On changing Arab American Studies to Arab and Muslim American Studies
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I recently had a few informal conversations with students and scholars in the field to ask if we should be called Arab American Studies or Arab and Muslim American Studies. There was overwhelming support for Arab and Muslim American Studies because it is seen as both more inclusive and more accurate given how Arabs and Muslims have been racialized by U.S. policies.

AMAS is More Inclusive
AMAS better reflects the interests of students and scholarship in the field.

Regarding students: We will draw more students if we are AMAS, rather than AAS, especially since one of our challenges is to draw the attention of students who automatically go to Near Eastern Studies. Many students are Muslim, but not Arab. Muslim is a broader designation that will attract Muslim students who are Bangladeshi, African American, Iranian, etc. – who might not otherwise identify with Arab American Studies. Many of these students identify with the racialization process that Arabs and Muslims have experienced.

Regarding scholarship: Many Muslim American Studies scholars do not identify with Arab American Studies and some very innovative work on racialization is being done in Muslim American Studies. At a meeting at the Arab American Studies Association conference in April 2014 where the future direction of the field was discussed, several scholars noted the importance of including Muslim American Studies within the framework of Arab American Studies.

Another example is that I just participated in a roundtable published in *Amerasia Journal* on "Asian American Religions" that included four Muslim American scholars who work on Islam in America – Sylvia Chan-Malik (Asian American), Su'ad Abdul-Khabeer (African American), and Meryem Kashani (Iranian American). The work of these scholars (and many others who work on the racialization of Islam) is innovative and relevant to the study of Arab Americans, but it would not be included if our frame remains AAS.

At the Critical Ethnic Studies conference in September 2013, Nadine Naber and I held a meeting for people interested in Arab, Muslim, and South Asian Diaspora Studies and to our amazement over 70 people came to the meeting. This also speaks to how more people respond to a broad category and how these categories resonate at this historical moment given post-9/11 forms of racialization.

It is clear that in the case of Arab and Muslim American Studies, broadening brings more people and makes us more relevant.

AMAS is More Accurate

Including Muslim Americans, speaks to the racialization of Arab and Muslim communities in the U.S. We do not do "Islamic Studies," rather we look at Muslim Americans in the context of Ethnic Studies and processes of racialization. How these categories – Arab and Muslim - overlap is part of our exploration (a similar argument cannot be made about Latino and Catholic forms of racialization).

US foreign policies have conflated Arabs and Muslims since 1967 Arab-Israeli war, and further in 1979 in the context of the Iranian Revolution, the 1991 Gulf War, and of course 9/11 where we saw a shared struggle against the perception of Arabs and Muslims (and people who "appear to be" Arab or Muslim) as terrorists.

It is true that AMAS does not match other AC ES categories, given that "Muslim" will be our only religious category. However, this is how race works and the fact that we reflect current racial configurations is what makes AC unique. We go beyond the four federally recognized racial groups and acknowledge that these categories are not fixed and always subject to change.

Additional Points

We offer an internship at the Council on American-Islamic Relations (the director, Dawud Walid is African American). It could be argued that this does not fit into our AAS framework, given that the focus is on Muslim Americans.

San Francisco State University is the only other university part from UM-Ann Arbor and UM-Dearborn to have an Arab American Studies program. At SFSU it is called "Arab and Muslim Ethnicities and Diasporas."

Undergraduate students here at UM are currently meeting with the administration to establish an Arab and Muslim minority cultural lounge (there are currently 13 multicultural lounges on campus) named after Edward Said. It is intended to be a safe space for these students who have experienced hostility on campus.