

## Co-Investigator Project Report

Anver Emon

**Project Title:** *The Muslim male scholar as feminist authority*

### **1. Research Work completed**

During the course of the research stipend period, I hired two JD students at the University of Toronto Faculty of Law, Kenneth Raddatz and Jenna Preston. Kenneth worked for me during the academic year 2010-2011, and Jenna worked for me during the summer of 2011. Both were tasked to research issues related to “the crisis of authority in Islam”. That crisis has created a vacuum in authority, raising important questions about who can and does “speak for Islam”. In the case of gender reform movements, those whose voices are most often heard are men, which raises, on the surface, an ironic turn of events. Below the surface, however, is a more interesting development -- a turn to the past as way toward the future. The turn to the past is not unique in the Islamic context. It is part and parcel of the Wahhabi movement of Saudi Arabia. Notably, it remains an important factor in considering who ‘speaks for Islam’ in terms of two key concepts - legitimacy and authenticity. The student researchers did considerable research into the voices of contemporary Islam and Islamic law, canvassing both men and women who claim to ‘speak for Islam’, and fill the void of authority that seems to prevail in this historical moment. Investigating individuals, both domestic and international, the student researchers provided important research memos, bibliography, and discussion for the forthcoming article. The article itself has been accepted to be part of a panel discussion at the Middle East Studies Association annual meeting in December 2011 in Washington, D.C.