

Barazangi, Nimat Hafez. Parents and Youth: Perceiving and Practicing Islam in North America. In Barbara C. Aswad and Barbara Bilgé, (Eds). *Family and Gender Among American Muslims: Issues Facing Middle Eastern Immigrants and Their Descendants*. Temple University Press (1996): 129-142.

Abstract

This chapter examines how some Arab Muslim youth and families in North America perceive themselves both as Arabs and as Muslims in the context of Canadian and United States societies. Parents are concerned with how best to transmit the Islamic ideological and Arab cultural heritage to their children. One of their problems derives from differences among Arab Muslims, who come from varied national origins and hold several interpretations of the Islamic view, not all of which are based on the Qur'an; as a result they also have different nationalistic attachments to their understanding of Arab heritage. A second problem arises between immigrant parents and their American-reared children. The children may participate in American culture to a greater extent than their parents, and they are constantly faced with the conceptual need to accommodate potentially conflicting points of view. Effective identity transmission requires the determination of the nature and extent of the different interpretations held by parents and their children and of the way these interpretations are reflected in their practice of Islam and association with the Arabic heritage.

Book Description:

Since the beginning of the twentieth century, Muslims have been immigrating to the United States from nations such as Lebanon, Yemen, Palestine, Turkey, Iran, Pakistan, and Bangladesh. Previously underrepresented in ethnic studies literature, these nearly four million descendants of previous immigrants and the new arrivals have settled in large numbers in Los Angeles, Chicago, New York, Detroit, and other North American cities.

From the social and historical conditions of the Muslim migration to a range of issues affecting Muslim American life, the contributors provide new and valuable information on topics like intergenerational conflict about identity and values, intermarriage, religious and community involvement, gender and family structure, education, the needs of the elderly, and physical and mental health problems, including AIDS. In the final section, some of these issues are given a personal dimension through the life stories of several immigrants who relate their own experiences of adjusting to life in America.