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Askar:

Militarism, Policing and Somali Refugees

A dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction of the requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

in

Ethnic Studies

by

Mohamed Abumaye

Committee in charge:

Professor Yen Le Espiritu, Chair
Professor Kirstie Dorr
Professor Ivan Evans
Professor Dayo Gore
Professor Daphne Taylor-Garcia

2017

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Chair

University of California, San Diego

2017

DEDICATION

For Baba and Hoyo, Waxaca ku samasa. Ani waku jacelka.

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VITA

2010	B.A., Sociology, University of Illinois
2011	M.A., African Studies, University of Illinois
2014	M.A., Ethnic Studies, University of California, San Diego
2016	UCHRI Fellowship, University of California Irvine
2017	Ph.D., Ethnic Studies, University of California, San Diego

FIELDS OF STUDY

Sociology, Critical Refugee Studies; U.S. Imperialism, Black Studies,
Somali Studies

ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

Askar:

Militarism, Policing and Somali Refugees

by

Mohamed Abumaye

Doctor of Philosophy in Ethnic Studies

University of California, San Diego, 2017

Professor Yen Le Espiritu, Chair

My dissertation examines the intersections between policing and militarism through centering Somali refugee experience with state violence. I argue that the intersections between the police and military are made visible through the Somali experience with police violence in San Diego. As a theoretical rubric for this project, I draw from the fields of Black Studies, Critical Refugee Studies and Critical Muslim Studies. While the police and military are depicted as separate in the fields of Political Science and Criminology, my project spotlights the convergence between the

police and military. During my research, I discovered that the SDPD received a tank from the U.S. military. I traced the trajectory of this tank through the database “Detroit Free Press” and uncovered that it had been deployed in Afghanistan in 2012, then transferred to Camp Pendleton in 2014, and finally given to the SDPD in 2015. I utilize this dramatic piece of evidence to show the rate and scale of police militarization in San Diego.

My investigation builds off a critical reading of police archives and an ethnography of the people most effected by police violence in San Diego, namely Somali refugees. This project, the first of its kind, exposes the links between U.S. military violence abroad and domestic police violence by centering refugee narratives that detail militarized violence. In closing, I illuminate the increasingly intimate relationship between the police and military in our contemporary security state.

INTRODUCTION

I chose the Somali word Askar as the title for this dissertation, because of its dual meaning. Askar translates into police and soldier, because in Somali linguistic epistemology there is no distinction made between the two. A major theme of this dissertation is investigating the intersection between militarism and policing, by centering Somali refugee experiences. Therefore, I wanted to use a Somali word that fully captures the increasing intimacy between the military and police in our contemporary security state. To analyze the emergence of militarism in Somalia, I begin with recent data about the Somali diaspora.

There are more Somalis living in the diaspora than in the country of Somalia.¹ How did this happen? What caused a significant portion of the population to leave the country? I grapple with these questions throughout this dissertation. In doing so, I hope to find an unconventional answer to these questions, one that does not reduce Somali refugee migration to the after effects of tribal warfare. In order to accomplish this task, I will put into conversation three seemingly unrelated fields of study: Black Studies, Immigration/refugee Studies, and Post-Colonial Studies. These fields will be interwoven by a guiding question: Why are Somali refugees in the U.S. of all places? I answer this question through an analysis of U.S. imperialism. My central thesis is that U.S. imperialism is the condition of possibility for Somali refugee migration. Unlike other immigration scholarship that is concerned with immigrant experiences or the bureaucratic

¹ Data is from the book *The Path of Somali Refugees into Exile*

process of refugee resettlement, I interrogate the migration of Somali refugees by situating the longue duree of U.S. imperialism in Somalia. This project is significant because no other work on Somali refugees critically engages the central role that U.S. militarism plays in Somali refugee life. This epistemological blindness can be explained in part by the separation of academic disciplines. The Somali Civil War is studied primarily by political scientists, while the Somali refugee migration is examined largely by anthropologists and sociologists.

I address the gap in these literatures by situating Somali refugee migration within the context of the 1993 U.S. military invasion of Somalia. I aim to show that wherever the U.S. military goes, refugees follow in the wake of American imperial violence. I trace this imperial violence because U.S. imperialism is still a dominant force in Somalia today. Because of the historical and contemporary relevance of U.S. imperialism to the Somali refugee condition, I hope to reveal that the U.S. crossed the borders of Somalia long before Somalis crossed the U.S. border. The intertwined nature of U.S. militarism and refugee migration is pronounced if you looked at the relationship between refugees in San Diego and U.S. militarism. Three of the largest refugee groups in San Diego—Iraqi, Somali, and Vietnamese—found themselves in San Diego precisely because of U.S. military interventions abroad.² Vietnamese and other Southeast Asian refugees were the first group of refugees to arrive to San Diego after the withdrawal of U.S. troops from Vietnam.³ According to the Federal Office of Refugee Resettlement Data System,

² See “Total Refugee Arrivals to California By Country of Origin Federal Fiscal Years 1983 through 2015” by California Department of Social Services, Refugee Programs Bureau

³ KPBS article by Megan Burks titled “How The Fall Of Saigon Made San Diego A Refugee Hub” examines the routes that Vietnamese refugees took from Camp Pendleton to settling in San Diego. <http://www.kpbs.org/news/2015/apr/24/how-fall-saigon-made-san-diego-refugee-hub/>

163,344 Vietnamese refugees have been resettled to California since 1982.⁴ The second group to arrive in San Diego were Somali refugees, whose presence has been precipitated by the 1993 U.S. military invasion of Somalia.⁵ The U.S. lost the war in 1994 and was heavily criticized, both domestically and internationally, for its failed humanitarian intervention in Somalia.⁶ To resuscitate its image as a world leader, the U.S. began accepting Somali refugees en masse.⁷ This shift in policy, from a military invasion of Somalia in 1993 to the resettlement of Somali refugees in the aftermath, highlights the relationship between domestic and foreign U.S. policies, where the punitive arm of the state—the military and the police—and the welfare arm of the state—the social services—reinforce and legitimize state power.⁸ The violent military arm of the state and the welfare arm of the state merged in the 1993 humanitarian-military operation in Somalia named the “Operation Restore Hope”.⁹

As critical refugee studies scholars have established, refugees are not simply passive recipients of aid; they perform the ideological labor of reinforcing the narrative of U.S. exceptionalism.¹⁰ By resettling refugees from Somalia, the U.S. failed war in Somalia can be forgotten and the U.S. can cleanse itself of the responsibility of initiating the Civil War in the first place. As of this writing, there are sixty-five million refugees

⁴ See “Total Refugee Arrivals to California By Country of Origin Federal Fiscal Years 1983 through 2015” by California Department of Social Services, Refugee Programs Bureau

⁵ See “Somali Social Justice struggle in the U.S.: A Historical Analysis” by Jesse Mills

⁶ See “How Public Opinion Constrains the Use of Force: The Case of Operation Restore Hope” By Mathew Baum which explains the series of military failures that led to the U.S. withdrawal of Somalia

⁷ *Ibid.*, 15.

⁸ See Punishing the Poor: The Neoliberal Government of Social Insecurity by Loic Wacquant

⁹ See Humanitarian Violence: The U.S. Deployment of Diversity by Neda Atanasoski

¹⁰ Yen Le Espiritu in the Body Counts argues that American Exceptionalism is defined by the belief that America is most just and racially inclusive nation on the earth and is therefore morally superior to all other nations.

displaced throughout the world.¹¹ Many of these refugees are products of imperial wars initiated by the superpowers of Russia, the U.S., and Britain. Because of these imperial wars, refugees constitute one of the most serious issues of the 21st century, or more accurately *militarism* constitutes one of the most serious threats to the future of humanity.

Black immigrants are the fastest growing sub-group of the black population in the United States.¹² In the 1990's, stateless people from Sudan, Ethiopia, and Somalia encompassed the largest wave of African immigrants to the United States. According to the *American Community Survey Briefs*, "about three-fourths of the foreign-born population from Africa came to live in the United States after 1990."¹³ This wave of black refugees underscores black people's diasporic relationship to U.S. imperialism. Furthermore, Somali refugee experiences shows that the relationship between the United States and Africa is not only governed by slavery, but also by U.S. imperialism and colonialism. U.S. imperialism not only produced the conditions of possibility for the displacement and migration of Somali refugees, but is also steadily becoming a powerful force on the African continent. U.S. military bases continue to expand into the African continent, to create what some refer to as the "Second Scramble for Africa."¹⁴ In short, U.S. military intervention directly influenced the migration of black refugees in the 1990's.¹⁵

¹¹ See U.N. Report titled "Global Trends Forced Displacement in 2015"

¹² See Pew Research database: <http://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2017/02/14/african-immigrant-population-in-u-s-steadily-climbs/>

¹³ The survey brief titled "The Foreign-Born Population From Africa: 2008–2012" by Christine P. Gambino

¹⁴ Huffington Post article by Jason Mcgue titled "The Second Scramble for Africa" highlights how Africa's rich natural resources are being exploited by American and European transnational corporations. http://www.huffingtonpost.com/jason-mccue/the-second-scramble-for-africa_b_8216990.html

¹⁵ See "The Foreign-Born Population From Africa: 2008–2012" by Christine P. Gambino

Literature Review

This project differs from traditional scholarship on Somali refugees because I highlight the insidious nature of U.S. border crossing, rather than celebrating the U.S. as a nation that rescues refugees. The rescue narrative does the ideological labor of spatializing suffering and violence to the global South, in order to justify Western intervention. In the field of anthropology, scholars such as Catherine Besteman, I.M. Lewis, Peter Little, Lee Casenelli, among others, seldom highlight the central role that U.S. imperialism plays in Somali politics, history, and migration. As an example, in “Somali Bantus in a State of Refuge,” Somali expert Catherine Besteman depicts Somali Bantu refugees as imbricated in a web of unspeakable suffering, using phrases such as the “collapse of Somalia’s government,” “ravaged farming villages,” “rape, murder, pillage, torture, kidnapping, and extortion in an onslaught of violence” (12). Besteman’s description invokes the colonial discourse of Africa as a space of violence, sidestepping the steep tolls of European colonialism and imperialism. In another passage, Besteman evokes developmental theory in her description of Somali Bantus: “Because of their *illiteracy*, lack of education, rural background, large families, and history of persecution, Somali Bantus were widely described as particularly needy and unprepared for modern life” (Emphasis mine) (12). Besteman’s anthropological approach thus employs the discourse of savagery, which produces an epistemological distance from the pre-modern other and the modern self. Drawing on the works of critical refugee studies scholars such as Yen Le Espiritu and Mimi Nguyen, my work disrupts whiteness by showing that U.S. imperialism in Somalia has produced the conditions of possibility for refugee flight. I conceptualize the refugee as an epistemologically disruptive figure that denaturalizes

U.S. militarism by exposing the inherent violence of U.S. imperialism.

I am invested in interrogating the racialization of knowledge and the politics of knowledge production. I critique the power white Western academics have in shaping the discourse on Somali refugees, and expose the inherently violating nature of research, and the uneven power relations between the researcher and the people under study. These uneven power relationships, which are conditioned by colonialism, make it possible for anthropologists to dominate scholarship on Somali refugees. These anthropologists fuel anti-Somali narratives, legitimize U.S. imperialism, and invade Somali people's homes, restaurants, and community centers.¹⁶ To understand how scholarship on Somalis got this way, we need to trace the history of the field of Somali studies. Anthropologist I.M. Lewis is considered the founder of the field of Somali studies. He was hired by the British colonial government in 1950 to document the behaviors of Somali natives, in order to aid the British military in Somalia. As such, Lewis explicitly helped the British government to expand its rule over Somalia. After Somalia gained independence in 1960, Lewis returned to Oxford where he established the field of Somali Studies. Lewis's colonial legacy highlights the imperialism of knowledge production, and the intimate relationship between militarism and knowledge. To this day, Lewis remains a powerful gatekeeper for scholars studying Somalia and Somali people. His post-colonial hegemony is indicative of the fact that much of the scholarship about Somalia is located in Britain, the former colonial power.

Clans in Somalia are not static but are rather colonial constructs, which Lewis

¹⁶ By these anthropologists I am referring to Catherine Besteman, and Peter Little

helped develop for the British colonial government. He argues in his seminal text *Pastoral Democracy* that clan is the singular mode of Somali social organization. His clan centered analysis of Somali life persists in scholarship about Somalis to this day. As an example, a recent book by Mark Bradbury, titled *Becoming Somaliland*, follows Lewis' footsteps by claiming that clan organizes the entire Somali political system. This reductive description of clan is in contradiction with the historical fluidity of clan in Somali life. Before British colonial rule in 1840, clan was one of many forms of Somali social organization (Ahmed, 34). Somalis have also historically organized themselves by language, region, religion, educational attainment, gender and, race. Based on Lewis's advice, the British colonial government created customary laws that was implemented through clan. In *Citizen and Subject*, Mahmood Mandani theorizes the ways in which British colonialism in East Africa codified tradition as a form of law for indigenous people. Indigenous tradition thus became the British colonial regime's interpretation of how natives organized themselves, rather than reflecting the lived reality of native life. Clan is one such form of native social organization that historically emerged from the colonial imaginary, but that the colonial powers made into reality. Through this bifurcated legal system, one for the British and one for Somalis, clan was transformed from a loose form of organization to an immutable and central mode of organization. Clan was a primary vehicle of violence during the 1990 Somali Civil war, and can be traced to the legacy of Lewis and colonial knowledge production.

I argue that Lewis, Besteman and other anthropologists are as much implicated in perpetuating the Somali Civil War as any military general by producing scholarship that reifies Somalis as clannish people. Clan is the dominant mode through which scholars

analyze the Somali civil war, and the way U.S. imperialism in Somalia is legitimated as a necessary good. Lidwien Kaptejin explains this obsession with clans in the article, “I.M. Lewis and Somali Clanship: A Critique”: “the obsessive focus on clan at the expense of other solidarities and sociopolitical arrangements and institutions –worked to form a colonial consensus between and among rulers and subjects- is a profound colonial one and cannot be abstracted from the context of colonial rule”(68). Kaptejin points attention to the importance of colonialism in shaping knowledge. Building off Kaptejin’s incisive analysis of clan, I argue that clan discourse persists because the U.S. and Britain dominate scholarship on Somalis. These American and British anthropologists willfully ignore scholarship from Somalia, and search instead for pre-modern African tribes. Yet, Somalis who produce scholarship have to engage these British and American scholars to gain legitimacy; yet there is no reciprocity of knowledge in the scholarship about Somalia. I contend that this unidirectional exchange of knowledge reflects the imperialism of knowledge production. This imperial project of knowledge production constructs Somalia and Somali refugee as the raw materials from which knowledge is excavated for the global north. In order to disrupt this trend, I will center Somali refugees as knowledge producers and intellectuals in my dissertation project, by citing Somali scholars, activists, and poets. The idea that Somali refugees can be knowledge producers disrupts what is conventionally thought of as knowledge.¹⁷ In so doing, I hope to show the danger that the refugee as intellectual poses to American imperialism.

¹⁷ Subjugated Knowledge is a term from Michel Foucault’s article “Power/Knowledge” that refers to forms of knowledge delegitimized by academics and the intellectual elite

Methodology

Because of my desire to center Somali refugees as knowledge producers, I have to be creative about my use of methods. I center Somali refugees as knowledge producers by interweaving ethnography with the archive, oral histories with a reading of cultural texts. My selection of methods is guided by my research questions as well as my political and ethnical commitments to Somali refugees. I am interested in the historical longue duree of U.S. imperialism in Somalia, and find archival methods useful for centering the history of the present. Unlike most anthropological literature on Somali refugees that relegates Somali history to background information, I take seriously the importance of Somali history for contextualizing U.S. imperialism and refugee flight. I argue that the U.S. 1993 military invasion of Somalia—dubbed Operation Restore Hope—is not a past event but continues to structure the destiny of Somalia, and the life chances of Somali refugees.

While archival work on Somali refugees provides an important historical context, the agency of Somali refugees is obscured in the state mediated archives. Juxtaposing ethnographic with archive methods produces a more nuanced picture of state violence, and Somali resistance to state violence. I take seriously the idea that Somali refugees are political agents and not mere victims of imperial violence. Ethnography, and in particular participant observation calls attention to the ways in which Somali refugees alter the dynamics of U.S. imperialism, and produce alternative realities than the one prescribed by U.S. Empire. A site in which these alternative realities are being imagined and lived is the Somali Youth League of San Diego. This Somali refugee activist group has been creatively articulating a world in which freedom is possible for Somalis. During my two

years working with the Somali Youth League, I have noted the transnational nature of their work: they organize against U.S. imperialism in Somalia, as well as the exploitation of Somalis in San Diego. The group consists mostly of young Somali refugees. I conducted a series of unstructured interviews with members of the Somali Youth League. I interviewed a total of thirty-five Somali refugees in City Heights, San Diego. I used pseudonyms to protect the anonymity of the people I have interviewed throughout this dissertation. In addition to my role as a researcher, I am also an active member of SYL.

Lewis Gordon, in *What Fanon Said*, asks, “How many biographies of Frederick Douglass, W. E. B. Du Bois, and Fanon do we need before it is recognized that they also produced ideas? It is as if to say that white thinkers provide theory and black thinkers providing experience for which all seek explanatory force from the former” (77). Gordon is challenging the ways in which objective knowledge is racialized as white and subjective experience as Black. I intend to inverse this relationship in my project, by highlighting the role that the biography of prominent white scholars like I.M. Lewis plays in the type of scholarship they produce. By doing so, I hope to reverse the anthropological gaze by anthropologizing the anthropologist. In a 1999 interview with Lewis, Charles Gesheker asked Lewis how he came to be interested in Somalia as a field site. Lewis responded in the following way: “Oh, yes, of course. I wasn’t really, as a young enthusiastic student of social anthropology, in the market for resisting. I was in the market looking for fields that were interesting, exciting, and relatively *unexplored* from the point of view of the subject of social anthropology, which was the case with the Somali scene” (Emphasis mine) (55). In his candid response, we can see that Lewis was casually seeking an unexplored terrain of knowledge to colonize. He can assert that he

was the first to discover knowledge about Somalis because under the logic of colonialism, Somalis have no claim to knowledge; they can only claim ownership over experience. Contemporary anthropologists like Catherine Besteman and Peter Little have continued to advance this discourse: that Somalis only produce experiential knowledge.

This colonization of knowledge begs the question, who owns knowledge? By posing this question we can arrive at the more interesting question, whose knowledge matters? I argue that in this neo-colonial moment, the knowledge of white anthropologists has continued to matter more than the knowledge Somalis produce. Therefore, knowledge has become the new frontier, paved by the manifest destiny of white anthropologists. It is in the context of this ongoing colonization of knowledge, that there is a political and epistemological urgency to center Somali refugees as knowledge producers.

Chapter One: Colonialism: Origin of U.S. Militarism in Somalia

Scholarship on Somali refugees often paints the Somali civil war as primordial clan animosity. A good example of this kind of framework is Mark Bradbury's book *Becoming Somaliland*. In this text Bradbury explains the emergence of Somaliland as an independent nation in 2007, without investigating the imperial and colonial history that shaped the political impetus behind its cessation. I critique this kind of discourse by exposing the Janus-faced nature of U.S imperialism. One face is humanitarian and abhors violence; the other is a militarized empire that only knows naked violence. Operations Restore Hope, the 1993 humanitarian/military operation in Somalia, reveals both faces of U.S. Empire.

I begin this chapter with the colonization of Somalia by British Colonial powers which, I argue, established the conditions of possibility for U.S. imperialism. Although Somalia was colonized by the French, the Italians and the British, I focus on British colonialism because it had the most significant effect on the development of the Somali state.¹⁸ The independent Republic of Somalia modeled the British parliament and court system as its guiding state structure.¹⁹ Three historical epochs have established the conditions that led to the outbreak of the Somali Civil War: The first is the colonial period from 1884 to 1960;²⁰ the second epoch is the Cold War period which encompassed the entirety of the Siad Barre dictatorship, and lasted from 1970-1990;²¹ and the final epoch is the period of heightened U.S. imperialism, from 1990 to the present. I argue that it is this layered history—European colonialism and U.S. imperialism—that has produced the Somali “refugee crisis.” This chapter examines Somali history not as an accumulation of events, but rather as a circulation of ideas. To understand the production of colonial racial knowledge of Somali and its people, I will analyze British colonial documents, newspaper articles about the Somali Civil War, and anthropological research on Somali people.

Chapter Two: From the Refugee Camp to City Heights: The Continuity of State Violence

Somali refugees generally do not arrive to the U.S. directly from Somalia, but

¹⁸ See A Modern History of the Somali: Nation and State in the Horn of Africa by I.M. Lewis

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 156.

²⁰ Ali Jamale Ahmed in the text the Invention of Somalia explains the role of British Colonial policy in the development of Somali clans.

²¹ See “From Peace-Keeping to Peace Enforcement: The Somalia Precedent” by Patrick Gilkes

spend years in a second city of resettlement before reaching their final city of resettlement.²² For many refugees, the refugee camp and Somalia are not discrete spaces, but often interconnected spaces where family, politics, and memories coalesce. In this dissertation, I utilize a transnational Ethnic Studies approach that pushes against the obsessive focus on Somalia as a failed state by political scientists, on the Dadaab refugee camp as a space of refugee suffering by anthropologists, and on the refugees' assimilation problems by sociologists.²³ To connect Dadaab and City Heights, I privilege the *refugee repertoires* that refugees bring with them from Dadaab.²⁴ These repertoires include such practices as food sharing, communal housing, and translation services. The driving thesis of this chapter is that the refugee camp and inner-city are carceral spaces that utilize technologies of policing and surveillance as a way to govern the vulnerable, but that refugees also develop counter-technologies to survive and even thrive in these carceral spaces.

What makes San Diego a unique site of study is its dual role as the largest refugee receiving city in California and as a military epicenter.²⁵ The city is a local manifestation of the global relationship between militarism and refugees. Focusing on the period of 1993-2001, I argue that state violence followed Somali refugees from their first city of resettlement in Dadaab, Kenya to City Heights, San Diego. I begin with 1993 because this is the year that large numbers of Somali refugees first entered the United States.²⁶ I

²² See Transnational Nomads. How Somalis cope with refugee life in the Dadaab camps of Kenya by Cindy Horst

²³ See Somalia: Economy without State by Peter Little

²⁴ See "The Refugee Repertoire: Performing and Staging the Postmemories of Violence" by Long Bui

²⁵ See California Department of Social Services Database:

<http://www.cdss.ca.gov/inforesources/Refugees/Reports-and-Data/Arrivals-Data>

²⁶ A San Diego tribune newspaper article from 1993 titled "New group of refugees find safe haven here" by John Wilkins details a story about the first group of Somali refugees to come to San Diego. He states that

engage this moment by utilizing refugee oral histories, newspaper articles, and U.N. and police documents. I also begin with 1993 because it represents the nexus of the War on Drugs and conservative attacks on welfare--the two processes that have negatively impacted Somali refugees' life chances. A goal of this chapter is to disrupt the ideological framework of the U.S. rescue narrative and more broadly the narrative of progress.

Chapter Three: The War on Drugs, Militarized Police, and Blackness

Focusing on the experiences of Somali refugees with U.S. racialized state violence, this chapter asks how the San Diego Police Department became one of the most militarized police forces in the country and how Somali refugee experience sheds light on this militarization. I focus on San Diego because the city is a major producer of military research and equipment via its vast network of universities, tech companies, and private contractors;²⁷ it is also a major refugee-receiving city. I examine how anti-black racism serves as a rationale for the mobilization of the military and the police against Somali refugees, and how the police legitimize its violence against the refugees through the rhetoric of law and order. What distinguishes my project from other works on police is that I focus on the militarized aspects of policing, and I do so with an emphasis on the refugee. Due to the proximity of Marine Corps Base Camp Pendleton, the San Diego Police Department and the military have had a deep and longstanding relationship. New

"It's become one recently for dozens of other Somalis, too -- more than 200 in September alone -- as refugees stream out of the ravaged east African country. The community here, now topping an estimated 1,000 people, has grown so much over the summer that immigration officials believe it is one of the largest in the nation."

²⁷ See article "San Diego, Guardian of the American Pacific"

recruits to the San Diego police train and learn military tactics at Camp Pendleton.²⁸ As a result of this relationship, San Diego, of all the major cities in the country, is a unique site for the study of police militarization.

Chapter Four: Anti-Blackness, Islamophobia and The War on Terror

In this chapter, I borrow from Nadera Shalhoub-Kevorkian the concept of countering counter-terrorism.²⁹ My methodological goal in this chapter is to counter counter-terrorism discourse. I do this by critiquing scholarship from the field of Terrorism Studies. I show how this scholarship racializes terrorism as Muslim, and the material effect this racialization has on Somali refugees. In addition to Terrorism Studies scholarship, I also interrogate FBI documents that contain information about Somali terrorism. Moreover, I will also look at the ways in which the War on Terror and Islamophobia effects Somalis domestically and in the country of Somalia. I argue that the police violence against Somalis in San Diego is informed by the drone violence against Somalis in Somalia. The figure of Al-Shabab, a Somali terrorist organization that operates in Mogadishu, is utilized as a way for police to profile Somalis in San Diego. Therefore counter-terrorism does the work of connecting the over here with the over there, the global and the local. Somali youth also connect the local and the global as a method of survival because while the U.S. military is killing their families in Somalia the police is assaulting them in San Diego.

²⁸ A San Diego police recruiting website named Recruit Military shows the police train at Camp Penelton. <http://search-and-employ.com/continue-to-serve-our-beloved-country-san-diego-police-department/>

²⁹ See “Criminalizing Pain and the Political Work of Suffering: The Case of Palestinian ‘Infiltrators’” by Nadera Shalhoub-Kevorkian

Chapter One:

Colonialism: Origin of U.S. Militarism in Somalia

Introduction

In 1993, then-President Bill Clinton delivered a speech about the deployment of American troops to Somalia. Clinton began the speech with this statement “We started this mission for the right reasons and we're going to finish it in the right way. In a sense, we came to Somalia to rescue innocent people in a burning house. We've nearly put the fire out, but some smoldering embers remain. If we leave them now, those embers will reignite into flames and people will die again.”³⁰ I begin with Clinton’s speech to pose this question: How can the U.S. claim to save Somalis from a burning house if it had participated in the burning of the house in the first place? The burning house is an apt analogy to the series of historical events that led to the collapse of the Somali state and the subsequent flight of close to a million displaced Somali refugees.³¹

To denaturalize the collapse of the Somali state, I begin with the colonization of Somalia by British Colonial powers which, I argue, established the conditions of possibility for U.S. imperialism. Although Somalia was colonized by the French, the Italians and the British, I focus on British colonialism because it had the most significant effect on the development of the Somali state.³² The independent Republic of Somalia

³⁰ <http://www.nytimes.com/1993/10/08/world/somalia-mission-clinton-s-words-somalia-responsibilities-american-leadership.html?pagewanted=all>

³¹ See Pew Research Center that lists the number of Somali refugees at 1.1 million:

<http://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2016/06/01/5-facts-about-the-global-somali-diaspora/>

³² See [A Modern History of the Somali: Nation and State in the Horn of Africa](#) by I.M. Lewis

modeled the British parliament and court system as its guiding state structure.³³

Three historical epochs have established the conditions that led to the outbreak of the Somali Civil War: The first is the colonial period from 1884 to 1960,³⁴ the second epoch is the Cold War period which encompassed the entirety of the Siad Barre dictatorship, and lasted from 1970-1990,³⁵ and the he final epoch is the period of heightened U.S. imperialism, from 1990 to the present. I argue that it is this layered history—European colonialism and U.S. imperialism—that has produced the Somali “refugee crisis.” This chapter examines Somali history not as an accumulation of events, but rather as a circulation of ideas. To understand the production of colonial racial knowledge of Somali and its people, I will analyze British colonial documents, newspaper articles about the Somali Civil War, and anthropological research on Somali people.

British Colonialism:1884-1960

British Colonialism in Somalia was made possible by the 1884 Berlin conference in which the borders of the African continent were drawn and codified by the colonial powers. According to Wang Shih-Tsung: “the Berlin Conference took place from 15 November 1884 to 26 February 1885 involving 14 countries - roughly all the states of Europe except Switzerland, along with Turkey and the United States - following intensified colonial rivalries in West Africa. Called by Bismarck in collaboration with the French Government, the meeting, held in the same rooms in which the Congress of 1878

³³ Ibid.,156.

³⁴ Ali Jamale Ahmed in the text the Invention of Somalia explains the role of British Colonial policy in the development of Somali clans.

³⁵ See “From Peace-Keeping to Peace Enforcement: The Somalia Precedent” by Patrick Gilkes

sat.”³⁶ Moreover, according to the language of the treaty signed at the conference titled “General Act of the Berlin Conference on West Africa, 26 February 1885”:³⁷

All the Powers exercising sovereign rights or influence in the aforesaid territories bind themselves to watch over the preservation of the native tribes, and to care for the improvement of the conditions of their moral and material well-being, and to help in suppressing slavery, and especially the slave trade. They shall, without distinction of creed or nation, protect and favour all religious, scientific or charitable institutions and undertakings created and organized for the above ends, or which aim at instructing the natives and bringing home to them the blessings of civilization.

Rather than the “material well-being of native tribes”, the purported goals of the Berlin Conference was to prevent conflict between the colonial powers over occupation of African lands.³⁸ In this all white conference that had no African representatives, Europeans divided Somalia into three distinct regions.³⁹ Britain legally stole northern Somalia, Italy violently possessed southern Somalia, and France with little fanfare captured northeast Somalia.⁴⁰ French Somaliland is now the independent country of Djibouti, whereas Italian and British Somaliland united to make the country of Somalia in 1960. In 2008 northern Somalia, which used to be British Somaliland, ceded to form its own independent country of Somaliland. Somalia today is divided into three countries (Somaliland, Somalia, and Djibouti), replicating exactly the colonial territories of British Somaliland, Italian Somaliland, and French Somaliland.⁴¹ I will focus on British Colonialism, because British colonialism preceded French and Italian colonialism and

³⁶ See The Conference of Berlin and British 'New' Imperialism, 1884-85

³⁷ See “General Act of the Berlin Conference on West Africa, 26 February 1885”

³⁸ See “The Centennial of the West African Conference of Berlin, 1884-1885” by George Shepperson

³⁹ See A Modern History of the Somali: Nation and State in the Horn of Africa by I.M. Lewis

⁴⁰ See The Invention of Somalia Ali Jimale Ahmed

⁴¹ “On the Somalia Dilemma: Adding Layers of Complexity to an Already Complex Emergency” by Peter Little

most effected the structure of the post-colonial Somali state.⁴²

British Somaliland assumed the form of indirect colonial rule, which meant that the region retained its own indigenous form of government but was overseen by British officials. The British entered Somalia in 1890,⁴³ with primary interest in the Somali coast, which is located on the Red Sea.⁴⁴ Control of the Somali coast allowed the British to station trading ships and naval fleets directly on the Red Sea. By securing the Somali coast, the British could access trade between the Middle East, North Africa, and Sub-Saharan Africa.⁴⁵ In the process, British colonial rule destroyed much of the established trade routes in pre-colonial Somalia.⁴⁶ As a result, in the 1950's British colonial administrators were anxious that Somali independence would bring about the loss of their economic interest in the region.⁴⁷ The colonial administrators wanted to delay independence long enough to install loyal natives to high levels in the new government.⁴⁸ Before they left in 1959, administrators destroyed vital infrastructure such as roads so that the new government would not be able run effectively.⁴⁹

The colonial powers spent their last moments in 1959 preparing Somalia for economic dependency and for a new form of imperialism named *development*.⁵⁰ As the colonial powers began the slow process of withdrawing from Somalia, they hatched plans to consolidate power in Somalia by allying with other nations that had imperial interests.

⁴² Ibid.,34.

⁴³ See A Modern History of the Somali: Nation and State in the Horn of Africa

⁴⁴ Ibid.,55.

⁴⁵ Ibid.,123.

⁴⁶ See A Modern History of the Somali: Nation and State in the Horn of Africa

⁴⁷ Ibid.,34.

⁴⁸ See British Colonial document titled "Policy in the Somaliland Protectorate" in 1960.

⁴⁹ Ibid.,26.

⁵⁰ Ibid.,12

The British planned to invite the U.S. to become a stakeholder in Somalia, along with Italy and France. A secret document by a British colonial administrator titled “Notes by Secretary of Foreign Affairs” in May 1960, just months before Somali independence, highlights a clear maneuver to lay the framework for British influence in Somalia.⁵¹ As British Colonial Secretary Sylwyn Loyd states:

I think we are generally agreed that we would not want to admit to the Commonwealth the new Somali Republic which will come into being on 1st July when Somaliland and Somalia unite. The new state will be a pensioner for many years, depending upon financial and technical aid from the Americans and Italians as well as from ourselves. The trend of discussion at the Commonwealth Prime Ministers Conference was against the granting of membership to poor, sparsely populated and backward territories such as the Somali Republic is bound to be, moreover, in this case the granting of the commonwealth membership would do much harm to our relations with the Ethiopians, the French and the Italians have made it clear that in these circumstances Italian aid would cease altogether. (66)

In this official statement, Somalis were imagined as a backwards people who did not deserve full inclusion into the British Commonwealth. British colonial officials believed the inclusion of Somalis into the commonwealth would dilute the greatness of the British empire, by adding into its fold a “backward territor[y].” The British colonial government was more than comfortable maintaining Somalia as a colony and exploiting its resources, so long as Somalis did not follow the resources back to Britain. Evident in this passage is the ways in which colonial powers rationalized colonial rule and the simultaneous inclusion and rejection of the colonized other from civilization. Although Somalia was denied membership in the British Commonwealth, it continued to be exploited by the British long after the end of formal colonialism in 1960.

⁵¹ See “Notes by Secretary of Foreign Affairs” from the British National Archives

Colonialism and the Production of Racial Knowledge: Primitivism and Clan

Divisions

As postcolonial theorists have repeatedly shown, colonialism is not only about economic acquisition.⁵² It is also a racial project, supported by a colonial production of knowledge that designates the colonized country and its people as naturally inferior, dependent and subordinate. In order to justify colonial rule in Somalia, the British imposed a ban on many of the books that were produced by Somali scholars, most of which were written in Arabic.⁵³ British colonial officials then portrayed Somalia as largely an oral society, devoid of any development of the written word, thus constructing them as a pre-civilized society.⁵⁴ The colonial powers then hired anthropologists to document the tribal and oral cultures of Somali people to reinforce and legitimate the myth of their “uncivilized” status.⁵⁵ These white anthropologists, such as I.M. Lewis, the self-designated “father” of Somali studies, worked closely with the British colonial administrators and produced research on Somalia that has continued to negatively impact Somali people’s lives.⁵⁶ Much of the scholarship about Somali people in the 1940’s and 1950’s came from Oxford University, conducted by scholars who received funding from the British colonial government.⁵⁷ Ethnographic data about Somalis thus functioned as a frontier to colonize, discover, and eventually claim the country and its people as property.

⁵² See *Orientalism* by Edward W. Said

⁵³ See *The Invention of Somalia* by Ali Jimale Ahmed

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*,45.

⁵⁵ See “Primordialist Blinders: A Reply to I. M. Lewis” by Catherine Besteman

⁵⁶ See “I. M. Lewis and Somali Clanship: A Critique” by Lidwien Kapteijns

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*,12.

These anthropological studies about Somali people, which propagate the belief that Somalis have been living in primitive lifestyle since time immemorial, continue to influence scholarship about and treatment of Somalis today.⁵⁸ As an example, a 1925 article, entitled “Somaliland: The Cinderella of Empire,” racializes Somalis as a people invested in primordial tribalism that can only be reasoned with through force of violence. In this article, anthropologist Douglas Jardine argued that “Enough has been said to show that the great mass of the Somalis are still living the same primitive and nomadic life today that their ancestors have lived from time immemorial- always on the move in search of water and grass, forever scanning the horizon for the rain they so seldom see, and usually ready for a fight if they think that thereby they may increase their live-stock at the expense of their neighbors” (7). As evidence of Somalis’ inability and unwillingness to become “modern,” Jardine shared the following story of a Somali “return[ing] to his tribe and the tribal life” after his study in Europe: “When abroad he may array himself in European clothes, complete with celluloid collar, guardee tie and patent leather boots; but when he returns to his country he will scornfully discard all the paraphernalia of European civilization and dress himself once more in a tobe of cotton cloth which he wears as proudly as the Roman wore his toga.”⁵⁹ At the same time, Jardine’s own writing seemed to admit that Somalis were forced by the colonial powers to assimilate, yet denied the possibility of ever attaining British identity: “In West Africa, for example, the native is usually anxious to imitate the European and the European's mode of life. He believes that if he acquires a certain degree of literacy and wears European clothes, he

⁵⁸ See “Dilemma on the Horn of Africa” by A. A. Castagno

⁵⁹ See “Somaliland: The Cinderella of the Empire” by Douglas Jardine

has by these facile processes risen to the same plane of civilization as the European, differing from him solely in the color of his skin; and when the European does not accept him at this valuation, he is greatly perturbed and believes that his failure to be accepted as an equal is attributable to color prejudice” (106). Jardine thus viewed Somalis as primordially trapped in tribal affiliations, yet also appeared to acknowledge Europeans’ refusal to accept “assimilated” Somalis as equals.

For Somalis to be colonized, they also had to be depicted as incapable of self-rule. British official and popular discourse consistently racialized Somalis as being plagued by internal clan divisions.⁶⁰ Prior to colonization, Somalis had organized themselves around their clan, region, and profession.⁶¹ Somali farmers were viewed as inferior to Somali nomadic camel herders.⁶² Somalis from varying clans and regions did not identify with each other, the Hawiye and Digil Rahween clans speak radically different dialects of the Somali language, and would not be able to understand each other.⁶³ However, the racialization of Somalis as clan-like people who will destroy themselves if left to their own devices originated in British colonial rule in Somalia.⁶⁴ It was British colonial law that gave preference to clan as the legally recognized form of Somali social organization, thereby transforming the clan structure from a relatively loose form of social grouping to a rigid system of communal membership.⁶⁵ The legalization of clans gave significant power to clan elders and leaders. Prior to the establishment of customary laws, the Somali

⁶⁰ See Clan Cleansing in Somalia: The Ruinous Legacy of 1991 by Lidwien Kapteijns

⁶¹ *Ibid.*,34.

⁶² *Ibid.*,74.

⁶³ *Ibid.*,79

⁶⁴ See Blood and Bone: The Call of Kinship in Somali Society by I.M. Lewis

⁶⁵ See “Destruction of State and Society in Somalia: Beyond the Tribal Convention” by Abdi Ismail Samatar

clan system was relatively fluid and allowed people to freely move in and out of clan affiliation.⁶⁶ The British transformed clan into a rigid system that fixed people's identity by allocating resources to Somalis based on clan affiliation.⁶⁷ Because of this interference, clan became a source of power in Somali society. Somalis utilized clan to mobilize for resources both political and material.

At the same time, colonial anthropologists, such as I.M. Lewis, have claimed that Somali people are the most homogenous group of people in Africa.⁶⁸ I.M. Lewis argues that Somalis are the only people in Africa that are racially, linguistically and religiously homogeneous.⁶⁹ This claim is plainly inaccurate, because of the diversity of languages, racial groups and religions that exist in Somalia.⁷⁰ I.M. Lewis believed that the only diversity in Somalia was through clan affiliations.⁷¹

A 1992 U.N. document titled "The United Nations and Somalia 1992-1996" shows the ways in which Somalis continue to be perceived as homogeneous:

When the independent Somali republic was formed in July 1960 from a merger of the former British and Italian Somaliland, many thought the country had a solid foundation for political stability. Not all Somali speakers lived within the borders of the new state—large communities also resided in Djibouti, Ethiopia and Kenya. But practically everyone within Somalia was of Somali origin, speaking the same language, adhering to the same religion, Islam and following similar cultural traditions. This was in sharp contrast to virtually all other African countries, which have societies composed of multiple linguistic and religious groups" (The United Nations and Somalia 1992-1996).

⁶⁶ Ibid.,15.

⁶⁷ The article "Back to the Horn: Italian Administration and Somalia's Troubled Independence" by Paolo Tripodi documents this British colonial policy

⁶⁸ See Blood and Bone: The Call for Kinship in Somali Society by I.M. Lewis

⁶⁹ Ibid.,45.

⁷⁰ See The Bantu - Jareer Somalis by Mohamed Eno

⁷¹ See "Primordialist Blinders: A Reply to I. M. Lewis" by Catherine Besteman

This conceptualization of Somalis as homogeneous is a colonial creation, because Somalis did not have a national identity prior to the arrival of the British. Somalis did not organize themselves around a national identity prior to British colonial rule, but rather Somalis organized their sense of identity around a broad and diverse ontologies such as region, town, clan, and occupation. The Somali people had for hundreds of years lived without a centralized government, structuring themselves around the organized and fluid clan systems.⁷² The British and Italian colonial powers created the Somali national subject, by becoming a site of resistance for Somalis who wanted independence. As Ali Ahmed argues, Somalis are a colonial invention the Somali nationalist movement, the Somali Youth League, arose in the 1950's as a response to British Colonialism.⁷³

Colonization of Education

A British colonial document from 1950 titled "Employment of Native Born Administrators" reveals the ways in which the figure of the primitive African is used to justify colonialism. The document begins: "These East and Central African territories were in an exceedingly primitive state when they first came under British rule some fifty years ago, and the provision of adequate educational facilities has been and remains an enormous problem. It is, therefore, not surprising that there are no Africans in the higher government posts. More primary schools and some secondary and vocational schools are however now being built" (22).⁷⁴ In this section, I will deconstruct the structural and historical forces that made this statement possible.

⁷² See Blood and Bone: The Call of Kinship in Somali Society by I.M. Lewis

⁷³ See The Invention of Somalia by Ali Jimale Ahmed

⁷⁴ See "EMPLOYMENT OF NATIVE BORN ADMINISTRATORS IN THE HIGHER

The indigenous school system and other forms of education that existed in Somalia prior to colonization were destroyed by the British, who viewed these indigenous centers of learning as a barbaric mode of education.⁷⁵ Thus the absence of an education infrastructure in Somalia was a condition produced by the British, rather than something that was indigenous to Somalis. Somalis had numerous educators and intellectuals in the form of poets and storytellers. The storytellers, many of whom are women, are the keepers of history for the clan and the family.⁷⁶ The storytellers are trained to remember six generations of their clan's history. They possess a tremendous capacity for memorization and can remember the names and deeds of hundreds of clan ancestors.⁷⁷ The storytellers as critical educators in the Somali clan system were tasked with teaching children about the history of the Somali people, their clan, and the family unit.⁷⁸

This education in clan history is of paramount importance, because it instilled in the younger generation a sense of identity.⁷⁹ An older Somali refugee named Amina Hassid, whom I interviewed in San Diego, shared a story with me about the role of Somali storytellers: "The storytellers told stories to the Somali community, they were respected by everyone. The storytellers were the teachers, philosophers, and healers all in one. It was required of storytellers to train for many years to learn the clan and family stories and reciting the stories by heart. The storytellers also needed to remember

GRADES OF COLONIAL CIVIL SERVICES" from the British National Archives

⁷⁵ Lee Casenelli in the article "Somalia: Education in Transition" explains British colonial policy in regards to education in Somalia

⁷⁶ In the book, Oral Poetry and Somali Nationalism: The Case of Sayid Mahammad 'Abdille Hasan, Said S. Samatar investigates the role of storytellers in the Somali community

⁷⁷ Ibid.,46.

⁷⁸ Ibid.,23

⁷⁹ See "Orality, Literacy, and Somali Oral Poetry" by John William Johnson

hundreds of famous poems and folktales too because that was also part of history.” As this comment highlights, storytellers took on numerous roles in the Somali community. Storytellers were required to undergo rigorous training and needed highly advanced technical knowledge to become proficient.⁸⁰

The British colonial powers refused to acknowledge the importance of storytellers to the Somali community, thereby devaluing Somali forms of knowing. Instead, the British created English language schools and centers for the training of native administrators.⁸¹ Somali education was not primitive as theorized by scholars such as I.M. Lewis; rather, Somali forms of knowing became devalued in relation to western knowledge. The eradication of indigenous forms of knowledge was central to the establishment of British colonial rule in Somalia.⁸² By eliminating alternative ontologies, the British imparted a modality of being that situates whiteness as the highest form of humanity and blackness as the lowest. An indigenous Somali ontology rejects the premise that a move towards whiteness is a move towards progress. The British utilized colonial education as a way to train native administrators in British law and bureaucracy. In the article “Education in Somalia: History, Destruction and calls for Reconstruction,” Ali Abdi claims that “in Somalia, colonial education demonstrates a systematic conformity to the general colonial education system with imperialist governments training low-level administrative personnel to help them administer the colonial territory effectively” (39). By “educating” native colonial administrators, the British were able to more effectively manage the colonized population. They did this by positioning native

⁸⁰ Ibid.,14.

⁸¹ See article “Education in Somalia: History, destruction, and calls for reconstruction”

⁸² Ibid.,37.

administrators as intermediators between themselves and the native population. On the eve of Somali independence in the late 1950's, the training of colonial administrators was critical to ensuring British influence over Somalia long after formal independence.

Somali Independence and Continued British Influence: 1960-1969

Somalia gained independence on July 1960 when Southern Somalia and Northern Somalia united to form of Republic of Somalia. Somalis pushed for independence in 1950, but were rejected by the United Nations. Instead the U.N. gave Somalia to Italy to create a ten-year Italian Trusteeship in Somalia. Under the official trustee agreement titled "Trusteeship Agreement for the Territory of Somaliland under Italian Administration, adopted by the Trusteeship Council January 27, 1950.", the goal of the trusteeship was to:⁸³

The foster the development of free political institutions and promote the development of the inhabitants of the Territory towards independence; and to this end shall give to the inhabitants of the Territory a progressively increasing participation in the various organs of Government; 2. promote the economic advancement and self-sufficiency of the inhabitants, and to this end shall regulate the use of natural resources; encourage the development of fisheries, agriculture, trade and industries; protect the inhabitants against the loss of their lands and resources; and improve the means of transportation and communication; 3. promote the social advancement of the inhabitants, and to this end shall protect the rights and fundamental freedoms of all elements of the population with- out discrimination; protect and improve the health of the inhabitants by the development of adequate health and hospital services for all sections of the population; control the traffic in arms and ammunition, opium and other dangerous drugs, alcohol and other spirituous liquors; prohibit all forms of slavery, slave trade and child marriage; apply existing international conventions concerning prostitution; prohibit all forms of forced or compulsory labour, except for essential public works and services, and then only in time of public emergency with adequate

⁸³ See "Trusteeship Agreement for the Territory of Somaliland under Italian Administration, Adopted by the Trusteeship Council January 27, 1950.", International Organization, Vol. 4, No. 2 (May, 1950), pp. 347-356 Published by: University of Wisconsin Press Stable URL: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/2704191> Accessed: 29-05-2017

remuneration and adequate protection of the welfare of the workers; and institute such other regulations as may be necessary to protect the inhabitants against any social abuses.

The Italian Trusteeships, despite Somalis protest, was created because the U.N. believed Somali were not ready for independence.⁸⁴ It was during the period of the Italian Trusteeship in the 1950's, that the Somali Youth League organized the Somali people in northern and southern Somalia to resist Italian occupation of Somalia.⁸⁵ The Somali Youth League consisted of a group of Somali college students, who formed the organization with the goal of achieving Somali independence.⁸⁶ Members of SYL created a vision of a unified Somalia that centered on the ousting of all colonial powers.⁸⁷ The SYL also wanted to unite the five Somali territories into one Republic, the five territories being British Somaliland, Italian Somaliland, French Somaliland (Djibouti), The Ogden in Ethiopia, and the Northern Frontier District in Kenya. These five regions are areas where a large portion of the population is ethnically Somali.⁸⁸ The Somali Youth League ran on the platform of uniting the five territories and created a five-pointed star as the flag to symbolize this goal. The Somali Youth League was unable to achieve its goal and only British Somaliland and Italian Somaliland united to form the Republic of Somalia.⁸⁹ SYL's inability to achieve this goal was a result of Ethiopian resistance to acceding the Ogden, and Kenya's desire to maintain control over the Northern Frontier

⁸⁴ Ibid.,12.

⁸⁵ See "Somalis as Africa's First Democrats: Premier Abdirazak H. Hussein and President Aden A. Osman" by Abdi Ismail Samatar and Ahmed I. Samatar

⁸⁶ Ibid.,34

⁸⁷ Ibid.,23

⁸⁸ See "The Somali Youth League, Ethiopian Somalis and the Greater Somalia Idea, c.1946-48" by Cedric Barnes

⁸⁹ Ibid.,7.

District. These two regions came into being because the British gave the Ogden to Ethiopia in 1948 and the NFD to Kenya in 1960.⁹⁰ These two British decisions would create tension between the Somalia and their neighbors of Kenya and Ethiopia for decades to come. Nonetheless, In July 1960, the President of the Somali Youth League, Abdirazak H. Hussein, was elected as the Prime Minister of Somalia.⁹¹

The prerequisite for Somali independence was the adoption of a nation-state system that modeled the British state structure.⁹² The indigenous native administrators, whose education was financed by the British, would later assume powerful positions in the post-colonial government.⁹³ After Somali independence in 1960, these former administrators remained loyal to the British.⁹⁴ This historical relationship inspired the adoption of British parliamentary government in the young Somali government. One of the first obstacles for the Somali government was the lack of infrastructure, the result of the quick and hasty exit of colonial administrators who took with them key documents about taxes and census data.⁹⁵ Moreover, the colonial bureaucratic documents—census data, deeds, and infrastructure plans—necessary to govern the state of Somalia were in English.⁹⁶ Since there were very few Somalis literate in English, the language used for the running of government offices, the postcolonial Somali administration encountered

⁹⁰ See “The Ogaden and the Fragility of Somali Segmentary Nationalism” by I.M. Lewis

⁹¹ See “Somalis as Africa’s First Democrats: Premier Abdirazak H. Hussein and President Aden A. Osman” by Abdi Ismail Samatar and Ahmed I. Samatar

⁹² See “Somalis as Africa’s First Democrats: Premier Abdirazak H. Hussein and President Aden A. Osman” by Abdi Ismail Samatar and Ahmed I. Samatar

⁹³ See “Education in Somalia: History, Destruction and calls for Reconstruction” by Ali Abdi

⁹⁴ See “Plenary Session September 7th: The Processes of Fragmentation and Consolidation in Sub-Saharan Africa”

⁹⁵ Ibid.,23.

⁹⁶ See A Modern History of the Somali: Nation and State in the Horn of Africa by I.M. Lewis

serious issues relating to governance and continued to require the assistance of British personnel to help translate the documents critical to running the government.⁹⁷ Since many of the government offices and programs from education to healthcare utilized the English language, English, along with Somali and Arabic, became an official language of the country.

For much of its history, the Somali language was primarily an oral language.⁹⁸ The Somali language did not have a written form until 1973, when the dictator Siad Barre decided to codify the Somali language.⁹⁹ Trained religious figures utilized the Arabic script in order to write documents in Somali.¹⁰⁰ Due to this uneven distribution of literary skills, there were very few Somalis who could read and write in Somali. The lack of a written Somali language contributed to the use of English as the language of government. The leaders of the Somali government were the educated elite, many of whom were trained at Oxford University.¹⁰¹ Their affinity for Britain influenced the Somali government's adoption of British parliamentary style government and the British court system.¹⁰²

The development of the nation-state made it necessary for the Somali government

⁹⁷ See Blood and Bone: The Call of Kinship in Somali Society by I.M. Lewis

⁹⁸ See "Orality, Literacy, and Somali Oral Poetry" by John Williams Johnson

⁹⁹ See the text *The Struggle for Land in Southern Somalia: The War Behind the War*

¹⁰⁰ The book *Somalia: From the Dawn of Civilization to the Modern Times*, explains the early history of writing in Somalia

¹⁰¹ See "Trouble in the Horn of Africa?: The British Somali Case" by Gordon Waterfield

¹⁰² Samson Jerry in the book *Somalia History, Origins, Migrations, and Settlement: The Somali Peninsula, Somalia during World War II, Government, Politics, Economy* investigates the influence of Somali colonial administrators in the late 1950's on the adoption of British parliamentary government for the Somali republic in 1960.

to create a bureaucracy.¹⁰³ A bureaucracy was needed because the government took over the function of the clan and had to manage a population of seven million, whereas clan leaders only managed a couple of hundred people.¹⁰⁴ Once a centralized form of government was forced upon the Somalis populace, it became impossible for the government to get information about people and where they lived because Somali nomads were constantly moving. Close to sixty percent of the Somali population are pastoral nomads who move over large distances in search of grazing land.¹⁰⁵ When the central government sent bureaucrats into the rural areas to collect census data, they were unable to track where people lived with reliable efficiency.¹⁰⁶ This was a particularly thorny problem because the government needed reliable information about the location of the population in order to allocate resources to certain regions, tax the population, build schools, health facilities, and other government tasks. The difficult terrain between the city and rural areas prevented educators, healthcare providers, and census officials from entering the rural areas.¹⁰⁷ This geographical separation was due in part to the fact that the British colonial powers invested much of the infrastructure development on the coast at the expense of the rural areas.¹⁰⁸ There were few roads that lead to the rural areas, where most Somalis lived. As a result, the Somali government had very little power outside the capital. To help with this task of building infrastructure, the government

¹⁰³ Ibid.,33.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid.,134.

¹⁰⁵ See “POPULATION ESTIMATION SURVEY 2014” carried out by the United Nations Population Fund

¹⁰⁶ See [A Modern History of the Somali: Nation and State in the Horn of Africa](#)

¹⁰⁷ See [Becoming Somaliland](#) by Mark Bradbury

¹⁰⁸ Mark Bradbury in the book [Becoming Somaliland; Understanding Somalia and Somaliland](#), theorized the effects of British colonial policy of investing resources on the capital and the coast while ignoring the rural Somali regions

received financial support from the former colonial powers of Britain.¹⁰⁹ They were willing to provide these funds, because the colonial powers wanted to maintain influence over Somalia.

The United States, which had emerged from World War Two as the leading superpower, also became interested in Somalia around the time of Somali independence in 1960. A British colonial document highlights early signs of U.S. imperial interest in Somalia:

The international implications of a request for British trusteeship over any of the territories must thus be balanced against the strategic advantages which we would thereby acquire. Such a request would not obtain the support of the United States Government, since, as mentioned above, the American Secretary of State's Deputy in London has stated that they could not support a claim by any one of the Big Four to Individual Trusteeship over any of the Colonies. Trusteeship by one of the British Dominions would probably be regarded as a subterfuge of British imperialist interests, and would equally not receive United States support. (Disposal of Italian Colonies, 10).

Prior to the 1950's, the U.S. had very little engagement with Somalia and Somali people. The only contact the U.S. had with Somali people was through Somali sailors, who travelled to New York for trade in the 1920's.¹¹⁰ Because of Somalia's oil and unique location on the Red Sea, the U.S. became keenly interested in Somali resources.¹¹¹ In addition to oil, the U.S. government was also interested in Somalia as part of a Cold War strategy to spread American influence throughout the world—a strategy that would lead

¹⁰⁹ Ali Jimale Ahmed's book *Daybreak is Near: Literature, Clans, and the Nation-state in Somalia*, examines the some of the mechanism though which thw Italians invested funds in Somalia

¹¹⁰ See article "Somali History and Migration to the United States" on the website: <https://www.yumpu.com/en/document/view/15876978/chapter-1-somali-history-and-immigration-to-the-united-states>

¹¹¹ See "Plenary Session September 7th: The Processes of Fragmentation and Consolidation in Sub-Saharan Africa" in the *African Studies Bulletin* in 1957.

to clear support of a brutal dictator in Somalia who rose to power in 1969.

The Dictatorship: Siad Barre 1969-1990

The democratic Somali government lasted until 1969, when a military coup d'état toppled the government and replaced it with a dictatorship.¹¹² The dictator, Siad Barre, was a young police officer in the Somali colonial police who in the late 1960's rose to power to become the highest ranking general in Somalia. He spent a year training and learning military tactics as a part of a joint operation in Russia.¹¹³ In Russia, Barre discovered socialism and learned advanced military strategy.¹¹⁴ When he returned to Somalia, Barre orchestrated a coup d'état that overthrew the first independent government of Somalia in 1969.¹¹⁵ After the violent coup d'état, Barre set out to establish scientific socialism as the official doctrine of the Somali government.¹¹⁶ Scientific Socialism was the government's policy in name only. In practice, the dictatorship operated under a system of nepotism, as members of the dictator's family were appointed to the highest position in the government. Barre appointed his friends and family to positions they were wholly unqualified for.¹¹⁷ A Somali-net forum chat site lists the number of Barre relatives that occupied high government posts. The commenter IRONm@n provides the list:

Maslah Mohamed Said Barre -Chief of Staff of the government (son).

Ayanle Mohamed Siyad Bare -Head of Administration and presidency (siyad barre's infamous teenage boy) (son)

¹¹² See [Africa's First Democrats: Somalia's Aden A. Osman and Abdirazak H. Hussen](#) by Abdi Ismail Samatar

¹¹³ The text [Somali President Mohammed Siad Barre, His Life and Legacy](#) examines how the early years of Siad Barre life in the colonial police and in Russia influenced his thinking as the dictator of the Somali Republic

¹¹⁴ Ibid.,39.

¹¹⁵ Ibid.,88.

¹¹⁶ Ibid.,123.

¹¹⁷ Ibid.,56.

Abdullahi Mohamed siyad Barre - vice minister of health of Somalia (Son).

Hassan Mohamed Siyad Barre -Supervisor of the army mechanized division of Mogadishu (son).

Anab Mohamed Siyad Bare -Director General of the National Budget Division (daughter).

Hawa Siyad Barre --Minister of Tourism and development (daughter).

Dirrie Siyad Barre --Financial adviser of the president (son).

Abdirahman Jamac Siyad Barre -- Minister of foreign affairs (cousin)

Ahmed Sulieman Abdulle (son in-law) -minister of interior, chairman of security committee

Abdirahman Hassan (son in-law)- commander of the police force

Mohamed Said Morgan (infamous son in-law) - Deputy minister of defense.¹¹⁸

In addition to his family, the dictator also gave preferential treatment to members of his clan and in the process alienated other clans.¹¹⁹ Barre utilized the nefarious clan politics to concentrate power in his administration. Barre's clan, the Marehan clan, monopolized the wealth in Somalia due to his ascendancy to the highest post in the Somali government. The Barre government gave preferential treatment to the Marehan clan in private industry and public office.¹²⁰ The most desirable business contracts, jobs, and land were given to members of the Marehan clan.¹²¹ A Somali elder from City Heights, Osman Hussein (Pseudonym) , remembers Siad Barre as a dictator and referred to him as Afwayne, a Somali word that means "big mouth": "Afwayne only helped

¹¹⁸ <https://www.somalinet.com/forums/viewtopic.php?t=253767>

¹¹⁹ Mohamed Ibrahim Shire in the book Somali President Mohammed Siad Barre, His Life and Legacy, examines nepotism in the Barre dictatorship.

¹²⁰ See Somali President Mohammed Siad Barre, His Life and Legacy

¹²¹ Ibid.,64.

people who were Marehan, people like me who are Hawiye we could not find any jobs because all the good jobs went to Afwaynes relatives. I was very angry because even if you were educated or hard working you could not get a good paying job if you were not Marehan. We couldn't even complain about this, because if people caught you complaining about Afwayne, you would end up in jail." Somali's deployment of the term Afwayne to describe the dictator is an example of infrapolitics: the tools used by those with little capacity to resist state power directly.¹²² Somalis utilized infrapolitics because the dictator was known to be extremely violent towards his enemies, executing and jailing anyone who dared to question his rule. Despite the oppressive nature of the Barre dictatorship, the U.S. government supported the dictator by providing him weapons and funding.¹²³ The U.S. fostered a relationship with Barre in an effort to wrest control of East Africa from the Soviet Union. America's relationship with Somalia was tested when Barre decided to go to war with Ethiopia in 1978 over the Ogden region.¹²⁴

The U.S. supplied arms to Somalia in the war effort, while the Soviet Union furnished arms to Ethiopia.¹²⁵ The Ogden is a region of western Ethiopia that has a large ethnically Somali population.¹²⁶ The Ogden was controlled by the British until the British colonial powers decided to grant the Ogden to Ethiopia.¹²⁷ The ethnic Somalis living in the Ogden desired unification with Somalia and fervently rejected inclusion into Ethiopia.

¹²² James Scott in the text Domination and the Arts of Resistance, defines Infrapolitics as the everyday modes of resistance deployed by the most vulnerable in society

¹²³ See Understanding the US Policy toward Somalia by Afyare Elmi

¹²⁴ In the article "Somalia's Domestic Politics and Foreign Relations since the Ogaden War of 1977-78" Harry Odada examines the motivations for Barre's war with Ethiopia in 1977.

¹²⁵ Ibid.,289.

¹²⁶ See "THE ROOT CAUSES OF POLITICAL PROBLEMS IN THE OGADEN, 1942-1960" by Tibebe Eshete

¹²⁷ Ibid.,305.

As a result of this colonial decision, there is ongoing tension between Somalia and Ethiopia over the Ogden. It is precisely because of this tension that a full-scale war broke out between Somalia and Ethiopia in 1977,¹²⁸ a war that lasted two years and produced the first Somali refugee crisis.¹²⁹

America's intimate involvement in the first Somali refugee crisis would foreshadow America's role in creating the largest Somali refugee crisis in 1993. Despite Barre's known history of human right abuses, the U.S. continued to funnel millions of dollars to the Barre government, while also providing him large quantities of weapons.¹³⁰ Barre utilized the Cold War politics to his benefit, as he continually shifted his allegiance between the U.S. and the Soviet Union as if playing a dangerous game of hot potato. This strategy worked in Barre's favor, because he received weapons and money from both the Soviet Union and the U.S.¹³¹

The financial and political support Barre received from the U.S. empowered his dictatorship which lasted twenty years from 1969 to 1989.¹³² The Ogden war ended with Ethiopia maintaining sovereignty over the region. The Ethiopian government won the war, because the Russians provided fighter planes to the Ethiopian army.¹³³ The Russian planes dropped large quantities of bombs on Somali troops, causing massive casualties and ending with a Somali surrender.¹³⁴ The Ogden War showed Russia's clear support of

¹²⁸ Ibid.,172.

¹²⁹ Ibid.,316.

¹³⁰ In the chapter "Understanding the US Policy toward Somalia" in the book Understanding the Somali Conflagration, Afyare Elmi reveals how the U.S. funded the dictator as part of a cold war strategy to oust the Soviet Union out of Somalia

¹³¹ Ibid.,14.

¹³² See Somali President Mohammed Siad Barre, His Life and Legacy

¹³³ The article "TOWARDS A HISTORY OF THE INCORPORATION OF THE OGADEN: 1887-1935" examines how Russian intervention became the turning point for the Ogaden war

¹³⁴ Ibid., 73.

Ethiopia and the U.S.'s endorsement of Somalia. These political fault lines would remain until the collapse of the Somali state. In addition to furnishing arms to the Barre dictatorship, the U.S. along with the World Bank provided loans to the government of Somalia that were known as Structural Adjustment Programs.¹³⁵ The loans had stipulations that required the Somali state to adopt neoliberal policies. These policies included a laundry list of stipulations, chief among them was opening the country to transnational corporations, reductions in wages, the elimination of tariffs, and limitations on government spending on education and social services.¹³⁶ The SAPs introduced the country to exploitation by transnational corporations and reduced the social services critical to Somali people. Abi Hassan, a Somali refugee living in City Heights, claims that "During Afwayne's government the education system was really bad because the government spent so little money on the schools and many of the children had to go to classes with no chairs, they didn't even have school supplies".

The neoliberalization of Somalia was a process the Western colonial powers started with colonization and finished with independence. Some of the largest transnational corporations that operate in Somalia are British and Italian.¹³⁷ The structural adjustments programs had devastating effects on Somali people, whose standard of living plummeted after independence.¹³⁸ Somali farmers were dispossessed of their lands by

¹³⁵ Abdi Samatar in the article "Structural Adjustment as Development Strategy? Bananas, Boom, and Poverty in Somalia" argues that structural adjustment programs had devastating effects in Somalia. He claims that wages were drastically reduced and an entire generation of Somalis entered poverty without any social safety nets.

¹³⁶ Ibid.,59.

¹³⁷ Peter Little in the book *Somalia: Economy without State* highlights the emergence of a booming economy in Somalia despite the country being a failed state. He documents the profits British and Italian transnational companies make off the Somali coast.

¹³⁸ See "Structural Adjustment as Development Strategy? Bananas, Boom, and Poverty in Somalia"

transnational corporations, pastoral nomads had to compete with city people for resources, and wealth was concentrated amongst the Somali elite.¹³⁹

A Somali refugee in San Diego remembers Somalia under the Siad Barre dictatorship: “Many of us thought we were finally going to be free after independence, we ended up getting a dictator who was evil and violent. There was no freedom and no opportunity. The British still had control over Somalia and told Afwayne what to do. When will Somalis ever be free?” The last comment is particularly telling; it shows that Somalis moved from one form of un-freedom under British colonialism to another. Somalis today are calling for a second independence, arguing that the first independence did not live up to the goal of Somali sovereignty.¹⁴⁰ More than anything else, Somalis desired independence from Barre and his brutal regime. This goal was actualized in 1990, with the ousting of the dictator.

Transnational War in Somalia

In this section, I dispel the dominant myths about the Somali Civil War, which is often narrated as a primordial clan animosity that eventually led to a full-scale war between Siad Barre, a member of the Marehan clan, and Mohamed Farrah Aidid a member of the Hawiye clan.¹⁴¹ To dispute this claim, I argue that the Somali Civil War was not only a civil war in the traditional sense of the word, but a transnational war orchestrated and created by the U.S., Italy, and Britain. In 1991, Italy played a prominent

¹³⁹ Ibid.,39.

¹⁴⁰ The article “Political Radicalism in Africa: 'The Second Independence'”, by Richard Jeffries that interrogates the demands that many African nations made in light of the failures of independence in establishing sovereignty and ousting European domination.

¹⁴¹ The book *Clan Cleansing in Somalia: The Ruinous Legacy of 1991* reduces the Somali civil war to clan conflict and ignores the role of U.S. militarism and British colonialism in creating and exasperating the war in Somalia

role in the Somali Civil War and demanded that Somalia return to being an Italian colony. Tripoldi documents the sentiments of an Italian ambassador who "...wrote that in order to increase the U.N.'s chances of success in Somalia, the Security Council had to establish an international trusteeship. He claimed that wherever decolonization failed it is necessary in the interest of local populations to resume the old trusteeship administration."¹⁴² This comment reveals that Italy's colonial interest in Somalia did not end with Somali independence. Rather, Italy had every desire to maintain its colonial influence in Somalia.

Britain and Italy also acquired a significant amount of wealth from their time as colonial powers in Somalia. The wealth that Britain and Italy accumulated from colonialism helped establish these two places as sites of wealth and power. More so than this historical accumulation of wealth, Britain and Italy have continued to profit from the exploitation of Somalia due to the many Italian and British transnational corporations that operate there. Peter Esichstad, in *Pirate State Inside Somalis Terrorism at Sea*, reveals that:

Somali environmental activist Amina Mohamed charged that, "She was killed because there are many things that she discovered. There are Italian companies there is the mafia. There is a whole range of people brokers and dealers involved in this task". Mohammed was convinced that Alpi was killed while investigating allegations that mafia run companies in Italy were involved in the transport and dumping of industrial waste in Somalia. Mohamed claimed that Alpi had discovered that much of the waste was being carried from Italy to the shore of the former Italian colony aboard fishing vessels of a Somali owned company (Eichstadt, 55).

¹⁴² See [The Colonial Legacy in Somalia: Rome and Mogadishu: from Colonial Administration to Operation Restore Hope](#) by Paolo Tripoldi

Alpi's investigation exposes the ways in which Italy continues to profit from the exploitation of Somali resources through often insidious and covert methods. One of the main functions of Italian colonization of Somalia is the exploitation of Somali resources. The ongoing nature of this exploitation means Somalia gained independence from Italy in name only. Italy also benefits from the lack of a centralized state in Somalia, which allows Italian corporations to dump gallons of toxic waste in the Somali coast, with little repercussions from a coast guard or military.

Despite the discourses of progress, the material conditions in Somalia are worse today than they were in 1960 and much of this is the result of the savage destruction of Somali social institutions and infrastructure at the hands of the former colonial powers.¹⁴³ During the height of the Somali civil war, Italy sent troops to Somalia despite heavy resistance from Somalis. Tripodoli reveals that "in January 1993, Rome deployed 2,300 soldiers, 1,290 vehicles, 78 armored vehicles and 36 helicopters." (87).¹⁴⁴ The competing Somali factions considered the deployment of Italian troops an act of war. The Italian troops escalated the war because they were more interested in securing strategic colonial resources than helping Somali civilians. I provide this historical analysis to help contextualize state collapse, and to challenge the naturalization of disorder as an essentially African phenomenon.

¹⁴³ Abdi Samatar in the article "The Predatory State and the Peasantry: Reflections on Rural Development Policy in Somalia" argues that the material conditions for rural Somalis are worse today than they were in the colonial period. He shows that there are more famines in Somalia in the post-colonial period than the precolonial period and that is the result of colonialism and its eradication of Somali kinship and support systems.

¹⁴⁴ See [The Colonial Legacy in Somalia: Rome and Mogadishu: from Colonial Administration to Operation Restore Hope](#)

The U.S. and Somalia

The U.S. was also a pivotal figure in the Somali Civil War. U.S. presence in Somalia is purposeful and insidious rather than accidental and benign. The U.S., along with Italy and Britain, is largely responsible for the millions of Somalis murdered and displaced after the war. My research challenges dominant Somali Studies scholarship, such as the works of Mark Bradbury, that paints the civil war as animosity between Somali clans. I direct attention to the role of U.S. imperialism in the Somali Civil War. The U.S. military withdrew from Somalia after two years in 1994, devastating the Somali landscape and killing close to 3,000 Somalis.¹⁴⁵ I provide this long history of U.S. imperialism and colonialism to properly contextualize the destruction produced by the Somali Civil War. A decade after the U.S. military withdrawal in 1994, the first official Somali government since state collapse was established in 2004. The Transitional Federal Government of Somalia was fully funded by the U.S., Italy, and Britain.¹⁴⁶ The Somali officials who were elected as the head of the newly established Somali state were puppet agents for the U.S. The Transitional Federal Government received most of its funding from the U.S.¹⁴⁷ The material conditions of Somali refugees cannot be extricated from U.S. imperialism in Somalia.

Moreover, the U.S. and Russia had been funneling millions of weapons into Somalia for close to two decades as part of the Cold War strategy.¹⁴⁸ Because of this

¹⁴⁵ The chapter “Black Hawk Down: Recasting U.S. Military History at Somali Expense” by Lidwien Kapteijns examines the devastation on Somali people caused by the 1993 U.S. military invasion of Somalia.

¹⁴⁶ <http://www.aljazeera.com/indepth/opinion/2012/07/201273094746839247.html>

¹⁴⁷ <http://reliefweb.int/report/somalia/us-assistance-transitional-federal-government>

¹⁴⁸ The article “Promoting Stability or Instability? Arms Transfers and Regional Rivalries, 1950-1991” by Gregory S. Sanjian documents the effects that the funneling of weapons to Somalia had in producing war and instability in the region.

influx of weapons, various militias became armed due to the easy access to military equipment. The most prominent of these organizations is the United Somali Congress, led by Mohamed Farah Aidid.¹⁴⁹ As argued above, the Somali Civil War is a transnational war that included many nations, including the prominent role played by the U.S. The Civil War erupted when Aidid's forces, after a year of attrition against Barre's army, reached the capital city of Mogadishu.¹⁵⁰ The use of mortars and shelling campaigns began when Aidid's forces clashed with the dictator's army.¹⁵¹ The clash between these two forces devastated the capital and forced hundreds of thousands of refugees to flee to neighboring Kenya.¹⁵² After months of attrition, Aidid forced the dictator to abandon his palace and retreat into neighboring Kenya.¹⁵³ The ousting of Barre created a power vacuum in Somalia in which numerous organizations emerged claiming to be revolutionary movements for the people and rightful successors to the Somali state. The listed factions include the Somali Nationalist Movement, the Somali Peoples Republic, and Peoples of Somalia.¹⁵⁴ These factions, claiming to represent the Somali people, battled each other over control of the capital. The conflict between these factions started a war that lasted two decades. The rival factions at the time were divided along clan lines, with Aidid rallying the Hawiye clan and Ali Mahdi of the Somali Nationalist Movement mobilizing the Isaq clan.¹⁵⁵ The war in Somalia produced massive death tolls and created

¹⁴⁹ Abdi Kusow in the article "The Genesis of the Somali Civil War: A New Perspective" examines the rise of Mohamed Farah Aidid.

¹⁵⁰ See L.A. Times article http://articles.latimes.com/1993-06-20/news/mn-5205_1_peace-enforcement

¹⁵¹ Ibid.,25.

¹⁵² The anthology Mending Rips in the Sky: Options for Somali Communities in the 21st Century,

¹⁵³ See The Colonial Legacy in Somalia: Rome and Mogadishu: from Colonial Administration to Operation Restore Hope

¹⁵⁴ Ibid.,57.

¹⁵⁵ See Dark threats and white knights : the Somalia Affair, peacekeeping, and the new imperialism by Sherene Razack

a complete break-down of the infrastructure in Somalia, which was caused by armed factions occupying airports, schools, hospitals, and police stations. These series of events caused a humanitarian crisis in which hundreds of thousands of refugees were unable to leave the country and had little access to food or housing.

It is in the context of these violent events that the United Nations sprang into action, a move that would end with a U.S. military invasion of Somalia. In 1992, the attorney general of the U.N. Boutros Boutros-Ghali declared:

The involvement of the United Nations in search for peace in Somalia began with an attempt, as I took office in January 1992, to bring about a negotiated ceasefire in Mogadishu. The United Nations then attempted to deploy a small number of ceasefire observer and a small force of security personnel for the protection of humanitarian relief operations in the capital, based on conventional peace-keeping premises, including the consent of the parties. However weak cooperation on the part of the factions, and outright opposition by some of them, led to long delays in the deployment of these units. As the famine toll rose, reaching appalling proportions in mid 1992, it became clear that a much larger force was needed to protect relief supplies and that it had to be deployed quickly whether or not the faction leaders agreed (United Nations and Somalia 1992-1996, 9).

This statement foreshadowed the series of events that eventually led to the escalation of military force in Somalia. Before the U.N. led troops entered Somalia, the country had not suffered a military invasion since the 1977 Ogden war.¹⁵⁶ The news media circuited images of starving refugees fleeing the country, which then led the United Nations to take drastic action in Somalia. The U.N. sent aid and relief workers to help refugees who were suffering from one of the worst famines in Somali history.¹⁵⁷ The aid workers brought

¹⁵⁶ See "Somalia's Domestic Politics and Foreign Relations since the Ogaden War of 1977-78" by Harry Odada

¹⁵⁷ See [Becoming Somaliland: Understanding Somalia and Somaliland](#)

food, water, and medical relief to people who were on the brink of death. It was during this critical moment that Somali militias began attacking U.N. aid workers who were providing services to refugees. These assaults inspired the U.N. secretary general to send U.N. security forces to Somalia. After the initial troop deployment, the U.N. started the slow process of escalating military presence in Somalia. It began with a small force of around fifty soldiers deployed to Somalia to protect aid workers, a number that would increase over the coming weeks.¹⁵⁸

The rationalization for the deployment of troops is made clear in a U.N. document highlighting resolution 751:

On the very day of his arrival my special representative was informed by Mr. Ali Mahdi, that the latter's faction of the United Somali Congress (USC) accepted by the deployment of up to fifty United Nations military observers to monitor the ceasefire in Mogadishu and agreed that these observers would be in uniform and unarmed. Mr. Mahdi also accepted the deployment of a United Nations security force in Mogadishu as proposed by the secretary general and agreed in principal by the security council" (United Nations and Somalia 173).

This passage reveals that the deployment of troops in Somalia shifted from humanitarianism to peacekeeping. The fifty soldiers who were originally sent to ensure the protection of aid workers were now being deployed to enforce a ceasefire agreement. The presence of U.S. troops in Somalia would not be possible without the approval of Ali Mahdi, because his organization claimed legitimacy as the sovereign power in Somalia.

As this was taking place, an embargo was placed on the importation of weapons into Somalia. The embargo was disingenuous, because the weapons causing untold

¹⁵⁸ See [Somalia and Operation Restore Hope: Reflections on Peacemaking and Peacekeeping](#) by John Hirsch

destruction in Somalia were imported into the country by the U.S. and Russia.¹⁵⁹ These two imperial powers spent two decades flooding Somalia with guns, tankers, RPG's, and remote detonated bombs. After the embargo, the competing factions the USC and the Somali Nationalist Movement planned a ceasefire with the goal of negotiating an end to the war. The ceasefire was poised to fail, because the deployment of U.N. troops and later American troops made a volatile situation more explosive.

One example of the acceleration of military forces in Somalia was U.N. resolution 767, which proposed the deployment of four additional security units each with 750 troops.¹⁶⁰ The presence of these troops could no longer be justified as security personnel for humanitarian workers, rather such a large force had the characteristics of an invading army. There was the belief amongst the competing Somalis forces that the actions of the U.N. reflected an organization that was intent on invading a country, rather than an organization dedicated to peacekeeping. According to U.N document 32, there was a fear in U.N. circles about "Another disturbing trend, which has evolved in recent weeks, apparently at the instigation of local faction leaders, is the widespread perception among Somalis that the United Nations has decided to abandon its policy of cooperation and is planning to invade the country" (207).¹⁶¹ The U.N. refused to acknowledge the deployment of a large numbers of troops to Somalia, a sovereign nation, as a military invasion. The U.S. can ignore the sovereignty of Somalia, because the borders of third

¹⁵⁹ See "Promoting Stability or Instability? Arms Transfers and Regional Rivalries, 1950-1991" by Gregory S. Sanjian

¹⁶⁰ See The United Nations and Somalia, 1992-1996

¹⁶¹ See The United Nations and Somalia, 1992-1996

world countries are not viewed as legitimate. Moreover, third world countries like Somalia do not have as much power to control what takes place within its borders. In Somalia, corporations and NGO's often take over state functions and undermine state power, whereas the U.S., as an empire state, has significant power to control its borders and can stretch its sovereignty to include the entire world, due to the proliferation of U.S. military bases around the world.¹⁶²

Therefore, what looked like a humanitarian operation to the outside world was rightly viewed by Somalis as a military invasion. Moreover, the U.N. operation in Somalia was the first time in U.N. history that military force was utilized as part of an offensive campaign. The U.N. secretary general at the time explains this historical precedent:

The resulting operation, which was to be known as the United Task Force (UNITAF) and code-named "Operation Restore Hope" by the United States set a new historical precedent for the United Nations. Chapter VII was created to deter acts of aggression against sovereign states. The security council had authorized member states to take military action under chapter VII only four time before: in response to attacks on republic of Korea in 1950, authorizing the interception of tankers carrying oil to southern Rhodesia in 1966, and twice concerning the Iraq-Kuwait conflict in 1990 and 1991. But in Somalia, the United Nations for the first time in its history authorized a group of member states to use military force not under United Nations command for humanitarian ends in an internal conflict, albeit one with serious ramification for regional peace and security because of the huge influx of Somali refugees, many of them armed, into neighboring countries.¹⁶³

This statement highlights that the U.N. was more concerned about armed refugees entering neighboring nations, than armed and violent U.N. soldiers encroaching onto

¹⁶² This site, <http://dra.american.edu/islandora/object/auislandora%3A55685>, details the number of known U.S. military bases stationed throughout the world.

¹⁶³ See [The United Nations and Somalia, 1992-1996](#)

Somali sovereignty.

Conclusion

After the U.S. military operation titled “Operation Restore Hope” failed with the deaths of 18 marines, the U.S. military withdrew from Somalia. This military operation would be remembered as the only military loss suffered by the U.S. since Vietnam. The Somali people would lose the most by this military invasion. The U.S. military withdrew from a country that was destroyed by years of a war made possible by the U.S., Britain and Italy. The country no longer had a functioning government and would continue to produce refugees for nearly two decades. After the embarrassing military defeat, the U.S. government repaired its image as the leader of the free world by accepting large numbers of Somali refugees. These refugees were following the U.S. military back to its home, Marine Base Camp Pendleton located in San Diego. It is in the early months of October 1992 that large numbers of Somali refugees arrived in San Diego.¹⁶⁴ These refugees would carry on their backs not only personal affects, but a long history of British colonialism, Italian trusteeship and U.S. imperialism. But in addition to this history of violence, Somalis would also bring with them a long history of poetry, storytelling, and resistance. Somalia today is synonymous with anarchy, but for much of its history Somalia was known as a nation of poets.¹⁶⁵ Somali poetry has historically been political,

¹⁶⁴ A San Diego tribune newspaper article from 1992 titled “New group of refugees find safe haven here” by John Wilkins details a story about the first group of Somali refugees to come to San Diego. He states that “It’s become one recently for dozens of other Somalis, too -- more than 200 in September alone -- as refugees stream out of the ravaged east African country. The community here, now topping an estimated 1,000 people, has grown so much over the summer that immigration officials believe it is one of the largest in the nation.”

¹⁶⁵ See PBS documentary Somalia: A Nation of Poets: <http://www.tpt.org/somalia-a-nation-of-poets/>

with poets being some of the harshest critics of colonialism, imperialism and nepotism.¹⁶⁶

In the spirit of the poets, I leave us with a Somali poem about the fate of oppressors:

you must stop slaughtering my loved ones!
Threatening the weak is wrong.
By God, you're worthless!
Admit the debt you owe –
Confess your crime!
May God damn you!
You murder young men and women
Forced far from home.
May your waters dry up drop by drop
Until you're as dry as a desert
Where nomads stroll in the late afternoon.

¹⁶⁶ See "Sarbeeb: The Art of Oblique Communication in Somali Culture" by Said S. Samatar

Chapter Two: From the Refugee Camp to City Heights: The Continuity of State Violence

Introduction

Abi Hamza (Pseudonym) is a student at San Diego State University and mentors Somali youth at the Somali Family Service. He first came to San Diego in 1996 after spending four years in the Dadaab refugee camp. During one of our interviews, Abi shared with me the enduring importance of his stay in the Dadaab refugee camp: “You have to remember our lives didn’t start in San Diego and they don’t end in San Diego, we still have family in the Dadaab refugee camps. Many of us spend our whole lives in those camps, and some of us never leave. The camps aren’t a temporary place until we get resettled, they are our homes. We learn how to survive and how to build community in the camps and we bring that knowledge to San Diego. I am from the camps as much as I am from Somalia.” Abi’s story shows that spaces of transit like the refugee camps have a permanency for refugees, who bring the epistemology of the refugee camp to San Diego.

Somali refugees generally do not arrive to the U.S. directly from Somalia, but spend years in a second city of resettlement before reaching their final city of resettlement.¹⁶⁷ For many refugees, the refugee camp and Somalia are not discrete spaces, but often interconnected spaces where family, politics, and memories coalesce. In this dissertation, I utilize a transnational Ethnic Studies approach that pushes against the obsessive focus on Somalia as a failed state by political scientists, on the Dadaab refugee

¹⁶⁷ See [Transnational Nomads. How Somalis cope with refugee life in the Dadaab camps of Kenya](#) by Cindy Horst

camp as a space of refugee suffering by anthropologists, and on the refugees' assimilation problems by sociologists.¹⁶⁸ To connect Dadaab and City Heights, I privilege the *refugee repertoires* that refugees bring with them from Dadaab.¹⁶⁹ These repertoires include such practices as food sharing, communal housing, and translation services. The driving thesis of this chapter is that the refugee camp and inner-city are carceral spaces that utilize technologies of policing and surveillance as a way to govern the vulnerable, but that refugees also develop counter-technologies to survive and even thrive in these carceral spaces.

What makes San Diego a unique site of study is its dual role as the largest refugee receiving city in California and as a military epicenter.¹⁷⁰ The city is a local manifestation of the global relationship between militarism and refugees. Focusing on the period of 1993-2001, I argue that state violence followed Somali refugees from their first city of resettlement in Dadaab, Kenya to City Heights, San Diego. I begin with 1993 because this is the year that large numbers of Somali refugees first entered the United States.¹⁷¹ I engage this moment by utilizing refugee oral histories, newspaper articles, and U.N. and police documents. I also begin with 1993 because it represents the nexus of the War on Drugs and conservative attacks on welfare--the two processes that have negatively

¹⁶⁸ See Somalia: Economy without State by Peter Little

¹⁶⁹ See "The Refugee Repertoire: Performing and Staging the Postmemories of Violence" by Long Bui

¹⁷⁰ See California Department of Social Services Database:

<http://www.cdss.ca.gov/inforesources/Refugees/Reports-and-Data/Arrivals-Data>

¹⁷¹ A San Diego tribune newspaper article from 1993 titled "New group of refugees find safe haven here" by John Wilkins details a story about the first group of Somali refugees to come to San Diego. He states that "It's become one recently for dozens of other Somalis, too -- more than 200 in September alone -- as refugees stream out of the ravaged east African country. The community here, now topping an estimated 1,000 people, has grown so much over the summer that immigration officials believe it is one of the largest in the nation."

impacted Somali refugees' life chances. A goal of this chapter is to disrupt the ideological framework of the U.S. rescue narrative and more broadly the narrative of progress.

I disrupt the refugee rescue narrative by highlighting the refugees' incessant encounters with police violence. My work follows Somali refugees from the 1993 U.S. military invasion of Somalia to San Diego, to emphasize the continuity of U.S. state violence.¹⁷² I am interested in what Somali oral histories tell us about how they have navigated police violence. I draw from the contested memories of Somali refugees to center quotidian forms of resistance, in order to examine the myriad of structural barriers to education, housing, and wages that Somali refugees encountered in San Diego. Theoretically, I bring together Black Studies and Critical Refugees Studies in order to illuminate black people's relationship to U.S. imperialism; I also engage Carceral Studies to show the ways that carcerality emerged from the state's management of enslaved black people.¹⁷³

Dadaab Kenya: Policing the Refugee Camp

During the Somali Civil War, throngs of displaced Somali refugees fled to neighboring Kenya.¹⁷⁴ The Dadaab refugee camp, constructed in 1991 to be a temporary shelter for up to 90,000 refugees, ended up housing 300,000 refugees.¹⁷⁵ As part of the prolonged refugee resettlement process, Somali refugees on average spent about five to

¹⁷² See "Misunderstanding the Somali Crisis" by I.M. Lewis

¹⁷³ See Slaves of the State Black Incarceration from the Chain Gang to the Penitentiary by Dennis Childs

¹⁷⁴ See Clan Cleansing in Somalia The Ruinous Legacy of 1991 by Lidwien Kapteijns

¹⁷⁵ See article by Gary Simpson published in "The Standard" that documents how the Dadaab camp was only built to house 90,000 refugees: <https://www.hrw.org/news/2009/03/31/somali-refugees-kenya-forgotten-and-abused>

ten years in Dadaab awaiting resettlement.¹⁷⁶ As a result, even though the refugee camps were built as temporary shelters, they often became semi-permanent homes for refugees. The Kenyan state agreed to build the refugee camp in Dadaab, because it is located in one of the most arid and unlivable parts of Kenya.¹⁷⁷ As a consequence, Somali refugees had to build a home out of a place not fit for human, an indication of how little value was placed on the lives of refugees in Kenya.

I utilize Eric Tang's concept of hyper-ghetto, in his book Unsettled: Cambodian Refugees in the New York City Hyper-ghetto, to connect the refugee camp and the U.S. "ghetto" as spaces of confinement structured by regimes of social control. I argue that this regime of confinement links Somali refugees' experience with state violence in the Dadaab refugee camp in Kenya to their encounter with ongoing forms of police violence in San Diego. As an example of this linkage, Somali refugees in Dadaab were forced to carry I.D. to identify their refugee status to Kenya officials, and Somali youth in City Heights under curfew laws are required to carry I.D. at night to identify themselves to the city police.¹⁷⁸ These two instances epitomize the surveillance state. According to the Refugee Act in Kenya Law: "Every refugee and asylum seeker shall— (a) be issued with a refugee identity card or pass in the prescribed form; and (b) be permitted to remain in Kenya in accordance with the provisions of this Act."¹⁷⁹ The refugee camp thus functions as a site of containment, where refugees' movements are closely monitored not for the

¹⁷⁶ See UNHCR document titled "UNHCR Refugee Trends 2015" *United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees*, June 2015

¹⁷⁷ See City of Thorns: Nine Lives in the World's Largest Refugee Camp by Ben Rawlence

¹⁷⁸ See document "Thirty-Six Years of Crime in the San Diego Region: 1980 Through 2015" by the Criminal Justice Research Division

¹⁷⁹ See the full transcript of the refugee act at:

http://www.kenyalaw.org/kl/fileadmin/pdfdownloads/Acts/RefugeeAct_No13of2006.pdf

protection of refugees but as a way to contain the population. If a Somali refugee wanted to leave the camps, they needed approval from UNHCR officials. The Refugee Act states “An asylum seeker or a refugee may apply to the Commissioner, through the refugee camp officer, for permission to travel outside a designated area.”¹⁸⁰ Refugees who wanted to leave the camps for shopping or for work, were often harassed and forced to pay bribes to Kenyan police.¹⁸¹ According to an Al-Jazeera article that documents the story of one refugee’s encounter with the Kenya police: “The policeman alleged my refugee identity card had expired. The truth is that it was still valid. He asked for a bribe. I had 1,000 shillings, equivalent to \$12.”¹⁸²

The legal categorization of Somalis as refugees meant that Somalis were barred from establishing residency or citizenship in Kenya, and denied the protections that come with citizenship.¹⁸³ As a result, Somalis were regularly attacked by and forced to pay bribes to the Kenyan police, particularly if they wanted to leave the camps for shopping or for work. As stateless people, refugees had limited capacity to resist this violence because they did not have any means of legal redress. An investigative report by Human Rights Watch entitled “Welcome to Kenya: Police Abuse of Somali Refugees” explains this disturbing trend: “Human Rights Watch spoke to dozens of Somali refugees who described how police patrolling the border areas near Liboi had stopped their vehicles—carrying an average of around 25 women, children, and men—to extort money from them

¹⁸⁰ Ibid.,34.

¹⁸¹ An Al Jazeera article highlights these bribes:
<http://www.aljazeera.com/news/africa/2014/08/kenyan-police-dogged-extortion-charges-20148513110560888.html>

¹⁸² See article on this website <http://www.aljazeera.com/news/africa/2014/08/kenyan-police-dogged-extortion-charges-20148513110560888.html>

¹⁸³ See http://www.kenyalaw.org/kl/fileadmin/pdfdownloads/Acts/RefugeeAct_No13of2006.pdf

in exchange for free passage to the camps. Refugees told Human Rights Watch that police sometimes held young children hostage to force their parents to pay money to secure their release”.¹⁸⁴ This police abuse accentuated the extent to which state violence structured Somali refugee life. To survive these structures of state violence, Somalis developed a keen distrust of state agents. This distrust of the state and humanitarian agents was a necessary tool of survival for refugees who rightly saw state agents as people who at best ignored the needs of refugees and at worst regularly exploited refugees for profit. This type of exploitation is most highlighted by the actions of the Kenyan police. The Kenyan government did little to regulate police abuse of refugees.¹⁸⁵ As a result, refugees developed specific strategies to circumvent police violence, such as sharing information with each other about the location of upcoming police strikes.

Safia Abdimalik, a long-time resident of City Heights, had spent four years in the Dadaab Refugee camp in Kenya (1992-1996). She is now an advocate for refugees at the Somali Family Service. She explained how the refugees attempted to avoid Kenyan police surveillance in the Dadaab refugee camp: “All of us worked together to save ourselves from the police, if they came looking for someone to jail or deport, we just pretended that we didn’t speak Swahili.” As this story shows, refugees produced tools to resist state violence that were not explicitly political in their deployment, but political in their disruption of state power. I provide this example to show that Somalis’ interactions with the police in San Diego does not operate in a vacuum. Safia’s technique of feigning

¹⁸⁴ See website for more information about the abuses that Somali refugees suffered at the hands of police: <https://www.hrw.org/report/2010/06/17/welcome-kenya/police-abuse-somali-refugees>

¹⁸⁵ See article on “All Africa” that highlights the ways in which UNHCR and Refugee collude to oppress refugees: <http://allafrica.com/stories/201609190812.html>

ignorance of Swahili, when interacting with the police, is a prime example of the *refugee repertoire*. This repertoire is collectively shared by refugees and is central to navigating life in the refugee camp. Moreover, refugees have a deep and intimate knowledge of police violence and tactics in managing vulnerable populations that dates to their experiences in the refugee camps. In Dadaab, the police, as the violent arm of the state, work alongside humanitarian agents to manage refugees.¹⁸⁶ Both entities utilize violence as a means of control.

The violence of humanitarianism is also manifested in the practices of NGO agents who limited the amount of food refugees could eat. According to a 1997 UNHCR document titled “Guidelines for Estimating Food and Nutritional Needs in Emergencies”: “Until now WFP and UNHCR have used a reference value of 1,900 kilocalories per person per day for designing emergency rations. This planning figure, which was endorsed by the 1988 Conference ‘Nutrition in Times of Disaster,’ is based on the needs of a “typical” sedentary population with a normal demographic distribution and an assumed physical activity level of 45 percent above the Basal Metabolic Rate (BMR).” This statement illuminates the ways in which UNHCR police refugees’ bodies through food rations. The people who created the 1,900 calorie restrictions are not refugees, but are tasked with dictating what is considered appropriate food intake for refugees. Moreover, this example highlights the ways in which the refugee camp mimics a prison, a space where people’s lives are governed almost entirely by an external entity.

In this space, where policing can take the form of food rations, Somalis found

¹⁸⁶ Ibid.,3.

numerous ways to disrupt power. As an example, Somali refugees would often explicitly withhold information from the police, because they grasp that knowledge is a central mechanism through which police power operates. When the police asked Somali refugees about information relating to a suspect, they would often feign ignorance. Caw Hassid, a Somali refugee who regularly volunteers at the Somali Family Service, explained why refugees would lie to the police: “We lied to the Kenyan police to protect ourselves, they cannot be trusted so we didn’t tell them anything.” Somali refugees congregated in houses and community spaces to share information about upcoming police raids. Families that had recent encounters with police would tell stories about which police officers to trust, which were known for violence, and which officers requested unreasonable demands. This sharing of information was critical to the ways in which refugees navigated camp life, and highlights the quotidian forms that the *refugee repertoire* can take. The Kenyan police also made significant sums of money demanding bribes and stealing goods from refugees.¹⁸⁷ Storytelling among Somali refugees served both as an epistemological basis for refugee identity and a practical tool for circumventing police violence and greed. Since refugees received little to no protection from the Kenyan state, the greatest resource for refugees was other refugees.¹⁸⁸

In addition to utilizing storytelling to safely navigate the Kenyan police, Somali refugees devised unique strategies to deal with humanitarian aid workers. As a way to shift the uneven power balance between refugees and refugee camp officials, refugees

¹⁸⁷ See <https://www.hrw.org/report/2010/06/17/welcome-kenya/police-abuse-somali-refugees>

¹⁸⁸ See Transnational Nomads: How Somalis Cope with Refugee Life in the Dadaab Camps of Kenya by Cindy Horst

utilized what James Scott has called “public transcripts:” the public displays of docility performed by the oppressed, which, upon closer inspection, reveal subtle forms of resistance. In the Somali case, the refugees would perform the image of the suffering and submissive refugee as a way to gain additional resources necessary for daily living. Omar Hasheem, a Somali taxi cab driver in City Heights, described how the refugees would “play dumb” to outsmart the refugee camp police: “The refugee camp officer was always condescending to us, so we would hide some of our daily rations so that we could get more later. They thought we were stupid but we only played dumb so in the end they were the ones that were fooled.” Omar’s refrain is an example of what I call the “refugee repertoire,” a tool kit that refugees draw on to navigate camp life. The “playing dumb” strategy shows that refugees are complex subjects who actively work to circumvent power.

As James Scott argues, the greater the power differential between the oppressors and the oppressed, the thicker the mask of docility.¹⁸⁹ Since the mask of docility is a mask, it is important to highlight the performance of docility rather than the fact of it. As an example, Somali refugees would regularly criticize aid workers who were not in their immediate presence. As Omar relates, “we would always make fun the of UNHCR workers, because they always looked at us like we were dirty and beneath them, so we did the same back to them.” In other words, Somalis were intimately aware of how UNHCR workers perceived them as helpless, and responded by privately mocking the aid workers. As Scott tells us, “. . .the theater of power can, by artful practice, become an

¹⁸⁹ See Domination and the Art of Resistance by James Scott

actual political resource of subordinates. Thus, we get the wrong impression, I think, if we visualize actors perpetually wearing fake smiles and moving with the reluctance of a chain gang. To do so is to see the performance as totally determined from above and miss the agency of the actor in appropriating the performance for his own ends” (34). In this passage, Scott shows that the performance of docility by the oppressed is not a marker of powerlessness, but rather one of the limited tools utilized by the oppressed to resist oppression. Refugees perform docility as a way to navigate the uneven power relations inherent in the structure of the camp, in which refugee input is rarely solicited in the running of the camp or in the executive decisions that affect refugees’ lives.¹⁹⁰ The strategies of resistance utilized by Somali refugees thus disrupt the image of refugees as impressionable people devoid of power. In these moments, when refugees lie to aid workers or to the Kenyan police, they enact political agency despite their status as stateless and therefore rightless people. I deploy James Scott’s analytic of infra-politics to name the moments in which refugees manipulate the refugee condition to their favor in their engagement with the refugee resettlement policies of the UNHCR. The concept of infra-politics is rooted in the idea that domination does not always produce consent in the oppressed, and that acts that seem like consent to oppressors can mask an undercurrent of resistance.

Another example of infra-politics is the refugees’ use of flexible kinship strategies, such as claiming children that are not their own. Refugee resettlement to countries like the United States is rooted in the idealization of the heteronormative

¹⁹⁰ Cindy Horst in the book Transnational Nomads: How Somalis Cope with Refugee Life in the Dadaab Camps of Kenya, examines how refugees are made to feel powerless in the Dadaab Refugee camp and are excluded from executive decisions that affect refugee’s lives.

family: A family that comprises a married mother and father with children is much more likely to be approved for resettlement.¹⁹¹ Single parent households, queer couples, and households that include multiple generations of people are significantly less likely to be approved for resettlement.¹⁹² Somalis are keenly aware of these policies and strategize to circumvent these heteronormative refugee resettlement policies. Safia Abdimalik explained to me the intricacies of this practice:

In Dadaab camp we noticed that single mothers were not getting resettlement, many of them would get rejected for refugee resettlement before the interview stage. But people with traditional families such as a married husband and wife with children would be much more likely to get resettlement. So people came up with creative ways to improve their chances, like creating fake marriages, buying a marriage certificate so that a single mother could get a better chance at resettlement. The mother would pay money to a man who would pretend to be her husband, and once they both entered the U.S. they would divorce after a couple of years.

These creative strategies are *refugee repertoires* which have helped numerous refugee families who otherwise would not have been resettled, to successfully gain residency in the United States.

Due to the refugees' reliance on what the UNHCR terms the "family composition fraud" strategy, UNHCR officials eventually altered their refugee resettlement policies. A UNHCR document "Managing Resettlement Effectively" shows the U.N.'s response to these strategies:

Family composition fraud is one of the areas where misrepresentation or fraud is most likely to be committed. The definition of a family is culturally specific, and care must be taken to accurately record real

¹⁹¹ The book *Entry Denied: Controlling Sexuality at the Border* by Eithne Luibheid interrogates the ways in which sexuality has been used to denied migrants entry into the United States and the privileging of heteronormative families in family reunion programs.

¹⁹² See [UNHCR Resettlement Handbook](#)

relationships, as misrepresentation may not have a fraudulent intent. However, family composition fraud may involve marriages of convenience; fictitious relationships, such as when distant relatives are claimed as sons and daughters; adding fictitious family members; substituting children, which may occur for money or under duress; or “losing” or hiding a family member to get an improved chance at resettlement (such as when a woman hopes to qualify for the Women and Girls at Risk category by claiming that her husband is dead or has disappeared). Family composition fraud may occur early in the process, in order to obtain increased rations of assistance; or it may occur at any later stage, to obtain recognition of refugee status or resettlement, or to take advantage of family reunification programmes outside of resettlement.

Michel Foucault’s insight that power is informed by resistance encapsulates this response.¹⁹³ The UNHCR responded to the refugees’ tactics by interviewing each member of a refugee family to confirm their familial status. A U.N. document titled “Interviewing Applicants for Refugee Status” highlights the strategies U.N. interviewers used to authenticate refugee stories.¹⁹⁴ The document urges interviewers to “assess the applicant’s story and credibility in connection with the principles and criteria for determination of refugee status. This requires that the applicant’s story be carefully documented and cross-checked.”¹⁹⁵ In this setting, personal stories become a site of legal and political contestation, where telling the *correct* story becomes a matter of life or death for refugees. Children are often interviewed separately from their parents, to authenticate the validity of their parent’s marriage, or their own relationship to their parents. According to Safia, in response, refugee families started coaching their children to ensure that they provide the “correct” answers to refugee resettlement agents. This

¹⁹³ See “Two Lectures. Power / Knowledge: Selected Interviews and Other Writings”, 1972-1977. Ed. Colin Gordon. Brighton: Harvester, 1980. 78-108.

¹⁹⁴ See <http://www.refworld.org/pdfid/3ccea3304.pdf>

¹⁹⁵ Ibid., 7.

example highlights the changing and complex interplay—the back and forth—between power and resistance.

Because refugees could not directly confront humanitarian workers, they opted to develop subtle strategies of resistance that relied on the perception of consent through the performance of docility. As I will show below, these repertoires live in the refugees' cultural memories, become part of the collective well of knowledge, which are then shared with fellow refugees via storytelling.

City Heights: Policing the Inner-City

The State Department resettled Somali refugees to City Heights in San Diego because it is a community that has a high concentration of refugee resettlement organizations.¹⁹⁶ According to the California Department of Social Services, more refugees have been resettled in San Diego in February 2017 than any other region of California. The chart, produced by the California Department of Social Services, details refugee arrivals to California by region.¹⁹⁷

¹⁹⁶ See Voice of San Diego article titled “The San Diego Somali Population Explained”:
<http://www.voiceofsandiego.org/community/san-diegos-somali-population-explained/>

¹⁹⁷ This chart can be found in the California Department of Social Services in the document titled “REFUGEE ARRIVALS INTO CALIFORNIA COUNTIES FEDERAL FISCAL YEAR 2017”:
<http://www.cdss.ca.gov/Portals/9/Refugee/Arrivals/Arrivals2017ToDate.pdf?ver=2017-05-10-103333-103>

Table 1: Chart from California Department of Social Services

COUNTY	Oct-16	Nov-16	Dec-16	Jan-17	Feb-17	TOTAL
Alameda	23	18	12	17	2	72
Contra Costa	1	3	4	9	1	18
El Dorado	-	-	-	4	-	4
Fresno	12	5	-	-	7	24
Los Angeles	189	169	132	271	141	902
Orange	15	19	12	27	13	86
Placer	5	25	-	6	8	44
Riverside	5	6	11	4	-	26
Sacramento	215	251	153	214	83	916
San Bernardino	8	1	-	2	-	11
San Diego	268	334	237	275	127	1,241
San Francisco	-	-	3	-	-	3
San Mateo	-	-	4	1	-	5
Santa Clara	12	19	15	15	13	74
Solano	-	-	-	1	-	1
Stanislaus	57	21	43	16	34	171
Tulare						-
Ventura	-	7	4	4	1	16
Yolo	4	9	6	2	-	21
TOTAL	814	887	636	868	430	3,635

City Heights represents a local manifestation of global trends of imperial warfare. The large and diverse refugee populations in City Heights evidences the human costs of these violent imperial impulses. Arriving in City Heights, Somali refugees brought with them a history tinged with U.S. militarism as well as strategies to survive these violent encounters. In San Diego, refugees encountered a new yet familiar form of militarized violence: The city of San Diego—home to the Marine Corps Base Camp Pendleton and to Naval Base San Diego, one of the largest bases of the United States Navy—is a militarized space; the University of California, San Diego produces drone research for the

U.S. military;¹⁹⁸ and fighter jets regularly fly over the San Diego sky. As detailed below, in City Heights, Somali refugees also encountered a new form of state violence: community police violence that targeted their blackness.

Special Weapons and Tactics Teams: Origin of Militarized Police

In the 1990's, SWAT teams in City Heights were regularly deployed to deliver search warrants for low level drug offences.¹⁹⁹ Tahim Nasheer, an Iman and Somali refugee in City Heights, remembered clearly the actions of the San Diego Police Department's (SDPD) SWAT teams: "It seemed like every night there would be a SWAT team breaking down doors and arresting people in our neighborhood. They would often use armored trucks with battering rams just to get into one guy's apartment." It was the War on Drugs that spurred the creation of the Gang Prevention Unit (GPU) in the SDPD,²⁰⁰ which became known for its use of excessive violence against black and Latino communities. Tahim Nasser described this unit to me: "The gang prevention unit thought all black kids were gang members, they were crazy and would come by every day to check our pockets and shove us against the wall. They would sometimes even call our houses and threaten us with arrests." According to a *Voice of San Diego* article, "The gang suppression team, they roll like a mob," said Lincoln Park Minister Hugh Muhammad at the hearing. "They roll deep. They roll three, four, five cars," Muhammad said. "They're very disrespectful. Matter of fact, in my opinion, sometimes they think

¹⁹⁸ See <http://dronelab.ucsd.edu/>

¹⁹⁹ See article "Policing Everything" by Ian G.R. Shaw

²⁰⁰ See *Voice of San Diego* article titled "The Fine Line Between Gang Policing and Gang Behavior" by Megan Burks

they're above reproach.”²⁰¹

As part of the War on Drugs that took place during the 1990's, SWAT teams were regularly deployed to City Heights under the “No Knock” policies.²⁰² These “No Knock” policies involved police breaking down residents' doors without knocking or identifying themselves as police.²⁰³ I asked Mohamed Barsanji if he remembered anything about the SWAT teams when he first came to San Diego in 1994. He explained that seeing the SWAT teams in San Diego reminded him of the Somali Civil War and the terror of the military. As Mohamed stated, “it seemed like every day that another person in our apartment complex would have their doors broken down in the middle of the night by SWAT teams. They entered people's houses by throwing flash grenades scaring everyone inside. The worst part of it was that they would never repair the damage they did so people had to live with broken doors and windows.” Mohamed's memory sheds light on an interesting aspect of police violence, which is how victims of police violence must live with the reminders of the original scene of violence. The broken door and windows provide a topography of violence embedded in the broken window shards. The residents of City Heights are also marred by the sound of police violence.

To live in City Heights is to become accustomed to the sound of sirens and how those sounds transform people's relationship to space. The police thus produce a sonic landscape that reminds residents that they are living under a police state. For Somali refugees who had lived through the trauma of war, encounters with police violence forced

²⁰¹ Ibid., 1.

²⁰² See *Rise of the Warrior Cop*

²⁰³ See article titled “No Knock” Search and Seizure and the District of Columbia Crime Act: A Constitutional Analysis”

them to revisit that trauma, through sound, smell and touch. These militarized scenes of police violence taught Somali refugees to distrust the SDPD and to liken them to an occupying military force. For Mohamed, the police acted like they were at war: “Man! You should have seen the police back then. They were like an army, and we were the enemies. The kind of gear the SWAT teams had, it looked like they were ready for war.”

Mohamed Barsanji also remembers the ways in which refugees helped each other to survive the SWAT teams as much as the violence caused by them. Mohamed claimed, “We would help people in the community, who had their doors and windows broken by SWAT teams, many people in the community came together to help out these people.” As Mohamed Barsanji recalls, the refugee community coming together to help families ravished by police violence highlights the ways in which the *refugee repertoire* functions as a resource for refugees in the face of state violence.

The San Diego police and other state agents would also regularly accuse young Somalis of being drug dealers and gang members. Tahim had intimate experience with this form of racial profiling: “I never sold drugs in my entire life but I was arrested and charged twice for drug distribution charges. The police with patrol cars would follow me and say we are going to get you and catch you slipping. I was black so to them I looked like a drug dealer.” As Tahim’s experience highlights, young Somali refugees were criminalized by the police because their blackness acts as a marker of criminality in the U.S. racial imaginary.²⁰⁴ Yet Somali refugees did not passively accept racial profiling, as many would congregate together as a sign of comradery and share experiences about

²⁰⁴ See Condemnation of Blackness

daily life and methods for navigating police violence. Ahmed Abdirazak, an SDSU college who had been living in San Diego since 1996, reminisced about his time as a youth in City Heights: “We would help each other out, we would give tips about which places to go to buy things with food stamps like clothes, T.V.s, and who to trust with food stamps, some stores didn’t accept food stamps.” Therefore, Somali youth found ways to build comradery and share what little resources they had with each other. Ahmed also noted that the SDPD would force Somali youth on street corners to undergo invasive body searches: “Some friends of mine would always get pulled over by the City Heights Library and the police would push us against the wall and search our pockets, while telling us that we wouldn’t amount to shit. Sometimes they would slam our heads against the wall and there is nothing we can do about it.”²⁰⁵ Ahmed’s statement underscores how powerless Somali youth felt in the face of police terror, but also the ways in which youth created comradery and support systems with each other as a means to survive this violence. Moreover, as Ahmed’s violent encounter highlights, militarized police were far more likely to be aggressive because they were trained to be proactive in their use of violence.²⁰⁶

The militarized police force that Somali refugees encountered in the early 1990’s had been predicted by the 1967 Kerner Commission report on police response to the race riots of the late 1960’s. As the report stated, “The Commission condemns moves to equip police departments with mass destruction weapons, such as automatic rifles, machine

²⁰⁵ According to the Uniform Crime Report by the FBI black youth were uniformly targeted for arrests: <https://ucr.fbi.gov/crime-in-the-u.s/2013/crime-in-the-u.s.-2013/tables/table-43>

²⁰⁶ See “Critical Response Technical Assessment Review: Findings and National Implications of an Assessment of the San Diego Police Department”

guns and tanks. Weapons which are designed to destroy, not to control, have no place in densely populated urban communities.”²⁰⁷ Rejecting police departments’ demands for military equipment as a solution to race riots, the commission concluded that “military weapons are designed to destroy not control,” which meant that a militarized police force would be more emboldened to use violence and function like a military force than a civilian police force. Somali distrust of the police has to be understood in this context—that encounters with the police could invariably lead to violence. A Somali refugee by the name of Ahmed Ali remembered that “we had to avoid police back then [in 1994]. They walked around the streets of City Heights with armored cars and assault rifles. We warned each other if we knew the police were going to do a raid that day.” Ahmed’s statement shows that Somali refugees were not passive subjects of militarized violence, but worked together to find methods to survive state violence. Abdi mentioned that “in Somalia we did the same thing we warned each other when we knew a rebel group was coming to our village, so people had enough time to leave.”

This hyper regulation of youth in public space was a phenomenon that Somali refugees were all too familiar with. For them, resistance to state violence was central to their life in Somalia, in the refugee camp in Kenya, and in San Diego. The hyper regulation of youth illuminates the increased levels of state intervention into the lives of refugees such as Abdi. The state actors that intervene into the refugees’ lives include such disparate agents as teachers, police, social workers, and refugee resettlement agents.²⁰⁸ This trend of the merging of the police into other public service sectors is particularly

²⁰⁷ The “Report of the National Advisory Commission On Civil Disorders” was written by Otto Kerner Jr. in 1967

²⁰⁸ See The Politics of Community Policing: Rearranging the Power to Punish

evident in the cultural programs instituted by the SDPD, best exemplified by the emergence of the “Community Policing” program.

Community Policing

Community policing was implemented in the early 1990’s and was heavily promoted by the SDPD. According to a SDPD document, “Implementing POP: The San Diego Experience,” “From its inception, community policing in San Diego has never been a public relations program aimed at making the community feel good about police officers. The Community Profile Development Project experiment—and community policing as it subsequently evolved—attempted to promote an analytical, thoughtful process of police community interaction directed toward problem solving.”²⁰⁹ In other words, community policing developed from the idea that police officers needed to be integrated into the community.²¹⁰ As a result, one of the main tenets of community policing was local police becoming intimately familiar with the communities they were patrolling.²¹¹ In practice, this policy translated into local police conducting daily foot patrols in neighborhoods and participating in a range of activities such as: conversing with residents, helping the elderly, and mentoring kids.²¹² According to the SDPD’s “Quarterly Community Policing Report,” a popular community policing program is “**Coffee with a Cop (2)** –Host an informal meeting with members of the community to

²⁰⁹ See “Implementing POP: The San Diego Experience” By Chief BOB BURGREN and NANCY McFHERSON

²¹⁰ The anthology The Politics of Community Policing: Rearranging the Power to Punish interrogates the philosophies that undergird community policing as a model of police work

²¹¹ Ibid.,178.

²¹² Ibid.,48.

get to know them and hear their concerns firsthand.” This type of community policing differs from contemporary policing where the police officers rarely leave their patrol cars.

Although community policing was purportedly developed to improve the relationship between police and local communities,²¹³ instead it heightened police control over communities of color.²¹⁴ At times, the community acted as an extension of the police, which involved religious leaders, elders, and individual community members helping the police by sharing their insider knowledge about where local youth congregate. Lebon Hazmi, an older refugee resident nicknamed “The Big Show,” explained this dynamic: “When we were kids back in the day, we felt a lot of antagonism to older people in the community because they would snitch on us and the police would always come even though we were just standing around hanging out.” This partnership between older people in the community and the police had disastrous effects on Somali youth in San Diego. Black, as well as Latino youth were criminalized and provided little reprieve from police harassment.

As an example of “Community Policing,” the San Diego police department instituted a program in which police officers provided cultural training programs to Somali refugee youth.²¹⁵ Abdi Hamza, a counselor and mentor for Somali teens for the Somali Family Service, shared with me his experiences with the now-defunct programs:

When I was a high school student at Crawford High school in the 1990’s, the San Diego police had an after-school program for Somali boys who were getting suspended and in trouble with the school. I was one of these boys and a police officer came every day after school and we, the kids in

²¹³ Ibid., 132.

²¹⁴ Ibid., 127.

²¹⁵ See <https://www.justice.gov/usao-sdca/community-outreach/youth-athletic-event-resource-fair>

detention, had no choice but to go. The police were offering cultural training because one of the officers said we had a backwards culture at home and they would teach us how to be responsible and civilized. The cop told us we were lazy and had no discipline because of our cultural upbringing. I kinda felt that the program was racist but didn't have any choice but to enroll.

These programs were rooted in the assumption that black pathology was the cause of Somali youth's criminal activities. A recent example of this assumption of black pathology is the 2014 controversy of the SDPD using a 1906 racist cartoon as part of police training,²¹⁶ which resulted in a lawsuit filed against the department by Arthur Scott, a black police officer.²¹⁷ Below is the cartoon that appeared in the *San Diego Sun* in 1906:

²¹⁶ See <http://www.nydailynews.com/news/national/black-suing-san-diego-police-racist-cartoon-article-1.2095389>

²¹⁷ See full transcript of lawsuit here:

<http://kpbs.media.clients.ellingtoncms.com/news/documents/2015/01/26/Complaint-Conformed1.pdf>



Figure 1: 1906 Newspaper Article

In the lawsuit, Sergeant Arthur Scott claims that:

On or about August 27, 2014 Sgt. Scott attended mandatory training Sergeant Lieutenant Update Training,” which was a forty-hour (one week) course. Part of the training included a class taught by retired SDPD Lieutenant, Tom Giaquinto, with the San Diego Police Historical Association. During the class, which took place at the San Diego Police

Museum, Lt. Giantuinto passed around a racist cartoon from the early 1900's, of "Patrolman Frank McCarter," who Lt. Giaquinto said was the first black SDPD officer. However, the cartoon that Lt. Giaguinto passed out caricatured Officer McCarter as ape-like, carrying a large pistol and brandishing an oversized baton. Lt. Giaquinto use of the cartoon had nothing to with race relations, nor was it used as an example of racism or discriminatory treatment. The sole stated purpose of the cartoon was to discuss Officer Mccarter himself and his history of having served as an SDPD officer and being allowed to police non-black communities, something that was extraordinary for that period... The following day, on or about August 28, 2014, Sgt. Scott complained to his supervisor, Lt. Mark Hanten, who was also the SDPD lieutenant in charge of the training. This was not the first time Sgt. Scott had complained to Lt. Hanten about inappropriate racist imagery being displayed at SDPD. In 2011, when President Barack Obama was campaigning for re-election, racist images of the President were posted on some SDPD officer's lockers. When Sgt. Scott complained about this, Lt. Hanten told him he was being "hyper-sensitive."

This image and the scandal indicate that the SDPD has a culture of pathologizing black people. Moreover, the fact the black officer's complaints were dismissed as "hyper-sensitive" shows how racism is so normalized in the SDPD.

The police-led cultural programs borrowed from the culture of poverty ideologies by focusing on themes such as disciplines and work ethic, assuming that black people lacked these qualities. The belief in the inherent pathology of blackness can be traced back in part to the scholarship of sociologist Patrick Moynihan. In his 1965 (in)famous report, "The Negro Family : The Case for Nation Action," Moynihan argued that black deficient culture is the root cause of poverty in black communities.²¹⁸ The blackness-as-pathology framework has continued to shape public policies on black communities. The culture of poverty narrative, as an overarching ideology, has a distinct history regarding

²¹⁸ See "The Case for National Action: The Negro Family" published by The Office of Policy Planning and Research.

immigrant groups. The assimilation theory invokes the culture of poverty thesis to explain the structural location of black immigrants in hyper-ghettos: Immigrants who adopt the values of poor black people, rather than the values of the white middle class, are doomed to cyclical poverty.²¹⁹

The cultural programs developed by the police are undergirded by the desire to assimilate Somalis to white middle class values, which is a code word for whiteness and is premised on the rejection of difference.²²⁰ The police believed that young Somalis were turning to crime because they were adopting the values of poor native-born black youth. As Abi Hamza shared with me: “The cops in the afterschool program would tell us that we have to stop acting like the black kids because we would end up dead or in jail if we started acting like, talking like or dressing like the other black kids in City Heights.” Abdi continued, “one of the cops then said well they are Africans we can’t teach savages to be civilized.” In Abdi’s story, the police linked the culture of poverty ideology to the historical discourses of the civilizing mission as it was applied to Africans. As such, Somalis’ experience in City Heights bridges the racialization of black Americans and the racialization of black people in Africa. The civilizing mission justified the violence of colonialism in Africa, whereas the culture of poverty legitimizes the violence of residential segregation and the afterlife of slavery in the United States.

The SDPD-led afterschool program and other similar programs are historically

²¹⁹ Ibid.,24. See also “Segmented Assimilation: Issues, Controversies, and Recent Research on the New Second Generation” by Min Zhou

²²⁰ See *The Possessive Investment in Whiteness: How White People Profit from Identity Politics* by Georg Lipsitz

situated in the emergence of community policing during the Johnson Administration.²²¹

As Peter Kraska explains in Rise of the Warrior Cop:

The exodus of middle-class families to the suburbs in the 1950s and 1960s left low-income and racially marginalized residents behind in the central city and now it seemed that the motorized patrol had created too much distance between police officers and residents in urban areas. Responding to this perceived problem, the Johnson administration had begun to integrate law enforcement programs into social welfare services by empowering police officers to direct after-school recreational programs, to staff Youth Service Bureaus, and to monitor classrooms as school resource officers.

These programs were designed to foster familiarity and trust between the community and the police. However, instead of breeding trust, the police became an occupying force in schools with high concentrations of low income students. This historical precedence, established by the Johnson Administration, conditioned the proliferation of police officers in schools. As of 2013, there are 43,000 police officers in schools throughout the country.²²² Teachers and school administrators rely on these officers to punish teens for misbehavior.²²³ School Resource Officers (SRO), as they are called, are overrepresented in schools with large populations of poor students of color.²²⁴ Simple infractions such as school fights that normally result in student suspensions became opportunities for officers to arrest and charge students with felonies.²²⁵ A report titled “Education Lockdown: The schoolhouse to Jailhouse Track” conducted by *The*

²²¹ See <http://www.sandiegouniontribune.com/communities/north-county/sd-no-criminal-justice-20161213-story.html>

²²² See Congressional Research Service Report titled “School Resource Officers: Law Enforcement Officers in Schools”

²²³ See “Education on Lockdown: The Schoolhouse to Jailhouse Track” a report conducted by The Advancement Project and The Southwest Youth Collaborative

²²⁴ *Ibid.*, 17.

²²⁵ *Ibid.*, 25.

Advancement Project states:

Zero tolerance, a term taken from the war on drugs (where law enforcement agencies swiftly and harshly responded to drug offenders), was initiated in school districts in numerous states during a juvenile crime wave in the late 1980's. In recent years, traditional school punishments have been supplemented by criminal penalties. Even non-violent acts are now subject to citations (tickets) or arrests and referrals to juvenile or criminal courts. In fact, in many instances the charges (e.g., battery for pouring a carton of chocolate milk over the head of a classmate) would never constitute a crime if an adult were involved. Schools have unreasonably raised the stakes for certain adolescent behaviors. As this report indicates the War on Drugs and the policies of zero tolerance encroached into schools and transformed the role of schooling in schools that had large numbers of working class students of color.

Abi Hamza has personally experienced the "Zero Tolerance" policies of schools:

"I was arrested in school for cafeteria food fight, some kid in the cafeteria yell 'food fight' and we all started throwing food around. Then the teacher called the School Resource Officer who came and arrested only the black kids even though everyone was throwing food. I was arrested and charged with assault and battery, which was crazy to me because I had seen tons of white kids get into fights and all they got was an in-school suspension." Abdi's experience reveals the human costs of the criminalization of black youth. Because of these SRO's, black students encounter the violence of the carceral state as early as high school. In short, police as an apparatus of state violence transforms schools into spaces of violence. To invite police into schools is to invite legitimized violence.

In another example, a longtime resident of City Heights, Mohamed Barsanji recounted his experience with the police at his high school: "When the police came to our high school, they told us that they would teach us how to become real men who had jobs

and were not lazy, but they just scared us and we did not want to learn anything from them.” As Mohamed’s story shows, young Somali boys were deemed lazy because they did not appear to conform to proper norms of masculinity. The police, as a surrogate for a strong male presence, would teach Somali boys that the proper performance of masculinity is a critical deterrent to crime. However, many Somali teens did not learn job skills or gain employment from these programs. Instead, they struggled to find steady employment, revealing a stark discrepancy between what the police promised the youth and the reality of the structural racism in their lives.

Rather than deterring crime, these community policing programs made Somali refugees more antagonistic to the police. As Mohamed explained, “I didn’t have much of an opinion about police before this program. But after this program and listening to police call us lazy and telling us we didn’t know how to live our lives. I started to really hate the police, because I always associated them with this experience.” Instead of addressing the poverty and structural violence young Somalis were facing in City Heights, the police were more interested in disciplining them. The merging of the police into other sectors of social services expands the carceral state, which intensifies the encounters youth of color have with the police. The spaces where youth of color could go to escape police surveillance became increasingly limited.

In addition to schools, the police also entered the non-profit world, spurred by the push for community policing. This partnership between the police and the non-profit sector is best highlighted by the SDPD’s Multicultural Community Relations Program.²²⁶

²²⁶ See https://www.washingtonpost.com/local/public-safety/police-devise-strategies-to-embrace-growing-refugee-populations/2016/09/22/3cdeb19c-80f6-11e6-a52d-9a865a0ed0d4_story.html?utm_term=.7aaa93beb776

The SDPD has a refugee liaison as part of the Multicultural Community Relations Program. These liaisons, who were often refugee themselves, were tasked with the job of building trust between refugees and the SDPD.²²⁷ Attached below is a photo from the SDPD website that documents the front office of the Community Relations Program.²²⁸



Figure 2: Office of Multicultural Community Relations

²²⁷ Ibid., 1.

²²⁸ See https://www.washingtonpost.com/local/public-safety/police-devise-strategies-to-embrace-growing-refugee-populations/2016/09/22/3cdeb19c-80f6-11e6-a52d-9a865a0ed0d4_story.html?utm_term=.7aaa93beb776

A quote from a *Washington Post* article highlights the purpose of the program: “Police are also concerned about refugees’ reluctance to report crime, because of their mistrust of police, and the possibility of gangs evolving out of refugee communities where young people seek a sense of belonging.”²²⁹ The police assumed that refugees don’t trust police, because refugees come from countries with repressive regimes and are therefore distrustful of state officials. Yet as Peter Kraska argues, “In fact normally a close alliance between the military and the police is associated with repressive governments”.²³⁰ For refugees, there is little difference between how the police operated in Somalia under the Siad Barre dictatorship and police in San Diego, in that Somalia and the U.S. are similar in their use of militarized and repressive police forces.

The San Diego police also criminalize the poor by issuing traffic tickets in City Heights.²³¹ Abdikareem Hashim, a Somali refugee and student at San Diego State University, shared with me his story that exemplifies the multitude ways that the poor are policed: “I couldn’t pay the 250-dollar speeding ticket, because I had to choose between paying rent or the ticket and I chose rent, and afterwards I started getting fees. I eventually spent time in the county jail because I couldn’t afford to pay any of it.” If you cannot pay a ticket, a series of fines are added to the original ticket.²³² For many poor people, paying a ticket that costs two hundred dollars is difficult enough, but paying all

²²⁹ See Washington Post article by Tom Jackman titled “Police devise strategies to embrace growing refugee populations: https://www.washingtonpost.com/local/public-safety/police-devise-strategies-to-embrace-growing-refugee-populations/2016/09/22/3cdeb19c-80f6-11e6-a52d-9a865a0ed0d4_story.html?utm_term=.4765f2e0c51f

²³⁰ See Rise of the Warrior Cop

²³¹ According to a report by the ACLU on the SDPD black people are stopped three times more often than white people

²³² See “Traffic enforcement in San Diego, California An analysis of SDPD vehicle stops in 2014 and 2015” by

the associated fees that come with failure to pay the original ticket is near impossible.²³³ Like many states, if you do not pay the fees associated with a ticket, the consequences include jail time. Below is as chart from “The ACLU of San Diego and Imperial Counties” relating to traffic stops in San Diego.

Table 2: Vehicle Stops by Race/Ethnicity

Race/Ethnicity, Jan-Mar 2014	% of Population (Aged 15+)	% of Vehicle Stops
Asian/Other	20.0%	15.6%
Black	5.8%	12.3%
Hispanic	26.6%	30.3%
White	47.6%	41.8%

As Abdikareem’s story highlights and this chart confirms, black residents in San Diego are much more likely to be pulled over and ticketed by the police. Abdikareem confirmed that he was a victim of racial profiling: “I can’t tell you how often I get pulled over by the police, it feels like I live in a different world, my world where police are terrifying and the white world where police are the good guys”. Abdikareem’s experience with racial profiling is supported by data from ACLU, where black people despite being a minority in San Diego are overrepresented in police stops. Abdikareem found ways to lessen the burden of paying the high price of the ticket by utilizing *refugee repertoire*, a practiced developed form the refugee camp in Kenya. As Abdikareem relayed to me, refugees would collectively pool money in a Diya (A Somali payment group), so that

²³³ Ibid., 23.

when any member of the Diya was forced to pay a bribe to the Kenyan police they could use money collected from the Diya.²³⁴ Refugees transported this practice to City Heights, and Abikareem used money from the Diya to pay for his ticket. This is one of many examples in which refugees utilized their knowledge of the policing in Kenya as a way to navigate police in San Diego.

Policing Technology

Abdi Halam, an activist and member of the Somali Youth League, explained how police utilized technology to surveil black youth in the 1990's. He claimed that "the police in the 1990's had these gang databases that include every Somali teen in San Diego. For many of us we were in the database because we knew a friend of a friend who was a gang member. The police would come to everyday and say we know you are a gang member come with us for questioning." The California State Department of Justice created the databases CalGang to store information about local gang members and the people they associated with.²³⁵ Even if an individual did not commit a crime, they existed permanently in the CalGang database as associates of gang members.²³⁶ Despite the presence of white gangs in La Jolla, such as the infamous Bird Rock Bandits, the SDPD focused on gang activities in City Heights, San Diego.²³⁷ These gang databases thus accelerated the criminalization of youth of color. The police would document their encounters with youth, by asking for I.D. and subsequently entering the youth's

²³⁴ See "Somali networks: structures of clan and society" by Róisín Hinds

²³⁵ See official California State Department of Justice website about the gang database: <https://oag.ca.gov/calgang>

²³⁶ See San Diego Tribune article that highlights how the gang database are used as a tool of racial profiling: <http://www.sandiegouniontribune.com/news/courts/sd-me-gang-audit-20161025-story.html>

²³⁷ See <http://www.nytimes.com/2008/05/12/us/12surfer.html>

information into the database.²³⁸ From Abdi's comments, it is evident that police utilize carceral technology to rationalize the racial logics that link black youth to criminality. The purported benefits of big data is the elimination of police bias; however, instead of eliminating police bias, crime data reinforce it. According to a report titled *Thirty-Six Years of Crime in the San Diego Region: 1980 Through 2015*, "There were 84 homicides in the San Diego region in 2015, an increase of 14 percent from 2014. In cases where motive could be determined, around half (52%) were due to an argument, 22 percent to domestic violence, and 17 percent to gang activity." Since black youth have disproportionate encounters with the police, they are overrepresented in arrests for crimes from burglary to murder.²³⁹

In *Punished: Policing the Lives of Black and Latino Boys*, Victor Rios details the role of police gang databases:

The rampant use of the gang database was an additional factor which accentuated the criminalization process. Police officers constantly placed young men in this database, allowing any other officer who met the boys to have detailed information about what "turf" they belonged to or where they were last stopped or when they were last questioned. It appeared that the police classified young people as gang members to benefit from the ability to keep track of them and impose harsher restrictions and policing on them.

As such, these databases worked as a method of surveillance of black youth and allowed the police to expand their reach into the lives of youth of color. As Rios explains, the tracking of young people creates the condition of possibility for police violence. Young blacks tracked into the database are more likely to encounter police violence, because the

²³⁸ See "Police and Computer Technology: The Case of the San Diego Computer-Aided Dispatch System" by Ken W Colton

²³⁹ See *Thirty-Six Years of Crime in the San Diego Region: 1980 Through 2015*

police are looking for them specifically, often with a name attached to a face. Abdi Saha a member of the Somali Youth League, recounted his experience with the CalGang database: “This cop who I never saw before pulled up next to me and knew my name, where I lived and named all of my friends. He told me he was watching me, I was so scared I couldn’t understand how he knew who I was?”

Abdi’s jarring experience with the police officer shows that technology has allowed the police to expand the range of their surveillance. To counteract, youth of color adopt technology as a form of resistance, this practice by refugee youth is another example of the *refugee repertoire*. In San Diego, Somali youth started to film police arrests as a way to keep the police accountable. They believed that if the police were filmed, they would be less likely to commit violence. By recording police assaults, Somali teens intend to make visible to the broader public an occurrence that has been made invisible to many. Abdimalik Hashim explains the use of technology to resist police: “We know take out our cameras to record police, because if we don’t they will attack the person and beat them. By recording them they will be more afraid to do that kind of stuff.” Abdimalik’s comment highlights the interplay between state power and resistance as mutually constitutive processes.²⁴⁰ Because many police officers feel justified in their use of violence, Somali youth maintain their own databases as a way to resist police violence. Somali teens share and collect information about the most dangerous police officers working for the SDPD. This information is disseminated through word of mouth, so people know which officers to avoid.

²⁴⁰ See "Two Lectures." *Power / Knowledge: Selected Interviews and Other Writings, 1972-1977*. Ed. Colin Gordon. Brighton: Harvester, 1980. 78-108.

Militarized Police Language

The use of military language such as “War Zones” and “War on Drugs” justifies the belief that black and brown youth are enemy combatants that need to be eliminated rather than rehabilitated. The militarization of police is a structural and linguistic phenomenon that frames how police interact with youth of color and only accelerates instances of police brutality. An example is the linguistic similarity between police ranks and military ranks. According to the San Diego Police Historical Association the police ranks include: Police officer 1, Sergeant, Lieutenant, and Captain.²⁴¹ These ranks and organizational structures are historically influenced by the military ranks: private, sergeant, lieutenant, captain and major.²⁴²

The militarized language is also influenced by the fact that a significant number of the police officers are former military veterans.²⁴³ There are a number of programs that promote the hiring of military veterans in the U.S. police forces. Kevin Loria highlights the recruitment of military veterans to police forces: “Under the Justice Department's COPS (Community Oriented Policing Services) program, 629 of the 800 police jobs funded for the next three years – all the newly hired officers – must go to veterans who served at least 180 days' active duty since 9/11. This is the first time the 18-year-old COPS program has required cities and counties seeking grants to hire veterans exclusively.”²⁴⁴ The fact that six hundred and twenty-six jobs are reserved for military

²⁴¹ See <http://www.sdpolicemuseum.com>

²⁴² See “Militarization and Policing—Its Relevance to 21st Century Police” by Radly Balko

²⁴³ The Bureau of Justice Assistance created a document titled “Employing Returning Combat Veterans as Law Enforcement Officers”

²⁴⁴ <http://m.csmonitor.com/USA/2012/0625/Military-veterans-to-get-priority-for-police-jobs-under-COPS-grants>

veterans highlights the steady transformation of police forces into standing armies. These veterans are trained to use lethal force as a first order of measure.²⁴⁵

One instantiation of the relationship between the military and police is an encounter with the police by Eidle Ali, a Somali refugee activist. Eidle claims that in 1994, an SDPD officer “pulled up on me near a 7/11 and ran out the car and shoved me against the wall to search my pockets, when I told him why was he doing this to me he told me; shut up you stupid skinny.” Skinny was a derogatory term utilized by U.S. Marines to refer to Somalis during the U.S. military invasion of Somalia in 1993. This naming strategy echoes the term “Charlie” to refer to Vietnamese people during the U.S. war in Vietnam and “Hajjis” to refer to Iraqi people. These instances of naming are modes of speech that dehumanize people. The fact that an SDPD officer referred to a Somali teen as a “Skinny” reveals how military language circulates and penetrates the policing world. In the scene painted by Eidle, Mogadishu and City Heights merge into each other as war zones that require a militarized response to the presence of Somalis. The military, police, Somalia, and City Heights are thus linked in this one singular moment of a police officer confronting a Somali teen. Somali youth also develop counter-terminology as a way to take power away from the insults hurled at them by police. As Eidle explained “whenever police harassed us and called us names we call them names too, except in Somalia, we would tell refer to police as Dabal Askar and they would look confused.” Dabal Askar in Somali translates into stupid police, and is an example of Somali refugee resistance to the daily humiliation at the hands of police. The Somali

²⁴⁵ For a discussion of use of force see “San Diego County Sheriff’s Department Policy and Procedure Manual”

word Askar, has dual meanings since Askar can mean either police or soldier. In the Somali language, the same word is utilized to name police and military.

Eidle's violent encounter is made possible by two parallel developments in American politics. The first development is the erosion of various political and economic gains made by black communities in the post-civil rights era, what Manning Marable refers to as "The Second Reconstruction". This erosion is the result of policies that reduced government spending to social services, healthcare, and housing for the poor. The second development is the allocation of government funds to the military put forth by the Reagan administration. Manning Marable explains "that the president proposed the largest military expenditures in human history, \$1.6 trillion over a five-year period. This inconceivable amount came to almost \$11,000 for every U.S. citizen who paid taxes on 1979 income".²⁴⁶ This expansive and expensive military budget allowed police departments to receive increased funds for military equipment. This budget catalyzed both the expansion of a U.S. military empire abroad and a repressive state domestically. Another effect of this uneven state spending is that the military ballooned while social services withered. As Marable notes:

the abandonment of the Comprehensive Employment and Training Act program, funded in 1981 for \$3.1 billion, and the elimination of its 150,000 federally funded jobs; the closing of the National Consumer Co-operative Bank, which granted loans to small economic nomic co-operatives; a \$2 billion reduction in the federal Food Stamps Program by fiscal 1983; the elimination of the \$2 billion Guaranteed Student dent Loan Program; the reduction of \$1.7 billion from child nutrition programs sponsored by the federal government by fiscal 1983; the closing of the Neighborhood Self Help and Planning Assistance programs, which allotted \$55 million in fiscal 1981 to aid inner cities.²⁴⁷

²⁴⁶ See Manning Marable in the book Race, Reform and Rebellion: The Second Reconstruction in Black America 1945-1982 page 67

²⁴⁷ Ibid.,94.

These significant cuts destroyed the gains in employment and education made by black communities in the immediate post-civil rights era. It threw an entire generation of black people who had been promised better opportunities in the post-segregation era, into poverty. The government's response to this growing inequality was the over-policing and criminalization of black communities.²⁴⁸

There is an inverse relationship between the expansion of the carceral state and the demise of the welfare state. In the midst of these punitive expansions, crime quietly declined in the 1990's. Marable explains that "In the early 1990s, statistics on violent crime began to fall sharply throughout the country. Ironically, state legislatures and the federal government began adopting more severe legal penalties against convicted felons, even for nonviolent offenders. "Maximum-minimum" sentencing laws were adopted, requiring judges to issue long-term prison sentences without the possibility of early parole."²⁴⁹ The crises of crime produced by legislators and the media worked to justify the expansion of police and the prison system. The figure of the black criminal became one of the most powerful tools to oppress black people in the 1990's.²⁵⁰ Somali refugees entered San Diego in a post-civil rights moment where de-facto segregation and the hyper-criminalization of black teens became the normal functioning of society.

Conclusion

²⁴⁸ See The Condemnation of Blackness: Race, Crime and the Making of Modern Urban America by Khalil Gibran Muhammad

²⁴⁹ Ibid.,221.

²⁵⁰ See Crime and the Politics of Hysteria: How the Willie Horton Story Changed American Justice for a discussion on how the figure of the black criminal embodied in Willie Horton galvanized the expansion of the Carceral State

Somalis had survived two spaces of confinement that attempted to reduce them to abject and powerless subjects, the refugee camp and the inner city, spaces deeply connected to the carceral state. Rather than become surplus population for the state, Somalis became agents that regarded the state as surplus. Somalis did not view the state as necessary for their day-to-day survival, because the state had failed to protect them on numerous occasions. The state failed to provide necessities such as food and shelter, while imprisoning them in refugee camps and policing them in the inner city. The Somali refugee condition reveals the fiction of the welfare state and highlights the entrenched vulnerability that the neoliberal state creates for its citizens. Somalis point to the capacity and possibility of living and thriving without state protections. Somalis responded to state violence by creating networks of support that superseded the state. They created tactics and methods to share information, food, housing, and education when the state failed to provide these critical resources. In City Heights, Somali refugee families would allow new refugee families to live with them for months at a time, until the family could find their own housing. Refugee services and welfare agencies in San Diego often failed to provide adequate housing to newly arrived refugees. Refugees provided this critical service that the state consistently failed to deliver to the most vulnerable in its community. Therefore, when Somali refugees encountered a police state in San Diego, they responded by utilizing *refugee repertoires* as a way to survive and as a strategy to circumvent state power. The refugees condition, as stateless people, exposes both the fiction of the state and the necessity of the state. Therefore, this chapter analyzed the encounter between the police state, as the highest form of state power, and stateless people, as markers of the limitations of the nation-state.

Chapter Three: The War on Drugs, Militarized Police, and Blackness

Introduction

Focusing on the experiences of Somali refugees with U.S. racialized state violence, this chapter asks how the San Diego Police Department became one of the most militarized police forces in the country and how Somali refugee experience sheds light on this militarization. I focus on San Diego because the city is a major producer of military research and equipment via its vast network of universities, tech companies, and private contractors;²⁵¹ it is also a major refugee-receiving city. I examine how anti-black racism serves as a rationale for the mobilization of the military and the police against Somali refugees, and how the police legitimizes its violence against Somalis through the rhetoric of law and order. The figure of the “criminal” disrupts the ideals of democracy and social order, ideals which are premised on sustaining the structuring legacies of U.S. imperialism, settler colonialism, and slavery.²⁵² White supremacy, the after-life of slavery, and colonialism pose a serious dilemma for Somalis: Is freedom from state violence possible when the state considers your existence—your blackness—as a threat? This question locates the danger of black identity in the context of a U.S. state regime that imagines violence as the primary solution to social problems. An example of this mindset is the institutionalization of loitering laws that criminalize the poor, instead o

²⁵¹ See article “San Diego, Guardian of the American Pacific”

²⁵² See [Toward a Global Idea of Race](#)

policies that address the structural issues that cause their poverty.²⁵³ In this web of state violence, safety is an elusive concept for Somalis, one that is curtailed by the state in the form of police brutality.

What distinguishes my project from other works on police is that I focus on the militarized aspects of policing, and I do so with an emphasis on the refugee. Due to the proximity of Marine Corps Base Camp Pendleton, the San Diego Police Department and the military have had a deep and longstanding relationship. New recruits to the San Diego police train and learn military tactics at Camp Pendleton.²⁵⁴ As a result of this relationship, San Diego, of all the major cities in the country, is a unique site for the study of police militarization. Unlike other scholarship on police that claim that the militarization of the police began in 2001 with the War on Terror, I argue for a longer history that traces the militarization of the police to two historical points: the slave patrols in the Carolinas in the 18th century and the War on Drugs in the 1970s (see James et. al.). The significance of these two moments is highlighted by the curtailment of black freedom that is white supremacy's response to Reconstruction and the Civil Rights Movement.²⁵⁵

The Construction of Black Criminality

Fears of black resistance, whether real or perceived, have historically spurred

²⁵³ See "Gang Loitering, the Court, and Some Realism about Police Patrol

²⁵⁴ A San Diego police recruiting website named Recruit Military shows the police train at Camp Penelton. <http://search-and-employ.com/continue-to-serve-our-beloved-country-san-diego-police-department/>

²⁵⁵ See Race, Reform and Rebellion by Manning Marable

the mobilization of state instruments of terror.²⁵⁶ The U.S. police were birthed in the Reconstruction period to mitigate white apprehensions about black freedom. In Slave Patrols: Law and Violence in Virginia and the Carolinas, Sally Hadden dates the origins of police militarization to the slave patrols of the 18th century.²⁵⁷ Hadden unveils historical evidence that shows that the slave patrols and militia merged in North Carolina in the 18th century as a response to white fears of slave revolts. She posits that “with this failed experiment behind them, the assembly determined that patrols and militia would be formally merged” (66). The last slave patrols to have officially operated in the U.S. disbanded at the end of the Civil War in 1866. This historical example signals the tremendous mobilization of state resources in response to black resistance. In short, the slave patrols, the antecedents to modern police departments, utilized ideas of black criminality as a way to legitimize systematic violence against black communities.

The police as a coherent organization cannot exist without the discourse of criminality.²⁵⁸ Social scientists played a key role in producing “Black criminality;” their scholarship helped to sanction state violence against newly freed black populations. As an example, in 1900, sociologist John Roach Straton linked blackness to criminality, claiming that “by the census of 1890, twenty years from their emancipation in the south, we are confronted with the fact that the race, though

²⁵⁶ Ibid.,46.

²⁵⁷ Sally Hadden explores the transformation of slave patrols to police in Chapter 4 of her book Slave Patrols

²⁵⁸ See Social Death: Racialized Rightlessness and the Criminalization of the Unprotected by Lisa Marie Cacho

constituting less than twelve percent of the population of this country, furnished thirty percent of all the crime of the country, including thirty-seven percent of all homicides” (788).²⁵⁹ Stratton thus deployed quantitative data to justify racial profiling, and make arbitrary claims as to why black people should be denied an education. From this passage, it is evident that data is not objective but rather can work towards promoting a political project premised on subjugating black people.

Khalil Gibran Mohamed, in Condemnation of Blackness, details the role of 20th century sociology in racializing crime as black. Khalil argues that discourses of black criminality began in 1890, a significant time period because black emancipation posed a serious threat to white supremacy in the post-Reconstruction period. The state needed a new discourse and structure to legitimize the exploitation of black people. Khalil decidedly demonstrates the way that “race-relations writers had inscribed criminality onto nearly every aspect of black people’s existence. That crime became linked to migration, to education, to politics, to housing, and to philanthropy reveals the pervasive influence of those who had forced the question to the nation of whether African Americans should continue to have access to social resources at all” (93). Khalil’s argument uncovers one of the major roles of the discourse of black criminality, which is to legitimize the exclusion of black people from state resources. Partly as a result of the work of criminologists, crimes committed by white people are individualized whereas crimes committed by black people become representative of the entire race. The discourse of black criminality allows the state to spatialize violence

²⁵⁹ See article “Will Education Solve the Race Problem?” By John Roach Stratton

onto black bodies and obscure the role of the state in producing violence.²⁶⁰ The history of criminalization and race provides unique insights into contemporary manifestations of crime discourse. As an example, the infamous New York stop and frisk policies that took place in 2003, which were overwhelmingly applied to young black people, spotlight the power of the police to criminalize black presence in public spaces.²⁶¹ According to an ACLU report in 2003, New Yorkers were stopped by the police 160,851 times:²⁶²

140,442 were totally innocent (87 percent).

77,704 were black (54 percent).

44,581 were Latino (31 percent).

17,623 were white (12 percent).

83,499 were aged 14-24 (55 percent).

The value of black criminality as an explanatory device was especially powerful in the 1970's War on Drugs. The 1968 election of Richard Nixon represented a watershed moment in the militarization of the police because it initiated the War on Drugs. According to Dan Baum in the book Smoke and Mirrors: The War on Drugs and the Politics of Failure, the War on Drugs began in June 1971, when Richard Nixon declared a war on drugs. In June 17, 1971 Richard Nixon gave a speech where he

²⁶⁰ See Slaves of the State: Black Incarceration from the Chain Gang to the Penitentiary by Dennis Childs

²⁶¹ New York's civil liberties Union uncovers the data on racial profiling in this website <http://www.nyclu.org/issues/racial-justice/stop-and-frisk-practices>

²⁶² See <https://www.nyclu.org/en/stop-and-frisk-data>

claimed:²⁶³

America's public enemy number one in the United States is drug abuse. In order to fight and defeat this enemy, it is necessary to wage a new, all-out offensive. I have asked the Congress to provide the legislative authority and the funds to fuel this kind of an offensive. This will be a worldwide offensive dealing with the problems of sources of supply, as well as Americans who may be stationed abroad, wherever they are in the world. It will be government wide, pulling together the nine different fragmented areas within the government in which this problem is now being handled, and it will be nationwide in terms of a new educational program that we trust will result from the discussions that we have had. With regard to this offensive, it is necessary first to have a new organization, and the new organization will be within the White House. Dr. Jaffe, who will be one of the briefers here today, will be the man directly responsible. He will report directly to me, and he will have the responsibility to take all of the Government agencies, nine, that deal with the problems of rehabilitation, in which his primary responsibilities will be research and education, and see that they work not at cross-purposes, but work together in dealing with the problem. If we are going to have a successful offensive, we need more money. Consequently, I am asking the Congress for \$155 million in new funds, which will bring the total amount this year in the budget for drug abuse, both in enforcement and treatment, to over \$350 million.

According to Nixon policy advisor John Ehrlichman, the War on Drugs was aimed at making it “illegal to be either against the war or blacks, but by getting the public to associate the hippies with marijuana and blacks with heroin, and then criminalizing both heavily, we could disrupt those communities.”²⁶⁴ Nixon’s goal of criminalizing black people would become a reality decades after his famous speech.

According to an ACLU report documenting the effects of the War on Drugs on Black communities²⁶⁵:

Pervasive racial targeting provides another peculiarly U.S. stamp to the drug war. We are incarcerating African-American men at a rate approximately four times the rate of incarceration of black men in South

²⁶³ See <http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/?pid=3047>

²⁶⁴ <http://jezebel.com/nixons-policy-advisor-admits-he-invented-war-on-drugs-t-1766359595>

²⁶⁵ See <https://www.aclu.org/other/drug-war-new-jim-crow>

Africa under apartheid.⁵ Worse still, we have managed to replicate—at least on a statistical level—the shame of chattel slavery in this country: The number of black men in prison (792,000) has already equaled the number of men enslaved in 1820. With the current momentum of the drug war fueling an ever expanding prison-industrial complex, if current trends continue, only 15 years remain before the United States incarcerates as many African-American men as were forced into chattel bondage at slavery's peak, in 1860.

Police departments also gained access to military SWAT teams to help with the drug wars. As discussed in Chapter 2, in San Diego, SWAT teams have often been deployed to deliver search warrants to poor communities of color.²⁶⁶ Indeed, the first SWAT team to operate in the U.S. established their base of operations at Camp Pendleton in 1962.²⁶⁷ As a result of San Diego's experiment with SWAT teams, most police departments in the nation now retain a SWAT team as an essential police unit. In another example of the merging between the military and the police, police chief Darryl Gates, in creating the first SWAT team of the Los Angeles Police Department, asked recently returned U.S. soldiers from Vietnam to train police officers.²⁶⁸ The use of Vietnam veterans to train the police reveals the concrete links between American imperial and domestic violence. More recently, the U.S. military has also shared institutional knowledge about their deployments in places like Korea, Vietnam, and Iraq with the police; the military in turn learns to fine tune their weapons of war by using people of color as the site of experiments.²⁶⁹ This intuitional knowledge about

²⁶⁶ Radley Blako in the book Rise of the Warrior Cop review data on the U.S. of swat teams in Chapter 2

²⁶⁷ This origin of police is referenced in Radley Balko's book "Rise of the Warrior Cop"

²⁶⁸ See Governing Through Crime: How the War of Crime Transformed American Democracy and Created a Culture of Fear

²⁶⁹ See The Militarization of U.S. Domestic Policing by Abigail R. Hall and Christopher J. Coyne

how to efficiently deploy death was transferred to police forces through SWAT teams.²⁷⁰

The first deployment of these SWAT teams was against the Black Panthers in Los Angeles in 1969.²⁷¹ The significance of this deployment is highlighted by the fact that the Black Panthers were discursively racialized as domestic terrorists. I argue that the FBI's surveillance of the Black Panthers, through the COINTELPRO program, set the precedent for the treatment of black Muslims today.²⁷² The Black Panthers were imagined as terrorists because they challenged the legitimacy of the U.S. as a country that has been built off the accumulation of black death. The Black Panthers also represented a threat to America's international interests, because of the party's virulent critique of the Vietnam War. The Policing Terrorism manual written by Ronald Clarke sheds light on the fact that the Black Panthers continue to be imagined as terrorists by the state. The state has at its disposal a long institutional memory which carries the knowledge of the Black Power Movement to the present. In the Policing Terrorism manual, Ronald Clarke, a Criminology Professor at Rutgers University, claims that "None of these domestic terrorist groups has shown the ability to conduct routine and repeated attacks on the scale of the IRA in Northern Ireland or the various terrorist groups in Palestine. This is probably because they lack the organizational capability to sustain many attacks. It might also be that they are not as committed to violence as are other terrorist groups. Exceptions to this general truth were the violent antiwar and *black power protests* that took place during the Vietnam era. (Clarke, 66, emphasis

²⁷⁰ Ibid., 14.

²⁷¹ <http://www.vrslegal.com/the-rise-of-swat-part-3-of-3-swat-vs-the-black-panther-party/>

²⁷² See Revolutionary Suicide by Huey P. Newton

added). Clark's statement, however, disregards the massive deployment of terror by the COINTELPRO to destroy the Black Panthers. The statement "various terrorist groups in Palestine" also reveal how Palestinian resistance to settler colonialism and black people's critique of white supremacy is read by the state as acts of terrorism instead of acts of freedom.²⁷³ The COINTELPRO program is important for my work because it details the FBI's role in racializing domestic terrorism as black.²⁷⁴

The FBI involvement in the War on Drugs unleashed the concentration of U.S. state powers in response to the material and political gains black people made in the late sixties.²⁷⁵ The political terrain shifted when President Ronald Reagan in 1986 declared that drugs were a national security issue, with the passing of National Security Decision Directive 221.²⁷⁶ According to the language used in the National Security Directive 221:²⁷⁷

The expanding scope of global narcotics trafficking has created a situation which today adds another significant dimension to the law enforcement and public health aspects of this international problem and threatens the national security of the United States. (C) While the domestic effects of drugs are a serious societal problem for the United States and require the continued aggressive pursuit of law enforcement, health care, and demand reduction programs, the national security threat posed by the drug trade is particularly serious outside U.S. borders. Of primary concern are those nations with a flourishing narcotics industry, where a combination of international criminal trafficking organizations, rural insurgents, and urban terrorists can undermine the stability of the local government; corrupt efforts to curb drug crop production, processing, and distribution; and distort public perception of the narcotics issue in such a way that it becomes part of an anti-U.S. or anti-Western debate.

²⁷³ See "Criminalizing Pain and the Political Work of Suffering: The Case of Palestinian 'Infiltrators'" by Nadera Shalhoub-Kevorkian

²⁷⁴ See Cointelpro: The FBI's Secret War on Political Freedom by Nelson Blackstock

²⁷⁵ See Rise of the Warrior Cop by Radley Balko

²⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, 67.

²⁷⁷ See <https://reaganlibrary.archives.gov/archives/reference/Scanned%20NSDDS/NSDD221.pdf>

Once drugs became a national security issue, federal entities like the FBI and the National Guard were mobilized to aid local police departments—a move that would summon the entire U.S. state apparatus of violence against black communities. Radley Balko, in Rise of the Warrior Cop, explains that “Reagan also brought the FBI to enforce the drug laws” (66). The relationship between the FBI and the police is not new, considering how closely they worked together under J. Edgar Hoover to destroy the Black Panther Party. What Ronald Reagan did was further solidify the relationship between the military and the police with the 1981 Military Cooperation with Law Enforcement Act,²⁷⁸ which allows the military to provide assistance to police departments in the form of intel, equipment, and soldiers.²⁷⁹ The act also encouraged the military to train police and share intelligence. The MCWLA, out of all the major pieces of legislation in the last 30 years, is most responsible for the militarized police forces we see today. During the height of the War on Drugs, the militarization of the police would have devastating effects on black communities which were disproportionately targeted by drug enforcement laws.²⁸⁰ According to an ACLU report on the war on marijuana, “on average, a Black person is 3.73 times more likely to be arrested for marijuana possession than a white person, even though Blacks and whites use marijuana at similar rates. Such racial disparities in marijuana possession arrests exist in all regions of the country, in counties large and small, urban and rural, wealthy and poor, and with large and small Black populations.”

²⁷⁸ Ibid.,59.

²⁷⁹ Ibid.,65.

²⁸⁰ See “The War on Marijuana in Black and White” by The American Civil Liberties Union

The expansion of police powers, as stipulated by the MCWLA, also enabled the CIA to share intel on terrorism gathered abroad with the local police in the ongoing War on Terror. In the Somali case, the CIA's sharing of intel about terrorism in Somalia with the local police departments further empowers the police to increase their surveillance of the Somali refugee community.²⁸¹ This institutional knowledge also works in reverse, with the police often sharing their institutional knowledge gained from the War on Drugs to aid the military. In 2010 there was a program in which 70 Marines shadowed the LAPD in order to apply the lessons learned in South Central L.A. to Afghanistan. Julie Watson, a reporter for 7 San Diego News, recounts the story of Abbott, who was amongst the "70 Camp Pendleton Marines in a training exercise that aims to adapt the investigative techniques the LAPD has used for decades against violent street gangs to take on the Taliban more as a powerful drug trafficking mob than an insurgency."²⁸² These adaptive techniques are then used against those racialized as disposable to the state.

²⁸¹ <http://harpers.org/blog/2011/07/the-cias-secret-prison-in-somalia/>

²⁸² <http://www.nbcsandiego.com/news/local/Cops-Show-Marines-How-to-Take-on-the-Taliban--98202989.html>

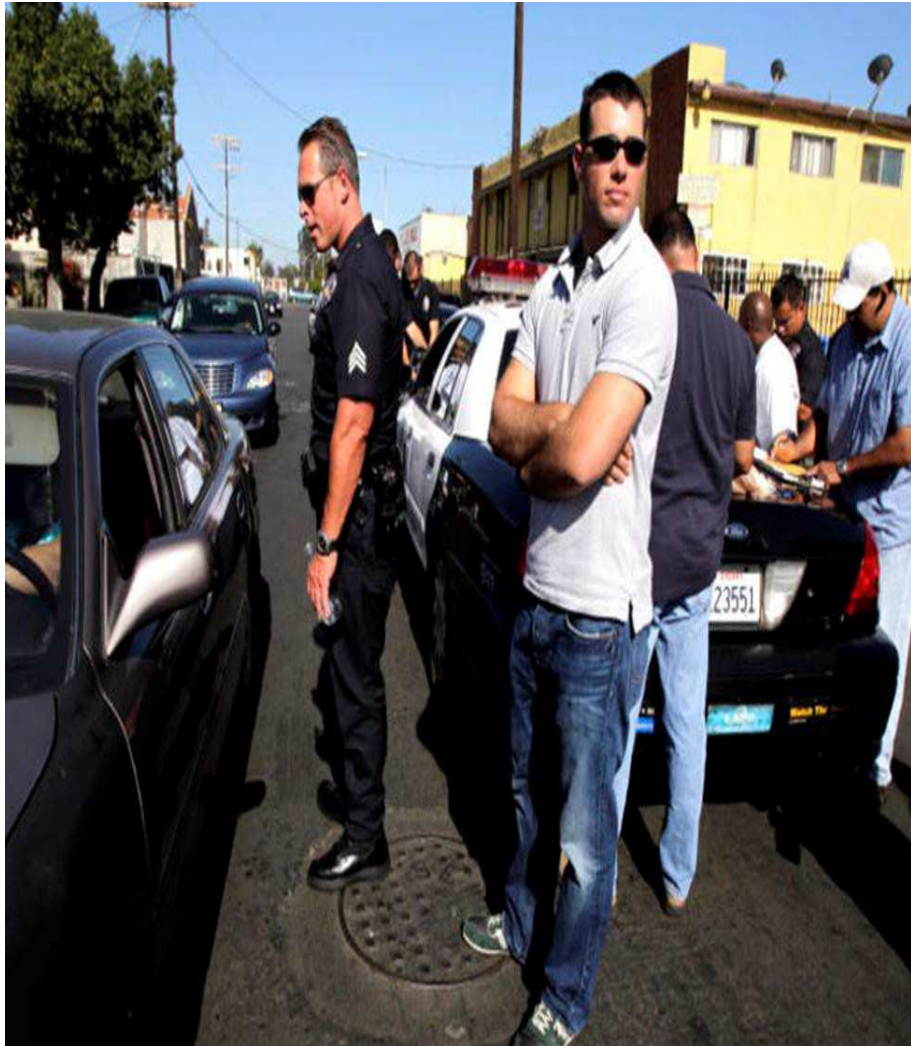


Figure 3: Photograph of police officer (left) being shadowed by Marine (right)

In the above photo (Figure 1), Marine Lt. Andrew Abbot watches as the police harass black people in South Central L.A. The violent techniques that the LAPD wielded against black communities, in the form of police brutality and murder, are learned and possibly used by the Marines in Afghanistan. This photo and the close proximity between the police officer and the Marine reveals the convergence of state powers, with the military and the police intimately working together to visit violence on communities of color in L.A. and in Afghanistan. Programs like this one illuminate how the discourse of terrorism and of criminality can work together to facilitate the global and local circulation of U.S. state violence.

To detail how the police criminalized the predominately immigrant neighborhood of City Heights, I will deconstruct an interactive map of crime produced by the SDPD.²⁸³ The website for this interactive map is titled Crime Mapping Building Safe Communities. In this digital map, you can enter an area code or address, and the map will show you the crimes in progress in the area including assaults, thefts, and vandalism. What immediately stands out in this map is that the vast majority of crimes are concentrated in the City Heights area of San Diego. Below is a map from the SDPD sponsored website Crime Mapping Building Safe Community which lists the number of crimes that took place in the City Heights, on May 31, 2017.²⁸⁴

²⁸³ <http://www.crimemapping.com/map.aspx?aid=137a7b29-7112-471f-9d43-728ca7ec478f>

²⁸⁴ See <https://www.crimemapping.com/>

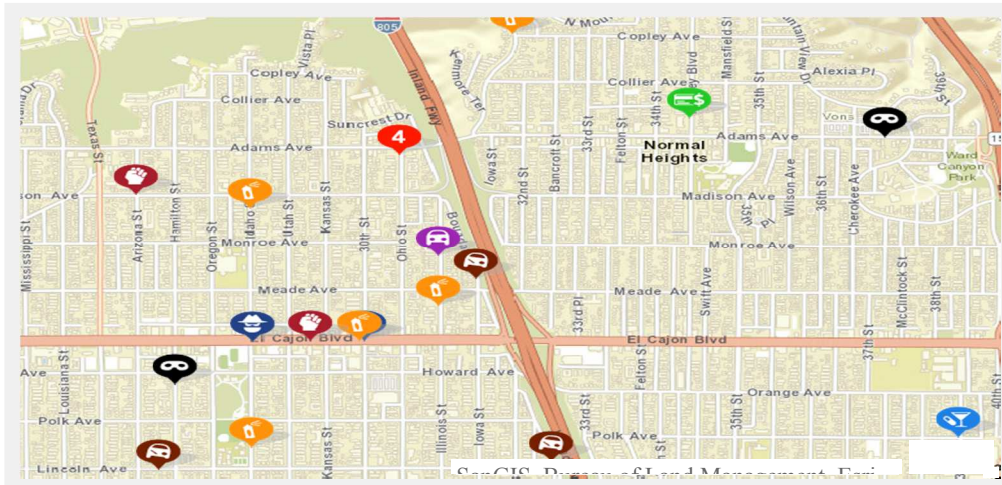


Figure 4: Map of Crime in City Heights

This mapping of crime onto the black and brown communities in City Heights is used by the police as a rationale for the overwhelming police presence in those communities.²⁸⁵ As a counterpoint, I juxtapose this mapping with an alternative mapping produced by Somali youth, who often share information with each other about the whereabouts of the police as a way to navigate and circumvent police surveillance and violence. As an example, Jamal Ahmed, a Somali youth and City Heights resident, shared this information with me: “You have to avoid the corner of 47th and University. That place, homie, is where police always harass young black kids.” The counter map provided by Jamal underscores Michel Foucault’s theory that resistance is informed by power. The police’s spatial understanding of the corner of 47th and University as a site of criminality is contested by Somali youth who argue

²⁸⁵ See [Police Accountability-Findings and National Implications of an Assessment of the San Diego Police Department](#)

that this corner is a site of police brutality. Somali youth are thus actively responding to and developing strategies to resist the police's project of mapping violence. The rupture between these two mapping projects highlights that space is a site of political, social, and epistemological contestation. Ahmed Rafik, an SDSU student, and a member of the Somali Youth League also deployed the same counter-mapping. Ahmed stated that "One of my friends bought a police scanner so that we would know what the police are up to. Whenever we found out where there would be a lot of police activity, we would text all our friends and tell them to avoid that region. One time there were ten squad cars at the corner of Fairmount and university, I was terrified by all those cops. I told all my friends to avoid that area."

Finally, crime is not only mapped onto space, but also onto bodies. An article by *San Diego Tribune* staff writer Joe Hughes on June 2005 reveals the racialization of Somalis as gang members: "Crime among the African youths on San Diego streets was escalating. Gangs were proliferating. Burglaries, vandalism, assaults and truancies were becoming the norm."²⁸⁶ Newspaper stories such as this one inspired white residents to demand that city government officials enforce curfew laws to monitor young black youth.²⁸⁷ Equipped with stories that affirm black criminality, the police began to occupy the City Heights neighborhood in earnest. Because of the increased police presence in City Heights, black youth were systematically profiled, assaulted, and arrested. Bilal Nasir a Somali student at SDSU explained "A lot of my friends have been harassed and arrested by police. We think that because there is such

²⁸⁶ <https://socialinnovation.usc.edu/files/2013/05/Hughes.2005.pdf>

²⁸⁷ The SDPD website provided a detail description of curfew laws
<https://www.sandiego.gov/police/services/prevention/community/parental/curfew>

a large number of cops patrolling City Heights, that we are always getting pulled over by police.”

This increased level of police surveillance and violence was legitimized by the continuous circulation of images of “black on black violence” and gang warfare in local news outlets. The *San Diego Tribune* and other media transformed black rage over deteriorating social conditions into the threat and police violence the solution. It was in this context of increased state violence against black communities that the first wave of Somali refugees arrived at City Heights, San Diego, in 1993.²⁸⁸ Somalis found themselves in an environment where their presence in City Heights triggered police hostility. The hostility was the product of the police’s conception of Somalis as black refugees who come from a country that represents anarchy and violence.

According to a June 2005 *San Diego Tribune* article by journalist Joe Hughes, titled “Big inroads made in City Heights; Police reach out to young,” the police in San Diego claimed that due to the Somali Civil War, Somalis feared the police: “Officer Patty Clayton said the anti-police attitude among youths was a throwback to life in their homeland, places such as Somalia, Ethiopia, Sudan, where anybody in a uniform was to be feared. Police were corrupt and violent. Ditto the military. Warlords ruled.”

²⁸⁹ As discussed in Chapter 1, colonial conceptions of African savagery, constructed by Western thinkers from Hegel to more contemporary anthropologists, continue to affect the way Africa and Africans are imagined in the U.S. The foreignness of Somalis, their Blackness, and Africanness collapsed numerous historically specific

²⁸⁸ The Somali family service an agency that helps Somalis dates the first wave of Somali refugee migration to San Diego as 1993.

http://somalifamilyservice.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=155&Itemid=435

²⁸⁹ <https://socialinnovation.usc.edu/files/2013/05/Hughes.2005.pdf>

ideas about Somalis into one digestible figure for white supremacy: the violent African warlord.²⁹⁰

Under the logic of policing, the only solution to this imagined Somali propensity to violence is state violence. As discussed above, the logic of policing is discursively naturalized by the state's monopoly on the legitimate means of violence; as such, the police's violent actions are understood merely as the mundane execution of the law.²⁹¹ As Simone Bowe contends in his discussion of the police (mis)treatment of Rodney King, "police violence is not read as violence; rather, the racially saturated field of visibility fixed and framed Rodney King and read his actions, as recorded by Holliday, as that danger from which whiteness must be protected" (20). In order for these violent police actions, such as the beating of Rodney King, to be relegated to the mundane and the procedural, the state mobilizes a variety of ideological apparatuses including schools, television, advertisements, and the media to racialize black existence as a violent threat to white safety. The continuous circulation of images of black suspects in news reports affirms white fears, and legitimizes police violence.²⁹² According to a 2015 document produced by Color of Change titled "Not To Be Trusted: Dangerous Levels of Inaccuracy in TV Crime Reporting in NYC", "Local news stations are representing 3 out of every 4 criminals as Black (75%), when the NYPD's actual Black arrest rate is only 2 out of 4 people (51%)."²⁹³

Somali refugees in San Diego are deeply affected by this racialization of

²⁹⁰ See The Philosophy of History by Georg Hegel

²⁹¹ Max Weber in the article "Politics as a vocation" defines the state as an entity that has monopoly over the legitimate means of violence.

²⁹² See "Not To Be Trusted: Dangerous Levels of Inaccuracy in TV Crime Reporting in NYC" by

²⁹³ *Ibid.*,4.

blackness. Many Somali youth told me that they had been arrested by San Diego police under the loitering laws, which basically designated black presence in public space a crime. Mohammed Mohamed, a Somali high school student in the City Heights prep charter school, told me that he was arrested by the police recently for loitering: “We didn’t do nothing. The police mess with us for just standing around.” Mohammed’s testimony confirms that loitering laws were created to protect white property and limit black mobility. According to a 2016 ACLU report, “Blacks were over 25 times more likely to be arrested for loitering with intent to commit a narcotics offense, and this offense was charged just under 4,000 times during the 33-month period. To be charged with this offense you do not need to have narcotics in your possession. Since it doesn’t require concrete evidence, this offense gives police officers significant leeway to arrest people who may have done nothing wrong and who are just hanging out”.²⁹⁴ In the article “Race Vagueness and the Social Meaning of Order Maintenance Policing,” Dorothy Roberts claims that “loitering ordinance gave police officers exceptionally broad powers to disperse any group of two or more people standing in public if the police suspect that the group includes a gang member. Any person who does not promptly obey an order to disperse is subject to arrests and six months in prison” (775).

In response to the state’s power to produce discourse on black criminality, Somalis re-present themselves not as violent people, but as victims and survivors of state violence. As Safia Ahmed, a Somali college student at SDSU, declared: “Us Somali people in City Heights we are not committing crimes, this is our neighborhood

²⁹⁴ <https://www.aclu.org/feature/picking-pieces>

why would we destroy it? The police are lying; they do not make me feel safe; they scare me. I feel more safe in City Heights than I do in La Jolla where all the rich white people live.” Safia, and other Somali youth thus locate police brutality, rather than black pathology, as the central story on violence. Their understanding of blackness echoes Afro-pessimist Frank Wilderson’s urging that we understand blackness as “always already criminalized in the collective unconscious” (Wilderson, 55),²⁹⁵ and Dorothy Roberts’ insistence that the “unconscious association between blacks and crime is so powerful that it supersedes reality: it predisposes white to literally see black people as criminals. Their skin marks Blacks as visibly lawless” (89).

While the individual act of committing a crime might not be political, the way crime is institutionalized through the passing of legislation is a political act. The institutionalization of drug crimes reflects the state’s desire to uphold law and order at the expense of black freedom. In the American political landscape, law and order is the maintenance of white supremacy. In the book Forced Passages: Imprisoned Radical Intellectuals and the Prison Regime, Dylan Rodriguez argues that law and order is “essentially an agenda for white liberation instantiated through white civil society’s awakening to the possibility of its own political disarticulation” (112). Therefore, any disruption of white supremacy is, to the state, disorder. It is for this reason that the Black Lives Matter movement is incompressible to white imaginations as anything but disorder, because this movement interrupts white supremacy. To fully understand the significance of the BLM, we must understand the role of police brutality in police

²⁹⁵ From the Article “We are trying to destroy the world: Anti-Blackness and Police Violence After Ferguson”. <http://sfbay-anarchists.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/01/frank-b-wilderson-iii-were-trying-to-destroy-the-world-antiblackness-police-violence-after-ferguson.pdf>

practices. As discussed above, police brutality is not an aberration to the normal execution of police duties, but rather the central function of the police. According to a 2017 Department of Justice’s investigation of the Chicago Police Department: “We, in consultation with several active law enforcement experts, found that CPD officers engage in a pattern or practice of using force, including deadly force, that is unreasonable. We found further that CPD officers’ force practices unnecessarily endanger themselves and others and result in unnecessary and avoidable shootings and other uses of force.”²⁹⁶ As this report indicates, the use of deadly force is normalized for police departments.

The BLM critiques this use of force by bringing national media attention to police murders of black people, thereby delocalizing black death.²⁹⁷ Before Twitter and Facebook, police murders of black youth were often narrated as isolated local events and felt only by local communities.²⁹⁸ In contrast, today, every time the police kill a black person, the news of that murder not only become national news, but is instantly available to people and the pain that is local becomes national.²⁹⁹ Yasmin Mohamed an SDSU student and a black lives matter activist in San Diego claims “seeing all the images of black people being killed by police on my Facebook page, Twitter, and CNN really inspired be to become an activist. I couldn’t take seeing all this senseless death, so I decided to do something about it. It’s the same story with a lot of my fellow activists, especially the young ones, who were never really interested in activism

²⁹⁶ See [Investigation of the Chicago Police Department](#)

²⁹⁷ See “Black Lives Matter And The Democratic Work of Mourning” by David W. McIvor

²⁹⁸ See “DISENTANGLING PUBLIC SPACE: SOCIAL MEDIA AND INTERNET ACTIVISM” by THÉRÈSE F. TIERNEY

²⁹⁹ See “Black Lives Matter And The Democratic Work of Mourning” by David W. McIvor

became Twitter activists.” The BLM therefore shifts the narrative about police murders from isolated incidents into a systematic trend. In so doing, the BLM ruptures the police’s monopoly on truth by providing alternative narratives than the one provided by the state.

When we move away from police murders as a spectacle and realize that this is what the police are paid to do, then we are forced to reckon with much more radical strategies to end police violence. Consider the fact that every use of lethal force by a police officer requires the completion of a series of complex paperwork.³⁰⁰ Because of this bureaucratic mechanism, police murder not only becomes legitimized by the law but is reduced to the banality of a few paragraphs. The horror of the murder becomes a simple file to be stored and never seen. According to a 2014 investigation into the San Diego Police Department titled “Officer-Involved Shooting Review”, “From 1993 through 2012, the SDCDA investigated 358 OIS cases with 367 subjects shot. Of the total shootings, 54% were fatal. The percentage of shootings in a given year that were fatal ranged from a low of 36% (2008) to a high of 79% (2005).”³⁰¹ As this report indicates a large portion of police shooting encounters end in death, which is interesting because this same report indicates 41 percent of shooting cases involved a white officer and a non-white subject.³⁰² Therefore the race of subject has significant effect on the likelihood that the officer related shooting would end in death.

Police violence is normalized, because the police have the full weight of white supremacy. The police specifically empower white citizens to hail the police as a

³⁰⁰ See “San Diego County Sherriff’s Department Policy and Procedure Manual”

³⁰¹ See “Officer Involved Shooting Review” by San Diego County District Attorney Office

³⁰² Ibid.,6.

response to black presence.³⁰³ I will now move us to an analysis of whiteness and police, because the operation of whiteness as power is central to the functioning of police. The way the crime is racialized as black is informed by the mechanisms through which legality is racialized as white.³⁰⁴ This reciprocal racialization has shaped police encounters with Somali refugees in the streets of San Diego.

Decriminalization of Whiteness

I begin my discussion of the relationship between whiteness and the police with an analysis of the Tamir Rice shooting and the white man who called the police on this unsuspecting youth. When a black person calls the police, there is always the danger of police violence being redirected on the black caller. To spotlight the level of intimacy between whiteness and the police, I provide below a partial transcript of the call that would later result in the murder of Tamir Rice.³⁰⁵ The conversation between the caller and the police dispatcher begins casually and without any urgency:

Caller: Hi how are you? Police Dispatcher: Good
 Caller: I am sitting at the park at West Boulevard
 Caller: There is a guy here with a pistol you know it's probably fake
 Police Dispatcher: Is he black or white?
 Caller: He is wearing a brown jacket and cap
 Police Dispatcher: Is he black or white?
 Caller: Black

The lack of urgency in the caller's voice is both shocking and telling. The ease with

³⁰³ See the Chapter "The Racialized State" in the Book [The Machinery of Whiteness](#)

³⁰⁴ Ibid., 13.

³⁰⁵ The report is publically available at this website:

http://prosecutor.cuyahogacounty.us/pdf_prosecutor/en-US/Rice%20Case%20Report%20FINAL%20FINAL%2012-28a.pdf

which this white man can hail the police is telling of white privilege and shocking in its effortlessness. There doesn't seem to be any immediate danger to this man, yet he calls the police as if he was calling a long-lost friend. To white people, police are employed specifically to protect them from the danger of black criminality. As Frank Wilderson theorizes “in short, white people are not simply “protected” by the police, they are—in their very corporeality—the police” (12).³⁰⁶

Although this caller was not a police officer, his whiteness granted him the power to deploy police violence; he, in essence, was the police. Without this caller's presence, Tamir Rice could still have been alive; the caller is therefore as much implicated in Tamir's death as the officer who fired the bullet. The urge to identify Tamir's race by the police dispatcher, and the resulting response “he is black” signals to the police that the caller's life is in potential danger and that Tamir's life is disposable. If the caller had stated that the suspect was white, the police would have approached Tamir with much less hostility. Therefore, to be identified as black in the context of the police is to be marked for death. I use the Tamir Rice transcript to highlight the role of individual white people in policing black youth. In particular, I want to highlight how state violence doesn't always operate through the exceptional but often through the mundane. Policing is thus an entire apparatus that also includes shop owners, social workers, teachers, security guards, and individual white people.

The Somali teens whom I interviewed recounted many incidents of being “policed” by white people in their lives. Abdikareem Haji told me that store clerks at

³⁰⁶ See “The Prison Slave as Hegemony's (Silent) Scandal” by Frank Wilderson

the local 7/11 often follow him when he is shopping. With quiet rage, Abdikareem disclosed to me: “I hate going to the 7/11 because the white clerk is always messing with me and he called the cops on me one time, he hates me because I’m black.”

Abdi’s statement pushed me to see the relationship between whiteness and policing.

Like the white caller in the Tamir Rice case, the white clerk’s deployment of the police is both a mundane and spectacular instantiation of everyday state violence. Abdi’s declaration that “he hates me because I’m black” reveals that the visibility of blackness is what is required for racial terror to take place. To the state, the black subject and the black body is the physical manifestation of criminality. It is for this reason that the police often arrest the first black person they see in search of a suspect. In Ohio, which had open carry laws, Tamir Rice’s innocence meant little in the face of his blackness.

On the other hand, the law-abiding citizen is almost always racialized as white. In the sociological study titled Dorm Room Dealers, Rafik Mohamed concludes that many drug dealers in San Diego are white, yet they are often ignored by the police because their white skin does not signify criminality. Rafik reports that “members of this affluent, primarily white drug network were anti-targets relatively immune from local law enforcement scrutiny” (31). In another example, in the Aurora Movie Theater mass shooting case, when the police encountered shooter James Holmes in the parking lot, they ignored him and continued their search for the shooter.³⁰⁷ In fact, Jason Oviatt, the first officer on the scene, testified that he had assumed Holmes was a

³⁰⁷ James Holmes on July 20, 2012 committed a mass shooting during a film screening of the Dark Knight Rises in a movie theatre in Colorado. See <http://www.cnn.com/2013/07/19/us/colorado-theater-shooting-fast-facts/>

fellow police officer: “There was a person standing on the opposite side of the car dressed in a black tactical helmet and a gas mask. On first glance, he looked like another cop to me.”³⁰⁸ The emphasis on “he looked like another cop” indicates that the police and whiteness are indistinguishable. When Holmes first entered the movie theatre, the audience in attendance didn’t find anything suspicious about him, despite the fact that he was clad in full body armor. Holmes’ immunity from suspicion is made possible by his whiteness because whiteness is the norm, the locus from which all others deviate as pathologies. In short, while the police murdered Tamir Rice for carrying a toy gun, they ignored Holmes despite the fact that he had massacred a dozen people in a movie theatre; such is the contradiction inherent in white supremacy.³⁰⁹

Somali Refugees’ Radical Resistance to Policing

Somali refugees in City Heights, San Diego are not only imagining radical approaches to resisting police but are in fact actualizing alternatives to the police. Instead of calling the police when trouble arises in the community, a group of Somali women have organized a system where the entire community deals with crime. Asha Ahmed, a Somali refugee activist who had been living in San Diego since 1994 highlighted the history of Somalis alternative to police. She claimed “It was in the Dadaab refugee Camp, the Kenyan police wouldn’t do anything to help us. If someone was attacked or had some items stolen, the Kenyan police would just laugh at you. So we had to do something to protect ourselves, a group of us created a Dadka (Somali

³⁰⁸ Found Transcript from website (<http://abcnews.go.com/US/aurora-shooting-trial-james-holmes-wore-armor-police/story?id=30710968>)

³⁰⁹ See “A Compressive Age: White Supremacy and the Growth of the Modern State” by Gregory P. Downs

word that translates into “the people”). We started organizing many of our friends and neighbors to join the Dadka, until we had a membership of four hundred people. The Dadka became our own way of protecting people. So if someone had some of their stuff stolen, they would come to the Dadka, and we would handle the situation. Instead of punishing the offender through traditional means such as beating them, or imprisoning them we would do something more non-violent. We would deny them access to our community. This means that they couldn’t get help from anyone in the camp, no one would be allowed to lend them food, supplies or medicine. People would not be allowed to pray with them or socialize with the offender. Therefore, the punishment would be isolation, and in the camp, being isolated from everyone is one of the worst things that could happen to someone.” As Asha mentioned the Dadka is a part of the refugee repertoire, a practice created in the Dadaab refugee camp in 1993 as a mode of survival. This shows that the refugee camp is not solely a space of suffering but is also a place where the refugees create life affirming practices. These practices are then brought with them to San Diego.

Asha continues “The Dadka didn’t end when we left Kenya, since many of us felt that we would still need it when we arrived in San Diego. When we came to San Diego in 1994, the same thing happened. Whenever we called the police for help they either didn’t come or came too late. One day a friend of mine got her house broken into and when she called the police they came three hours later and the robber was long gone by that point. Another time I called the police because someone had broken into my car but instead of helping me they kept harassing me with questions and arrested my son for resisting arrest. Therefore, we knew that police were not very

helpful and at times could be dangerous. So I talked to my friends Maryam and Tasneem who were from the same refugee camp and now lived next door to me in City, Heights. In 1996, we scheduled a meeting in my living room and decided we would organize the Somali refugee community to create a Dadka in City, Heights. We got a lot of interest because many of us didn't trust the police from our experience in the Dadaab refugee camp. We ended up forming a committee of ten women who would be the core leadership of the Dadka and in our first year we ended up getting 1000 members. As the Dadka collective, we spread through word of mouth encouraging other refugees to join us. Our first case involved a man who had been stealing money from his wife to buy Khat (Somali drug stimulant), the woman named Khadija brought the case to us. We found out who the Khat dealers were and convinced them to stop selling drugs to him since they were also members of the Dadka. He was very angry after the Khat dealers stopped selling to him. But he would continue to steal his wife's money, since she worked and he was unemployed. What we did next was contact the people who run the Somali café in City Heights and tell them to stop providing him service. Khadija's husband always went to the Somali café to discuss homeland politics every day and we made sure he wouldn't be able to continue doing that. After that he stopped stealing from his wife and we solved the case not through violence but through peaceful means. It was after that successful case that many people saw that we really could help people and we started helping a lot of people."

As Asha story shows Somali refugees had developed alternatives to the police in the Dadaab, because they had lived in a space that had denied them basic protections.

Therefore, they did not just provide a critique of police violence with the goal of restructure police forces, they were actualizing alternatives to the police. Moreover, Asha was working as a maid in 1996 and was running the Dadka on her spare time. Yet the Dadka ran into some troubles when police found out about their activities. Asha explains “At some point the SDPD found out about the activities of the Dadka and me. They asked me who I was and what I was doing in the neighborhood. They told me that they know about Dadka, and that they want me to stop. They were being very antagonistic towards me, and told me that they think that Dadka is making refugees to distrust the police. But we already didn’t trust the police because they had failed us so many times” As Asha’s story indicates the police were threatened by Dadka because the organization had challenged the legitimacy of police.

As I have shown earlier in this chapter, the police are historical constructs that emerged with the slave patrols. Therefore, a world without police has existed and continues to exist with the work of the Dadka. The police argue that without police forces the world would descend into anarchy. Asha’s story shows that police abolition is not a dream but can be a reality.

As of 2017, the Dadka organization has grown larger and includes weekly meetings. The executive board of the Dadka now includes twenty people because the Dadka has a membership of two thousand according to Khadija. In the meetings, the executive board decides which cases to take, and how to deal with existing cases. The members meet once a week in a different member’s apartment. They rotate leadership based whose apartment is being used that day. The decisions made on cases require a unanimous vote from all the members.

In addition to Somali women in San Diego, these alternatives to police are being realized by groups such as the Safe Outside the System Collective. According to the mission state of Safe Outside the System Collective:³¹⁰

The Working Group on Police and State Violence (now SOS Collective) began in 1997 in response to a rash of street violence, repressive state violence tactics, an increase of police harassment, and brutality, and the “Quality of Life” policies of the Giuliani administration. In working to build a citywide movement, the WGPV participated in founding the Coalition Against Police Brutality (CAPB). With the other POC based organizations part of CAPB, the working group helped organized People’s Justice 2000, 41 days of action in the wake of Diallo and Louima, and annual Racial Justice Day (RJD) events, where the families of those who have been brutalized and killed at the hands of the NYPD raise their voices and demand justice.

The work of the Safe Outside the System Collective include getting the community to intervene during moments of violence instead of calling the police. They do this through their “Safe Neighborhood Campaign” which follows a five-step model.³¹¹ The five steps are:

Year 1: Build and Root, Developing our training tools, Defining transformative justice at a community level, Recruiting folks to join Safe Neighborhood Network
 Year 2: Imagine and Remember Study together, share strategies and lessons learned
 Train Safe Spaces on transformative justice strategies for intervention, support, community safety, and alternatives to policing
 Year 3: Love and Protect Safe Spaces in Safe Neighborhood Network mobilize to practice transformative de-escalation, rapid response to violence, survivor support, etc.
 Year 4: Sustain and Scale
 Develop a guide to neighborhood interventions.

³¹⁰ See <http://alp.org/safe-outside-system-sos-collective>

³¹¹ Ibid.,1.

The work of these collectives disrupts the idea that without police we would descend into anarchy.

Conclusion

Once we realize that the police do not protect communities of color from violence but in fact use violence for social control, then we need to do more than demand federal oversight committees or the hiring of black police officers. If we take into account the historical and contemporary role of police in American society, what is required is the abolishment of police as we know it. "Police violence" is a contradictory term because the police do not exist without violence, and if we want to end police violence we must imagine a world without police. We must grapple with the fact that police brutality can never be resolved by the American judicial system, since it is the same system that legitimizes and grants police their power to murder. Therefore, the problem of policing cannot be reduced to reengineering police departments but requires the revamping of the entire American political system. When the police take a life they are doing so in the name of the state, since the police are individuals granted federal powers. When you challenge an individual police officer, you are challenging the entire U.S. state apparatus. It is precisely for this reason that the police report of incidents of police violence becomes codified as the only rendition of that event. The victim's interpretation of the events is always read as false.

This pattern gives police more powers than enforcing the law; they in effect have the power to determine the nature of reality. Police have ontological powers,

which makes the act of resisting police a defiance of reality. Even in the face of video evidence detailing police violence, the police's version of events continue to be reproduced as the only truth. The police murder of Eric Garner is a prime example of this. Despite the fact that the unwarranted and brutal murder of Eric Garner was caught on video, the officer who killed him was not indicted. In the face of police's power to determine the truth, cameras lie. When we move beyond investigating the legal powers police have to understand the extent of their ideological dominance, we can see that more radical approaches to resisting police violence are necessary.

Chapter Four: Anti-Blackness, Islamophobia and The War on Terror

Introduction

Since 9/11, there has been a systematic campaign by the United States government to link terrorism with Islam, to the point that Muslims have become synonymous with terrorism in much of American public discourse, even when the latest report on terrorism by the FBI itself indicates that only six percent of terrorists acts have been committed by “Islamic extremists.”³¹² Indeed, President Donald Trump’s speeches and proposed executive orders consistently link the words “Muslim” and “Islam” with “violent extremist terrorists.” The normative equation of the Muslim with the terrorist has now made it standard practice for the media and agents in the U.S. national security regime to link any perceived crimes committed by Muslims in the United States to terrorism.³¹³ In this chapter, I examine how the term "terrorist" has been made exclusive to Muslims, and how counter-terrorism programs have been deployed by the U.S. national security regime to justify state violence. Whereas the third chapter has critiqued the work of criminologists, this chapter analyzes the work of specialists in the field of Terrorism Studies to reveal the ways in which scholarly research can and do work on behalf of the state. More generally, I am interested in documenting the material

³¹² See https://www.fbi.gov/stats-services/publications/terrorism-2002-2005#terror_05sum

³¹³ As an example, in November 2016, when Somali refugee Abul Artan attacked students at the Ohio State University campus, news agency quickly speculated that the attack was a terrorist act. See <http://www.wsj.com/video/ohio-state-attacker-may-have-been-isis-inspired/98AD2912-3297-4149-87C6-1A9D137B01A9.html>

conditions of violence that Islamophobia makes possible. Focusing on Somali refugees, I pay particular attention to black Muslim identity as a site that captures the continuities/overlaps between the War on Drugs and the War on Terror,³¹⁴ and thus between anti-blackness and Islamophobia.

Anti-Blackness and Islamophobia

As black Muslim refugees, Somalis' experiences highlight the intersections between Islamophobia, anti-blackness, and nativist ideologies, and reveal the ways in which different sectors of state power—the FBI, ICE, and the police—can be mobilized for the benefit of white supremacy. One such example of the convergence of state instruments of violence is the 2004 case of Abdullahi Jama Amir, a Somali man in City Heights who was first arrested by the SDPD, then detained by ICE, and then sent to Guantanamo Bay by the U.S. military. Although Amir was later acquitted of all charges, his case exemplifies the links between anti-black, anti-immigrant, and anti-Muslim discourses and practices.³¹⁵ In the post 9/11 climate, “which views ‘Islam’ and ‘the Muslim’ as the defining threats to U.S. interests and to the global order” (Sohail), the Somali refugee subject is constructed as a dangerous subject—a criminal and a terrorist—that needs to be eliminated rather than recuperated.

Sumeya Abdi, a Somali resident of City Heights, explains the effects that the War on Drugs and the War on Terror had on Somalis. She states, “When we first came to San Diego in 1993, the police were always attacking us because we are black, and

³¹⁴ See “Crime Control & Political Repression: From the War On Drugs To The War On Terror” by Naomi Braine

³¹⁵ http://www.sandiegouniontribune.com/uniontrib/20040602/news_7m2somali.html

arresting Somalis for no reason. Now the police harass us because we are Muslim, they attack our families in Somalia, my brother in Somalia tells me he hears American bombs dropped in Mogadishu every night.” With a vivid paintbrush, Sumeya makes the epistemological connection between domestic U.S. warfare against black communities in San Diego, with foreign warfare against black people in Somalia. While scholars are just beginning to examine the intersections between the War on Terror and the War on Drugs, I argue that Somalis have always experienced these painfully real connections. Therefore, what an academic might stumble upon through the archives or ethnography is for Somalis a form of knowing, a refugee epistemology that has always known the scope and reach of U.S. state violence.

According to the 2012 police document “Running a Three-Legged Race: The San Diego Police Department, The Intelligence Community, and Counter-Terrorism,” the Somali refugee community has become a target of U.S. counter-terrorism, specifically the Criminal Intelligence Unit (CIU) of the SDPD. As the document concludes: “Al-Shabaab emerged as one of the most significant domains identified by the SDPD’s new threat picture. San Diego is home to a large Somali population, and is a primary point of entry for Somalis claiming asylum... CIU’s work to establish intelligence priorities and a collection plan to meet this domain began with the writing of a thorough report about what was known about the local diaspora” (13).³¹⁶ Al-Shabab is a Somali Muslim organization that took control of the government in

³¹⁶ Al-Shabab is a religious organization that came to power in Somalia in 2006. They have been labeled as a terrorist organization by the U.S. See “Al Shabaab: Recruitment and Radicalization within the Muslim American Community and the Threat to the Homeland”

2006,³¹⁷ and has been the main target of U.S. counter- terrorism in Somalia.

In August 2015, police arrested two Somali men in San Diego with allegations of ties to radical extremists.³¹⁸ One of the arrested Somali youth Mohamed Abdihamid Farah is an American citizen, yet he could be detained indefinitely because of The National Defense Authorization Act of 2012.³¹⁹ This case spurred fears of a growing terrorist threat in San Diego and led to the police engaging in counter-terrorism operations. And yet, even though black Muslims in America account for one third of the Muslim population, they are erased from the narrative of Muslim identity³²⁰because Muslims are almost always imagined in the U.S. as Arab.³²¹

According to a Pew Study report titled “Muslims Americans: No Signs of Growth in Alienation or Support for Extremism,” “Muslim Americans are racially diverse. No single racial or ethnic group makes up more than 30% of the total. Overall, 30% describe themselves as white, 23% as black, 21% as Asian, 6% as Hispanic and 19% as other or mixed race.” Despite the diversity of the Muslim population in the United States, the discourse of Islamophobia continues to construct Muslims as a monolithic threat to U.S. democracy.

The erasure of black Muslims is highlighted by the case of a Somali man

³¹⁷ See “Terrorism without Borders: Somalia’s Al-Shabaab and the global jihad network” by Daniel E. Agbibo

³¹⁸ <http://www.breitbart.com/national-security/2015/04/20/6-isis-related-arrests-in-san-diego-minneapolis-over-alleged-terror-plot>

³¹⁹ See <https://www.congress.gov/112/plaws/publ81/PLAW-112publ81.pdf>

³²⁰ Data is from a 2011 Pew Research Center <http://www.people-press.org/2011/08/30/muslim-americans-no-signs-of>

³²¹ See [Black Star, Crescent Moon The Muslim International and Black Freedom beyond America](#) by Sohail Daulatzai

Mustafa Mattan, who was shot in his home in Fort Murkararry, Canada.³²² Somalis have argued that he was killed because he was Muslim, but the police refused to investigate his death as such because he was black. In a report on Mustafa's death on Al-Jazeera, Margari Hill argues that "the curious case of Mustafa Mattan is as much a story of intra-racial division and anti-black racism within the Muslim population as it is a narrative about the neglected death of a young man seeking a better life far from home."³²³ On the other hand, much of the media speculation and Twitter posts focused on Mattan's Muslim identity of the victim as the rationale for the attacks, but not on his blackness. As Twitter user Amo tweets: "Another hate crime #Mustafa Mattan shot in his apartment yesterday #Canada." The erasure of his Blackness from the media narratives highlights the impossibility of Blackness and Muslimness to occupy the same position.

Black Muslims have also been largely written out of the narratives of the Black Lives Matter movement because their identities as Muslim and migrant defy American conceptions of Blackness. As an example, the 2016 police shooting of Somali teen Abdi Mohamed in Salt Lake City has garnered little public attention outside of the Somali community.³²⁴ In response, young Somalis initiated a Twitter campaign to incorporate the deaths of Muslim youths into the Black Lives Matter movement. Many Somalis have steadily organized to spotlight the unique challenges and structural violence that black immigrants and Muslim communities

³²² <http://www.aljazeera.com/indepth/opinion/2015/02/colour-muslim-mourning-150215065825362.htm>

³²³ Ibid., 1.

³²⁴ The Inquisitor conveys Abdi's shooting the police in this website "<http://www.inquisitr.com/2886331/abdi-mohamed-awakens-from-coma/>".

encounter in the U.S. They have adopted the hashtag Black Muslim Lives Matter, as a way to highlight the erasure of black Muslims from conversations of state violence against black people. Somalis' strategies of activism and survival thus produce a theoretical rubric for linking diverse structural issues such as immigration reform, police brutality, and hate crimes against Muslims.

In *Good Muslim Bad Muslim*, Mahmoud Mandani explains the relationship between the “criminal” and the “terrorist.” Mandani poses the question, “Should terrorism be dealt with like a criminal act, as several critics of American bombing of Afghanistan have argued? It sounds appealing, but if terrorism were simply a crime, it would not be a political problem. The distinction between political terror and crime is that the former makes an open bid for public support” (55). During this era of the War on Terror, the police have cited the scholarship of criminologists as rationale for anti-terrorist policies. To highlight this insidious relationship, I examine the writings of Ronald Clarke, a criminologist in the department of criminal justice at Rutgers University. In 2009, Clarke published a police manual, titled Policing Terrorism, for the U.S. Department of State. This manual was distributed to the SDPD by the Department of Justice and was used to sanction police surveillance of City Heights. Clarke claims in the manual that “The existence of well- established immigrant communities provide cultural cover for potential terrorists” (55). The concept of “cultural cover” seems to imply that terrorists and immigrants share the same ‘culture.’ Clarke’s analysis harkens to and draws power from Samuel Huntington’s “Clash of Civilization” thesis, which posits that “the great divisions among humankind” is between Islam and the West. In this statement, Clarke clearly advocates for police surveillance of immigrant

communities. He utilizes his expertise as a scholar in order to help police actualize their anti-immigrant and Islamophobia ideologies. Criminologists like Clarke continue to have long standing relationships with police departments. According to a document titled “Embedded Criminologists in Police Departments”, “In contrast to more traditional academic practitioner research partnerships, becoming embedded within a police department involved taking the step from external partner to internal resource. Embedded criminologists maintain their scientific objectivity and independence in carrying out scientific inquires within police departments. However, embedded criminologists also function as an important part of the police organization by collaborating on the development of programs, through problem analysis and evaluation research and by interjecting scientific evidence into policy conversations to guide police executive decision making.”³²⁵

It is important to note that police units tasked with domestic counterterrorism borrow from the strategies used by the police during the War on Drugs. As discussed in Chapter 2, one of these strategies is community policing, which developed from a desire by police departments to involve community members in policing.³²⁶ Community policing as a model of policing granted the police significant power and control over Somali youth who received little reprieve from police, whether at school, parks, recreation centers, and community spaces.³²⁷ In the post/11 era, as part of their counterterrorism efforts, the police had stepped up community policing in order to have increased access to Muslim communities. In a 2014 document entitled “Using

³²⁵ See “Embedded Criminologists in Police Departments” by Anthony A. Braga

³²⁶ See [The Politics of Community Policing: Rearranging the Power to Punish](#) by William Lyons

³²⁷ See “San Diego Police Department Quarterly Community Policing Report”

Community Policing to Counter Violent Extremism,” the Office of Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS Office)³²⁸ promotes community policing “as a front-line strategy to prevent terrorism across the diverse communities served by law enforcement agencies throughout the country,” touting that “this document provides practical insights and compelling examples of how to extend the principles of community policing in ways that help prevent terrorism and violent extremism while building stronger communities and preserving constitutional and civil rights.” An FBI counter-terrorism document also highlights the use of community policing in the War on Terror.³²⁹ As indicated in the excerpt below, Muslims are required to take part in community policing—“to work with law enforcement to help prevent terrorist attacks”—as a way to prove their patriotism.

Protecting American communities from al-Qa'ida's hateful ideology is not the work of government alone. Communities-especially Muslim American communities whose children, families and neighbors are being targeted for recruitment by al-Qa'ida - are often best positioned to take the lead because they know their communities best. Indeed, Muslim American communities have categorically condemned terrorism, worked with law enforcement to help prevent terrorist attacks, and forged creative programs to protect their sons and daughters from al-Qa'ida 's murderous ideology (44).

In stark contrast, acts of terrorism and violence committed by white and/or Christian supremacists do not taint all members of these groups.³³⁰ In 2009, the

³²⁸ See “Using Community Policing to Counter Violent Extremism” by *The Community Oriented Policing Services*

³²⁹ See “EMPOWERING LOCAL PARTNERS TO PREVENT VIOLENT EXTREMISM IN THE UNITED STATES” at https://www.aclu.org/sites/default/files/field_document/Empowering-Local-Partners-to-Prevent-Violent-Extremism-in-the-US-2330-2341.pdf

³³⁰ One such example is Robert Dear Jr.’s shooting rampage of Planned Parenthood, who professed that the shooting was done in the name of Christianity. As Trevor Hugh from *USA Today* reports, “The man who admits to killing three people at a Colorado Springs Planned Parenthood clinic last fall told police he dreamed he’ll be met in Heaven by aborted fetuses wanting to thank him for saving unborn babies, according to newly released court documents.” See

Department of Homeland Security published a report on right wing extremists.³³¹ While this report concludes that “rightwing extremists” have the capabilities “to carry out violence,” it humanizes the perpetrators by describing them as “disgruntled, disillusioned” veterans who suffer “from the psychological effects of war” (7), even when they possess a large collection of weapons and espouse explicitly violent rhetoric and threats against women, queer folks, and communities of color.³³² Today, even in the face of growing white supremacist organizations, Islamophobia is powerful enough to redirect most of the resources of the FBI and the Department of Homeland Security to profiling and infiltrating Muslim communities.³³³

The War on Terror and the Production of the Terrorist

In the post 9/11 era, Muslims are ideologically constructed as villainous and predisposed to committing violent terrorist acts. In *Muslims Are Coming*, Arun Kundani argues that “because the battle was between competing definitions of Islamic identity, the war on terror was as much a cultural war as a military one.... Rather than a singular enemy, the Islamic world was a cultural terrain within which Western states needed to intervene to reshape identities from primordial zealots into progressive individuals.” Kundani’s argument suggests that the War on Terror is sustained by ideological campaigns that define Muslim culture as a monolith predisposed to terrorism. In the U.S.

<https://www.usatoday.com/story/news/2016/04/11/planned-parenthood-shooter-happy-his-attack/32579921/>

³³¹ See “Rightwing Extremism: Current Economic and Political Climate Fueling Resurgence in Radicalization and Recruitment” By U.S. Department of Homeland Security

³³² See Rightwing Extremism: Current Economic and Political Climate Fueling Resurgence in Radicalization and Recruitment” By U.S. Department of Homeland Security

³³³ See “Al Shabaab: Recruitment and Radicalization within the Muslim American Community and the Threat to the Homeland” by The Department of Homeland Security

imperial imaginary, terrorism is not something that can be unlinked from Muslim culture but is an unchanging fact of it. As a result, the logical end of the War on Terror is not the redemption of Muslims but rather the elimination of Muslims. At a congressional hearing entitled “Compilations of Hearings in Islamists Radicalization—Volume I,” New York State Senator Peter King cited a Pew poll that suggested that “15 percent of Muslim American men between the age of 18 and 29 could support suicide bombings,” concluding that “these are realities we can’t ignore.”³³⁴

Islamophobia reduces the complexity of Islam³³⁵ to an essentialized entity of violence that is single-mindedly focused on the destruction of western civilization.³³⁶ It is not just cultural producers that reinforce the idea that Muslims are terrorists, there is an entire field of study dedicated to the racialization of Muslims as terrorists, aptly named “Terrorism Studies.” In his discussion of terrorism studies, Arun Kandani argues that “Those wanting to cover such simple formulae in the veneer of scholarship turned to the founding father of terrorism studies, Walter Laqueur, whose “new terrorism” thesis distinguished between older, political forms of terrorism inspired by nationalism, communism, or fascism and the new ‘Islamic fundamentalist violence that he saw as ‘rooted in fanaticism.’³³⁷ The Middle East Institute is a Washington-based think tank dedicated to the study of the Middle East. The MEI mission statement proclaims its intellectual objectivity: “MEI has earned a reputation as an *unbiased* source of

³³⁴ Ibid.,34.

³³⁵ The multiplicity of ways that Islam is practiced in countries throughout the world challenges the media’s representation of Muslims as a monolith. In Somalia, Islam coexist with indigenous Somali traditions that predated the arrival of Islam to East Africa. See A Modern History of the Somali: Nation and State in the Horn of Africa by I.M. Lewis

³³⁶ See “Muslims in the Media and at the Movies” by Todd H. Green

³³⁷ See The Muslims are Coming: Islamophobia, Extremism and The War on Terror

information and analysis on this critical region of the world, a reputation it has meticulously safeguarded since its creation. Today, MEI remains a respected, non-partisan voice in the field of Middle East studies” (Emphasis mine).³³⁸ However, the MEI board of directors is comprised mostly of former military generals, suggesting a linkage between the Institute and the U.S. military. The chair of the board of directors Anthony C. Zinni “is a retired four star United States Marine Corps general. He served his country in numerous diplomatic roles, as the U.S. special envoy to Israel and the Palestinian Authority and in missions to Pakistan, Somalia, Eritrea and Ethiopia.”³³⁹ I argue that an institute chaired by a former general who was deployed to Somalia is likely to produce produces scholarship that reflects the position and needs of the U.S. military. Much of the Terrorist Studies scholarship I interrogate below was produced by the MEI.

In the post 9/11 era, the MEI and its affiliates have received significant support and money from public and private entities, and serve the same role that criminologists did for the state during the height of the “War on Drugs,” which was to legitimize state violence against communities of color. According to the 2015 *Middle East Institutes Annual Report*, the Institute receives funds from a large list of organizations including the U.S. Dept. of State, Bureau of Conflict and Stabilization Operations, Chevron U.S.A. Inc., Shell Oil, Occidental Petroleum, and ExxonMobil.³⁴⁰ Some of its largest funders (organizations that have provided 50,000 or more to the Institute), are oil companies, and the U.S. Department of State. These funders clearly have the most to benefit from the ongoing War on Terror, and U.S. military and business presence in the Middle East. In

³³⁸ See <http://www.mei.edu/mission>

³³⁹ See <http://www.mei.edu/profile/anthony-c-zinni>

³⁴⁰ See <http://www.mei.edu/annual-reports>

particular, the Middle East Institute promotes scholarship that racializes terrorism as Arab, which subsequently legitimizes the actions of the U.S. military in the Middle East and protects US access to oil in the region. The research findings and recommendations produced by Terrorism Studies scholars have intensified state resources dedicated to domestic counter-terrorism and the profiling of Muslim communities in the U.S. Terrorism Studies scholars thus do the work of conflating all forms of domestic terrorism with Muslims, even though eco-terrorists and white supremacist organizations far outnumber Muslim terrorist organizations in the United States.³⁴¹

As discussed above, Somali refugees in San Diego are scrutinized and profiled by the counter-terrorism unit of the San Diego police department.³⁴² This unit is tasked with gathering intel and stopping the radicalization of Muslims in San Diego. The goal of this unit is to stop radicalization before it reaches the last stage, which is violent action. Below is an FBI chart that documents the ways in which law enforcement maps radicalization:³⁴³

³⁴¹ See “Countering Eco-Terrorism in the United States: The Case of ‘Operation Backfire’” by The Department of Homeland Security

³⁴² See *Running a Three Legged Race: The San Diego Police Department, The Intelligence Community and Counterterrorism* by Andrew Mills

³⁴³ See “Radicalization into Violent Extremism II: A Review of Conceptual Models and Empirical Research” by Randy Borum

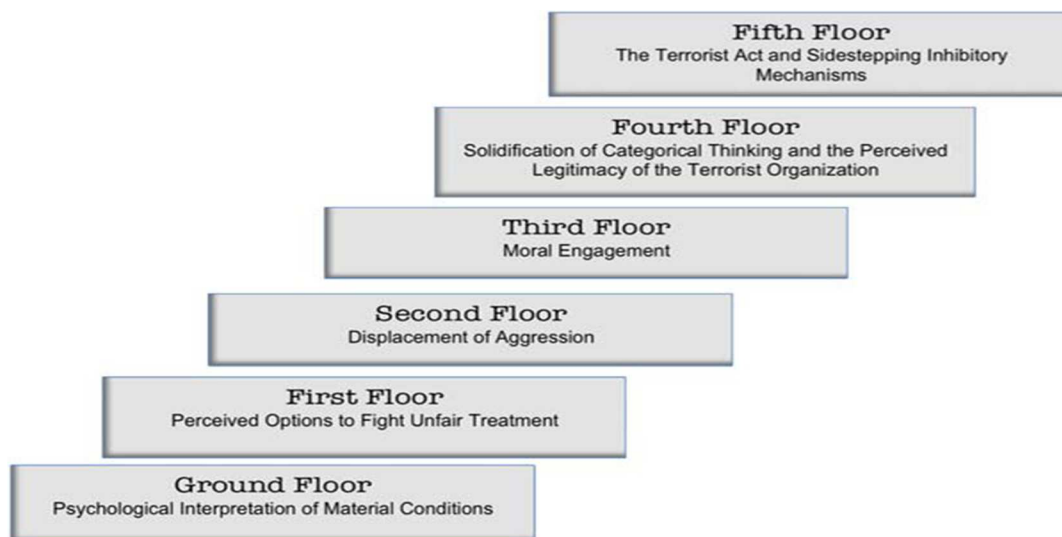


Figure 5: Radicalization as Stairs

It is important to note that this chart was prepared for the FBI by a Terrorism Studies expert, Randy Borum. In an article titled “Radicalization into Violent Extremism,” Borum imagines the process of Muslim radicalization as containing six progressive floors or stages. He argues that the first floor, named “Perceived Options to Unfair Treatment,” is the stage at which the police and FBI should intervene in order to disrupt radicalization at its earliest stage. In practice, Borum’s suggestion means that the police and FBI should surveil Muslims who are simply expressing discontent with “unfair treatment.” This pathway to “radicalization” is eerily similar to the pathway for social

change adopted by social justice activists, which also begins with the crucial step of developing “an awareness of unfair treatment.” In another section of the same document, we can see that much of U.S. law enforcement is organized around fears of radicalization. As Borum argues, “violent extremists prey on the disenchantment and alienation that discrimination creates, and they have a vested interest in anti-Muslim sentiment. It is for this reason that our security—preventing radicalization that leads to violence—is inextricably linked to our values: the protection of civil rights and civil liberties and the promotion of an inclusive society.” This statement thus frames Muslims youth’s reaction to structural discrimination—rather than structural discrimination—as the root cause of radicalization.

The proposed tactic of stopping radicalization at the earliest stage basically means that Muslim people are criminalized for their beliefs and thoughts. The police thus feel emboldened to violate the First Amendment rights of Somali youth by monitoring their posts on social media such as chat forums, where youth who espouse any criticism of the U.S. and its policies are placed on watch lists. As an example, in a recent request for proposals, authored by Jenny Presser, the Boston Police Department indicates that it “is seeking to acquire technology and services that support the identification, collection, integration, synthesis, analysis, visualization and investigation of threat information present within real-time open source and social media platforms, as well as, other disparate structured and unstructured “big data” sources. The purpose of this project is to bridge a technology gap in situational awareness, secure data access, and both “big data” and “fast data” analysis by distilling specific knowledge concerning threats, hazards and

other conditions related to crime and public safety present on the Internet” (16).³⁴⁴As a consequence, Somali youth activists who organize around U.S. drone attacks in Somalia are especially surveilled by the police and the FBI, and afforded few forums for political protest.

In a 2011 FBI document that listed American Somalis who had joined Al-Shabab and who were either killed or captured by the U.S, two of the Somalis featured have their names or faces blacked out.³⁴⁵




	Dahir Gurey Hometown: Columbus, Ohio	An American citizen who arrived in Somalia in early 2010 from Ohio. In September 2010 he was killed in a firefight between al-Shabaab and pro-government forces.
	Farah Mohamed Beledi, 27 Hometown: St. Paul, Minnesota	One of the young Somali-Americans who left the United States in 2009. In May 2011 he attempted to commit a suicide bombing but was shot before he could detonate his vest.
	(Name Withheld) Hometown: Seattle, Washington	Traveled to Yemen and Somalia, and was later executed by Shabaab after an internal dispute.

Figure 6: Chart of Suspected Al-Shabab Members

As indicated in the chart above, Dahir Gurey is faceless; and two entries below his, another man is nameless and faceless. The blacked out faces and names raise these questions: Why does the government hide their faces? What does their erasure tell us

³⁴⁴ See “REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS TO ACQUIRE TECHNOLOGY AND SERVICES THAT SUPPORT THE IDENTIFICATION, COLLECTION, SYNTHESIS, ANALYSIS, AND INVESTIGATION OF THREAT INFORMATION PRESENT WITHIN REAL-TIME OPEN SOURCE AND SOCIAL MEDIA PLATFORMS”

³⁴⁵ See “Al Shabaab: Recruitment and Radicalization within the Muslim American Community and the Threat to the Homeland” by The U.S. House of Representatives Committee on Homeland Security

about U.S. militarism? When I showed these images to Somali youth activists in City Heights, they had a spirited discussion about what these blacked-out faces meant. Cawo Hassan, a Somali Youth League activist, insisted that “they are innocent Somalis who travelled to Somalia to visit relatives, but were killed by U.S. drone strikes.” I include Cawo’s statement not for its factual accuracy, but to signal the tension between the dominant narratives of Somalis as terrorists and Somali counter-narratives that expose U.S. imperial violence. Indeed, we may never learn why their faces are blacked out, but what we do know is that these images function as a warning: that the state can murder you, disappear your body and erase your existence. The families of these disappeared people were most likely never notified; they could still be alive in some detention center. The erasure of their faces and names highlights how absence can still function as a visible presence of state power. This kind of power can be seen in the brutal examples of people disappeared under autocratic regimes in Latin America.³⁴⁶

As forms of racialization, these blacked out faces are in stark contrast to the hyper-visible media representations of the figure of the Muslim terrorist. One clear example of media representation of Islam is the film “The Third Jihad: Radical Islam's Vision For America,” produced by a neoconservative think tank.³⁴⁷ “The Third Jihad” is a film that does the work of justifying state power by racializing the colonial other. The documentary styled film explores the idea of a Muslim invasion of the White House, carried out by Muslim American citizens. Disturbingly, the film was used as a training exercise for the NYPD to prepare the police for domestic counter-terrorism.³⁴⁸ *A New*

³⁴⁶ See “Truth Commissions for Chile and El-Salvador: A Report and Assessment” by Mark Ensalaco

³⁴⁷ see <http://www.loonwatch.com/2009/05/the-clarion-funds-new-hate-the-third-jihad/>

³⁴⁸ See <http://www.nytimes.com/2012/01/24/nyregion/in-police-training-a-dark-film-on-us-muslims.html>

York Times article highlights the use of this film as part of police training. Michael Powell explains the film:³⁴⁹

Ominous music plays as images appear on the screen: Muslim terrorists shoot Christians in the head, car bombs explode, executed children lie covered by sheets and a doctored photograph shows an Islamic flag flying over the White House. “This is the true agenda of much of Islam in America,” a narrator intones. “A strategy to infiltrate and dominate America. ... This is the war you don’t know about. “This is the feature-length film titled “The Third Jihad,” paid for by a nonprofit group, which was shown to more than a thousand officers as part of training in the New York Police Department.

A central cast member of this film is Somali politician Ayan Hersi Ali, who is a major spokesperson for Dutch white supremacist and right wing parties.³⁵⁰ Despite being an immigrant herself, Ali describes herself as a former Muslim, a champion of Islamophobia and an ardent critic of multiculturalism and immigrants despite being an immigrant herself.³⁵¹ As a self-identified former Muslim who espouses the evils of Islam, she is a central figure in cultural discourses that equate Muslims with terrorism. She argues that Islam is inherently violent and cannot be redeemed as a religion and must be banished in order for modernity and civilization to be able to spread to the Middle East and Africa.³⁵² In her autobiography *Infidel*, Ali argues that “In the past fifty years the Muslim world has been catapulted into modernity. From my grandmother to me is a journey of just two generations, but the reality of that voyage is millennial. Even today you can take a truck across the border into Somalia and find you have gone back thousands of years in time.” Armed with these Islamophobic ideas, the film introduces Islam to the audience as a

³⁴⁹ *Ibid.*,1.

³⁵⁰ See http://www.imdb.com/title/tt1436475/fullcredits?ref_=tt_ov_st_sm

³⁵¹ See *Infidel: My Life* by Ayan Hersi Ali

³⁵² *Ibid.*,37.

marker of racial difference. *The Third Jihad* ends with Muslim Americans taking over the country and establishing Sharia Law. The message of the film is clear: police are the vanguards of freedom and democracy against the enemy within, the Muslim.

In sum, in the United States, Muslims are imagined as threats to liberal democracy because liberalism is rooted in the valorization of the individual and a rejection of communal modes of organizing life.³⁵³ Islam as a religion is portrayed as oppressive to the expression of individuality. Islam is constructed as the enemy of liberal democracy, and Muslims as archaic and trapped in prehistoric modalities of being and therefore incapable progress. Fatima El-Tayeb, in the article “Time Travelers and Queer Heterotopia,” argues that “For Europe, this meant that migrants from the global South were not only presumed to hail from an earlier time but to remain stuck in it, thus creating European minority populations perceived to be permanently out of place and time. That is, the putative incompatibility of Islam and Europe is not framed as a conflict between a Christian majority and a Muslim minority, both of whom are European, but between a twenty-first-century European society, committed to multicultural values, gender equality, and sexual freedom, on the one hand, and a medieval, intolerant, foreign culture, on the other.” (312). It is through this epistemological rendering that the country of Somalia and Somali refugees are read as incapable of adopting democracy and unwilling to assimilate into whiteness, respectively.

The SDPD and Policing Terrorism

³⁵³ See <http://worldpopulationreview.com/countries/somalia-population/>

A Department of Justice's manual titled Policing Terrorism was distributed to police departments across the country, and explains the shift in emphasis from drugs to terrorism in police departments. The authors of the manual, Graeme Newman and Ronald Clarke, explain that "After the initial shock of 9/11, you, like many other chiefs, might have begun gloomily to contemplate the future of policing. At a stroke, terrorism had replaced crime as the greatest threat to the nation's social order and intelligence agencies had become society's principal guardians, usurping the role traditionally held by police" (2). Clarke's conception of social order is premised on the protection of private property and the control over black mobility. Clarke's statement and the reorientation of police resources to combatting terrorism is rationalized by the SDPD's conception of Somali refugees as the largest terrorist threat in San Diego. The SDPD has a division of counter terrorism tasked specifically with neutralizing the Somali community.³⁵⁴ Housed within the intelligence unit of the SDPD, the division of counter terrorism was established after 9/11.³⁵⁵ What is striking about the SDPD's obsession with Somalis as domestic terrorists is that Somali refugees are a relatively small population in San Diego. The Somali refugee community as of 2016 numbers at 30,000 out of total San Diego population of 1.3 million.³⁵⁶ However, as discussed in the previous section, the blackness of Somalis makes them hyper-visible targets of police violence and counter-terrorism efforts. Somalis are a black Muslim group that can readily be identified as dangerous by the

³⁵⁴ See "Running A Three-Legged Race: The San Diego Police Department, The Intelligence Community, and Counter-Terrorism" by Andrew G. Mills & Joseph R. Clark

³⁵⁵ Ibid.,5.

³⁵⁶ Data organized by the Somali family service shows that the San Diego Somali population is 30,000. <http://www.somalifamilyservice.org/>

discourses of black criminality available to the police. As discussed above, to reveal the continuities between the War on Drugs and the War on Terror, I show that the federal government actively utilizes strategies from the War on Drugs in creating counter-terrorism tactics. One example of this linkage is the comprehensive gang model, a strategy in which police departments partner with local communities to deter gang recruitment.³⁵⁷

This model was originally created for drug enforcement, but was later adopted by the SDPD as a method for counter-terrorism. Below I provide a brief overview of the gang model as explained by the Department of Justice:

The Department of Justice's *Comprehensive Gang Model* is a flexible framework that communities can use to reduce or prevent gang activity, involving strategies of community mobilization, social intervention, opportunities for educational and vocational advancements, and organizational change. Local community organizations and government offices responsible for addressing gangs—police, schools, probation officers, youth agencies, grassroots organizations, government, and others—help identify causes, recommend appropriate responses, and select activities for local implementation, supported by integrated Federal, state, and local resources to incorporate state-of-the-art practices in gang prevention, intervention, and suppression. This multi-dimensional, community-led response to gangs—driven by local stakeholders and supported by the Federal Government—has reduced serious gang-related crimes in affected locations across the country. (6)

The SDPD adopted this gang model in their engagement with the Somali community, actively monitoring and surveilling the Somali refugee community for domestic counter-terrorism. According to a Public Records Request by the Somali Women's Advocacy Group:

Most U.S. citizens of Somali descent and Somali immigrants (collectively "Somalis") in San Diego fled their homeland due to persecution based on

³⁵⁷ See [OJJJ Comprehensive Gang Model Planning for Implementation](#) by The Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention

their ethnicity, religious practices or tribal affiliation. Yet the FBI and its partners in San Diego's Joint Terrorism Task Force ("JTTF-SD"), including the San Diego Police Department ("SDPD"), have subjected San Diego's Somalis to regular scrutiny based on those same factors. While only a small number of Somalis with ties to San Diego have been linked to terrorism, the FBI and its JTTF-SD partners have engaged in broad investigation of the Somali community. This has created an atmosphere of anxiety and insecurity among Somalis in San Diego.

As this request for records makes evident, the Somali refugee community is under continuous surveillance by the SDPD. This surveillance has resulted in Somalis living in a constant state of fear.

In our contemporary political moment, the relationship between Somalis and the SDPD is configured by the War on Terror. The police are traditionally organized to enforce local laws; in San Diego, these local laws involve anti-gang and loitering laws. By establishing a division of counter-terrorism, the SDPD transforms their mission from domestic law enforcement to international counterterrorism. The structural organization and aims of the SDPD reveals that the police and military are increasingly occupying the same function. A militarized police makes visible the hidden function of the police as an occupying force in black communities. The function of the SDPD as an occupying force is eerily evoked by the continuous presence of five or more patrol cars on street corners in City Heights as the police arrest a single black person.

To further explain this blurring of state powers, I now turn to former military officer and current FBI agent Andrew Mills who is tasked with helping the SDPD develop domestic and international counter-terrorism strategies. In the "Running a Three Legged Race" memo, Mills advised the SDPD to shift their focus from crime to counter-terrorism:

The homegrown jihadists that threaten the US are not easily identifiable

on the basis of demographic characteristics. Today's threat is not borne by the stereotypically thick- accented angry young Arab of a Hollywood film. Jihadists are increasingly clean-skin individuals; those who travel with passports from the US or other Western nations and raise little immediate suspicion at the border. Homegrown militants do not fit any particular socio-economic or ethnic profile. Their average age is thirty. Of the cases for which ethnicity could be determined, only a quarter are of Arab descent, while 10% are African-American, 13% are Caucasian, 18% are South Asian, 20% are of *Somali* descent, and the rest are either mixed race or of other ethnicities. (98)

Mills makes a special point to highlight that 20 percent of all homegrown terrorists are Somali, despite the numerical impossibility of this being true. He also states that "home grown militants do not fit any profile," a contradictory statement that evades questions of racial profiling. This blanket statement allows the government to rebuff criticism of racial profiling, while using tactics that specifically target Arabs and Muslims. The police are able to mobilize vast resources with little public outcry because the discourse of terror has created a permanent state of fear. After 9/11, the U.S. engaged in a permanent state of war, a state that would occasionally be interrupted by shifting geographies of terror.³⁵⁸ These shifting terrains were made visible by Obama's policy of withdrawing troops from Iraq, while sending twenty thousand soldiers to Afghanistan.³⁵⁹ The War on Terror as a complex set of intersecting ideas allows the state to effectively destroy any country they categorize under the rubric of terrorism. These shifting geographies of terror have allowed the U.S. state to commit increasingly more soldiers to Somalia.

³⁵⁸ See [The Rhetoric of Terror: Reflections on 9/11 and the War on Terror](#) by Marc Redfield

³⁵⁹ See <https://www.the-american-interest.com/2016/02/15/obamas-failed-legacy-in-afghanistan/>

Ben Chappell explains America's propensity to war: "The arbitrary power to 'deem' persons as fitting such labels grants this process a strategic ambiguity, such that the war on terror promised to be a permanent state of war against an enemy who shape-shifted like a shadow and regenerated like a hydra" (319).³⁶⁰ Like the War on Drugs, the War on Terror has no end point because the enemy is not real but a discursive construct that serves American imperial aspirations. The discourse of terror grants legitimacy to the realization of America's imperial goals. These goals are essentially the exploitation of resources and labor and are rationalized under the guise of spreading democracy. Islam is constructed as the greatest threat to liberal democracy. Liberalism as a value system situates the individual as the rightful subject of democracy, whereas Islam privileges the collective over the individual. The religious Umma supersedes any individual Muslim. Chappell explains that the Muslim is this shape shifting enemy who in their corporality represents a threat to American liberalism. The logic of U.S. Empire does not distinguish between Muslims but imagines all Muslims as potential terrorists, the same way the logic of policing imagines all black people as criminal. Chappell argues that this racialization of Muslims allowed the state great leeway to police, hunt, and profile Muslims. He declares that "After September 11, however, polls reported that nearly 60 percent of the American public favored ethnic profiling, at least as long as it was directed at Arabs and Muslims" (55). The heavy-handed support for racial profiling is not surprising, because the state has historically mobilized public fear and racism to justify

³⁶⁰ See "REHEARSALS OF THE SOVEREIGN: States of Exception and Threat Governmentality" by Ben Cambell

racial profiling.

The support for racial profiling on the part of the public and the state is akin to the massive support of racial profiling against young black people in New York.³⁶¹ This profiling was based on the FBI's fabricated crime statistics that claimed black people committed a disproportionate number of crimes. According to the FBI's Criminal Justice Service Division "Juveniles who were black accounted for 51.4 percent of juvenile arrests for violent crimes".³⁶²

Therefore, data did not just reflect reality but had the capacity to produce reality and make black criminality a seemingly unchanging truth. The FBI utilizes the same approach in regards to Muslims, because the FBI focuses on the acts of terror committed by Muslims at the expense of all other forms of terrorism, especially since U.S. terror is geographically the most widespread.³⁶³ The military violence the U.S. visits on millions in the Middle East and Africa is by definition terrorism (the use of violence or threat of violence for political aims), and yet is not labeled as such. The War on Terror had devastating effects on Muslim communities throughout the U.S., who became victims of state surveillance. As Taha Hashim, a Somali student at mesa college, exclaimed, "[I] hate flying because the last time I flew to Somalia to visit my grandmother; I was detained for 48 hours by the FBI at the San Diego airport, they said I was from Al- Shabab."

The deployment of violence against Somali youth and the nation of Somalia indicates how naturalized violence is to the normal functioning of

³⁶¹ See "Stop and Frisk: Report on 2011 Findings" by the New York Civil Liberties Union

³⁶² <https://ucr.fbi.gov/crime-in-the-u.s/2011/crime-in-the-u.s.-2011/tables/table-43/#overview>

³⁶³ See "Terrorism 2002-2005" U.S. Department of Justice

American politics. How and why does violence become the only method of political engagement? America's reaction to 9/11 is not surprising from a historical standpoint, as the U.S. has employed violence for political aims since its inception. The westward expansion of early settlers was premised on the violent erasure and genocide against indigenous peoples (Byrd). The violence that the U.S. deployed against the Vietnamese people in the 1970s was rationalized as a fight against communism, whereas the U.S. military occupation of Somalia is made possible by the discourse of terror. In stark contradiction, any acts of resistance by communities of color is delegitimized by U.S. regimes of truth that designate inclusion into U.S. Empire as the only aspiration.³⁶⁴ This inclusion is premised on the idea that the role of people in the "Third World" is to either be exploited labors in their home countries or exploited immigrants to the U.S.³⁶⁵

The *San Diego Tribune* is one such meaning-making institution that does the work of making U.S. Empire invisible by shifting public attention to acts of terror committed by Al-Shabab. Thus far, the *San Diego Tribune* has published few details on the thousands of Somalis killed by U.S. drones in Somalia. In addition, Somalis in San Diego are plagued by the secretive counter-terrorism unit of the SDPD, whose job is to watch, observe, and infiltrate the Somali refugee community. Asia Yusuf, a Somali chef, claimed that "White men with long beards who want to convert to Islam come to spy on us in the restaurant, but we know who they really are." The men Asia is referencing are from the counter-terrorism unit of the SDPD. Asia's retort "we know

³⁶⁴ See [Empire of Liberty: Power, Desire, and Freedom](#) by Anthony Bogues

³⁶⁵ See [The Ruptures of American Capital](#) by Grace Hong

who they really are” calls upon a refugee epistemology that makes visible seemingly invisible acts of state power. Because of my interview with Somali refugees in San Diego, I also have become aware of the activities of the SDPD’s counter-terrorism unit. Trained by the CIA on surveillance techniques, the counter-terrorism unit sends informants to spy on the Somali community, informants who wear long beards and claim to want to become better Muslims.³⁶⁶ The SDPD justifies this surveillance by citing San Diego as a terrorist hotspot, largely because of the large presence of immigrants.³⁶⁷

To explain how Islam’s relationship to terrorism is imagined by U.S. state institutions of violence, I provide a textual reading of an FBI training manual on Islam that was distributed to the SDPD in 2011. This FBI training manual is titled *Islam 101* and makes a direct correlation between violence and Islam.³⁶⁸ I have reproduced a chart from this manual below:

³⁶⁶ See “Running A Three-Legged Race: The San Diego Police Department, The Intelligence Community, and Counter-Terrorism”

³⁶⁷ Ibid., 21.

³⁶⁸ See <https://www.wired.com/2011/09/fbi-muslims-radical/>

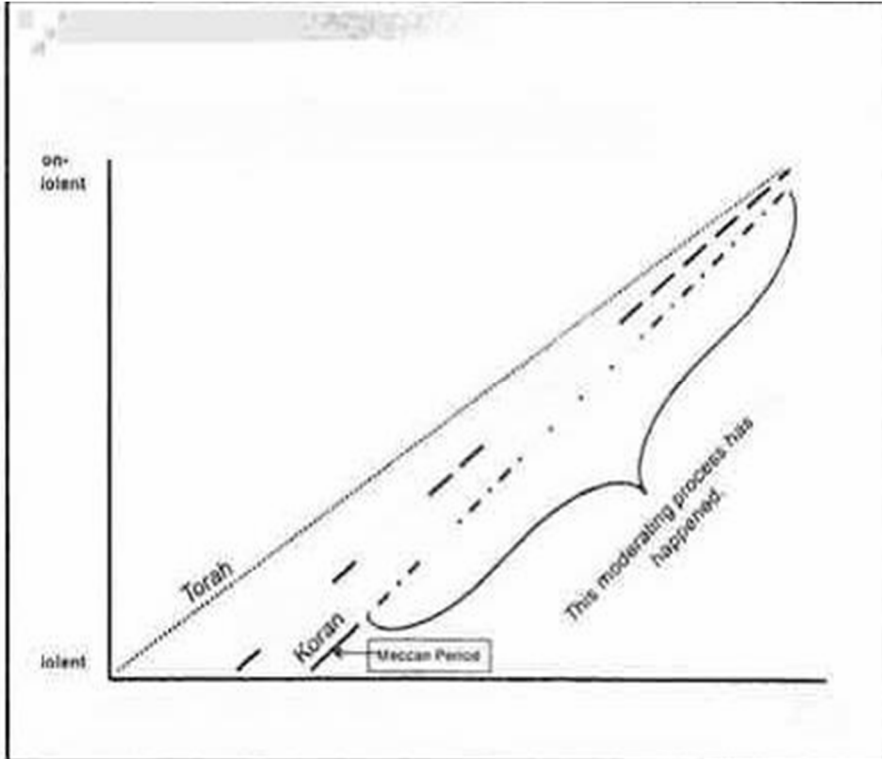


Figure 7: Chart of Islam

What this chart does is compare the Koran, the Bible, and the Torah. On the Y axis is a range that moves from violent to non-violent, and on the X axis is the passage of time from 14BC to 2010. This chart indicates that both the Torah and the Bible started as violent and steadily became non-violent over time, whereas the Koran began as violent and remains unchanged from 610 AD to 2010. This chart reproduces the ideology of linear temporality which assumes that society becomes more progressive and advanced and moves from savage to modern with the passage of time. In this narrative of linear temporality, the U.S. and Western Europe are regarded as the pinnacle of progress, while Third World nations lag behind at a less advanced stage. In

this linear trajectory of progress, Muslim nations are literally stuck in time, unchanged since the 6 B.C., while Africa exists completely outside of time.³⁶⁹ Somalia as an African nation and a predominantly Muslim nation is thus both stuck in the past and exists outside of time. The colonial solution to a nation that is stuck in the past and refuses progress is elimination and genocide, and to a nation that operates outside of time is to bring it back into linear temporality through development. The mechanism through which Europe brought African nations back into time is by forcing African nations to adopt the nation-state model as a form of governance.

The U.S. response to Somalia is to simultaneously destroy it through war and to develop it through aid and state building. This schizophrenic response represents U.S. military policy in Somalia, as well as SDPD's response to Somali refugees. The SDPD both attacks Somalis for gang affiliation and terrorism, while simultaneously creating cultural programs to civilize Somalis. Somalis must be eliminated like Arabs but also civilized like Africans. The chart above signals a discursive move that narrates the violence as being inherent to Muslims. This FBI training manual thus teaches San Diego police officers that any Muslim person they encounter should be met with deadly force.

Juxtaposing police training manuals with news reports, interviews, and statistics, my project aims to highlight the convergences of Islamophobia and anti-black racism as a rationale for the mobilization of the military and the police. I do not argue that anti-blackness and Islamophobia operate in the same way since

³⁶⁹ See [Silences in African History: Between the Syndromes of Discovery and Abolition](#) by Jacques Depelchin

Islamophobia and anti-blackness have different histories and operate in structurally differing ways. What I do argue is that Somalis who are Muslim and racialized as black in the U.S. are deeply affected and interpolated by both Islamophobia and anti-blackness. I am interested in how the state utilizes anti-black racism and Islamophobia to justify violence against Somalis and the strategies Somalis employ to navigate and survive this violence.

Drones and the War on Terror

The War on Terror would see not only the expansion of U.S. military forces throughout the world but also the emergence of drones as a form of warfare that is deadly and indiscriminate in its destruction.³⁷⁰ When the U.S. engages in war with countries like Somalia, the entire population of that country is deemed disposable. Whereas wars against civilized societies are marked by respect for the humanity of the enemy combatants, drones are indicative of what the War on Terror represents for Somalis. Drones as weapons are not programmed to eliminate an individual but rather an entire group of people. Therefore, drones are utilized against people whose humanity means little to the state; to be racialized as “other” is to be denied the privilege of empathy. Even though drones are intended to allow more precise targeting of enemy combatants, drones often produce large civilian casualties.³⁷¹ A statement by a former military personal from the book, *Dirty Wars: The World Is a Battlefield*, explains the ways in which drones are rationalized:³⁷²

“We were much more successful using the surgical strikes, where we went in, to tell you

³⁷⁰ See “Afghanistan, Drone Warfare, and the Kill List” by Ryan C. Hendrickson

³⁷¹ *Ibid.*, 15.

³⁷² *Dirty Wars: The World Is a Battlefield* by Jeremy Scahill

the truth very Israeli like- and we did the drone strike, and/or hellfire strike and we blasted the individual car of a known guy who was known to be in that vehicle. We flew in, we snatched his body, we confirmed it, we got the intelligence and went away. That's the way we should be doing it. We could have been doing that for the preceding (ten) years" (296).

The use of drones in the War on Terror has increased not decreased the number of civilian casualties. Drones are often deployed with faulty intel and often kill large numbers of people at once.³⁷³ The high death tolls caused by drones is not surprising, because civilian casualties or what the military refers to as collateral damage has been a central aspect of American warfare. The deaths of hundreds of thousands of civilians in the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan is justified by the ideology that Muslims, regardless of the diversity of their beliefs, are terrorists.³⁷⁴ One example of this is a 2005 CNN news report that claimed, "American forces have killed at least 100 insurgents and foreign fighters in an offensive near Iraq's border with Syria, U.S. military officials said Monday."³⁷⁵ The reporter does not distinguish between the innocent civilians who were killed in the assault and the alleged terrorists who wanted to do harm to U.S. forces. Insurgents is a term intended to dehumanize those who are uniformly and routinely killed by American military forces, namely Muslims.

In the article, "U.S. Covert Actions in Somalia: Does Latest Drone Attack on Al- Shabab Signal Change in U.S. Tactics in Somalia," Jack Serle of the Bureau of

³⁷³ Ibid., 154.

³⁷⁴ See *Endless War: The Global War on Terror and the New Bush Administration* by Paul Rogers

³⁷⁵ See <http://edition.cnn.com/2005/WORLD/meast/05/09/iraq.main/>

Instigative Journalism exposes the hidden U.S. military violence in Somalia:³⁷⁶

It was the fifth consecutive strike against al Shabaab’s leadership, with drones now appearing to have superseded other, manned aircraft and cruise-missiles in the seven years since attacks began in Somalia. The unmanned systems are now widely seen as the US’s weapon of choice in its war on terror, as they can “strike their targets with astonishing precision,” according to CIA director John Brennan. But despite their vaunted precision, there are reports the latest strike in Somalia, on January 31, killed or injured civilians.

The murder of Somali civilians in this news reports appears as a mere afterthought in an otherwise successful operation—a metric for the success of American military tactics. In another report, Serle claims that 150 Somalis were killed in a drone attack that took place on March 7, 2016.³⁷⁷ This attack marked the single highest death toll in a U.S. drone attack recorded anywhere. And yet, instead of condemning this extreme form of barbarism, the U.S. military celebrated these deaths as great accomplishments.³⁷⁸ Despite the fact that the *San Diego Tribune* is a local newspaper, the staff at the Tribune continue to publish articles detailing international Somali terrorists’ plots as a way to “contextualize” not only the U.S. military presence in Somalia, but also the racial profiling of Somalis in San Diego. However inadvertently, the *Tribune* worked intimately with the SDPD to bolster support for the harassment and profiling of Somalis in San Diego.

Unlike the writers of the *Tribune*, Somalis in San Diego are keenly aware of U.S.

³⁷⁶ <https://www.thebureauinvestigates.com/2015/02/06/does-latest-drone-strike-on-al-shabaab-signal-change-in-us-tactics-in-somalia>

³⁷⁷ See <https://www.thebureauinvestigates.com/stories/2016-03-07/unprecedented-death-toll-from-us-air-strike-in-somalia>

³⁷⁸ See https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/checkpoint/wp/2016/03/07/u-s-drone-strike-kills-more-than-150-in-somalia/?utm_term=.0c1edb98a3ab

imperial atrocities. In my work, I link the violence Somalis encountered in Somalia at the hands of the U.S. state to the violence they encounter in San Diego. The argument presented by the SDPD is that Somalis in San Diego are joining Al-Shabab in Somalia.³⁷⁹ As the imagined enemy of U.S. empire, the figure of Al-Shabab allows the U.S. military to share information with the SDPD, thereby enabling the targeting of Somali communities both in Somalia and San Diego. As of this writing, the U.S. military is conducting a significant amount of surveillance in Somalia to track Al-Shabab through the use of drones.³⁸⁰ These drones not only produce death but allow the transmutation of intel by taking photos of Somalis, and their landscape and towns. Drone technology traces its history to the British colonial use of bombs as a method of suppressing colonial resistance. The first deployment of aerial bombing in Somalia occurred under British colonialism. According to Mahmoud Mandani, the first “systematic aerial bombings were carried out by the British Royal Air Force against Somalis in 1920” (33).³⁸¹ Aerial bombings during British colonialism were utilized against people who were considered un-civilized enemies. Since the British empire did not take the humanity of Somalis seriously, it felt no need to distinguish between civilians and enemy combatants.

A recent newspaper article reported that the drones that are operating in Somalia are there to target a secret military base.³⁸² Ty McCormick explains the

³⁷⁹ See “Running A Three-Legged Race: The San Diego Police Department, The Intelligence Community, and Counter-Terrorism”

³⁸⁰ See <http://www.mirror.co.uk/tech/drone-disguised-bird-discovered-somalia-8427670>

³⁸¹ See Good Muslim, Bad Muslim: America, The Cold War, and the Roots of Terror by Mahmood Mandani

³⁸² <http://foreignpolicy.com/2015/07/02/exclusive-u-s-operates-drones-from-secret-bases-in-somalia-special-operations-jsoc-black-hawk-down/>

recent presence of drones in Somalia:

“They have a base over there,” Abdighani Abdi Jama, state minister for the presidency in the interim regional administration in Kismayo, said of U.S. forces, gesturing to a heavily fortified compound not far from the airport’s small terminal. He confirmed that as many as 40 U.S. military personnel are currently stationed in Kismayo, roughly 300 miles south of the capital of Mogadishu, where he said they operate drones from the airport’s single runway and carry out covert “intelligence” and “counterterrorism” operations.

Based on this report, we can see the secrecy within which the U.S. military operates in Somalia. Today, in Somalia, there are 40 American soldiers who operate covertly and without the permission of the Somali government or people. The U.S. military continues to deny the existence of this military base. How do we contend with state power that operates through non- being, that makes its absence visible through the violence it enacts on Muslim bodies? The base is the central location from which the U.S. military deploys untold numbers of drones, which are responsible for the deaths of thousands of Somalis.

The figure of Al-Shabab allows the U.S. military and police to create a transnational circuit of state violence against Somalis. The Anti-Defamation League published a report on Al- Shabab in February of 2015. The report confidently states that “Americans began traveling to Somalia to join Al Shabaab in 2007, around the time the group stepped up its insurgency against Somalia's transitional government and its Ethiopian supporters, who have since withdrawn. At least 50 U.S. citizens and permanent residents are believed to have joined or attempted to join or aid the group

since that time.”³⁸³ Al-Shabab is thus a key character in an American drama that locates Muslims as the villains. Therefore, the state links the foreign Al-Shabab operating “over” there with the domestic Somalis being recruited “over here.” As such, counter-terrorism as a tactic applied in Somalia and in San Diego highlights the convergence and cooperation between the military and the police.

Islamophobia is based on the logic that Islam as a religion supports violence and the people who practice this religion are as a consequence inherently violent.³⁸⁴

According to the logics of the U.S. state, extreme violence is the only solution to people who cannot be reasoned with. In this passage in the “9/11 Commission Report” we see this logic in operation. The “9/11 Commission Report” begins with the statement that:

We learned about an enemy who is sophisticated, patient, disciplined, and lethal. The enemy rallies broad support in the Arab and Muslim world by demanding redress of political grievances, but its hostility toward us and our values is limitless. Its purpose is to rid the world of religious and political pluralism, the plebiscite, and equal rights for women. It makes no distinction between military and civilian targets. Collateral damage is not in its lexicon.” (XVI)³⁸⁵

The authors argue that terrorists can be distinguished from traditional enemies of the U.S. because terrorists are more willing to harm civilians. This statement is plainly a-historical, because many of the U.S. wars including World War Two are organized around the goal of inflicting large numbers of civilian casualties as a military tactic.³⁸⁶ The bombs dropped in Hiroshima and Nagasaki have revealed that the U.S. specifically

³⁸³ See “Al Shabaab’s American Recruits” by The Anti-Defamation League

³⁸⁴ See “The Story of Islamophobia” by Junaid Rana

³⁸⁵ See “The 9/11 Commission Report”

³⁸⁶ See “World War Two and the Law of War” by Geoffrey Best

uses mass violence against civilians as a central military tactic.³⁸⁷ This contradiction is even more apparent with Donald Trump's authorization for U.S. air strikes to target civilians in Somalia.³⁸⁸ The tension between U.S. military violence as a force of terror and the perceived violence of third world countries is visible in the 9/11 Commission Report. The violence and destructive force of the U.S. military is deeply felt in places like Iraq and Afghanistan, where the military transformed the geography through bombing campaigns.³⁸⁹

This contradictory view of violence is conditioned by the idea that irrational violence is natural to third world countries whereas the rational violence of the U.S. is justified as necessary to the maintenance of social order.³⁹⁰ This passage by the 9/11 commission highlights this view: "It is not a position with which Americans can bargain or negotiate. With it there is no common ground—not even respect for life—on which to begin a dialogue. It can only be destroyed or utterly isolated."³⁹¹ The enemy the report is referencing is Al-Qaeda, and according to this report, this new breed of enemies cannot be reasoned with and therefore must be destroyed wherever it may be located. This hunt for Al-Qaeda has led the U.S. to Somalia, where the U.S. military continues to build its force and accelerate its aggression from drones to the deployment of ground forces.³⁹²

The racialization of Muslims as unredeemable savages that have to be eliminated is also present in the "9/11 Commission Report." The report begins with this declarative

³⁸⁷ See Hiroshima and Nagasaki: The Physical, Medical, and Social Effects of the Atomic Bombings: the Committee for the Compilation of Materials on Damage Caused by the Atomic Bombs by Iwanami Shoten

³⁸⁸ See <https://www.stripes.com/news/us/trump-authorizes-more-aggressive-airstrikes-against-al-shabab-in-somalia-1.461295>

³⁸⁹ See "Collateral Damage?: Civilians and the US Air War in Afghanistan" by Marc W. Herold

³⁹⁰ See HUMANITARIAN VIOLENCE The U.S. Deployment of Diversity by Neda Atanosi

³⁹¹ See "The 9/11 Commission Report"

³⁹² See https://www.nytimes.com/2017/05/25/opinion/somalia-al-shabaab-us-airstrikes.html?_r=0

statement: “Because the Muslim world has fallen behind the West politically, economically, and militarily for the past three centuries, and because few tolerant or secular Muslim democracies provide alternative models for the future, Bin Ladin’s message finds receptive ears.” Missing from this statement about the assumed backwardness of Muslims is the fact that much of the Muslim world had been colonized until relatively recently.³⁹³ As such, the poverty and lack of infrastructure in many Muslim countries cannot be attributed to their inability to compete with the Western world, but rather to Western countries such as the U.S. that have been actively stealing the resources of these countries. This is especially noticeable in Somalia where British and Italian fishing companies have continued to exploit the resources off the Somali coast, with little repercussions from the international community or the Somali state.³⁹⁴

According to the 9/11 Commission Report, not only are Muslim countries predisposed to violence, they are also behind in terms of scientific, cultural, technological, and military development. Based on this logic, in order to advance economically, Muslim countries’, need to emulate democracy as it exists in the U.S. The U.S. is the yard stick for which progress and civilization is marked.³⁹⁵ U.S. exceptionalism also functions as a justification for U.S. imperial pursuits that operate under the guise of progress.³⁹⁶ In 1998, citing the role of U.S. exceptionalism in justifying military violence, President Clinton claimed that “America is and will remain a target of terrorists precisely because we are leaders; because we act to advance peace, democracy,

³⁹³ See Good Muslim, Bad Muslim: America, the Cold War, and the Roots of Terror

³⁹⁴ See “Closing the net Stopping illegal fishing on the high seas” by Task Force on IUU Fishing on the High Seas

³⁹⁵ See The Gift of Freedom: War, Debt, and Other Refugee Passages by Mimi Nguyen

³⁹⁶ Ibid.,83.

and basic human values; because we're the most open society on Earth; and because, as we have shown yet again, we take an uncompromising stand against terrorism.”³⁹⁷

Clinton touted the logic of U.S. exceptionalism even further by arguing that not only were Muslim countries unable to replicate democracy as it existed in the U.S, they were actively seeking the destruction of democracy. Based on this worldview, Muslims cannot be saved through economic development or the civilizing mission but need to be destroyed because they refuse to adopt American values of openness.

Conclusion

The converge of identities that is the black/Muslim/immigrant is increasingly important to highlight, because it shows the diverse ways in which structural racism and imperialism function in our present moment. The Somali refugee community in San Diego only numbers around 30,000, and³⁹⁸ the country of Somalia has a population of six million, which is nearly the size of Texas.³⁹⁹ Why has such a small country and refugee community attracted so much unwanted attention and violent action? I argue that Somali refugees and the country of Somalia have become central figures in national security narratives because Somalis represent the convergence of multiple structures of racism such as anti-black racism, Islamophobia, and nativism. The War on Drugs, as a mobilization of state resources from the 1970's to our present moment, would not have been possible without the central role of anti-black racism and the myth of the black

³⁹⁷ See <http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/?pid=54799>

³⁹⁸ See Somali Family Service Data: <http://www.somalifamilyservice.org/index.php/contact-sfs/16-youth-programs>

³⁹⁹ See <http://worldpopulationreview.com/countries/somalia-population/>

criminal as a governing ideology. The War on Terror on the other hand and the destruction of Arab and Muslim life since 2001 could have not occurred without the discourse of Islamophobia. Somali stories illuminate the ways in which police violence, military attacks and mass deportation converge to produce an increasingly authoritarian state.

Epilogue:

The Return of The U.S. Military: The Never-Ending War in Somalia

In this dissertation, my goal has been to highlight the continuous, pervasive, and violent presence of U.S. militarism in Somali life since the 1990s, both in Somalia and in City Heights, San Diego. In chapter one, I denaturalized the “collapse” of the Somali state by showing that it was the collusion of European colonialism and U.S. that produced the civil war in Somalia and the subsequent Somali “refugee crisis.” In chapters two and three, I showed how U.S. militarism followed Somali refugees to San Diego in the form of militarized police. In chapter four, I engaged how the War on Terror has affected and delimited Somali refugees’ lives. I conclude that while U.S. militarism in Somalia has continued unabated, the reasoning behind its role in Somalia has changed, from the logic of humanitarianism in 1993 to the logic of counter-terrorism in the post 9/11 era.⁴⁰⁰

During the Cold War, citing the threat of a communist takeover, the U.S. instigated and funded some of the most destructive wars in countries in the Global South, leaving these countries among the poorest in the world and its people scattered to different corners of the world. In the 1970s, Somalia became a fiercely-fought battleground between the U.S. and the Soviet Union.⁴⁰¹ Both imperial forces funded the Somali dictator and the Ethiopian government to engage in protracted and costly wars over the fate of the territory. As discussed in Chapter 1, the government of Somalia collapsed in 1990, a year after the collapse of the Soviet Union, signaling the rise of the

⁴⁰⁰ See Humanitarian Violence: The U.S. Deployment of Diversity by Neda Atanasoski

⁴⁰¹ See “The Hot ‘Cold War’: The USSR in Southern Africa” by VLADIMIR SHUBIN

U.S. as the world's only superpower.⁴⁰² With the demise of the Soviet Union in 1989, the U.S. found itself facing public resistance from America's tendency to engage in costly and protracted wars.⁴⁰³ The U.S. empire thus needed a new enemy to justify its imperial encroachment into sovereign nations. A statement from the 1992 Defense Planning Guide created for then-Vice President Dick Cheney highlights the void that the War on Terror filled for U.S. imperial ambitions. Dale Vasser, the architect of the document, begins by arguing that "Clearly the passing of the Cold War reduces pressure for U.S. military involvement in every potential regional and local conflict. Indeed, absent a global ideational challenge, we have the opportunity to exercise far greater selectivity in our commitments....(44).⁴⁰⁴ This statement implied that "absent a global ideational challenge" in the post-1990's moment, overt American military interventions would be less tolerated by Congress and the broader public. The 9/11 attacks in 2001 provided the needed "global ideational challenge," which roused the U.S. Congress and broader public to re-commit U.S. military might and resources to win the nebulously-termed War on Terror.⁴⁰⁵ The figure of the "Muslim terrorist" emerged in this post 9/11 era as the central enemy in the War on Terror.

The 2006 emergence of U.S. military forces in Somalia is rationalized by the emergence of Al-Shabab in 2008, an organization the U.S. government claims has direct links to Al-Qeada.⁴⁰⁶ The 2001 congress approved "Authorization For Use of Military Force" bill has allowed the executive branch broad powers to declare war on any

⁴⁰² See "The Colonial Legacy in Somalia: Rome and Mogadishu from Colonial Administration to Operation Restore Hope" by Paolo Tripodi

⁴⁰³ See Cold War Civil Rights: Race and the Image of Democracy by Mary Dudziak

⁴⁰⁴ See Defense Planning Guide by Dale A. Vasser

⁴⁰⁵ See "US Imperialism and the Iraq War" by Itty Abraham

⁴⁰⁶ See "A tentative assessment of the Somali Harakat Al Shabaab" by Roland Marchal

organizations related to Al-Qeada without the need for approval from Congress.⁴⁰⁷

Section 2 of the Bill states: “IN GENERAL.—That the President is authorized to use all necessary and appropriate force against those nations, organizations, or persons he determines planned, authorized, committed, or aided the terrorist attacks that occurred on September 11, 2001, or harbored such organizations or persons, in order to prevent any future acts of international terrorism against the United States by such nations, organizations or persons.” Since its passage in 2001, this bill has been used by both the Bush and Obama administrations to deploy U.S. drones and troops to countries around the world. In this Heritage Foundation passage, we can see how Al-Qeada is used to justify U.S. military intervention in Somalia: “Largely expelled from Afghanistan, Al-Qaeda may seek to regroup in another country where it could count on some degree of local support. Somalia is such a place. It is a failed state whose lawless anarchy would permit terrorists to operate relatively freely. The al-Qaeda network has operated there in the past and has longstanding ties to a small minority of Somali Islamists, with which it has worked since the early 1990s.”⁴⁰⁸

In this document, author James Phillips of the Heritage Foundation claims that Somalia’s lawlessness makes the country an ideal target for Al-Qeada, because terrorists can operate there with little scrutiny. It is noteworthy that “lawlessness” also makes Somalia an ideal target for U.S. business interests as well, since American companies do not have to negotiate with a strong sovereign state in order to extract and profit from

⁴⁰⁷ See <https://www.congress.gov/107/plaws/publ40/PLAW-107publ40.pdf>

⁴⁰⁸ See <http://www.heritage.org/homeland-security/report/somalia-and-al-qaeda-implications-the-war-terrorism>

Somalia's rich natural resources.⁴⁰⁹

As I argued in this dissertation, political instability in Somalia is not the product of Al-Qaeda, but of the U.S. military occupation of Somalia and the deployment of drones that regularly destroy the country's infrastructure and kill innocent civilians.⁴¹⁰ The U.S. military also funds warlords and rebel organizations—the same outfits that they targeted for elimination with the 1993 “Operation Restore Hope”⁴¹¹--to fight Al-Shabab, with little concern for the long-term effect that this “alliance” will have on the people living in the country.⁴¹² In other words, the lack of a stable state in Somalia has been made possible by U.S. policy of funding these warlords. On the other hand, Al-Shabab, much-maligned in the West, has produced significant infrastructure improvements for Somalia, ravaged by a decade long civil war.⁴¹³ Known as the Islamic Union Courts, Al-Shabab built schools, hospitals, and food drives to help the local Somali communities that had been reduced to abject poverty by a decade-long civil war.⁴¹⁴ Ronald Judy, in the article the “Politics of Islamic Reformation,” argues that:

It is the traditionalists, the report recognizes, who are largely responsible for the establishment of the vast array of charitable organizations, schools, printing presses, mosques, and social and welfare programs. The report fails to say, but it needs to be pointed out, that these organizations provide the backbone of civil society in the Muslim world, especially at a time when postcolonial states have withdrawn from the provision of social services under the pressure of neoliberal economic policies increasingly adopted since the 1970s.” (333)

⁴⁰⁹ See Somalia: Economy without State by Peter D. Little

⁴¹⁰ See <http://securitydata.newamerica.net/drones/somalia-analysis.html>

⁴¹¹ Ibid.,2.

⁴¹² See <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2006/05/16/AR2006051601625.html>

⁴¹³ See “A tentative assessment of the Somali Harakat Al-Shabaab” by Roland Marchal

⁴¹⁴ See <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-39296517>

Judy explains that the religious organizations that the U.S. targets as terrorist threats are the very ones that provide critical services that neither the U.S. nor the Somali state is willing to provide. As a result, Al-Shabab is popular with many local Somali people, who see the organization as the only entity that has been willing to assist them and to resist U.S. imperialism. Abi Salem, a Somali refugee living in San Diego, remembers the work of Al-Shabab in Somalia: “Back in 2009 in Somalia we had a really hard time, we were hungry and could not find any food, especially the children who were always crying from hunger, then Al-Shabab took over our town and the first thing they did was set up food pantries for the kids. We would have starved if it wasn’t for al-Shabab.”

In contrast to Al-Shabab, the Transitional Federal Government in Somalia was funded by the U.S. and actively worked to promote America’s agenda.⁴¹⁵ The leadership of the Transitional Federal Government (TFG) is comprised of diasporic Somalis who reside in America but returned to Somalia to assume key leadership positions in the government.⁴¹⁶ While organizations like Al-Shabab attempt to resist U.S. imperialism, the TFG government actively works to promote the interests of U.S. imperialism. Ahmed Siad, an older Somali refugee relayed to me his distrust of the TFG: “The prime minister and all his lackeys work for the U.S. they don’t care about the Somali people, they use the money they get from the U.S. to fill their personal bank accounts, they are very corrupt and only make the country worse. This is why Somalia will never get better, because of corrupt politicians who are put in power by the U.S.”

⁴¹⁵ See <http://reliefweb.int/report/somalia/us-assistance-transitional-federal-government>

⁴¹⁶ See <https://qz.com/903697/majority-of-somalias-presidential-candidates-and-one-third-of-lawmakers-hold-foreign-passports/>

Somali Youth League

In addition to and at times in collaboration with Al-Shabab, Somali youth in the diaspora have been active in mobilizing against U.S. militarism. The Somali Youth League in San Diego has been mobilizing the Somali refugee community around numerous issues affecting Somalia, including the 2005 drought in Somalia. The Somali Youth League initially sprang into action in the 2006 as a response to the U.S. sponsored Ethiopian invasion of Somalia.⁴¹⁷

In 2006, the U.S. provided military equipment and funds to the Ethiopian military to motivate Ethiopia to fight a proxy war for the U.S. government.⁴¹⁸ The Ethiopian military rationalized the invasion by claiming that Somalia, as a border nation housing terrorists, posed a significant threat to the safety of Ethiopian citizens.⁴¹⁹ A news report by Rob Prince revealed that the U.S. government pressured Ethiopia to invade Somalia:

If accurate — and there is no reason to believe the contrary — the cable suggests that Ethiopia had no intention of invading Somalia in 2006 *but was encouraged/pressured* to do so by the United States which pushed Ethiopia behind the scenes. Already bogged down in wars in Iraq and Afghanistan at the time, the Bush Administration pushed Ethiopia to invade Somalia with an eye on crushing the Union of Islamic Courts, which was gaining strength in Somalia at the time. . . . The U.S. military had been preparing Ethiopia for the invasion, providing military aid and training Ethiopian troops. Then on December 4, 2006, CENTCOM Commander, General John Abizaid was in Addis Ababa on what was described as “a courtesy call.” Instead, the plans for the invasion were finalized.”⁴²⁰

This invasion resulted in the deaths of 20,000 Somalis and created close to a million

⁴¹⁷ See “So Much to Fear” War Crimes and the Devastation of Somalia by Human Rights Watch

⁴¹⁸ See http://fpif.org/wikileaks_reveals_us_twisted_ethiopias_arm_to_invade_somalia/

⁴¹⁹ See “Ethiopia’s invasion of Somalia in 2006: Motives and lessons learned” by Napoleon A. Bamfo

⁴²⁰ See http://fpif.org/wikileaks_reveals_us_twisted_ethiopias_arm_to_invade_somalia/

refugees, thereby exasperating the Somali refugee crises.⁴²¹ There were numerous reports of atrocities committed by Ethiopian soldiers. According to a 2008 Human Rights Watch report, the “United States policy towards Somalia largely revolves around fears of international terrorist networks using the country as a base. The United States directly backed Ethiopia's intervention in Somalia and has provided strong political backing to the TFG. But US officials have refused to meaningfully confront or even publicly acknowledge the atrocities committed by the Ethiopian military. The US approach is not only failing to address the suffering of millions of Somalis but is counterproductive in its own terms, breeding the very extremism that it is supposed to defeat.”⁴²²

The Somali diaspora was disturbed by these news reports and enraged by the unfolding events. Many Somalis had relatives in Mogadishu that recounted the horrors of the Ethiopian military invasion. These stories mobilized Somali youth in San Diego to protest the actions of the Ethiopian government. Somali youth organized protests and charity runs to expose the broader San Diego community to the violent events unfolding in Somalia. Some Somali youth rightly suspected that the U.S. government had sponsored the Ethiopian invasion. Asia Himzo, an activist in the Somali Youth League, shared her thoughts about the Ethiopian invasion with me: “We knew that the American government supported the Ethiopian invasion, because our family in Somalia would tell us they saw American soldiers with Ethiopian soldiers in Somalia. The Americans kept denying their involvement but our family knew something was up.” A 2006WikiLeaks document, titled “Meeting with U.S. Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs,”

⁴²¹ See “So Much to Fear” War Crimes and the Devastation of Somalia” Human Rights Watch

⁴²² See <https://www.hrw.org/report/2008/12/08/so-much-fear/war-crimes-and-devastation-somalia>

revealed the extensive nature of America's involvement in the atrocities.⁴²³ The declassified military document states:

The US Assistant Secretary's visit to Addis Ababa and meeting with prime minister Meles and the presence of Rear Admiral Hunt at her side show's Washington's growing concerns about the evolving situation in Somalia and the region. If in the past, the U.S. and Ethiopia had diverging views and strategies on the way forward in Somalia, the UIC's military achievements have definitely led to a rapprochement and to the potential development of a common approach to the problem. Any Ethiopian action in Somalia would have Washington's blessing.

As this leaked memo indicates, the U.S. utilized Ethiopia as a proxy in their global war against terrorism. The target for the proxy war was the Islamic Union Courts, but like all American wars, civilians became the main victims of military violence.⁴²⁴

The U.S.-organized Ethiopian invasion of Somalia was as much driven by the desire to destroy terrorism in Somalia as by the need to establish U.S. control in the region.⁴²⁵ For close to one hundred years, Somalia has been at the center of trade in the Red Sea; having control over the country would mean access to the trade routes in the Red Sea.⁴²⁶ In a 2016 article James Jeffrey, in the "Global Post," highlights the geographic importance of the Somali coast: "Nowadays it's viewed as offering some of the most prime military real estate on the planet. It overlooks the southern gateway to the Red Sea on the way to the Suez Canal, one of the world's biggest shipping lanes. Major militaries want a presence there both to shore up regional stability and to counter piracy

⁴²³See

https://wikileaks.org/wiki/US_encouraged_Ethiopian_invasion_of_Somalia:_UN_meeting_memo_with_Jeanday_Frazier,_Secretary_of_State_for_African_Affairs,_2006

⁴²⁴ See "Taliban and the Islamic Courts Union: How They Changed the Game in Afghanistan and Somalia?" by Aisha Ahmad

⁴²⁵ Ibid., 7.

⁴²⁶ See A Modern History of the Somali: Nation and State in the Horn of Africa

threatening that key trade route".⁴²⁷ The Somali coast is a space where capital accumulation is made possible by companies located in Britain, Italy and France all of which are countries that have access to Somalia due to their former colonial relationship.⁴²⁸ The proxy war was inspired by America's financial interest in the country and a deep-seated desire to maintain political control over Somalia.⁴²⁹ In short, America's desire to circumvent Somali sovereignty is shaped by American imperial interests.⁴³⁰

Al-Shabab and The Somali Terrorist

The U.S.'s militaristic and political interventions in Somalia align with Edward Said's definition of imperialism, which I find generative for my analysis. In Culture and Imperialism Said argues that:

"Imperialism" means the practice, the theory, and the attitudes of a dominating metropolitan center ruling a distant territory; "colonialism," which is almost always a consequence of imperialism, is the implanting of settlements on distant territory. As Michael Doyle puts it: "Empire is a relationship, formal or informal, in which one state controls the effective political sovereignty of another political society. It can be achieved by force, by political collaboration, by economic, social, or cultural dependence. Imperialism is simply the process or policy of establishing or maintaining an empire.

In the case of Somalia, the U.S. operates as an empire that maintains power in the region primarily through force. The metropole of the U.S. sustains dominance over Somalia

⁴²⁷ See <https://www.pri.org/stories/2016-05-03/china-building-its-first-overseas-military-base-djibouti-right-next-key-us-one>

⁴²⁸ See "The Dialectics of Piracy in Somalia: the rich versus the poor" by Abdi Ismail Samatar, Mark Lindberg & Basil Mahayni

⁴²⁹ See "Understanding the US Policy toward Somalia" by Afyare Abdi Elmi

⁴³⁰ Ibid.,80.

because of the military base Camp Lemonier, located in Djibouti.⁴³¹ The U.S. empire can maintain a high level of political and economic dominance throughout the world, because the U.S. has more military bases globally than any other country.⁴³² These military bases allow the U.S. government to project power far beyond its metropolitan center. Camp Lemonier was created in 2002 as part of the U.S.'s "Global War on Terror," with East Africa emerging as the next terrain for the War on Terror.⁴³³ The "War on Terror" and 9/11 thus allowed the U.S. to extend its imperial reach and flex its military might in a way that was not possible before.

What makes the contemporary U.S. military operations in Somalia different from the 1993 military invasion is the fact that the U.S. now has to engage a large and vocal Somali diaspora living in America⁴³⁴ who protest its encroachment into Somali sovereignty. As a consequence, both Al-Shabab and the Somali Youth League in San Diego have been targeted for foreign and domestic U.S. counter-insurgency. The resistance waged by Somali refugees in the diaspora and FBI's retaliatory surveillance of Somalis provokes the question of what happens when the colonized other becomes a citizen of the metropole? Either the assimilation of the colonized other through multiculturalism or the demonization of the colonized other through racial discrimination, both are projects of race that are not mutually exclusive.⁴³⁵ Somali refugees are racialized as the terrorist enemy rather than as a symbol for refugee rescue narratives. It is precisely

⁴³¹ See "Where Is the "Post-9/11 World"?" By BRONWYN WINTER

⁴³² See <http://www.politico.com/magazine/story/2015/06/us-military-bases-around-the-world-119321>

⁴³³ See https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/national-security/remote-us-base-at-core-of-secret-operations/2012/10/25/a26a9392-197a-11e2-bd10-5ff056538b7c_story.html?utm_term=.336bd9f75a36

⁴³⁴ See *The Somali Diaspora: A Journey Away* by Roble, Abdi, and Doug Rutledge

⁴³⁵ See *European Others: Queering Ethnicity in Post-national Europe* by Fatima El-Tayeb

because of the activities of the U.S. military in Somalia and the emergence of resistance to this violence by Al-Shabab in Somalia, that Somalis in America have become prime targets of U.S. counter-terrorism. Al-Shabab translates into “The Youth” in Arabic and is mostly comprised of Somali youth.⁴³⁶ The Somali Youth League in San Diego is also a youth-led organization that derives its name from the de-colonial movement in Somalia during the 1950’s that went by the name of the Somali Youth League. Abid Samatar, in the article “Somalis as Africa’s First Democrats: Premier Abdirazak H. Hussein and President Aden A. Osman”, reviews the origin of the Somali Youth League: “a time, now expunged from collective memory, when many aspirants were cognizant of the onerous responsibilities of leadership. In this regard, it is instructive to revisit the formation of Somalia’s first internal self-government in 1956. At that time, the victorious Somali Youth League (SYL) elected the late Abdillahi Issa Mohamoud and Aden Abdillah Osman as Prime Minister and President of the Legislative Assembly, respectively.” As the origin story of the Somali Youth League highlights, youth have been the center of resistance across time and space and resisted the convergence of western dominance, whether it was in the form of Italian colonialism in 1950 or U.S. imperialism in 2017.

As I documented in my second and third chapter, the Somali refugee community was perceived as a criminal threat in the early 1990’s and as a terrorist threat in the post-9/11 moment. Lost in these narratives is the ways in which U.S. imperialism and military violence has historically threatened and continues to endanger Somali life. The refugee stories that center U.S. imperialism and structural racism reveal a U.S. imperial problem

⁴³⁶ See “A tentative assessment of the Somali Harakat Al-Shabaab” by Roland Marchal

rather than a refugee problem. U.S. militarism produced the Somali refugee crises and continues to wreak havoc on Somali communities in the form of militarized police. By blaming violence on the victims of violence, the U.S. attempts to absolve itself of the crime of creating the refugee crises. As this passage by Ken Menkhaus highlights, the victims of racism are imagined to be the progenitors of racism because they call attention to the workings of racial power. Ken Menkhaus's article "Somalia, Global Security and the War on Terrorism" is indicative of this racial discourse, arguing that:

The strong cultural identity Somalis possess makes them relatively disinclined to assimilate, producing ethnic enclaves in countries which are not always accustomed to this as a feature of their urban landscape. Some Somalis exploit generous family reunification policies for refugees by fraudulently claiming nephews and even non-relatives as children (often for a fee). All this in turn has created public resentment against Somali communities, fueling a rise in support for anti-immigrant right-wing and neo-fascist movements from Canada to Scandinavia.

Menkhaus' willingness to blame the emergence of neo-fascism on Somalis can be illuminated by W.E.B Du Boise's critique of the "Negro Problem."⁴³⁷ Du Bois argues that America does not have a negro problem but a white supremacy problem. Du Bois does the work of revealing that racism and white-supremacy is the root cause of the issues affecting America.⁴³⁸ In the same way, via the case study of Somalia and Somali refugees, my dissertation has revealed that U.S. militarism and white supremacy is the problem of our century and has caused havoc across the globe, displacing many people in its wake.

⁴³⁷ See Black Reconstruction in America: An Essay Toward a History of the Part Which Black Folk Played in the Attempt to Reconstruct Democracy in America, 1860–1880 by W.E.B Du Bois's

⁴³⁸ Ibid.,156.

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