. And reformist ritual is oriented toward developing social unity, and consequent social power, at a moment when Muslims in the West are threatened from multiple quarters.

Under such conditions, the prevailing response to any ritual change not supported by the widely disseminated originary models—injecting a musical component, for instance—is not primarily condemnation, but fear. Overtly, this fear is expressed in the religious discourse of *bid'a*—the danger of spiritual innovations—but sociologically it can be understood rather differently as the fear of identity loss, perhaps via the conflation of multifarious "cultures" threatening the desired unity of "religion," and resulting in dis-

unity and disempowerment. Among first-generation immigrants, reasoned rejection and fear of musical ritual may be accompanied by a pleasantly nostalgic emotional response deriving from memories of familiar practices of the homeland; however, the second generation, lacking such nostalgia, is more likely to respond with rejection, intellectual and emotional (Frishkopf 2009b).

For the most part, Canadian Muslims have marked themselves off from the broader society as those who fast in Ramadan, eat no pork, drink no alcohol, pray, and perhaps (especially for females) dress in a particular way. These practices are strategies for defining differences as a means of identity maintenance; in Canada it is difficult for anyone to claim to be an authentic Muslim (especially vis-à-vis other Muslims) without performing them in public, at least in the mosque (and in certain situations they are actually enforced⁸). By contrast, Muslim identity in traditionally Muslim regions of the world tends to be far less dependent on its performance; indeed, the status of being Muslim exists as a quasi-embodied property (akin to gender), nearly independent of the degree to which it is performed. But for the sake of emphasizing one's Muslim identity in Canada, "ritual music" is most usefully invoked not to be performed, but to be denied, thus generating a productive marker of difference.

Furthermore, immigration tends to break whatever chains of oral tradition remain active in global Islam. An immigrant Muslim community, particularly in its second generation, relies to a greater extent on the written word for religious guidance, and is thus ever more susceptible to the effects of global Islamism, advocated and carried by originary models. Particularly when languages of the homeland are lost (in the second generation), and connections to sacred places (e.g., saints' shrines) associated with affecting ritual performance are broken, the immigrant community tends to fall back upon Islamic texts translated and globally distributed by reformists. Such discourses become powerful tools for inducing collective amnesia, erasing centuries of oral tradition as if it had never existed.⁹ As a corollary, it is clear that the value of the arts and aesthetic experience, along with mystical experience, is lost in the process, because the production of the spiritual arts depends crucially on human mediation, and because the experience of the spiritual arts resists linguistic capture.

Thus far much the same might be surmised for European Muslim communities. But particularities of the Canadian immigration processes play a critical role in shaping the particularities of Islam in Canada. There, immigration only began opening up to non-Europeans in the late 1960s, according to a rationalized "point system" rewarding higher education, particularly in practical fields the government deemed critical to the Canadian

economy. As a consequence of this "high-pass filter" system, an overwhelming majority of recent Muslim immigrants arrive in Canada with training in applied science, especially engineering. The same filter tends to preclude immigration of artists and intellectuals. As in Egypt, where the Muslim Brothers draw the bulk of their membership from professions centered on closed and bounded systems, including medicine (the body), law (legal code), or engineering (the project at hand), a system approach tends to transfer to religious practice as reformism.

In the reformist model, Islam is itself such a closed system: a practice derivable—like mathematics—from axiomatic texts (Qur'an and Sunna) necessary and sufficient for regulating human life on earth. According to these very texts, the system is closed, bounded, and complete, regulating order within a formless and chaotic environment.¹⁰ To admit any other truth or interpretation is impurity, danger—*kufr* (unbelief). One does not blur the line between system and environment (lest one jeopardize this certainty), much less critique the system itself. Everything is built with apparently unsailable rationality and logic—as attested by a prevalent apologetic reformist discourse regarding the compatibility between Islamic faith and modern science.

Here, then, lies the primary difference between Islam in Europe and in Canada. European Muslim immigrants, many of whom arrived as unskilled laborers, are more uniformly spread across social classes and professions than in Canada, whose Muslims are more highly educated than the general population. As a result, Muslim communities in Britain, Germany, France, and elsewhere in Europe, typically dominated by the cultures of former colonies (e.g., South Asia in Britain, North Africa in France), are better able to reconstitute (in microcosm) the Muslim communities of their home countries, including musical-ritual experts capable of reproducing musical-ritual practices. Muslim migration to Canada, by contrast, drawing primarily on the upper and professional classes across a wide array of Muslim countries, tends to produce new kinds of Muslim community in Canada, of a sort not found in the countries of origin. These communities typically lack musical-ritual experts carrying oral traditions of localized Islam. Indeed, in these communities, contrasting practices, carried by immigrants from multiple sites of Islamic localization, are highlighted for removal as merely "cultural," and hence extraneous to "true Islam."

Rather, when Muslim immigrants choose to practice Islam in Canada,¹¹ these relatively elite, well-educated Muslims center their attention on "proper" ritual performance according to originary sacred texts (mainly Hadith and originary reformist texts) circulated globally (ever more rapidly via cyberspace). For Canadian reformist Muslims, the inner spiritual wealth

produced by adaptive chains of humanly mediated culture is construed as a threat to Islamic unity, particularly in urban, ethnically heterogeneous Muslim communities where such culture can be expected to be diverse.

Whereas earlier reformists sought a modernist unity as a means to reestablish the *khilafa* and ultimately to challenge the West on its own terms, Canadian reformists (and many others who succumb to peer pressure), professionally successful and inhabiting a relatively tolerant society, tend to harbor more modest goals: to establish unified Muslim communities enjoying freedom of religious expression, without persecution or discrimination, and to ensure the reproduction of that community via the Muslim upbringing and marriage of their children. At first these communities remained aloof from the broader society, focusing on building a modern Islamic practice in conformity to reformist ideology, in an inward-looking strategy of social unity and Islamic reform, a result of the schismogenetic cybernetic loop traced earlier.

These goals have proved difficult to achieve, however, especially in the post-9/11 world, in which the non-Muslim majority increasingly associates Islam with militancy and terrorism, and Islamophobia is rampant. Therefore Islamic reform in North America has had to counteract the systemic tendency toward schismogenetic differentiation in certain respects, reorienting itself for broader social engagement on a nonspiritual level, to combat discrimination, stereotyping, and journalistic bias. Muslim leaders began to realize that Muslims, occupying comfortable niches in professions such as medicine, engineering, and small business, needed to involve themselves also in social leadership and public policy and encouraged Muslim youth to pursue careers in law, politics, journalism, and broadcasting (see Shaikh 2006 below). This is now beginning to happen, particularly in the second and higher generations. Nevertheless, ritual (and, more broadly, performative) conformity remains a key strategy for unifying Muslim communities as they begin to engage the broader society, as a means for achieving social influence.

This new outward-looking reformism is visible in the public discourse of two prominent Canadian Muslim organizations. Neither discourse prioritizes spiritual development, much less the aesthetic means traditionally developed for its facilitation.

NATIONAL AND LOCAL STRATEGIES

Perhaps the most prominent national Muslim organization in Canada is the Canadian Islamic Congress (CIC), which provides a good example of strategic reformism directed toward social goals (internal and external) in a recent article posted on its website:

On Monday July 3, 2006 nearly 70 Canadian Muslims from Toronto, Vancouver, Winnipeg, London, Ottawa, Montreal and Waterloo gathered at the Islamic Centre of York Region to generate a common strategy for the Muslim community in Canada.

The six-hour meeting, which took a 90-minute break for lunch and Zuhr prayer, was jointly organized by the Canadian Islamic Congress, Toronto Muslim Unity Group, and the Muslim Council of Montreal. Their aim was to create a forum through which the Muslim community's challenges could be identified, as well as to generate both short- and long-term solutions to these challenges. (Shaikh 2006)

The Congress identified the following challenges facing Canadian Muslims:

1. Negative stereotyping of Muslims by the media.
2. Islamophobia.
3. The need for more integration; including removal of discrimination barriers against Muslims and by encouraging more Muslim participation in Canada's political process.
4. The effects of Canada's move toward the political right.
5. Internal divisions in the national Muslim community along lines of gender, generation, culture, wealth, ethnicity, language, religious practices, etc.
6. Improving the quality and quantity of Canadian Muslims who can successfully manage their economic, social and political environment.
7. A Canadian foreign policy that appears to be increasingly against the Muslim world.
8. The lack of consensus and community building mechanisms among Canadian Muslims.
9. The need for more Muslims in significant professions, such as law, journalism, etc. (Shaikh 2006)

Reformist ideology is clearly in evidence here in the importance assigned both to unity and identity, as well as integration and assumption of more influential social positions. The Congress focuses exclusively on sociopolitical problems of ordinary Canadian social reality. Challenges posed by metaphysical reality are not in evidence. Nor are the aesthetic catalysts traditionally deployed to accelerate spiritual advancement.

An example at the local level is provided by the al-Rashid mosque of Edmonton. The original al-Rashid mosque, built in the 1930s, has been moved to a historical park (Fort Edmonton), while a new facility, known as the Canadian Islamic Centre, includes a mosque and additional services. Discourse from the Centre's website clearly exhibits strategic emphasis upon social in-

fluence, education, and unity, framed in the typical business-speak of management consultants (“mission,” “vision,” “goals”).

CIC Mission Statement:

The CIC strives to foster better citizens and effective leaders for the future of the community; by providing a proper, financially stable and most conducive environment for the Muslims of Edmonton through quality religious, cultural, educational and social services & programs. An environment supported by a solid and sustainable organizational capacity.

Vision Statement:

Muslims of Edmonton are a strong community; well educated and knowledgeable; financially stable and independent; positive and influential leaders. Contributing constructively to society’s betterment and advancement.

Goals:

1. Produce 100 community leaders
2. Establish a progressive and dynamic youth organization
3. Establish financial stability throughout the organization
4. Establish quality programs and services (profitable and social)
5. Increase community and volunteer engagement involvement
6. Improve communications
7. Build a strong and organized internal foundation (CIC Mission and Vision 2009)

Neither the Canadian Islamic Congress nor al-Rashid mosque centers its discourses on Islam’s central metaphysical aim (to worship God through submission, *islam*, in preparation for the hereafter) or Sufism’s more mystical interpretation (to experience the Divine Reality in this life), much less on the sacred aesthetic media traditionally deployed for achieving it. Rather, these organizations emphasize strategies for solving this-worldly social problems characterizing a minority religious community in a theoretically tolerant immigrant society promising social influence for subgroups who can unify themselves by rallying round common concerns.

RITUAL AS STRATEGIC ACTION AND THE ERASURE OF AESTHETIC PRACTICE

Modern Islamic reformism has tended to delete localized aesthetic Muslim ritual (as it had adaptively developed after centuries in Muslim regions from West Africa to Indonesia, the end product of long chains of human meditation) brought to Canada by immigrants, in favor of a deaestheticized ritual uniformity. For modern reformists, sacred, localized aesthetic culture

is *bid‘a*, not grounded in originary canonical texts (indeed often not representable in language and thus not susceptible to originary formulation), and both symptom and cause of a premodern devotional diversity that has induced disunity and torpor in the Umma, and thus its disempowerment in the modern world.

A number of factors have accentuated modern Islamic reformism in Canada. Canada is primarily an immigrant society. Most Canadian Muslim immigration is recent, drawing heavily on post-1970 currents of global reformism, and it is culturally diverse. Generally speaking, immigration tends to disconnect Muslims from those sacred places, times, and rituals—scattered throughout their lands of origin—marking the multiple Islamic localizations that are anathema for reformers. Canadian immigration’s “high-pass” social filtering also breaks the chains of oral traditions carrying localizations. In Canada, these factors further combine with a felt need for social unity among a religious minority subjected to schismogenetically amplified unifying forces, both exogenous (e.g., theoretical multicultural tolerance combined with Islamophobia in practice) and endogenous (e.g., the juxtaposition of Muslim cultural differences, thereby highlighted for elimination as extra-Islamic). The practical need for Muslims to solve pressing social problems (discrimination, the dangers of assimilation, and the lack of Muslim education) and the system mentality of Canadian Muslim professionalism have also favored dominance of the reformist approach.

But why doesn’t Canadian Islam develop its own—if limited—aesthetic forms, as even such a strongly reformist country as Saudi Arabia (where particular forms of chant, architecture, and incense are deemed “*halal*”) has done? Certainly the immigration filters have tended to limit the influx of specialists in the manipulation of aesthetic media (including musicians). But this isn’t the whole story. If Canadian Muslim communities comprised a unified, fully communicating group or set of groups, such aesthetic forms might develop naturally.

Part of the problem is the fact that the locus of Islamic authority does not lie within Canada; Canadian Muslims tend to accept external authorities as representing “true Islam,” rather than shaping a Canadian Islam for themselves. There are, for instance, no Islamic theological seminaries in Canada capable of training Canadian imams who understand Canadian society from within. On the contrary, Canadian mosques (of whatever doctrinal orientation) typically import their imams from traditional centers of Muslim learning, such as al-Azhar University in Cairo, as if these places could bestow authenticity on Canadian Islam by providing “the real thing.” Many of these imams, while perhaps well trained, cannot even speak English or French, and have few prospects of communicating directly to their congregations, much

less fostering a spiritual community and developing sonic forms adapted to the Canadian environment.

However, in the final analysis, the erasure of the aesthetic in Canadian Islam can be interpreted most deeply, it seems to me, as an instance of modernity's shift from communicative action toward strategic action, an example of the ongoing colonization of the lifeworld, to invoke social philosopher Jürgen Habermas's theoretical concepts, while simultaneously broadening them (Habermas 1984). In his theory of communicative action, Habermas is concerned primarily with the role of rational discourse in renewing a lifeworld replete with understanding and consensus. But just as the lifeworld can never be wholly rationalized, so rationality is never sufficient for full human communication, even in the (post?)-modern world, in which "traditional" mythical-emotional structures, supposed to have passed away, have nevertheless maintained their vitality to a surprising degree (as demonstrated by the continued prominence of organized religion). Rather, moral convictions and durable social relationships, whatever their rational dimensions, remain always crucially supported by affective expressive communication, carried, often enough, through aesthetic media.

Of all such media, live musical performance, with its intensive face-to-face social dimension and proximity to linguistic expression, is undoubtedly the most powerful. Musical performance supports powerful social relationships capable of transmitting meaning and shared understanding, the same kinds of social relationships privileged in human mediation. This is nowhere truer than in religious ritual, whose affective-aesthetic dimensions undergird the felt truth of the worldview it affirms, as well as social relationships forged among participants, providing channels for powerful nonverbal expressive communications. Drained of aesthetic media, constrained to fixed formal structures, religious ritual becomes coercive rather than communicative, a form of strategic action aiming proximately at coordinating internal unity, and ultimately at power in the society at large.

Reformist Islamic ritual is a case in point. Traditional humanly mediated Muslim ritual centers upon a localized linguistic expression fused with paralinguistic sound, enabling *expressive communicative action* to occur, comprising an enveloping soundworld through which intersubjective meanings are developed and transmitted, and rich social relationships are sustained, and thus supporting the process of human mediation itself. Live musical expression and experience constitute a complex form of musical-communicative action, nourishing the overlapping lifeworlds by which participants are connected through multiple feedback loops in the course of performance. But under circumstances of political threat (such as those in which Islam has found itself for the past two hundred years or so), such localized subjective nourishment has been construed as undermining objective strength.

Reformism's originary models include ritual models, uniformly applied and enforced as a form of *strategic action*, displacing aesthetic performance rendered meaningful by its adaptation to local social contexts and acoustic ecologies. Modernist Islam's insistence on a global ritual uniformity (enforced by accusations of *bid'a*) centered on immutable texts, and the attendant evisceration of localized musical practices, is a manifestation of the social system, colonizing the individual Muslim's lifeworld as a means of unifying and strengthening the Umma in its exoteric aspects. The muting of the ritual soundworld instantiates reformist Islam's broader aim, to foster internal social unity and external social power through ritual conformity. In seeking this unity and power via collective action, the social system treats cultural differences (including aesthetic media and experience) as obstacles to be swept aside rather than as rich resources for interpersonal understanding and spiritual development. Reformist strategic action opposes the cultivation of aesthetic-spiritual practices (socially ramified and ramifying), centered on social relationships, place-specific traditions, human mediation, and expressive-communicative action, and contributing to an intensification of individual spiritual meaning. Such action centers instead upon coercive originary models for homogenizing thought and practice, developing social unity in order to serve a social agenda.

Whereas in the historic Muslim world this reformist ritual trend exists alongside older strands of human mediation, in Canada it expands to fill nearly the entire Islamic social space. Reminiscent of Husserl's critique of science (Husserl 1970), Canadian Islam seems, on the whole (and myriad exceptions notwithstanding), to have lost its connection to the human world, a world that is localized, affective, and rooted in human relationships, having been reoriented instead to address social problems inherent in a putatively multicultural society.

This situation is entirely understandable given the circumstances. Yet one hopes that the second or third generation of Canadian Muslims may succeed in localizing their religion through expressive-communicative ritual action, reclaiming a local authority, resisting colonization by the social system in favor of a richly spiritual lifeworld, and filling musical silences with sound.

NOTES

1. The present chapter builds on an earlier essay explicating this reception (see Frishkopf 2009b). The author is indebted to the editor for her constructive comments, as well as to the two anonymous readers.

2. While it is no doubt possible to find numerous counterexamples of Islamic music in Canada, including practices of particular Muslim communities (such as the Ismailis, or Sufi orders such as the Naqshabandiya of Montreal, whose highly musical *hadra* I attended in 2005), particular singers (such as Dawud Wharaby Ali), and the occasional

musical muezzin, this chapter takes an empirical approach toward understanding the statistically dominant sonic profile of Islam in Canada, in which musical sound in Islamic ritual is the exception rather than the rule. In the social sciences, at least, the former does not disprove the latter.

3. For instance, the small Egyptian Delta town of Tanah is locally acclaimed for its distinctive tradition of Qur'anic recitation, despite proximity to the much larger urban centers of Mansura (23 km) and Cairo (147 km), hosting far more influential traditions.

4. Perhaps the reason may be that in the Muslim world, musical sound (as opposed to poetry itself, which was frequently written) has always centered on text, and (until recently) on transmission via human mediation, rather than being driven by system-level institutions (religious, political, or capitalist) carrying symbolic technologies for control and standardization via originary models. Until the advent of recording, even the melodic contours of Qur'anic recitation have never been regulated by originary models (see the following sections), whereas cantillation of the Bible has frequently relied upon ekphonic notations.

5. Some thinkers have viewed Muhammad's illiteracy as structurally equivalent to Mary's virginity, providing a pure matrix for the deposit of the sacred Word (Schuon 1963).

6. From seventh-century Medina onwards, music flourished in Muslim courts, and the sonorous voice was highly esteemed in religious worship, starting with the Prophet's expressed preference (preserved in *hadith*) for the beautifully recited Qur'an.

7. For instance, for his public opposition to widely accepted beliefs and practices (including what he perceived as the innovations of saint veneration, including its musical ritual aspects in *sama'*), Ibn Taymiyya (1263–1328) was jailed several times and ultimately died in prison (Laoust 2010; Shehadi 1995, 95ff).

8. For instance, girls enrolling in Edmonton's Islamic Academy (a private Islamic school) are required to wear starting from elementary school (Edmonton Islamic Academy 2009, 36); no such formal requirement pertains to Egyptian schoolgirls, who generally do not wear the veil until they reach grades three or four.

9. How often have Canadian-born second-generation Muslim students told me: "There's no music in Islam" or "Sufism has nothing to do with true Islam!" despite the centuries-long prevalence of Sufism and music in traditional Muslim societies. Such statements may be heard in Muslim countries as well, but only in blatant juxtaposition to ethnographic evidence contradicting them, and hence with considerably different import.

10. E.g., the oft-cited Qur'an 5:3, "This day have I perfected your religion for you" (Yusuf Ali translation).

11. And many Muslim immigrants do, even among those who were formerly Westernized and secular, as a means of assuming a ready identity and joining a community, especially in the face of discrimination, and as an emotional compensation for social dislocation.

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CHAPTER 5

PIOUS ENTERTAINMENT: HIZBULLAH'S ISLAMIC CULTURAL SPHERE

JOSEPH ALAGHA

HIZBULLAH'S SPOKESMAN SAYYID IBRAHIM AL-MUSAWI regards art as the most sublime achievement of humanity, since it brings man closer to the creator, to God, who asks man to be in a continuous struggle to ascend toward perfection.¹ Islamic art is a “cause, a passion, and a life.” When a passionate activity is not related to revolution, then it is void of any worth and beauty. Revolutionary activity is part of Islamic art because it is purposeful; its purpose is to transform society and reform it. Herein lies its aesthetic dimension. Islamic art is the art of resistance (*al-fann al-muqawim*); it resists tyranny, oppression, and purposeless art: “art for the sake of art.” Islamic art stresses creativity in relation to context and content, a transparent content that is the basis of influence and movement. By this it creates a realistic revolutionary art that aims at changing and reforming society. Thus, the message of the purposeful and committed Islamic art of resistance with a mission (*al-fann al-muqawim al-multazim al-hadif*)² is a different message; it is the message of ideologically motivated art (Murtada 2002, 55–94). Why is art accorded such an important mobilizational role? It has already been noted in the introduction of this volume that in other contexts and countries this *infitah* (“opening-up”)—both generally and in art in particular—among Islamic movements is described by the concept of post-Islamism. Is a similar trend discernible in the case of the Lebanese Hizbullah?

Hizbullah, better known as the Islamic Resistance in Lebanon, which is infamous for its allegedly “terrorist” and militant face, is an interesting case study. In this chapter, I am going to convey another face of Hizbullah: its *al-saba al-Islamiyya* (Islamic cultural sphere). Available material on a Lebanese³ Shi'ite view on the performing arts has not been adequately addressed in the literature, let alone Hizbullah's opinion on the topic, which remains sketchy and fragmented. Here I am going to shed light on Hizbullah's notion of pious entertainment and performing art, as well as limitations on them in the Islamic cultural sphere in relation to *al-fann al-muqawim*, as the orga-