

The Dynamics of The American Muslim Community Towards Technology and Communication in Manifest Destiny Perspective

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ABSTRACT

Muslims all around the world face serious intellectual challenges from the fundamental social shifts that have occurred as a consequence of modernity. This paper identifies several challenges and opportunities faced by the American Muslim community in facing the advancements in technology and communication from the perspective of Manifest Destiny, as well as the steps that can be taken in utilizing technology and communication positively to advocate for their rights and promote a better understanding of their religion and culture. However, the American Muslim community has often been on the defensive, fighting allegations that it supports radicalism, facing extensive scrutiny and intrusive spying by the government, responding to harassment by several law enforcement agencies, and feeling threatened by rising Islam phobia and a culture of hostility towards Islam and Muslims. The community seems to be endlessly reacting to some new challenge, and these trends have reduced the values of manifest destiny within American Islam. As found by the author, the use of social media and other digital platforms can strengthen Muslim community networks and overcome negative stereotypes about Islam.

Keywords: *American Muslim; Technology; Communication; Manifest Destiny*

INTRODUCTION

Islam is the second-largest religion in the world (Mallik et al., 2021). Muslim Americans are the largest and growing diverse population, with a population of about 5 million people and projected to double by 2030. The majority are descendants of Africans, Arabs, and South Asians, with over 60% being first-generation immigrants (Padela et al., 2021). Muslim Americans also contribute creatively to the development of science and arts, literature, philosophy, culture, and technology (Smith, 2016). The development of Islam in America has undergone many changes over time. The position of Islam itself in America is not much different from other religions in America, as Islam is known as a direct, natural, straightforward, and disciplined religion. Islam has played many roles in America, such as the establishment of Muslim communities, Muslim farms and agriculture with doctors and other professionals, Islamic studies in academic fields at several universities, mosque construction,

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the formation of chaplains (religious figures in the US), and much more, making Islam one of the three strongest religions in America.

The Muslim reform movement in the United States is not significant enough due to the events of September 11, 2001. The lack of support from the community and the inactivity of websites (Yvonne Yazbeck Haddad & Harb, 2014). Over the past 12 years, Muslims in America have also tried to convince others about their identity that aligns with being both American and Muslim by writing about Islam as an authentic American religion. Currently, the global Muslim community includes secular Muslims as well as those who only accept ultra-conservative and puritanical interpretations of Islam. Each community interprets ideas about knowledge and education according to their context. However, some dominant ideas have emerged throughout history and currently influence global radicalization movements in Islam. Even outside of radicalization, shifts in the way Muslims have historically viewed education and knowledge still impact education and knowledge in Muslim communities (Sabir-El-Rayess, 2020).

The role and policies of the United States towards the outside world have come under sharp focus since the events of September 11th. A few terrorists armed with simple weapons were able to cause chaos and destruction, demonstrating how vulnerable even the most technologically advanced nations can be. Reaffirming national security in the light of this new threat is not just about enhancing domestic defenses, but also requires an understanding of what triggers aggression (De Zoysa, 2005). This depends on interrelated networks of alliances, including influence and control over strong global regulatory institutions and openness to international civil society from non-governmental organizations (NGOs). The economic power dimension and soft power influence of the US are on par with the tremendous power of its military and technology capabilities.

Like Orientalism, the term manifest destiny is applied and interpreted inconsistently. One way to differentiate what is exceptional or not exceptional about Muslims is by explicitly examining certain political or social variables that differ from non-Muslims. Muslims are more likely to merge religion with political legitimacy, and there is no fundamental difference between authoritarianism in Muslim and non-Muslim countries. In other words, the same institutional barriers to democracy that exist in other developing countries are essentially the same in Muslim-majority countries (Mabry, 2015). Therefore, the author attempts to look at the other side of this manifest destiny by questioning the dynamics of the Muslim community's movement toward the influence of technology and communication from the perspective of manifest destiny.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The theory of Manifest Destiny was a belief among Americans in the 19th century that their destiny and duty were to expand and settle across the entire North American continent, from the Atlantic Ocean to the Pacific Ocean. Integration, on the other hand, refers to the process of combining or unifying different groups into a larger entity.

Manifest destiny is exemplified by three basic principles that characterize the rhetoric of a continental American empire. First, it assumes that the United States has a unique moral superiority that no other country possesses. Second, it claims that the country has a "mission to redeem the world by spreading American republican government and way of life" wherever it may be. Third, manifest destiny has a "messianic dimension" because it assumes "faith in a destiny ordered by God for America." Manifest destiny is not just a matter of geographic expansion but also a concept with religious resonance (Swanson, 2020). The religious foundations of manifest destiny can be traced back to the colonial period when in his sermon called "Model of Christian Charity," Puritan minister John Winthrop welcomed arriving settlers claiming that "we shall be as a city upon a hill." (Meridian, 2018). The eyes of all people are upon us.

In the context of Manifest Destiny, integration refers to the efforts of America to integrate newly acquired territories through expansion into the United States. This involves adopting American laws and political structures, implementing federal laws, and spreading American cultural values to these territories. The goal of this integration is to achieve political, economic, and social unity throughout America as a whole.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Morrison, M. (2001). *Manifest Destiny and Empire: American Antebellum Expansionism* (Hietala & Watson, n.d.) This book examines the beliefs in Manifest Destiny, which states that the destiny of the United States is to expand its territory throughout North America. The mindset driving this expansionism is fueled by various factors, including the desire for economic growth, the spread of democratic ideals, and a sense of cultural superiority. The book delves into key events and policies of the era, such as the Louisiana Purchase, the Mexican-American War, and the Oregon Trail. It highlights the political debates and controversies surrounding these expansionist endeavors, including the issue of slavery's expansion into new territories. The author critically analyzes the motivations behind American expansionism, shedding light on the complex relationship between the ideals of freedom and democracy and the realities of imperialism. The book provides a comprehensive overview of the factors that influenced American expansionism and its impact on domestic and foreign affairs during this transformative period in American history.

Manifest Destiny's Underworld: Filibustering in Antebellum America by May, Robert E. explores the practice of filibustering in the context of America during the antebellum period (David, 2003). Filibustering refers to the actions of individuals or groups using armed force to invade foreign territories with the aim of expanding American territory. The book examines the phenomenon of filibustering and reveals the activities of filibusters, including invasions in Cuba, Nicaragua, and Central America. The author highlights the motives and motivations behind these practices, including expansionist ambitions, economic gain, and political considerations. In this book, the author critically analyzes the impact and implications of filibustering on America's relationships with neighboring countries, as well as its relationships with European nations. Additionally, the book delves into the political and moral debates surrounding filibustering practices, including issues of slavery and violations of international law. Through in-depth research, *"Manifest Destiny's Underworld: Filibustering in Antebellum America"* provides profound insights into the role and influence of filibustering in the context of American expansionism during the antebellum period. The book invites readers to consider the dark and complex aspects of the American expansionist movement, which at times involved controversial and unlawful actions.

John L. O'Sullivan: A journalist who is considered to have coined the term Manifest Destiny in an editorial article in 1845. Journalist John L. O'Sullivan first used the term in an editorial article in the *Democratic Review* for July-August 1845, in relation to what was then almost a closed issue, namely the annexation of Texas. Sullivan immediately applied it as an argument for taking over Oregon; after that, it was brought into the debate on the Oregon question in the House of Representatives and proved to be a convenient summary of the nationalist and expansionist sentiment that was full of confidence at the time (Meridian, 2018).

In addition, there were also figures who adhered to Manifest Destiny, such as James K. Polk as the US President from 1845 to 1849, who led the United States during the Mexican-American War and supported westward expansion (Joy, 2014). Andrew Jackson was the US President from 1829 to 1837, who expanded the US expansion policy to the East (Reuter et al., 2011). Thomas Jefferson was the US President from 1801 to 1809, who purchased Louisiana from France in 1803 and expanded the US territory to the Rocky Mountains (Fei, 2019). William Henry Harrison was the Governor of Indiana in the early 1800s who led a campaign

against Indian tribes in the western territories, paving the way for US expansion into those territories (Joy, 2014). Lewis and Clark were explorers led by Meriwether Lewis and William Clark who were tasked by President Jefferson to explore and map the western territories of the United States in the early 1800s (Cunningham, 2021). Henry Clay was a US Senator who advocated for US expansion to the West and supported the war with Mexico to gain more territory (Worrell, 2015). Stephen F. Austin was the founder of the Texas colony who led the struggle for Texas independence from Mexico and joining the United States (Osuna, 2021). John Quincy Adams was the US President from 1825 to 1829 who expanded the US expansion policy to the Southwest (Regele, 2018) & Daniel Boone as an early American explorer and settler who opened up a trail to the western territories and helped expand the US territory (Patel, 2019). The contributions or thoughts made by figures related to Manifest Destiny played an important role in shaping the identity of the United States and its foreign policy in the 19th century. However, it should be noted that their views and actions often became controversial and debated by historians and society at large.

THE MANIFEST DESTINY IN TECHNOLOGY AND COMMUNICATION

Literally translated, "Manifest Destiny" in means "real destiny" or "real fate." In the context of US history, Manifest Destiny refers to the belief that the American nation has a "real destiny" to conquer and dominate the American continent, and to spread American values and ways of life throughout the entire region (Fei, 2019). Manifest Destiny was used in the 19th century in the United States to describe the belief that the fate or destiny of the country was to expand its territory and spread its political and economic influence throughout North America (Adamova, 2017). This idea is rooted in the belief in the exceptionalism of America and the superiority of American institutions and values. In the context of leadership, the United States has long been considered a leader in innovation and technology. This is reflected in America's excellence in the technology industry and important discoveries such as the internet and mobile phones. The United States often leads international diplomatic efforts to resolve conflicts and promote world peace, such as the Israel-Palestine conflict or the Paris climate agreement. The Manifest Destiny movement in the digital era is still ongoing and can be seen in several aspects, including: digital technology domination, political and cultural influence, expansion into outer space, digital intervention, leadership in digital trade, digital diplomacy, and cybersecurity development.

The United States led in innovation and technology in the 20th century, with US technology companies such as Google, Apple, Facebook, and Amazon leading the way in digital innovation in the 21st century. This success has given the United States influence and power in global digital trade. The Manifest Destiny culture focuses on sanctifying the economic order, legitimizing social media actions and decisions regarding new technology and platform use. Facebook describes the digital frontier as crucial to stimulating growth in commercialism and consumerism, but also in opening up possibilities for a more democratic society where everyone has a voice to express ideas and initiate change in the development of the open online world (Freishtat & Sandlin, 2010). New technology provides an opportunity to overcome barriers to direct democracy implementation. The frontier myth, along with Manifest Destiny, unites concepts of physical expansion, economic development, and social justice. Therefore, Manifest Destiny can be used to promote social issues and change (Pease, 2010). However, the persuasive influence of social media as a communication instrument still faces challenges and criticism in a society that is increasingly aware of the dangers of cultural and technological imperialism.

Along with the success of digital technology, the United States also exports their culture and values through social media and other digital platforms. This has political and cultural influences on the way people think and act in society globally. Manifest Destiny also represents

a change in social order, representing the physical embodiment of growth, expansion, and modernity. It was not just an inevitable physical movement westward, but also a cultural waterfall of hope and optimism. The impact of digital manifest destiny is not only felt in large numbers but also through significant changes in the daily lives of workers, students, and citizens. These changes include a significant increase in electronic distance learning, as well as representation, sales, and travel by storing their information on company networks via laptops. Musicians now have the power to record and distribute their music digitally, while hobbies continue to harness the power of the internet to create strong communities for increasingly specific passions. The emergence of online trading forums like eBay has created many electronic communities of traders and collectors alike who have expanded their networks into the virtual world. Digital tools and culture continue to spread into every aspect of everyday life.

In this way, the hidden values of Silicon Valley as American democratic values are spreading cyber-libertarianism as a substitute for true American freedom of speech. And of course, the United States is one of the leaders in global digital trade. US technology companies have a significant influence on global digital trade and continue to expand their reach into developing countries.

Furthermore, the United States continues to develop cyber-security technology and strategies to protect their critical infrastructure from cyber-attacks. This includes efforts to protect government, industry, and finance systems from cyber-attacks that could threaten national security. In January 2008, the Bush Administration issued the Comprehensive National Cyber Security Initiative, designed to protect government institutions and departments from attacks and anticipate future threats. In May 2009, after a major review of America's digital infrastructure, Obama described America's digital network as a "national strategic asset," and appointed Howard Schmit to a new position as Cyber Coordinator, responsible for coordinating cyber-security policies across the federal government (Hallams, 2010). In 2009, the Pentagon also established the first Cyber Command, designed to protect US military networks and launch offensive cyber-attacks against potential enemies. Digital diplomacy is an important innovation, but it has its limitations in that it will not prevent terrorist attacks and will also not eliminate deep-seated anti-American sentiment and its varied causes.

The internet is an unknown territory, like the wild west; technology companies and startups at the forefront of technology are entering uncharted territory. People who push for network technology expansion are called digital pioneers, while those born in the internet era are called digital natives. In the early days of social web, the concepts of technology-tribalism and technology-Manifest Destiny often emerged. Although supporters of cyberspace claim that there is unlimited potential for internet social communities, the rhetoric often used has nationalist elements of technology-tribalism and inappropriate metaphors of technology-Manifest Destiny (Hinck, 2022).

Manifest signifies that in the past, the United States had a responsibility to expand its territory to the west coast, dominate the entire American continent, and even lead the world. However, in the digital era, the concept of Manifest Destiny has shifted and changed. One example of the shift in Manifest Destiny in the digital era is the emergence of the idea that the United States is a world leader in technology and information. The country has large technology companies such as Apple, Google, Facebook, and Amazon that dominate the global market and become centers of technological innovation. This leads to the belief that the United States has a responsibility to develop technology and become a leader in that field. However, on the other hand, the concept of Manifest Destiny can also be a reason for digital imperialism, such as espionage through secret programs like PRISM, which is electronic surveillance conducted by the US National Security Agency (NSA) to monitor internet and telephone communications, or to control and manipulate information on social media. Information

inequality reflects power inequality. If data is considered the new oil in the 21st century, then internet users are seen as resources exploited by big corporations like Facebook, Google, and Apple for their own profit. There is equality among internet users worldwide in their vulnerability, but the reality is not so (Louw, 2017).

THE DYNAMIC OF U.S MUSLIM MOVEMENT IN MANIFEST DESTINY

The anti-imperialist movement that has become a multicultural norm in this global process not only encourages the democratization of minority cultures and subcultures in America, but also increases understanding of the relationship between domestic social movements and sub-national migrant and diaspora communities around the world (Lawson, 2012). There has been a significant shift in Muslim identity politics from one that is based on disconnecting from American identity, or American exceptionalism and its associated cultural practices, to one of cultural integration and assimilation. This does not mean that Muslims have abandoned their habits of conforming to Anglo-American ideals, but many American Muslims have strengthened their efforts to retell the story of Islam in America - sometimes by claiming origins that date back to the 12th century. Over the past 12 years, American Muslims have also sought to strengthen their claims to a harmonious identity between America and Islam by writing about Islam as an authentic American religion; in fact, since 9/11, there have been many online and print publications dedicated to the idea that Islam is an American religion and that Muslims are no different from Jews and Christians in America (Y Y Haddad & Harb, 2014). These works are another part of the complexity of the project and movement that began with American Muslims after 9/11.

In terms of social movements in the internet era, both communication and technology contexts apply a civilizing and cosmopolitan pluralist orientation to the struggle for the birth of a pluralistic Muslim community. All of this can be achieved with critical awareness of the problems faced and opportunities behind them. Moreover, in the digital and global age, Muslims should participate as much as possible in voicing progressive and civil ideas (Abadie et al., 1999). On the other hand, some American Muslims view the Manifest Destiny movement with skepticism, as it is often associated with American expansionism and imperialism. They see it as a threat to the interests of marginalized communities, including the Muslim community. Overall, the relationship between the Muslim community and the Manifest Destiny movement is complex and determined by various factors, including the political, social, and historical contexts in which they occur. The Muslim community's participation in this movement is an ongoing process and will continue to evolve as both the Muslim community and the larger American society continue to change and develop.

The American Muslim Manifest Destiny movement aims to strengthen the Islamic identity of American Muslims and participate in American political and social life. There are several values underlying this movement, including: belief in justice, cooperation between people of different religions, education and understanding of religion, and youth and leadership. The American Muslim Manifest Destiny movement promotes justice and equality for all people, regardless of religion, ethnicity, or social background. This movement encourages American Muslims to be agents of change who advocate for justice and address injustice in society. The movement regards religious freedom as a fundamental right that must be respected and protected. The American Muslim Manifest Destiny movement advocates for the rights of Muslims.

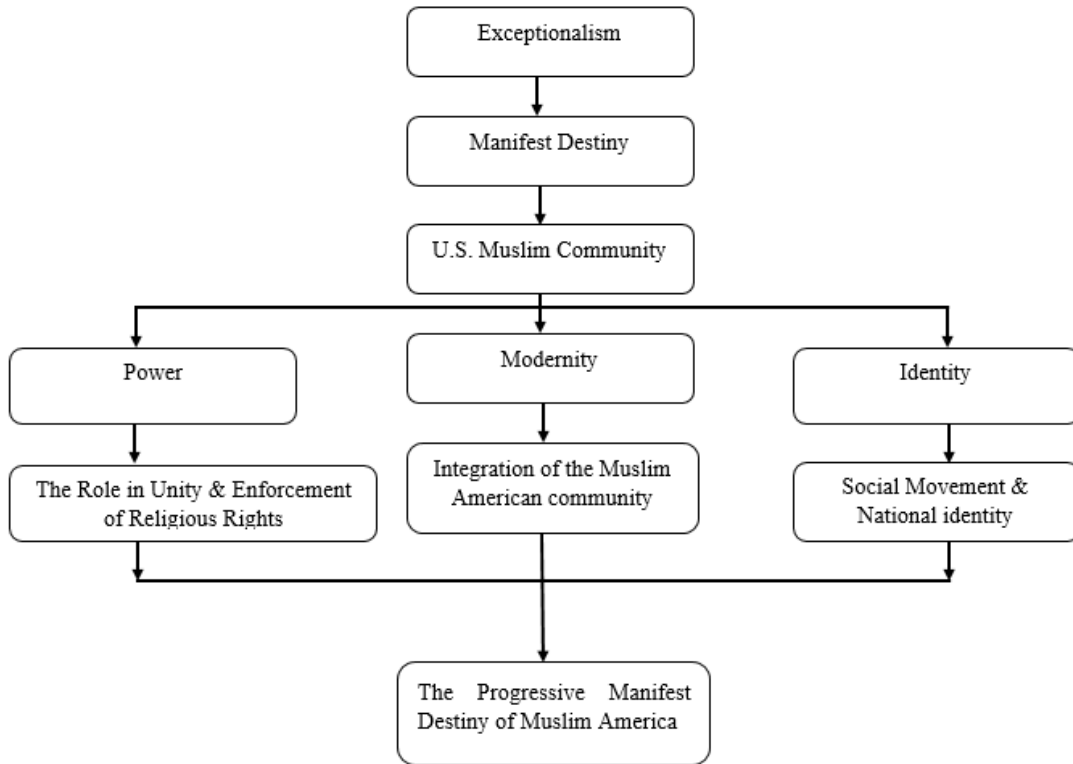


Table 1: Derivatives of the Manifest Destiny Movement

Source: Processed by the author.

America for worshiping according to their beliefs without fear of discrimination or violence. This movement encourages cooperation between American Muslims and other religious communities in advocating for justice and addressing injustice in society. The movement emphasizes that everyone must work together to create a fair and tolerant environment for all. Many in the Arab world believe in extraordinary conspiracy theories where these values become the main focus. One consequence is the control of Western media, especially in reporting factual news, mostly viewed with hostility or denial, and general skepticism of journalistic claims is common. This skepticism also extends to Muslims living in the West (De Zoysa, 2005). In addition, actions that implement regime change in Iraq and elsewhere may divert attention from the global threat posed by terrorism triggered by repressive Islamic states and dissatisfied populations. Advancing the idea of Manifest Destiny, although rhetorically targeting domestic audiences, is seen as a reflection of neo-imperialism inspired by the United States. Now realizing the need to gain more friends in the Middle East, focus groups and surveys have been implemented, showing that family and faith themes are common concerns for Islam and the United States. This movement also promotes better education and religious understanding for American Muslims. The movement emphasizes that a correct understanding of Islam can help overcome stereotypes and discrimination against American Muslims. The Youth and Muslim American Manifest Destiny Movement advocate for the participation of Muslim American youth in American political and social life. The movement also promotes Muslim American leadership capable of leading and advocating for justice for all. These values are at the core of the Muslim American Manifest Destiny Movement and serve as a foundation for movement members in advocating for their rights and interests as Muslim Americans.

In America, there is a new atmosphere of change. The rhetoric against Islam has significantly decreased. The American government, such as Congress and the White House, has recognized the existence of American Muslims and provided them with opportunities to participate in policy discussions. This is a privilege that not all Muslim countries grant to their citizens currently. As a result of this success, American Muslims begin to believe that they have a God-given destiny (Becker et al., 2015). They believe that the divine mission must be carried out. Their exceptional intellectual talents, highly educated population, free and encouraging environment in the United States, and enthusiasm and dynamism of the Islamic revival, all join to provide a great opportunity for the American Muslim community not only to spread Islamic values in the West but also to influence and shape the destiny of traditional Muslim societies.

American Muslims realize that if Islam wants to survive in a way that makes it central and relevant to all aspects of human life, it must learn to adapt and survive in the challenging environment of the West (Muslim et al., 2016). The geopolitics of Muslim America encompasses a range of complex issues, including the war on terrorism, conflicts in the Middle East, migration, human rights, Islamophobia, and political issues related to Islam within the context of the United States. It is important to recognize that the experiences and perspectives of Muslim Americans are highly diverse. There are various groups and schools of thought within the Muslim American community, each with different views and approaches to geopolitical and domestic political issues.

the geopolitical connotations of Bones ell's romantically uplifting vision of space exploration resists equivalent interpretation as a metaphor for Cold War anxieties, such as nuclear Armageddon, anti-communism or the de-humanizing effects of technoscience.⁵¹ Instead of evoking these anxieties directly, Bones ell's detailed images presented a much more comforting and structured view of the universe and the progressive role of techno science, which may well have helped to allay such Cold War anxieties (Sage, 2008).

The threats to Islam in the Muslim world today are rough and physical. There is no intellectual and social alternative to Islam in their home countries. Although Islamists face repression from secular authoritarianism, state security agents cannot replace Islam. Islam endures and will continue to be the center of Muslim life in the traditional Muslim world. Therefore, the clear destiny for American Muslims is to demonstrate to the world how relevant Islamic values are in modern/post-modern life. By understanding Islam as something that enables good living, both now and in the future, American Muslims can convince the West that Islam will contribute to further enrich their lives.

CONCLUSION

In the digital era, the concept of Manifest Destiny has shifted and evolved. One example of the shift in Manifest Destiny in the digital era is the emergence of the idea that the United States is a world leader in technology and information. The country has large technology companies such as Apple, Google, Facebook, and Amazon that dominate the global market and are centers of technological innovation. This leads to the belief that the United States has a responsibility to develop technology and become a leader in the field. In the context of social movements in the internet era, both communication and technology apply to creating a civilized orientation and struggles for the birth of a cosmopolitan pluralist society. All of this can be achieved by having critical awareness of the problems faced and the opportunities that lie behind them.

Moreover, in the digital and global era, Muslims should participate as much as possible in advocating for progressive and civilized ideas.

In the context of Manifest Destiny, the Muslim movement uses technology and communication positively to advocate for their rights and promote better understanding of their religion and culture. However, the American Muslim community is often on the defensive, such as fighting allegations that they support radicalism, facing government scrutiny and spying, responding to harassment by some law enforcement agencies, and feeling threatened by increasing Islamophobia and a culture of hostility towards Islam and Muslims. For American Muslims, it is important to show the world the relevance of Islamic values in modern/post-modern life. By understanding Islam as something that enables a good life, both now and in the future.

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