

The Literature of Happiness “With reference of the Philosophy of Happiness in Islam”

Abdel Nasir Yousuf Abde; Kahree Salih¹

Abstract

This paper discusses *Islam* as a way of life behind the religion. This way of life was broadly followed by people all around the world many millennia before the reformation initiated by 'the recitation'. There is a considerable body of research, debate and thinking on Happiness, and much of this is reflected in the Islamic world. This is as it should be, because of the centrality of concepts of Happiness/wellbeing in all social, economic, political and religious spheres. The researcher intended to draw together some of the strands of work concerning wellbeing from an Islamic perspective and which will explore the influence of the Islamic faith on individual, family, community and societal wellbeing. There will be a theoretical and conceptual discussion to give an appreciation of the scope of the field of study.

Keywords: Religious observanceself-responsibility Islam Happiness

Introduction

In United Arab Emirates the concept of Happiness plays a crucial role in people's life. In his wall, HH Sheikh Mohammed Bin Rashid Al Maktoum wrote, "we are building a new reality for our people, a new future for our children, and a new model of development." Evidently the concept of Happiness is central in HH's policies. The purpose of this study is to get some understanding of the concept of Happiness/welbeing in Islam, drawing on the available research evidence. The exploration was based on a number of research questions, but no hypothesis. The key question is: what does happiness/wellbeing mean in Islam? Secondary questions include: Does the application of Islamic principles and values result in a very different construction of happiness -/wellbeing from others in use? How is this construct measured, if it exists? And: How is it scaled up to levels above the individual to the family, community and society?

Muslims believed that Islam is a complete and a perfect religion as well as a way of life for the whole mankind. It is evident in both the Qur'an and the Ahâdith these unique features of Islam: Abu Hurairah (radhiallahuanhu) narrated that the Prophet (sallallahu 'alayhiwasallam) said, "Religion (Islam) is very easy and whoever overburdens himself in his religion will not be able to continue in that way. So you should not be extremists, but try to be near to perfection and receive the good tidings that you will be rewarded; and gain strength by offering the prayers in the mornings, afternoons and during the last hours of the nights." (Bukhâri 1/38)

Theoretical Framework of the Study

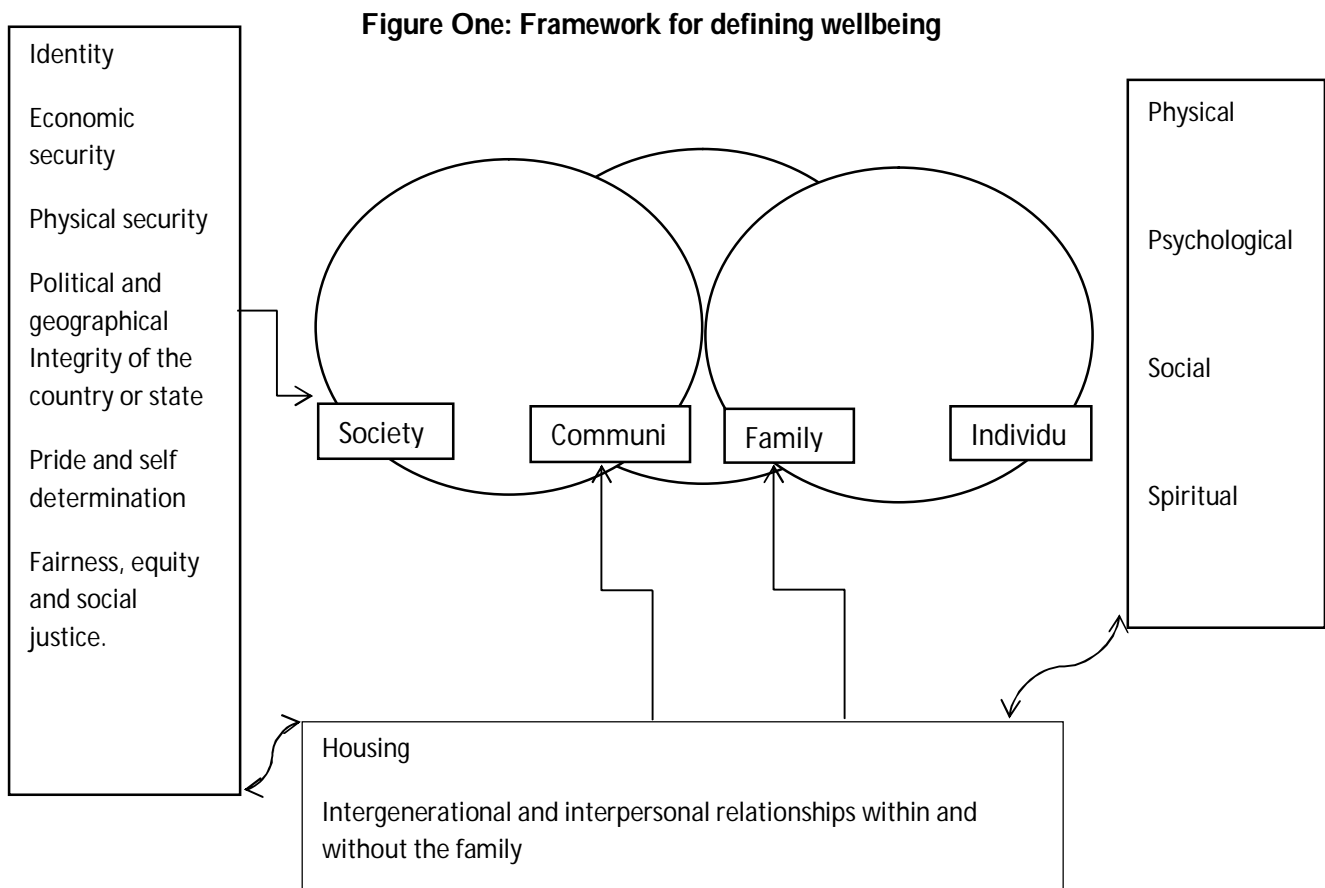
Islam is one of the largest religions in the world, with over 1 billion followers. It is a monotheistic faith based on revelations received by the Prophet Muhammad in 7th-century. It is one of the three Abrahamic religions. The others being Judaism and Christianity.

¹ College Of Islamic And Arabic Studies-Dubai, United Arab Emirates. Nasirtebian@Gmail.Com, 00971557232550.

All three religions originated in the area of the world we now call the Middle East. These religions have an overlapping ancestry, and over time have been in conflict or competition with each other. Islam is an Arabic word meaning “submission, surrender, and obedience.” The word itself stands for complete submission and obedience to Allah (God) (Ahmad. 1959) and illuminates the fundamental religious idea—that the believer (called a Muslim, from the active particle of islām) accepts surrender to the will of Allah (in Arabic, Allāh: God).

Allah is viewed as the sole God—creator, sustainer, and restorer of the world. Islamic statement of faith says, “There is no god but God, and Muhammad is the Prophet of God.” The interpretation of this statement or testimony is that there is no god but Allah and that Muhammad (sallallāhu ‘alayhiwasallam) His messenger. Obviously, it is an effective way for the believer to recognize Islam. This formula, is considered to be the first and most important pillar of Islam, is pronounced again and again by millions and millions of Muslims around the world. The belief that everything comes from Allah, the Creator of all worlds, contributes to the safety and physical and mental well-being of the believer.

The following framework (Figure One) will be used as a guide to explore the meaning of wellbeing to followers of Islam. This will be of necessity a limited exploration, but one, which it is hoped to highlight the thinking as well as the application of happiness/wellbeing theories and measurement instruments to Muslim populations.



From: Knight, A. &McNaught, A(Eds). *Understanding Wellbeing: An Introduction for students and practitioners of health and social care.*Banbury: Lantern Publishing (pp.11). It is important to understand the scope and impact of Islam on people's day-to-day lives. Hamidi (undated) notes that in addition to being a religious book (the Quran); it also covers legal, social educative and humanitarian codes that had provided the Islamic nation with all the sound principles for the development of their community. It may be viewed as a comprehensive encyclopedia to serve humanity in every “aspect of life” (Hamidi, undated, p.5).

The Muslim populations in the United Kingdom, as an example of Muslims in Europe, are from different parts of the world: including Arabs and Turks from the Middle East and North Africa (the MENA region) as well as people from West Africa, Pakistan and Bangladesh. There are also an unknown number of British and European people who have converted to Islam (Suleiman 2013). It is believed that this is the case in most European countries. Worldwide, the largest concentration of Muslims is in South East Asia (Indonesia and Malaysia). There are also large Muslim populations in West and East Africa, former Soviet Republics in Central Asia (Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, and Turkmenistan) as well as in India, Pakistan, Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Surprisingly, the Muslim majority countries (MMC) are not in the Arab World. These countries are Indonesia, the Maldives and Malaysia. There are some states that are officially called Islamic Republics (Iran, Afghanistan, and Pakistan). Apart from the three Islamic Republics mentioned previously, only the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia has legal systems based entirely on Islamic law (Sharia). There are some other countries that have mixed legal systems, of which Sharia is one part. There are conflicts in some states over some regions or groups attempting to apply Sharia Law in their area, in violation of the constitution and the wishes of the majority population (Nigeria, Sudan, Mali and Indonesia).

As it is mentioned earlier, the religion of Islam is the acceptance of and obedience to the teachings of God, revealed to his last prophet Muhammad (PBUH). The main tenets of the religion are detailed in the remainder of this section:

1) Monotheism the One

The belief in something called monotheism which is derived from the Greek words 'monos' meaning only one and 'theos' meaning god. It is relatively new word in the English Language and it is used to denote the Supreme Being. In Islam the belief in one God is essential. It is a fundamental point in Islam as belief in One God entails certainty. Muslims believe that there is only one God "Allah", who has neither son nor partner, and that none has the right to be worshipped but him alone. He alone is the Sustainer and Creator of the universe. He is the First, He is the Last. In the Quran, Allah is described in the following way: "Say (O Mohammed) He is Allah, (the) One. Allah –us-Samad (The self-sufficient Master, whom all creatures need, He neither eats nor drinks). He begets not, nor was He begotten; and there is none co-equal or comparable unto Him." (Quran 112:1-4).

2) The True Reality of Angels

In common folklore, angels are thought of as good forces of nature, hologram images or illusions. In Islamic doctrine they are real created beings. The greatest of them is Gabriel whom the prophet of Islam actually saw him in his original form. The prophet Mohammed (may mercy and blessing of Allah be upon him said;

" I have the permission to speak about one of the angels of Allah who carry the Throne. The distance between his ear-lobes and his shoulders is equivalent to seven-hundred year journey." (Abu Daoud)

They do not drink or eat. The angels do not get bored or tired of worshipping Allah: "They celebrate His praises night and day, nor do they ever slacken." (Quran 21:20) Muslims believe in the existence of the angels and that they are honored creatures. The angels worship Allah alone, obey Him, and act only by His command. Among the angels is Gabriel, who is the messenger that communicated the Quran from Allah to prophet Muhammad (PBUH).

3) Heavenly Books:

One must believe that Allah has revealed Heavenly Books to His Messengers. These books include The Scriptures of Ibraheem, The Torah (The Sacred Book) of Moses, Zaboor (Psalms) which is revealed to Daoud, and the Holy Quran. All these books call people to worship Allah alone. Allah says, "Indeed We have sent our Messengers with clear proofs, and revealed with them the Scripture and the Balance (justice) that mankind may keep up justice." (Quran 57:25) Muslims believe that Allah revealed books to His messengers as proof for mankind and as guidance for them. Among these books is the Quran.

Allah has guaranteed the Quran's protection from any corruption or distortion deed. Allah says "Indeed, it is We who sent down the Qur'an and indeed, We will be its guardian." (Quran, 15:9).

4) Belief in the Prophets and Messengers of Allah:

"The Prophet (Mohammed) believes in what has been sent down to him from His Lord and (so do) the believers. Each one believes in God, His Angles his Books, and His Prophets. (They say) 'We make no distinction between one another of His Prophets' ... " (Quran 2:285) Muslims believe in the prophets and messengers of Allah, starting with Adam including Noah, Abraham, Ishmael, Isaac, Jacob, Moses, and Jesus. But Allah's final message was revealed to the Prophet Muhammad. Muslims believe that Muhammad is the last prophet sent b Allah: "Muhammad is not the father of any one of your men, but he is the Messenger of Allah and the last of the prophets (Quran, 33:40).Also, Muslims believe that all the prophets and messengers were created human beings who had none of the divine qualities of God.

To have faith in Messengers is to firmly believe in the fact that Allah has chosen the right men to convey His message. That is to say, the single most important message of all prophets to their people was to worship God alone. All of them have invited people to worship Allah and shun false gods.

5) Belief in the Day of Resurrection:

In the Holy Qur'an, the Day of Resurrection/Judgment is referred to as the Day of Gathering (Q64.9), the True Day (Q78:39), the Day of Justice (Q21:47), the Day of Decision (Q77:38), the Day of Sorting out (Q77:13-4) and the Day of Grief and Regrets (Q19:39). Muslims believe thatjust as Allah, the Creator of Mankind, created us the first time, believe in the Day of Judgment (the Day of Resurrection) when people will be resurrected for God's judgment according to their beliefs and deeds.The belief extends to the certainty of Allah's justice. In the Day of Resurrection each one of us will stand before Allah to be questioned about his or her deeds. Like Christians, Muslims believe that the present life is only a trial preparation for the life after death. Islam teaches that this life is simply a test to determine our place in the eternal life. Those who die while believing that "There is no true god but Allah, and Mohammed is the Messenger (The prophet) of Allah" and are Muslims will be rewarded on that day and will be admitted to Paradise.Therefore, theday of Resurrection and Judgment is very important otherwise faith in Allah and righteous deeds will be meaningless. Similarly, without it, all the disbelievers, tyrants, oppressors and wicked persons of this world will go Scot free, may God forbid bad thing. Many religions/ideologies of the world have different beliefs and understanding about it. In Islam, the belief in the Day of Resurrection/Judgment is one of the articles of faith that every Muslim must believe.

6) Belief in the Divine decree (Al- Qadar):

Belief in al-Qadar (the Divine decree) is the sixth pillar of faith, and no one's faith is complete without it. In Saheeh Muslim (8) it is narrated that Ibn 'Umar (may Allah be pleased with him) heard that some people were denying al-Qadar. He said: "If I meet these people I will tell them that I have nothing to do with them and they have nothing to do with me. By the One by Whom'Abd-Allaah ibn 'Umar swore, if one of them had gold equivalent to Mount Uhud(a mount in Mekka) and he spent it, Allah would not accept it from him unless he believed in al-Qadar." Thus,Muslimsmust believe in Al-Qadar, which is Divine Predestination, but this belief does not mean that human beings do not have freewill. Muslims believe that human beings can choose right or wrong and that they are responsible for their choices. The belief in Divine Predestination includes belief in four things:

6.1 – Belief that Allah knows all things, in general terms and in detail, from eternity to eternity. Not a single atom is unknown to Him in the heavens or on earth.

6.2 – Belief that Allah has decreed all things in al-Lawh al-Mahfooz, fifty thousand years before He created the heavens and the earth.

6.3 – Belief that the will of Allah is irresistible and His decree is comprehensive, so nothing happens in this universe, good or bad, but by His will.

6.4 – Belief that all that exists was created by Allah. He is the Creator of all beings and the Creator of their attributes and actions, as He says (interpretation of the meaning):

"Such is Allah, your Lord! LaailaahailaHuwa (none has the right to be worshipped but He), the Creator of all things"[al-An'aam 6:102] 7)

Also, correct belief in al-Qadar also involves believing in the following: That the individual has free will by means of which he acts, as Allah says (interpretation of the meaning): "To whomsoever among you who wills to walk straight" [al-Takweer 81:28]

"Allah burdens not a person beyond his scope"[al-Baqarah 2:286] That a person's will and ability do not operate outside the will and decree of Allah, Who is the One Who has given him that ability and made him able to distinguish (between good and evil) and make his choice, as He says (interpretation of the meaning): "And you cannot will unless (it be) that Allah wills the Lord of the 'Aalameen (mankind, jinn and all that exists)" [al-Takweer 81:29]

The Five Pillars of Islam

The essential teachings of Islam are based on five principles, referred to as the 'Five Pillars of Islam', and six fundamental beliefs, known as the 'Six Articles of Faith.' [The Arabic word for faith is Iman] This division is based on the following well known hadeeth of Prophet Muhammad. Umar, one of the closest of companions to the Prophet, related the following occurrence: "Once, while we were sitting with the Prophet, a man appeared before us whose clothes were exceedingly white and hair exceedingly black. No signs of traveling were seen on him and no one among us knew him. He sat towards the Prophet, resting his knees against his knees and placing the palms of his hands on his thighs. He then said: 'O Muhammad, tell me about Islam.' The Messenger replied: 'Islam is to testify that there is no god worthy of worship except Allah and Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah, to perform the prayers, to pay the compulsory charity (Zakah), to fast in Ramadan, and to make the pilgrimage to the House if you are able to do so.'

He said: 'You have spoken the truth.' We were amazed at him asking questions and then saying he had spoken the truth! He then inquired: 'Tell me about faith (Iman)?' The Prophet replied: 'It is to believe in Allah, His angels, His scriptures, His messengers, and the Last Day, and to believe in divine decree, both its sweetness and its bitterness.' He said: 'You have spoken the truth.' Umar then related some more questions he asked and the answers given by the Prophet. Finally, when the man left, the Prophet asked: 'O Umar, do you know who was the questioner?' I said: 'Allah and His Messenger know best.' The Prophet said: 'It was Gabriel who came to you to teach you your religion.'" The Five Pillars of Islam are the framework of Islamic life. They are the testimony of faith, prayer, giving Zakat (support of the needy), fasting during the month of Ramadan, and the pilgrimage to Makkah once in a lifetime for those who are able.

7.1) The Testimony of Faith

The testimony of faith is saying with conviction, "La ilahaila Allah, Muhammadurrasoolu Allah". This saying means "There is no true god but God (Allah), and Muhammad is the Messenger (Prophet) of Allah". The first part, "There is no true god but Allah means that none has the right to be worshipped but Allah alone, and that Allah is neither partner nor son. This testimony of faith is called the Shahada, a simple formula that should be said with conviction in order to also convert to Islam. The testimony of faith is the most important pillar of Islam.

7.2) Prayer

Muslims perform five prayers a day. Each prayer does not take more than a few minutes to perform. Prayer in Islam is a direct link between the worshipper and Allah. There are no intermediaries between Allah and the worshipper. In prayer, a person feels inner happiness, peace, and comfort, and that Allah is pleased with him or her. Prayers are performed at dawn, noon, mid-afternoon, sunset, and night. A Muslim may pray almost anywhere such as in fields, offices, factories, or universities.

7.3) Giving Zakat (Support of the Needy)

All things belong to Allah, and wealth is therefore held by human beings in trust. The original meaning of the word Zakat is both purification and growth. Giving Zakat means giving a specified percentage on certain properties to certain classes of needy people. In addition, a person may also give as much as he or she pleases as voluntary alms or charity.

7.4) Fasting for the Month of Ramadan

Every year, in the month of Ramadan all Muslims fast from dawn until sundown abstaining from food, drink, and sexual relations. Although the fast is beneficial to health, it is regarded principally as a method of spiritual self-purification. By cutting oneself off from worldly comforts, even for a short time, a fasting person gains true sympathy with those who go hungry, as well as growth in his or her spiritual life.

7.5) The Pilgrimage to Makkah

The annual pilgrimage "Haj" to Makkah is an obligation once in a lifetime for those who are physically and financially able to perform it. An average of two million people goes to Makkah each year from every corner of the globe. Although Makkah is always filled with visitors, the annual Haj is performed in the twelfth month of the Islamic calendar. Pilgrims wear special simple clothes, which strip away distinctions of class and culture so that all stand similar before God.

Pilgrims pray at the Haram mosque in Makkah. In this mosque the Kaaba, which Muslims turn toward when praying. The Kaaba is the place of worship which Allah commanded the Prophets Abraham and his son Ishmael to build. The rites of the Haj include circling the Kaaba seven times and going seven times between the hillocks of Safa and Marwa, as Hagar (Abraham's wife) did during her search for water. Then the pilgrims stand together in Arafah and ask Allah for what they wish and for His forgiveness in what is often thought of as a preview of the Day of Judgment. A festival, Eid Al-Adha, which is celebrated with prayers, marks the end of the Haj. This and Eid al-Fitr, a feast-day commemorating the end of Ramadan, are the two annual feasts of the Muslim calendar.

The Literature of Happiness in Islam

Happiness is a positive emotional state that is subjectively defined by each person. As per the Webster's Third International Dictionary, "happiness is a state of wellbeing characterized by relative permanence, by a dominant agreeable emotion ranging in value from mere contentment to deep and intense joy in living and by a natural desire for its continuation. The common Islamic concept of happiness is that it is a feeling that resides in the heart. It is characterized by peace of mind, tranquility, a sense of wellbeing, and a relaxed disposition. It comes as a result of proper behavior, both inward and outward and is inspired by strong faith. Allah's Messenger (Peace be upon him) said, "True enrichment does not come through possessing a lot of wealth, but true enrichment is the enrichment of the soul." (Saheeh Muslim).

In the Holy Quran Allah says, "Whoever does right, whether male or female, and is a believer, We will make him live a good life, and We will award them their reward for the best of what they used to do." (Quran, 16:97) Even though happiness is perhaps one of the most important things in life, science still cannot explain much about it. Its concept itself is elusive. To some people, happiness means wealth; to others, it means position, and still to others, it means power and control. Even though these factors are the means to happiness, they are not the ends.

Islam teaches that human happiness does not originate from any of these above mentioned factors, and to a believer, a Muslim, happiness has a very different meaning. To better understand the meaning of happiness in Islam, Anas narrated the Prophet (Pbuh) as saying, "Whoever's concern was the afterlife, Allah makes his richness between his eyes, gathers his inner self, and the worldly life will come to him with compliance. And whoever's concern was for the worldly life, Allah will make his poverty between his eyes, disunite him and he will not get anything from this worldly life except what has been written for him." (Tirmidi)

Evidently there is a considerable volume of Islamic literature on the topic of happiness" Al- Ghazali(1910), Mihr (1990) Masir&Adam (1995). This genre of work is aimed at practicing Muslims and seems to offer spiritual guidance and to further bolster them in their faith. For example, Shahrana observes, "In the Quran happiness is termed by the word sa'adah". Whenever the term sa'adah is mentioned in the Quran, it is always related to two conditions: the happiness in the hereafter (Alukhra) and happiness in the present world (Aldounya). For a Muslim the ultimate happiness is the happiness in the hereafter as mentioned by the Almighty Allah in Surah Hud (Shahrana, 2009). Kharofa's (1982) observations are more direct: "the view of Islam of the wellbeing of man is to abstain from everything that Allah had forbidden and to do everything that God has commanded him to do".

This literature is very much a debate within Islam. However, there have been instances when this debate has crossed over and challenged mainstream subjective wellbeing "happiness theories" (Moosavi. 2006). Obtaining authentic happiness depends on faith and moral acts. Authentic happiness means attaining a purified or comprehensive life which is filled with meaning and purpose" (ibid p.4). One can see why Islamic scholars might take issue with the constructs of subjective wellbeing advanced by psychologists, as there is a fundamental philosophical divide between the two ways of thinking about wellbeing. The Islamic approach seems to be around conforming to Islamic values and principals and their behavioral corollaries, meaning that the Islamic construct of wellbeing has stronger moral and theological components than is the norm in Western conceptualization of wellbeing.

The wellbeing of individuals and populations can be assessed subjectively and objectively. While there is a considerable body of research on religion, health and wellbeing, surprising little specifically focuses on Islam and wellbeing. The prevailing literature tries to explore the correlation between religious observance wellbeing and health (Kaldor et al. 2004: Caras 2003, Steiner et al 2010). Much of this literature is concerned with Christianity, and tries to relate measures of health and wellbeing to proxies for the strength or frequency of religious practice. With Islam and wellbeing we have a more complex phenomenon in that Islam is a way of life, and is far more integral to a person's existence and routines than with other religions.

It has been long established that there is a link between religion/spirituality and we being, and this seems to hold across all faith groups (Knight & Khan Fredrickson B L (Undated)). Researcher's own 'structured framework for defining wellbeing recognizes spirituality as being integral components of individual wellbeing. Given the scope of Islam on its followers, it would be reasonable to also include religion/spirituality as a factor in family, community and societal wellbeing.

There is a lack of clarity about the precise processes or mechanisms through which religion produces the well-being effect. It is frequently assumed that it is the positive emotions associated with religion that accounts for the benefit of religion on wellbeing.

Kaldor et al (2004) explored the extent to which willingness to develop one's spirituality related to higher levels of wellbeing. They found that there was a positive relationship between religious beliefs and active involvement in private or public religious practice and many of the measures of wellbeing. The analysis of the data suggests that those with more orthodox religious belief tend to record higher levels of optimism, a sense of purpose in life and involvement in caring activities.

Surveys Measuring Subjective Happiness Among Muslims

In 2008, Denmark ranked as the happiest nation on the planet, according to the World Map of Happiness and the World Values Survey. The same year, the Scandinavian country came in at No. 2 on the World Database of Happiness; barely beat out by nearby Iceland. However, measuring happiness is at least as difficult as catching rare and elusive ghost. What kind of tool should we use? At the Pursuit of Happiness project, we try to collect and analyze the most scientific studies on happiness and subjective well-being (SWB). The question is, how does one evaluate what the most "scientific" studies are? There are a number of studies that attempt to measure the subjective wellbeing of Muslim populations, exclusively, or include some Muslim respondents in their survey sample. Aflakseir (2012) has explored the relationship between 'the sense of personal meaning', psychological wellbeing, spirituality and religiosity of a group of Muslim students in England. His hypothesis was that there would be a positive relationship between personal meanings, psychological wellbeing and spirituality and religiosity. Sixty (60) respondents were recruited at universities in Birmingham and Southampton: four research instruments were used to assess their wellbeing.

The findings were that Muslim students who practiced their religion perceived their life as meaningful. The researcher noted some other differences in this cohort with other population groups. These differences related to Death Acceptance and Choice Responsibility. These differences were attributed to conflict with Islamic teaching philosophy. He speculates that "religion enhances meaning of life by providing a unifying philosophy of life and serves as an integrating and stabilizing force that provides a framework for interpreting life's challenges and provides a resolution to difficult conditions (ibid p30).

Ibrahim et al (2012) have reported a study of subjective wellbeing of older Muslims in rural areas of Malaysia. This was a very conventional study in which the population seems to have been selected more for their demographic characteristics, as there was no focus on any aspect of their faith in either the methodology or the reported findings.

A significant body of research has been conducted in Kuwait by Abdel-Khalek (Abdel-Khalek. 2004. 2006. 2006a, 2007, 2008 and 2010). This work largely consists of quality of life measurement. One study, in particular, (2006) tries to test the connection between "gender differences in happiness, physical health, mental health, and religiosity" (ibid p85). This study included a relatively large sample of 2210 males and 1154 females' undergraduates. Four self-rating scales were used to assess happiness, physical health, mental health and religiosity.

The main finding of the study is the significant relation between the self-ratings of happiness, physical health, mental health and religiosity (ibid p93), and it is noted "religion is more central and plays a more important role in Kuwait society" (ibid p93). These findings were confirmed in a later study of 424 adult employees (Abdel-Khalek, 2008), and in a sample of 224 Egyptian college students (Abdel-Khalek 2011).

This link between religiosity and happiness has produced contrary findings among Christians (Lewis 2002, Lewis, et al 2000). It could be argued that the patterns of devotion and religious observance among Christians, Muslims and other religious communities can vary in intensity. In addition Islam extends beyond religious practices, and shapes the followers day to day life and the structure of their existence. As such, any comparative research therefore needs to have more complex measures beyond the extent of religious practice, if we are to be assured that we are dealing with comparable phenomena. Another weakness of this happiness, subjective, psychological wellbeing studies is that they deal with internal states and do not step outside the individual to assess the social, cultural and environmental drivers of wellbeing.

An example is the findings of Moghnie and Kazarian (2011) evaluation of the subjective wellbeing of college students in Lebanon. The instrument was an Arabic translation of the Subjective Happiness Scale (SHS) and the Adult Parental Acceptance Questionnaire (PARQ), administered to 273 students in state and private colleges. This study does not objectively take religion into account, and is more concerned with the reliability and cultural appropriateness of the measuring instrument. The subjective happiness scores of Lebanese students were below that of US college students. Not surprising, given that "they are challenged by waves of economic and political instability that undermine their employment opportunities and contribute to their migration to other countries for economic livelihood and stability (ibid).

The impact of environmental factors on assessing the influence of religiosity and spirituality on wellbeing was noted by Tiliouine et al (2009) in their study of Islamic wellbeing in Algeria. In their study of 2,909 Muslims, religiosity was found not to contribute towards wellbeing as they measured it. It was postulated that the post conflict situation in the country and regaining normal life was the major concern of respondents. Woodlock (2012) looked at the subjective and national wellbeing of a sample of Muslims in comparison with the general population, in two regions in Australia. There were 600 persons in the sample for a questionnaire-based survey. Subjective wellbeing refers to how individuals perceive their life circumstances. National wellbeing is not defined, but it seems to refer to the wellbeing of Muslims as a distinctive community. The survey found that in respect of personal wellbeing, Muslim scores were indistinguishable from the general Australian population. However, there were differences in two domains: that of safety and future security. It was hypothesized by Cummins (2003) cited in Woodlock(2012) that Muslims might feel vulnerable due to world crisis events involving Muslim actors elsewhere. The local corollary of these events is increased scrutiny anti-Muslim political rhetoric. racial and religious vilification. With national wellbeing, Muslims fare worse than the rest of Australia's populations, with significantly less satisfaction over the role of government than the general population. Again it is hypothesized that this finding could arise from the positioning of Muslims as a "potential threat" (Woodlock 2012).

The studies that have been summarized so far suggests that while it is possible for Muslims and other individuals to experience high subjective wellbeing, the wellbeing can be compromised at other level and locations within their social system over which they have no control. In the extreme these extraneous forces might prove an existential threat to the individual or the community concerned. The political and social rhetoric surrounding the Global War on Terror has provided fertile breeding ground for anti-Muslim and right wing politics in many countries.

This has been exacerbated by austerity programmes that have followed the ongoing financial crisis. Within the UK, Muslims have long been a disadvantaged group. According to Laird et al (2007), "Compared to other religious groups Muslims in the UK have the highest age-standardized rate of reported ill health (13% for males, 16% for females) and disability (24% of females, 21% of males), with widespread poverty and deprivation.". In the other side of the world, Muslims in the US generally have higher socio-economic status than their UK counterparts, although the range is wide, specific health research data are sparse, and information on Muslim youth even more limited.

Much of the focus in the UK is on Muslims as an ethnic group and a perceived security threat; however, this also masks the significant religious discrimination that they experience, because the expression of discrimination is often expressed as being against cultural practices, as opposed to those based on their religious practices and beliefs. Laird et al (2007) cite Weller et al (2001) identification of six levels of religious discrimination all of which are pertinent to the day to day life of Muslims in the UK. Muslims in Western societies experience a patchwork of ethnic-racial and religious discrimination: overlaid onto this is the antipathy, antagonism and violence attached to Muslim communities being seen to be allied with or the source of terrorism.

Household and Family Wellbeing

In United Arab Emirates, and in some other European countries, there is growing government and academic interest in the concept and measurement of national and personal wellbeing, but there is at yet now widely accepted framework which focuses specifically on family and takes a comprehensive approach which can guide research, policy development, resource allocation and evaluation. The examination of literature in this aspect only discovered one study that focused on household or family wellbeing (Abdelhak&Sulaiman 2011). This study is focused on household wellbeing, poverty alleviation and the role played by Islamic values. It also explored the use and role of Islamic vehicles for the support of the poor: Zakat, Sadakah (charity), and interest free loans. It sought to shed light on the underlying gap between Islamic values and principles that substantially could enhance people's wellbeing and alleviate their vulnerability to poverty: (ibid p3).

In the context of household poverty, the researchers were concerned with two major questions as follows:

How do Islamic values and principles contribute to people's wellbeing?

Do these values and principles serve positively or otherwise in avoiding households (falling) into the poverty traps (ibid p3).

The Islamic expectation is that individuals should work to support themselves and their family; and that family finances should be managed effectively. The Prophet says, "All of you are guardians (in trust of something or someone) and are accountable for your flock" (Saheeh Muslim) That is to say, we are a Shepard for other people and responsible for those under our guidance. It is also the person's duty to enhance his or her skills and talents to enhance production and productivity. Community responsibility takes the shape of Zakat, Sadakah, Waqf (Endowments), and interest free loans. Zakat is compulsory, and is a way of sharing richness and wealth. Sadakah and Waqf are charitable donation and activities and Muslims are encouraged to be active in these matters, as an act of piety and goodness. Waqf as a financial endowment may also take the shape of a donation of money or property to a nonprofit organization for the ongoing support of that organization. On the other hand, government obligations take the shape of transfer payments, facilitating growth and measures for equal opportunities.

Their research was carried out in Malaysia where data was collected via a structured socio-economic questionnaire containing open and closed ended questions. After piloting the questionnaire on 30 person a final sample of 100 respondents was selected. All respondents had received or had been involved in some type of Islamic scheme such as Zakat, Sadakah, or an interest free loan. Following the questionnaire, individuals were further assessed to measure the impact of Islamic values and principles on household wellbeing and their contribution to avoidance of poverty traps. The results suggested that the degree of an individual's self-responsibility was a fundamental key in eradicating his own poverty (ibid p14). Those individuals who succeeded were characterized by self-belief, Optimism, frequent prayer and a self-improvement ethos. These individuals, also, were keener to seek interest free loans, as opposed to support from Zakat or Sadakah.

Households that had received ZakatorSadakah were poorer, less optimistic and less orientated towards self-improvement. The study concluded that motivation was the key to poverty alleviation, and that those households that were more successful in managing their circumstances were those who adhered to Islamic values and principles. The researchers recommended that charitable support should be provided through the Islamic Financial system ie. Interest free loans, as opposed to charity, in order to improve the motivation of the poor. A very good example could be seen in United Arab Emirates experience in establishing specific systems for Zakat, Sadakah, and interest free loans.

How Happiness should be measured?

It is essential that the set of measures of happiness / well-being is relevant and well-based in what matters to people, both as individuals and for the country as a whole.

However, one more major challenge to reliability is how these measurements measure the happiness or SWB of their subjects. When politicians first announced that the UK government Office for National Statistics (ONS) was planning to measure national well-being, criticism came from all directions. So, as the ONS releases its 2014/15 measures of personal well-being—suggesting that more people are feeling positive about their lives than before—now seems a good moment to take stock of how and why the government takes an interest in our well-being.

Focusing on Muslim Majority and influential Countries in relation to the basic questions of wellbeing such as: how should wellbeing be measured and what is the evidence about the wellbeing of individuals or communities? , the study noticed that the studies quoted from Kuwait, Lebanon and Malaysia go some way to providing answers. In addition to that these studies give way to look at the available evidence/measures at societal or national level. Two distinctive approaches to societal and national wellbeing have emerged. One is anchored in the concept of Happiness and indices have been developed to measure happiness, (Helliwell et al 2013).

The other focuses on development, using such measure as the Human Development Index (HDI), which reported upon annually by the UNDP (United Nations Development Programme). Human Development Index (HDI): A composite index measuring average achievement in three basic dimensions of human development—a long and healthy life, knowledge and a decent standard of living. (See Technical note 1 (<http://hdr.undp.org/en>) for details on how the HDI is calculated). The HD is used as a measure to rank countries by their level of development. The general assumption is that the higher the HD, the higher the level of wellbeing experienced by the residents of the countries concerned. The 2012 ranking for Muslim Majority Countries is shown in the following table:

Table One: 2012 Human Development Index Ranking for Muslim Major Countries

VERY HIGH HDI		Egypt	0.622
Brunei	0.855	Palestine	0.641
Qatar	0.834	Uzbekistan	0.641
UAE	0.818	Syria	0.632
HIGH HDI		Indonesia	0.629
Bahrain	0.796	Maldives	0.688
Kuwait	0.790		
Saudi	0.782	Kyrgyzstan	0.622
Malaysia	0.769	Tajikistan	0.622
Kazakhstan	0.754	Morocco	0.582
Iran	0.742		
Lebanon	0.745		
Libya	0.769		
Azerbaijan	0.734	Low HDI	
Oman	0.731	Pakistan	0.515
Turkey	0.722	Bangladesh	0.515
Algeria	0.713	Yemen	0.458
Tunisia	0.712	Senegal	0.470
MEDIUM HDI		Mauritania	0.467
Jordan	0.700	Djibouti	0.445
Algeria	0.000	Afghanistan	0.374
Turkmenistan	0.698		

Source: Human Development Report, 2013, UNDP

While it could be argued that the HDI does measure certain aspects of human development, it is not designed to reflect the nuances and workings of a society organized on religious principles. Hendrie Anto (2009) has argued that: "Islamic perspective on economic development is unique and original (and) is totally different from the conventional view: specifically in its fundamental base. The objective of economic development in Islamic perspective is to achieve a comprehensive and holistic welfare both in the world and hereafter (akheerah). It is called *falah*(success). It is true that the existing Human Development Index (HDI) published by UNDP of human development, but is not fully might be the most comprehensive in compatible and sufficient for measuring human development in (an) Islamic perspective" (Hendrie Anto, 2009. Page70).

The author goes on to develop an Islamic Human Development Index (IHD). This new measure is considered within the framework of *Magasid al-Shari'ah* (The purpose of Islamic legislation), which is basically concerned with the promotion of human wellbeing through the preservation of self, wealth, posterity, intellect and faith. (Hendrie Anto, 2009, Page70). This reformulation results in seven additional indices. The Faith Index is shown at Appendix 2 to give the reader an indication of how this concept has been operationalized. The IHD is then constructed and used to assess countries in a league table. The outcome is a slight difference in the ranking, with some countries faring better on this new index as compared with the HDI. Some countries suffer a marked deterioration in rank. (See Appendix 3 for a composite table of country rankings) However, the countries at the top and bottom largely remain the same, although ranked differently.

As an extension of this approach, Batchelor (2006) has developed an Islamic index of Wellbeing. The index claims to be based on the Quran and the Sunnah. The key indices are: religiosity (the percentage of Muslims who perform the obligatory prayers five times daily, men attending mosque at least once per week, fasting for Ramadan and paying zakat) and what is termed Social Interactions (levels of secondary education, good status of women, care of children and the poor). Indices were calculated for 27 of the 50 MMC, in addition to Nigeria. The Gulf States were not included in the survey. The results ranked Malaysia and Indonesia in the top two positions, followed by Senegal, and Palestine. In the next band are MENA countries and then sub-Saharan Africa which overlap. The former communist bloc countries generally had the lowest indices on this calculation.

The measurement of happiness has been a concern for about the past decade, stimulated by developments in happiness measurement in United Arab Emirates, Canada, France and, more recently, the UK. In July 2011 the UN General Assembly passed a resolution inviting member countries to measure the happiness of their people and to use this to help guide their public policies. An independent group of experts have now produced two annual World Happiness Reports (Helliwell et al 2012, 2013) In the 2013 Report, Sachs (2013) argues for a return to virtue ethics in the pursuit of happiness. He compares the values of Buddhism, virtue ethics and Christianity as paths to happiness as compared with consumerism/materialism.

Conclusion

Although there is little evidence that this science has any sound basis or is anything other than a strategy for declining growth, it has become a booming academic discipline around the globe. More than 200 colleges, including the University of Cambridge, either have research institutes or offer courses in so-called positive psychology, which seeks to maximize happiness for individuals and society at large. International conferences are devoted to the subject. There is an increasing acceptance that the welfare of individuals and happiness of people are not solely determined by their material circumstances but also depends heavily on their relative position in society. Happiness and wellbeing is a major concern in Islam. The notion of wellbeing is an integral part of Islamic philosophy and worldview, and this is reflected in a significant body of publications that explore the meaning of happiness in Islam. The paper cannot say if the works that were quoted are representative, but happiness in Islam seems to have a stronger moral and philosophical core than in the Western discourse. This is not surprising, given the role of religion in human society (Lee & Newbury 2005). It is clear that there is a concept of wellbeing in Islam. However, it is not evident that this Islamic concept of wellbeing had been operationalized and measured on an individual level.

There are numerous examples of Western derived SWB assessment being undertaken on Muslim individuals and communities, in the West, South Asia and the Middle East. Given the internal logic of the instruments used, the results are not surprising. The shortcomings of these measures are demonstrated in the research in Lebanon.

Here high levels of SWB were recorded by respondents, while recognizing that they had to leave their own country in their search for economic livelihood and stability. This result is confirmation of Woodlock's observation that "Personal wellbeing is held under homeostatic control and supported by external factors and internal factors..." (Woodlock 2012).

The literature review in this paper only discovered one study that focused on household or family wellbeing (Abdelhak&Sulaiman 2011). The emphasis on self-responsibility and charity as core Islamic values and principles were the more striking feature of this work, along with a clear expression of community (brotherhood) and governmental responsibility.

The expression of individual and family wellbeing that comes across in this work is that of the individual working to support themselves and their family, and that family finances should be managed effectively. The person's duty to enhance his or skills and talents to enhance production and productivity conveys a more sober and less self-obsessed view of wellbeing than is current in Western culture. This is also reflected at a community level, where Zakat, Sadakah, Waqf, and interest free loans are the main forms of assistance to others: and these seem to be more important than social security or other forms of state aid. Zakat is compulsory, and is a way of sharing richness and wealth. Sadakah and Waqf are charitable donation and activities and Muslims are encouraged to be active in these matters as an act of piety and goodness. These acts and the philosophy that underpins them (brotherhood) could be construed as some of the elements of community wellbeing. Government obligations in this model are both supportive of individual family and community wellbeing. These obligations take the shape of transfer payments, facilitating economic growth and measures for equal opportunities: which could also be construed as contributing towards societal wellbeing.

At societal and national level, we see that there have been attempts to redefine the Human Development Index to create an Islamic Human Development Index (I-HDI). Similarly there is the proposed Index of Wellbeing for Muslim Counties. Both these latter, societal level constructs attempt to operationalize and measure indices that reflect Islamic values. I would hypothesize that within the context of a Muslim society or any sub group in a larger society characterized by religious or other philosophy that binds devotees together and offers a distinct and lived world view, the wellbeing framework, in such circumstances, would not be linear, as depicted, but would be multidimensional.

Also, it would be characterized by a greater overlap between the circles representing the four domains of wellbeing. A complete convergence of the identified domains of wellbeing is not possible in practice, but it could be postulated that the ideological and policy goal would be to get a close convergence as possible.

Understanding the wellbeing of Muslims is not really possible without taking into account the overarching nature of Islam as a religion and its centrality to the lives of individual Muslims. However, this is not all there is a huge diversity between Muslim communities and countries that defies the common stereotypes that are pervasive in Western societies (offenhauer.2005).

Better understanding of Islam and Muslim communities means going beyond religion and taking into account measures of human development the geographic spread of Muslims, their distribution in different nation states with differing political governance structures, ethnic and religious compositions, their experience of colonialism natural resources endowment, and the extent of their integration into the global economy.

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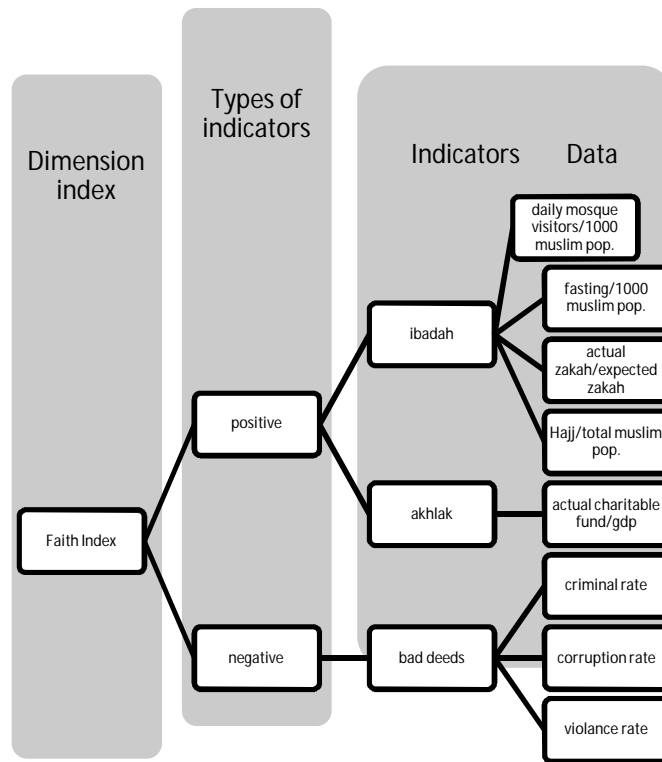
Appendix One: Country Ranking Using Different Measures of Development/ Wellbeing Source: HenrieAnto (2009) Introducing an Islamic Human Development Index (I-HDI to measure Development in OIC Countries Islamic Economic Studies 19, 2, 69-94

Table 2: I EDI Rank, MWI, NWI and HDI Rank

R	I-HDI		HDI		MWI		NWI	
	country	Score	country	score	Country	score	Country	Score
1.	Qatar	0.901355	Brunei	0.894	Brunei	1	U.A.E	0.82723
2.	Brunei	0.89781	Kuwait	0.891	Qatar	0.981833	Qatar	0.820878
3.	U.A.E	0.88187	Qatar	0.875	U.A.E	0.93651	Bahrain	0.809866
4.	Kuwait	0.855005	U.A.E	0.868	Kuwait	0.925858	Brunei	0.795621
5.	Bahrain	0.782965	Bahrain	0.866	Malaysia	0.764257	Oman	0.788721
6.	Malaysia	0.767044	Libya	0.818	K.S.A	0.758503	Jordan	0.786376
7.	K.S.A	0.724958	Oman	0.814	Bahrain	0.756063	Kuwait	0.784151
8.	Jordan	0.694823	K.S.A	0.812	Turkey	0.64301	Malaysia	0.76983
9.	Oman	0.665014	Malaysia	0.811	Jordan	0.60327	Tunisia	0.697579
10.	Turkey	0.657314	Albania	0.801	Suriname	0.59342	K.S.A	0.691414
11.	Tunisia	0.625631	Kazakhstan	0.794	Kazakhstan	0.583764	Lebanon	0.691285
12.	Suriname	0.619049	Turkey	0.775	Somalia	0.569697	Libya	0.684122
13.	Albania	0.603095	Suriname	0.774	Algeria	0.564009	Albania	0.683981
14.	Kazakhstan	0.599304	Jordan	0.773	Maldives	0.562285	Syria	0.680114
15.	Egypt	0.595928	Lebanon	0.772	Indonesia	0.557143	Turkey	0.671618
16.	Algeria	0.589137	Tunisia	0.766	Tunisia	0.553683	Suriname	0.644679
17.	Syria	0.583857	Iran	0.759	Iran	0.552143	Egypt	0.640821
18.	Indonesia	0.582953	Azerbaijan	0.746	Egypt	0.551036	Palestine	0.635967
19.	Iran	0.582867	Maldives	0.741	Oman	0.541308	Morocco	0.618389
20.	Maldives	0.575977	Algeria	0.733	Uzbekistan	0.523411	Kazakhstan	0.614843

21.	Kyrgyz	0.540019	Indonesia	0.728	Albania	0.52221	Tajikistan	0.614618
22.	Uzbekistan	0.536701	Syria	0.724	Kyrgyz	0.490625	Algeria	0.614265
23.	Lebanon	0.536159	Turkmenistan	0.713	Pakistan	0.488705	Iran	0.61359
24.	Tajikistan	0.52468	Egypt	0.708	Syria	0.487601	Indonesia	0.608764
25.	Morocco	0.52072	Uzbekistan	0.702	Gabon	0.476365	Maldives	0.58967
26.	Libya	0.516532	Kyrgyz Rep	0.696	Azerbaijan	0.440974	Kyrgyz	0.589414
27.	Azerbaijan	0.504648	Gabon	0.677	Tajikistan	0.434743	Turkmenistan	0.579118
28.	Gabon	0.502685	Tajikistan	0.673	Morocco	0.42305	Azerbaijan	0.568322
29.	Pakistan	0.46984	Morocco	0.646	Bangladesh	0.415486	Uzbekistan	0.549991
30.	Turkmenistan	0.461411	Comoros	0.561	Yemen	0.398447	Gabon	0.529005
31.	Yemen	0.457055	Pakistan	0.551	Lebanon	0.381032	Yemen	0.515663
32.	Bangladesh	0.427781	Mauritania	0.55	Mauritania	0.355736	Mauritania	0.493849
33.	Mauritania	0.424793	Bangladesh	0.547	Libya	0.348941	Comoros	0.47786
34.	Gambia	0.381978	Cameroon	0.532	Turkmenistan	0.343704	Iraq	0.476109
35.	Comoros	0.376764	Sudan	0.526	Cameroon	0.335652	Uganda	0.47545
36.	Cameroon	0.375637	Djibouti	0.516	Nigeria	0.324763	Senegal	0.466922
37.	Somalia	0.36756	Togo	0.512	Gambia	0.312195	Gambia	0.451761
38.	Nigeria	0.354139	Yemen	0.508	Djibouti	0.30733	Pakistan	0.450975
39.	Uganda	0.353466	Uganda	0.505	Benin	0.306066	Togo	0.449699
40.	Benin	0.352107	Gambia	0.502	Guinea Bissau	0.280695	Bangladesh	0.440077
41.	Sudan	0.340885	Senegal	0.499	Comoros	0.275668	Sudan	0.435772
42.	Togo	0.323894	Nigeria	0.47	Guinea	0.258418	Cameroon	0.415621
43.	Palestine	0.317984	Guinea	0.456	Sudan	0.245999	Benin	0.398149
44.	Senegal	0.310874	Benin	0.437	Burkina Faso	0.231522	Nigeria	0.383515
45.	Guinea	0.303731	Cote D'Ivoire	0.432	Uganda	0.231482	Guinea	0.349044
46.	Djibouti	0.301988	Chad	0.388	Mali	0.215189	Burkina Faso	0.343148
47.	Guinea Bissau	0.294143	Mozambique	0.384	Togo	0.198088	Mali	0.341798
48.	Burkina Faso	0.287335	Mali	0.38	Cote d'Ivoire	0.178459	Mozambique	0.323634
49.	Mali	0.278494	Guinea Bissau	0.374	Senegal	0.154826	Niger	0.318882
50.	Iraq	0.238055	Niger	0.374	Niger	0.102357	Guinea Bissau	0.307591
51.	Cote d'Ivoire	0.23154	Burkina Faso	0.37	Chad	0.067352	Djibouti	0.296646
52.	Niger	0.21062	Sierra Leone	0.336	Sierra Leone	0.047931	Chad	0.294788
53.	Mozambique	0.184152	Iraq		Mozambique	0.04467	Cote D'Ivoire	0.28462
54.	Chad	0.18107	Palestine		Iraq		Sierra Leone	0.238356
55.	Sierra Leone	0.143143	Somalia		Palestine		Somalia	0.165422

Source: HDR 2007, WDR 2007, IDB 2007, calculated



MB Hendrie Anto: Human Development Index 79
Figure 1

Appendix 2: The Faith Index

Source: HenrieAnto (2009) Introducing an Islamic Human Development Index (I-HD to Measure Development in OIC Countries Islamic Economic Studies 19, 2, 69-94



Appendix Three: Geographic distribution of the World's Muslim population

Source: http://wikimedia.org/wikipediacommons88d/Madhhab_Map2.png