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The Global War on Terror: Race, Gender, and Empire After 9/11

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

Doctor in Philosophy

in

Sociology

By

Sabrina Akbar Alimahomed

June 2011

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Dr. Edna Bonacich, Chairperson

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June 2011

The Dissertation of Sabrina Akbar Alimahomed is approved:

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## Dedication

This dissertation is dedicated in loving memory of my mom. I began it while she was still alive and she unfortunately passed away before I completed it. I barely managed to find the strength to finish it after she died, but remembered that she never gave up on any endeavor she started. I also knew that she sacrificed everything to make sure that I had an opportunity to achieve a higher education. She suffered insurmountable obstacles where most people would have given up, but she always persevered with a calm demeanor and smile on her face. Her unconditional love and support were instrumental to me and my success as a person. She always made me feel as if I was the most important gift she ever had experienced in life. She taught me to never hesitate to stand up for someone else who was being ‘done wrong’, even if it meant jeopardizing yourself. Her wise advice always reminded of the most important things in life: laughter, humbleness, and compassion for others.

## ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

The Global War on Terror: Race, Gender, and Empire after 9/11

by

Sabrina Akbar Alimahomed

Doctor of Philosophy, Graduate Program in Sociology  
University of California, Riverside, June 2011  
Dr. Edna Bonacich, Chairperson

This research examines the ways in which race, gender, and capital structure the “War on Terror” by systematically unpacking the connections, and contradictions, in both the global and domestic arenas of US politics and representation of Muslims. The War on Terror is the most privatized war in the history of the US, which provides an important site of analysis to explore the burgeoning industry created and sustained by fear of terrorism. The scapegoating of Muslims as suspected terrorists allows for the uninhibited development and justification for the increasingly privatized Homeland Security State. This research draws upon both the lived experiences of 60 young adult Muslims in Los Angeles along with extensive archival data on Muslim discrimination, to provide a comprehensive overview of the racialized and gendered processes shaping the representation, oppression, and emergent identities of the Muslim diaspora. I situate their experiences within the context of three central dimensions of the War on Terror; state practices and policies, public discrimination and hate crimes, and ideological representations. My research further juxtaposes the imperial deployment of women’s rights discourses in justifying the “War on Terror” abroad alongside the widespread



infringement on Muslim women's civil liberties in the US diaspora. While Arab and Muslim American communities have been frequent targets of repression, I argue that gender significantly structures the post-9/11 backlash in qualitatively different ways for men and women. That is, Muslim men have been characterized as dangerous, violent, and highly suspect within the popular imaginary and much of Western media, which has lead to the sanctioning of civil and human rights violations, largely through detainment, deportation, and surveillance. In contrast, Muslim women are consistently portrayed as voiceless victims without agency, further invisibilizing their own lived experiences of systemic discrimination as well as the ways in which diasporic Muslim women navigate and resist such structures of exclusion.

## Table of Contents

Chapter 1 – The War on Terror: Local Impact, Global Interests.....	1
Chapter 2 – Homeland Security Inc: Race, Capital, and the War on Terror.....	35
Chapter 3 – Cointelpro 2.0: FBI Investigations, Surveillance, and Racial Profiling of Los Angeles Muslim Communities.....	71
Chapter 4 – Unveiling the War Against Muslim Women.....	101
Chapter 5 – Generation Islam: Arab Americans and Racial Politics after 9/11.....	126
Chapter 6 – Conclusion.....	150
Appendix A.....	177

## List of Figures

Figure 1: Number of FBI Cases by Year.....	83
Figure 2: Citizenship Status.....	85
Figure 3: Gender Demographics of FBI Cases.....	89
Figure 4: Travel Delays and Stops.....	90
Figure 5: FBI Questioning Pattern.....	93
Figure 6: Timeline of FBI Investigations.....	100

## **CHAPTER 1**

### **THE WAR ON TERROR: LOCAL IMPACT, GLOBAL INTERESTS**

The US government has invested more than a trillion dollars in the War on Terror (Dagget 2010). It has now become the second most expensive war since WWII. During the worst economic recession since the Depression, we still are witnessing an unimpeded financial commitment to these war efforts. Also, government spending has collectively risen under two opposing political administrations over the last ten years. The War on Terror has not only commanded a vast financial investment but also has been accompanied by a massive reorganization of the federal government under the guise of Homeland Security. This profound shift in capital towards fighting the war on terrorism is sustained by intersecting logics of race, gender, colonialism, and sexuality which normalize the US federal government's vested position in fighting terrorism. The defense of the US nation state in response to the attacks on the World Trade Center and Pentagon on September 11, 2001 has legitimated the continued subordination of US Muslims. This population has been stripped of their basic humanity under the guise of fighting terrorism. While the mass media and government officials would have the US public believe that fighting terrorism is the only reason the US is waging war, it is quite evident that capital has other motives.

Capital has a definitive stake in sustaining the War on Terror on both domestic and global fronts (Chomsky 2001; Eisenstein 2004; Harvey 2005). Eisenstein (2004) problematizes the corporate interests and profit motives of the US waged wars in the Middle East arguing that the postwar reconstruction will ensure the most lucrative

contracts and positions for those corporations affiliated with the Bush administration. Furthermore, she argues that the corporatization of Iraq by the US serves as an unquestioned outcome and necessity of the occupation. Therefore, the increasing role of US private corporations in postwar reconstruction serves as a proxy for ‘development’ in Iraq which implicitly reinforces the West and capitalism as progressive and the East as backwards and pre-modern.

The interest of Western capital in the Middle East is clearly not a new phenomenon but has its roots in prior colonialist histories. In this sense, capitalism has always been accompanied by Western imperialist ideologies about Islam and the Middle East. The liberation of women and also less visible gays and lesbians in the Middle East are central logics that support and legitimize Western imperialism and presence in the Middle East (Massad 2002). Oppositionally, fundamentalist leaders are able to garner popular support by conflating the fight against imperialist values with retaining patriarchal control over women and upholding homophobic practices as representative of indigenous Islam.

The War on Terror has only re-entrenched a false binary between the West which is portrayed as modern, progressive, and civilized while the East is constructed as barbaric, backwards, and uncivilized (Mohanty 2003; Ong 1988; Said 1978). This binary works to strengthen popular support for US military intervention in the Middle East accompanied by significant capital investment and profit (Eisenstein 2004). This opposing construct not only circulates to legitimate foreign imperialism but is also used as a justification for containment and surveillance of Muslims domestically. Capital not

only benefits from investment globally but has also reaped important material rewards from the massive build up of the domestic security infrastructure as well.

The use of terrorism as a rhetoric tool has been quite effective in garnering support from the US public and whipping up public hysteria; meanwhile war on terror policies have also had a profound impact on rolling back civil liberties for all Americans, but perhaps the most vulnerable population has been US Muslims. In the case of US Muslims, their civil liberties have been suspended indefinitely because national security triumphs any personal invasions of privacy or rights. In addition US Muslims are expected by the State and wider society to accept such an intrusion into their lives because if they are innocent than they should have nothing to hide from governmental authorities. In 2010, I reviewed a legal case from the Council of American Islamic Relations; a recent FBI investigation of a young innocent Muslim man prompted him to refuse to talk to the FBI before consulting with a lawyer from the Council of American Islamic Relations. A lawyer on his behalf then called the FBI agent who said, “I am surprised that this guy got a lawyer, only people who have something to hide hire a lawyer.” Muslim Americans are preemptively thought of as guilty before innocent in the US today. The racial profiling of this group is based upon egregious stereotypes about their religion and its propensity towards violence. The use of the terrorist is a controlling stereotype that draws on multiple ideas of Muslim men as misogynistic, religiously fundamentalist, homophobic, and violent. This casts Muslims in a defensive position within the US whereby they have to continuously challenge these discourses. It also

homogenizes the experiences of Muslims in the US, who are diverse in their lived experiences and identities.

These categorical assumptions draw their support from longstanding colonialist ideas about Muslims. Thus, “colonization almost invariably implies a relation of structural domination and suppression—often violent of the heterogeneity of the subject(s) in question” (Mohanty 2003:18). The undifferentiated construction of Muslims as identical contributes to their domination in the US because every Muslim is depicted as possessing a propensity towards terrorism. This construction is also reliant on the racialization of Muslims as both a threat globally and domestically. The boundaries between domestic, or internal US racialization projects, has clearly become connected to global racialization projects. The imperialist force of US invasions has racialized Muslims across nationalistic divides. Muslims are indistinguishable from their “terrorist” counterparts in Afghanistan or any other Muslim country.

Muslims have endured persistent state and interpersonal violence since the attacks on the World Trade Center on September 11, 2001. Muslims were targeted as a result of new US security policies that were implemented after 9/11. At least 100,000 Arabs and Muslims were personally affected by these policies which ranged from detention, mass arrests, closed hearings, secret evidence, FBI interviews, wiretapping, seizure of property, removal of aliens with technical visa violations, and mandatory wiretapping (Cainkar 2008: 53). It is estimated that approximately 83,000 people in the US were subjected to call in special registration (Dept. of Homeland Security: Cainkar 2008). The War on Terror has been a flexible project that intersects with other forms of State violence such

as the burgeoning immigration industrial complex that has been aimed at policing Latino/a and other immigrants (Diaz and Saenz forthcoming). This discourse has been so powerful that in the immigrant marches in 2006, people held signs that read “Do we Look Like Terrorists?” Therefore, State violence in the War on Terror has also reinterpreted the threat of the immigrant as a suspected terrorist.

The State has waged war to keep “us” safe. But, who is the “us” in this war? War rhetoric has emerged to safeguard women rights. There has been an explosion of media stories that have highlighted the repressive gender and sexuality regimes of the Middle East and Islam. War is seen as a necessary and liberatory idea to secure rights for women and gays/lesbians. While feminist organizing efforts such as Code Pink were against this so called feminist war rhetoric, other organizations such as the Feminist Majority supported the war as a means to liberate Afghan women (Smith 2005). While women did suffer under the Taliban rule, US waged war doesn’t mean that Afghan women will lead a more liberated life now. In fact, women and children compose the majority of refugees who fled Afghanistan.

The research presented in the proceeding chapters examines the ways in which race and gender structure the “War on Terror” by systematically unpacking the connections, and contradictions, in both the global and domestic arenas of US politics and representation of Muslims. This research draws upon both the lived experiences of 60 young adult Muslims in Los Angeles along with extensive archival data on Muslim discrimination. I provide a comprehensive overview of the racialized and gendered processes shaping the representation, oppression, and emergent identities of the US



Muslim diaspora. I situate the interviewees' responses within the context of three central dimensions of the War on Terror; state practices and policies, public discrimination and hate crimes, and ideological representations. Moreover, I analyze the ways in which diasporic Muslims make sense of their own lives in the face of a persistent onslaught of public suspicion and state repression.

### **Theoretical Framework**

The attacks on the World Trade Center and Pentagon on September 11, 2001 were used to justify the invasions of both Afghanistan and later, Iraq. At the beginning of the war, majority public opinion supported waging war and then securing occupation of Afghanistan in order to find Osama Bin Laden. Collective public sentiment identified as victims of the traumatic event and never questioned the role of US foreign policy in global capitalism as precursors to 9/11. Both Republicans and Democrats supported the war and anyone who questioned the validity of bombing Afghanistan to find one person was deemed unpatriotic. Meanwhile, the US public reported feeling a sense of common unity with each other because the terrorist attacks had been aimed at all Americans. The World Trade Center as a prominent symbolic and material point of global capital was obscured as the public came to believe the "Muslim terrorist" was a threat to the everyday American. Any attack on the nation was deemed an indictment of the freedoms enjoyed by the American lifestyle.

Dominant media representations in the US depict Muslims as backwards, dangerous, and fanatical which normalizes and legitimates state violence within the US

and as foreign policy (Shaheen 2003). These representations pathologize Muslims, thereby rendering them as threats to internal and external state security. While Muslim men are seen as physical threats, such as suicide bombers and terrorists; Muslim women are viewed as cultural threats to US society. The exaggerated views of Muslim men as violent and hypermasculine parallels the stereotype of African American men as dangerous and threatening. This is not to say they are the same construction, but have remarkable similar effects in rationalizing state violence towards these two different groups. The deployment of these ideologies rationalizes the scrutiny, surveillance, policing, and detention of both of these populations. For African American men, it is mainly the prison industrial complex that regulates this population. And, in the case of Muslim men, it is the FBI, Department of Homeland Security, and the military.

The aim of capital in the War on Terror differs from historical forces of the economic agenda of the state. The defining characteristics of white supremacy are the systematic subordination of people of color economically, politically, and culturally. The system of racism is most notable in periods of slavery, colonialism, and the deliberate genocide of indigenous peoples for land expansion. Slavery and colonialism have produced economic and political exploitation of people of color, thereby relegating them to positions where they hold minimal power over the means of production within this current economic system. In the case of Muslims, they are not being used as an exploitable labor force but instead are the primary motivation and ideological justification for supporting this trillion dollar war. Capital holds a distinct interest in creating new ways to invest capital, which is the focus of the continuous funnel of money

towards the domestic security infrastructure and wars abroad. Even in a recession, capital has found a way to sustain profit by keeping the war on terror a national pressing issue.

Muslims are viewed as the cultural antithesis to Christians in the US. Muslims have faced challenges in practicing their religious obligations. This is especially prominent in the fight against the building of mosques around the country, including the most publicized debate about a mosque being built near the World Trade Center attacks in New York. The ostracization of Muslims is reinforced as both a cultural threat to the moral, Christian fabric of US society as well as physical, security threats fashioned in the fixation on global terrorism. The history of such Islamophobia is informed by anti-Black politics as well. Given the radical history of the Nation of Islam, and the fact that African Americans have composed the largest proportion of Muslims until recently, this is not an entirely new view of Muslims. This history comes into sharp precision when there is a convergence between anti-Black racism and Islamophobia as witnessed in the sensationalized media coverage of Umar Farouk, the Christmas day bomber.

### **Background Demographics: Who Are Arabs?**

Arab as a category is used to culturally and linguistically identify people who hail from nations in which Arabic is the prominent language. Arabs trace their origins to the regions of North Africa and the Middle East. While often the term Middle Eastern and Arab are conflated, not all Arab nations are located in the Middle East, nor do all Middle Easterners consider themselves Arab. Also, Arab Americans are diverse in terms of

religion, a mix ranging from Jewish, Christian, Coptic, and Muslim, the assumption in the United States defines Arabs solely as Muslim. Despite the fact that South Asia (India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka) constitutes the largest population of Muslims worldwide, far more than the Middle East, this stereotype prevails.

During the last census taken in 2000, the largest population of Arabs identified as Lebanese, approximately one out of four Arabs in the United States. The second largest group is Egyptian at 14.5%, followed by Syrian and Palestinian. The gender ratio for the Arab population still favors men at 57%, about 8% higher than the total population in the US. Contrary to popular media depictions that often naturalize Arab Americans as foreigners, approximately half of residents (46%) are native US citizens (US Census Bureau 2005). The 2000 Census reported that there are 1.2 million Arabs in the United States, representing a 40% increase during the 1990's. It will be important to document during the 2010 census if that immigration flow has been greatly stemmed due to the heightened immigration restrictions that were put into place after 9/11. The US Census collects data on the Arab population from the ancestry question that is listed on the long form. The challenge with the census long form is it is a voluntary optional form that is not sent to all residences, only 1/6 of households receive this form. Unlike the short form which contains a question on race and ethnicity that is required, the long form is secondary appendix to the short form. The ancestry question refers to ethnic origin, roots, heritage, a person's birthplace or their ancestors (US Census Bureau 2003).

The educational attainment of Arabs is higher in contrast to the general population in the United States. Approximately 40% of Arabs hold a bachelor's degree or higher in

the US compared to only 24% of the general population. Similar to other racial groups in the US, the average educational attainment also masks stark differences among various nationalities within the category of Arab. For instance, 63.9% of Egyptians hold a bachelor's degree, which is almost twice as much than most other Arab ethnic groups such as Moroccan 31%, Syrian 35%, and Iraqi 35.5% (US Census Bureau 2003).

The class status of Arabs is contradictory in that they are slightly more likely to earn on average a higher income than the larger population but they are also more likely to live in poverty. This evidence is indicative of the large gap in income, education, and wealth among Arab Americans. A very concerning fact is that 41.4% of Iraqi children live in poverty in contrast to only 16.6% of the general population. When examining occupations of Arab Americans, they are most likely to be concentrated in two areas: management/professional and sales/office jobs. In both of these areas, Arabs are more likely than the general population to hold these types of jobs. The only ethnic group who is heavily located in service positions is Moroccans, nearly twice as high as most other Arab groups.

### **History of the Racialization of Arab Americans**

The first wave of Arab immigration (1880-1930) to the United States was composed mostly of Christian Arabs. During this time, immigrants hailed from the Ottoman provinces of Syria, Mount Lebanon, and Palestine (Samhan 1997). There were 60,000 Arab immigrants that immigrated from 1899-1910. Similar to early waves of Asian immigrants, the majority of Arab immigrants during this time were men

representing approximately 68% of the population (Abraham 2007). During the first wave of immigration to the United States, Arab Americans experienced similar rights and treatment that ethnic whites assumed as they became integrated into the US. This status was similar in its access to institutional rights such as voting, land ownership, employment, residential and social integration with whites, and citizenship (Cainkar 2008).

Immigration policy shifted in 1924 when the National Origins Act established quotas for each national group based upon a percentage of the populations residing in the US as counted under the 1910 census. Syrian immigration was diminished by the new restriction from the peak of 9,000 to a few hundred annually (Samhan 1997). The McCarran Walter Act of 1952 continued the use of the quota system, instead utilizing the census data from 1920, which still favored 2/3 of the immigrant population to be arriving from Europe. The major change in this immigration policy was the use of education and professional skills as a determinant in the preference of immigrants. The use of profession and education in prioritizing immigrants for entry in the US significantly shaped the composition of the newly arrived immigrant population. The first immigration wave of mostly Christian Syrian immigrants differed substantially from the post World War II era immigrants who were more diverse in terms of their representation in the working class, as Muslim, and hailed from varied Arab nations.

The Immigration and Reform Control Act (IRCA) of 1965 was the first reconciliation of past discrimination towards immigrant populations, particularly those of non-European descent. This act repealed the 1924 National Origins Act which had

established the quota system favoring European immigrants. Just after a few years after the passage of IRCA, the late 1960's witnessed approximately 15,000 Arabs immigrating yearly (Samhan 1997). Since this time Arab Americans increasingly experienced discrimination, exclusion, and racial profiling (Cainkar 2008).

### **Racialization**

Racialization is a useful theoretical tool to understand the dramatic shift in public perception towards Arab Americans and Muslims post 9/11. In understanding race in US society, Omi and Winant (1994) argue that racialization is a process that is used “to signify the extension of racial meaning to a previously racially unclassified relationship, social practice, or group” (16). Within this rubric, racialization focuses on the development of race as an emergent process. This process links structure and representation in a given time to maintaining historically specific “racial projects.” Omi and Winant define a racial project as “an interpretation, representation, or explanation of racial dynamics, and an effort to reorganize and redistribute resources along particular racial lines” (56). By linking discursive practices of race with socio-structural formations, Omi and Winant are able to shed light on the political and historical trajectory of racial categories. Race is taken to be a fluid, conflictual, and socially created category that changes over time. This definition rejects the notion that there is an innate, fixed, or essentialist basis of race. While Omi and Winant stresses this theoretical standpoint, racial projects still rely upon the institutionalization of an essentialist definition of race.

Another important dimension of their shifting racial classification has been the ways religious prejudice has informed and shaped race in the perception of Arab Americans. Omi and Winant (1994) fail to account for the ways religion can inform the racial politics of the United States. Arab Americans have been forced to deal with racism, not only because of their association with particular nation states, but also because of their presumed affiliation with Islam. Naber (2000) argues that Arab Americans are racialized according to religion (Islam) and not phenotype. It is difficult to assess whether the assumption that all Arabs are Muslim, or that all Muslims are Arab underlie their treatment in the US. But, these processes definitely converge in the racialization of Arabs and South Asians in the United States.

This process is complicated in that some Arabs can pass as white under the US racial system, while others are marked as people of color. Omi and Winant (1994:73) posit that “Whites can at times be the victims of racism—by other whites or non-whites—as is the case with anti-Jewish and anti-Arab prejudice.” Despite the range of experiences and identities that exist in the Arab American community, Arabs are continually depicted on television as non-white and Muslim. The media consistently portrays Arabs and Muslims in a negative light (Shaheen 1984). Given the fact that Muslims constitute such a small population in the United States, the media becomes an important vehicle by which information is distributed about these populations to the wider American public. Most Americans have limited contact with anyone from the Middle East, North Africa, or South Asia, and only have media constructions as their primary dissemination vehicle for information about these populations.



Arabs, South Asians, and Persians are often conflated as the “bad Muslim” in media imagery. They are consistently overrepresented as terrorists historically as well as contemporarily. In recent years, there has been an explosion of films and TV specials that have highlighted Islamist extremism and religious fundamentalism in these regions (Naber 2000). Thus, media images portray Muslims in a negative or distorted view. Also, the coverage of Muslims and Arabs continually represents them as being “forever foreigners” and enemies of the West. Men are depicted more frequently than women in fiction roles. Women remain in the background, often veiled, submissive, and silent whether it is in news stories, television, or movies. The conflation of Arab, Middle Eastern, and Muslim in media depictions is central to displacing them as racial subjects who neatly fit into the racial schema of the US. Naber (2000) further claims that this paradoxical status leads to Arab American invisibility within US racial politics. Naber’s analysis can be expanded upon since 9/11, in that Arab Americans have now been rendered hyper-visible, despite their continued classification by the US government as white.

While theories of race and racism often linearly demonstrate the persistent and continued exclusion of groups from whiteness and its afforded institutional and economic privileges, Arab Americans’ experiences with racism are unique from other historically disadvantaged groups of color. It has been argued that Arab Americans have not assimilated and instead experienced a fall from “the graces of marginal whiteness” (Cainkar 2008: 47). Cainkar (2008) argues that this fall from whiteness has corresponded to the rise of the US as a global superpower. Hence, the negative

racialization of Arab Americans in more recent times, that is post 1960s, is directly correlated to foreign policy and less with enduring domestic institutional racism. Arab Americans' recent experiences with racism positioned them very differently than other groups of color and whites within the racial schema of the US.

### **Orientalist Constructions: South Asians as Targets**

The conflation between Middle Eastern, Arab, and Muslim is not the only racial process at work in US politics. South Asians and the post 9/11 racism they have faced cannot be understood within this framework. There has been a substantial amount of racial profiling and violent attacks directed against Hindus, Muslims, and Sikhs. The collective racialization of Arab Americans after 9/11 is an ambivalent category that has subsumed South Asians, Persians, Muslims, Afghans, and Sikhs. The racial profiling and targeting of South Asians and Sikhs is an outcome of the “darkening of Arabs” in recent years. South Asians have never been quite accepted under the racial rubric of “Asian” in the United States (Prashad 2000). Therefore, their marginal status within the category of Asian, their typically “brown” phenotype, and their affiliation with Islam, or non-Western religions such as Sikhism has left them open to attack.

Similarly, Arab Americans are not widely accepted under the racial category of white (Naber 2008). Common day perceptions of Arab Americans defy their classification as white. There is a mismatch between everyday treatment and their bureaucratic classification. The ambiguous status of South Asians, Arab Americans, and

“others” from the Middle East provides the possibility that they can be conflated under the project of Orientalism.

Following September 11, the Federal Bureau of Investigation and the Immigration and Naturalization Service detained individuals who may have been involved with terrorist activities. A report published by the Office of the Inspector General at the Department of Justice admitted to detaining 762 people (Iyer 2003). The detainees were subject to investigation and could be held without charges in detention centers across the nation. Family members were not able to contact the detainees as the government did not release any information relating to the identities and locations of the persons being held in detention. It is estimated that approximately 600 secret immigration hearings were held without any involvement from family, media, and the public. The largest reported numbers of detainees were from Pakistan, approximately 33%, which “was more than double the number of detainees from any other country. Egyptian nationals comprised the second largest number of detainees. India was sixth on the list of approximately twenty countries of origin for detainees” (Iyer 2003: 39). The targeting of South Asians is not simply a result of “mistaken” identity for Arabs, but instead demonstrates a consistent attack on South Asians in addition to Middle Easterners. In October, 2003, approximately 1,400 Pakistani immigrants had been deported, while another 180 remained in detention centers. In a poll conducted by the Council on American-Islamic Relations, 57% of Muslims reported experiencing some form of discrimination, including disparaging remarks, employment discrimination, or hate crimes (Human Rights Watch Report 2002: 16). A similar striking finding is that 83% of Sikhs of South Asian descent

report that they personally experienced, or someone they knew had been a victim of, a hate crime or incident (Han 2006).

### **Citizenship and Court Cases**

In 1790, the first decree by Congress on the issue of citizenship restricted naturalization to free white persons. This decree persisted until 1952. During this time, the courts had ruled that Mexican and Armenian petitioners for citizenship were white, “but vacillated over the Whiteness of petitioners from Syria, India, and Arabia” (Haney-Lopez 2006:1). Syrians were declared white in 1909, 1910, and 1915; but were categorized as non-white by the courts in 1913 and 1914. This striking contradiction also appeared in the court cases of Asian Indians where they were declared white in 1910, 1913, 1919, and 1920 but were ruled as non-white in 1909, 1917, and permanently after 1923 (48). Haney Lopez demonstrates the highly contested and unstable category of white at this time. The conflicting challenges these populations faced in their petitions to the courts centered on their scientific categorization as Caucasian which stood in contrast to common knowledge claims that were popularly held beliefs or conceptions about who was white and non-white. In 1909, George Najour, a Syrian petitioner was granted citizenship on the basis of being considered part of the Caucasian or white race. Judge Newman who presided over the case noted that Najour was “not particularly dark, and has none of the characteristics or appearance of the Mongolian race, but, so far as I can see and judge, has the appearance and characteristics of the Caucasian race” (quoted in Lopez 2006: 50). In this case, Syrians were ruled as belonging to the Caucasian race

based upon notable anthropological designations by Dr. Keanes in *The World's People: A Popular Account of Their Bodily and Mental Characters, Beliefs, Traditions, Political and Social Institutions*. This text was referred to in the ruling by Judge Newman which cited Caucasians as ranging from white to dark and hailing from the nations in North Africa, Europe, Middle East, Western Asia, and Polynesia. Dr. Keanes held that there were four distinct racial typologies: Mongolic or Yellow Division, American or Red Division, Negro or Black Division, and Caucasian or White Division. The apparent tension in assigning Syrians, Arabians, and Indians to one of these typologies was evident in oppositional rulings that wavered between white and nonwhite in designating citizenship to these groups in the US. Also, Syrians, Afghans, and persons hailing from Arabia were notably distinguished by two poles of race in their court rulings, whether they were closer in appearance and classification to Indians or Caucasians.

In the court case of Feroz Din, the federal court in California stated, “This applicant for citizenship is a typical Afghan and native of Afghanistan. He is readily distinguishable from “white” persons of this country, approximates Hindus. The conclusion is that he is not a white person” (Lopez 2006: 70). The California court had concluded that Afghans could not be understood under the common sense rubric of white as the intent of the congress ruling demonstrated in 1790.

Another case that followed under common perceptions of whiteness was the case of Faras Shahid in 1913. In South Carolina, Shahid who was Syrian was denied his naturalization on the basis that everyday common sense would not perceive Shahid as Caucasian. The court noted Shahid’s skin color in its decision, approximating his shade

as the color of a walnut (Lopez 2006: 51). Additionally, Judge Smith ruled that a Syrian of Asiatic birth could not be considered white because of the absurd idea that “a very dark brown, almost black, inhabitant of India is entitled to rank as a white person, because of a possible or hypothetical infusion of white blood 30 or 40 centuries old” (52). In Judge Smith’s opinion, Syrians, Indians, and Malays were not viewed as Caucasian because “white persons” were only “such persons as were in 1790 known as white Europeans” (52). In this case, skin color was an important factor in its consideration of Shahid’s case. The court once again considered Shahid’s position in light of the relationship of Syrians to Hindus in the category of Caucasian. The court found that scientific explanations were not enough to declare whether one was Caucasian; common sense applications of race were just as important. Moreover, the court also indicated in its ruminations about the legitimacy of Shahid’s petition that he “writes his name in Arabic, cannot read and write in English...His answers to the questions of whether he is a polygamist or a disbeliever in organized government were in the affirmative”(50). In addition to skin color, the infusion of culture, religion, and language were also factors that were noted in court decisions. In the case of George Dow in 1914, an immigrant Syrian applicant, the judge argued that “[s]ince Dow was perceived to be Asiatic, the judge argued that he was not European and, therefore, not white” (Naber 2008:21).

While the courts debated in the early 1900’s the eligibility of Syrians, Arabs, and other western Asian peoples for citizenship, immigration policies clashed with the court’s decisions. In 1910, the US Census Bureau had defined these groups as Asiatic and ordered the courts to reject applications for naturalization (Samhan 1997). This shifting

classification by different institutions within the government also prevented voting among these populations. In 1923, immigration policy was also used to justify the denial of citizenship to Syrians. The District judge included reference to the 1917 Restrictive Immigration Act which barred immigration for countries east of the Persian Gulf (Samhan 1997). Due to the anti-Asian racism prevalent at this time in US history, Arab immigrants sought to distance themselves from this category and instead steadfastly defended their belief in their whiteness. Therefore, the particular racial categorization that was produced in the early 1900's was ambivalent for Arabs. Naber (2008:23) describes this period up until the 1940's in Arab immigration history as the "racialization of ambiguity" on the level of the federal government. The court and immigration authorities wavered on their commitments to allow them entrance into whiteness or further classify them with Asiatic peoples. Most notably, the courts referenced Hindus as the closest in approximation to Arabs and Afghans. Arabs and Indians, unlike white ethnics, such as Italians and Irish, their citizenship was always secure and never questioned. But, ultimately Arabs were able to secure their status as ethnic whites, while Indians were relegated to the status of Asians and denied citizenship.

### **Whiteness Studies: Where do Arabs fit?**

Whiteness studies have encapsulated a turn in theoretical orientation to understand the historically constructed nature of the white category in the United States. One particular analytical thread in this field has been to demonstrate the absorption of Italians, Irish, Jews, and Eastern Europeans into the category of whiteness. At the turn of

the century all of these ethnic groups experienced discrimination in the US, but in the succeeding decades, they assimilated into whiteness. Brodtkin (2002) notes this official transition for Jewish people in the 1940 Census where whites of native parentage were no longer distinguished from those whites with immigrant parentage. Along with other restrictive barriers being lifted, such as the ban on restrictive housing covenants in 1948, Jewish people were further incorporated into an expansive whiteness. “Although changing views on who was white made it easier for Euro-ethnics to become middle class, economic prosperity also played a powerful role in the whitening process. The economic mobility of Jews and other Euro-ethnics derived ultimately from America’s postwar economic prosperity” (43). Brodtkin argues the economic mobility of Jewish people from primarily working class backgrounds into the middle class worked in conjunction with their new inclusion into whiteness. The shift of Jewish people and other ethnic whites into whiteness, and for some into the middle class, was heralded as a success in assimilation. Their change in status was used as a measuring stick for other groups, particularly against African Americans. Similar, to the myth of the model minority, ethnic whites’ successful assimilation was used as a rhetorical tool to justify the subordination of African Americans. White Americans firmly believed if African Americans just worked hard enough, they would also be able to ‘make’ it in US society. Despite governmental assistance that was given to ethnic whites, these groups tended to romanticize their own history as one that involved working hard, pulling themselves up by their bootstraps, and had rejected any assistance from the government. While many people worked hard, Guglielmo (2003) argues that Italians and other ethnic whites had



reaped the most important assistance from the government in comparison to other racial groups and that was in the form of receiving the privileges that were associated with whiteness. The advantages conferred to ethnic whites including benefits from the GI Bill, Social Security and labor union protections, along with being immune to the detriments of segregation, redlining, and political exclusion. Whiteness encompassed a range of economic, social, and political benefits that was extended to these newly incorporated groups. While theories of white ethnics' assimilation stress the process in which these groups forfeited their culture in seeking acceptance into whiteness, Ignatiev (1996) argues that whiteness was also a result of an active process in which white immigrants influenced their position within whiteness, in particular adopting anti-Black attitudes. Ignatiev further argues that cultural assimilation is largely irrelevant in the study of whiteness today as the two most culturally distinct groups of whites, Amish and Hasidic Jews, are still by all accounts given the rights of whites. A static assumption in whiteness studies is that there is and has been a steady, linear progression over time in whites' assimilation. This does not hold true for Arab Americans. While they originally enjoyed and were treated as ethnic whites, this status has been relatively unstable since the 1960s. Their racial status has been quite affected by the US global position since the 1960s and its relationship in particular to neo-colonialism in the Middle East.

According to the US Census, Arab Americans are classified as "white". Despite this official classification, most Arab Americans do not view themselves as white (Naber 2008). The lack of inclusion on the census of either a Middle Eastern or Arab category has been attributed to the relative insignificance of poverty facing these populations.

“Traditionally, the tracking of minority groups has been used by the bureau to determine and better analyze economic and social issues. But various studies over the years have found that Arab Americans tend to be economically above average. As such, the argument goes, there has been no real need on the part of the U.S. Census bureau to conduct this type of analysis”

(<http://www.americanarabforum.org/workinggrouponancestry.htm>). Historically, in the US, analyzing class has been central in the theorization of race relations. In particular, groups of color have experienced economic marginalization, including the denial of good jobs, high poverty rates, and being excluded from various economic sectors. It is this analysis that has led many scholars to distinguish between the racism African Americans and Latinos face in comparison to East and South Asian Americans, because of their differing class positions within society. Arab Americans pose a challenge to these understanding of race, as their contradictory racial position within US society has been shaped both by their middle class economic position and their perceived cultural and religious differences in contrast to other groups of color and whites as well. Arabs, Muslims, and Sikhs who are working class were more apt to experience discrimination at their places of employment after 9/11, than those that were able to insulate themselves with their higher class position. In particular, convenience store workers and taxi cab drivers were subjected to the most attacks at their work in contrast to any other job sector.

### **Muslim Women: Intersections of Gender and Colonialism**

The heightened scrutiny of Muslim communities has also unevenly impacted men and women in different ways. Muslim men have been viewed as security threats to the nation state and Muslim women have been cast as threats to the moral and cultural fabric of the US. Women are often seen and treated as the repositories of culture, meaning that women are responsible for passing on the moral and cultural values to the next generation. Given that women are usually the primary caretakers of the family, the inculcation of customs, food, and cultural practices often reside in the realm of the domestic. Muslim women, especially those who wear hijab are seen as threats to an American (read white, Christian) identity and culture. Their wearing of the headscarf signals an inability to assimilate into American culture. The cultural practice of wearing the hijab is seen as so threatening that women have often reported that they have been asked to take it off at universities, work, and when in contact with government agencies as well. In other Western countries, the government has attempted to ban the headscarf as well. This should beg the question, how could one piece of clothing garner so much attention and need for institutional control?

Muslim women are often invoked on both sides of the War on Terror. In other words, Western imperialists stress their subjugated status in order to legitimate military intervention and religious fundamentalist also use Muslim women to further advance their resistance to Western colonialism. This is not a new phenomenon as the rise in religious fundamentalism within the Middle East and South Asia is deeply entwined with the outcomes of nationalist struggles (Sangari and Vaid 1989). The rise in Hindu and

Islamist fundamentalist movements were a reaction to “western domination on the one hand and the failure of the nationalist project for the poor and lower middle classes on the other” (Ray and Korteweg 1999). During colonialism, the site of the family was viewed as the only ‘pure’ space that was unspoiled by colonists (Chatterjee 1989). This view led nationalist struggles to exert control over the family and women as important symbols of resistance to colonization (Kandiyoti 1991). For instance, women who were considered *gharbzadeh* (Western-toxicated) in Iran were positioned as the most morally corrupted by Westernization (Moallem 2005). *Gharbzadeh* women internalized Western values and rejected their own religious and moral obligations. Therefore, national leaders and fundamentalists assert that a return to indigenous values and traditions resist imposed Westernization.

Fundamentalists are able to garner power among the populist masses by conflating Qur’anic interpretations of purdah or hijab with the fight against Western imperialism. The emphasis on the proper moral conduct of Muslim women is not solely based on Islam, but in fact is political, and used to legitimate the social control of women (Kandiyoti 1997). Rather than envisioning gender roles as fixed only by religious doctrine, many feminists argue that women have always assumed multiple, conflicting and contradictory positions within society (Jayawardena 1986; Kandiyoti 1997; Lazreg 1994; Moghadam 1992).

Islam is the fixation of ‘difference’ between women of the East in contrast to women in the West. In the West, Islam is represented as the only defining explanation of women’s status in the Middle East (Lazreg 1994). The emphasis on Islam as the only

continuing factor in women's subordination functions as a colonial discursive construct that absolves Western women from analyzing Christianity as a significant shaper in the Western feminism. The Orientalist gaze which views the East as backwards, uncivilized, and traditional attaches itself to a site of difference, that being Islam. All that is backwards and uncivilized becomes Islam.

The binary construction of the East as pre-modern and the West as modern plays out in depictions of Western women as liberated and sexually loose and Eastern women as oppressed and chaste. Muslim fundamentalists emphasize the rigidity and chastity of Muslim women (Najmabadi 1991), while U.S. powers emphasize the equality and gender-blindness of military policies (Lorber 2002). Nationalism, religion, and imperialism become entwined as the War on Terror is fought and mapped on women's bodies.

## **Methods**

This research draws on a variety of sources, with primary emphasis on qualitative methods to analyze the data, but also employs quantitative descriptive data analysis to give a broad overview of trends within the cases. This study utilizes 60 semi-structured interviews, primary governmental documents, non-profit research human rights reports, newspaper articles, and 113 legal intake cases from 2006-2010 provided from the Council of American Islamic Relations, the largest national Muslim civil rights organization in the US. The interviews were conducted with Muslim youth between the ages 18-25. Respondents identified with a variety of national and ethnic origins, including the Middle East (Lebanon, Afghanistan, Kuwait, Palestine, Syria, Jordan, Iraq,

Saudi Arabia), North Africa (Lybia, Tunisia, Egypt, Algeria), and South Asia (Pakistan, India, Bangladesh). I also included both men and women since gender plays a key role in how racism is perceived and addressed by individuals (Feagin and St. Jean 1998). Knowing how respondents identify themselves according to race, gender, and age helped me discern trends in the treatment of specific populations after 9/11. Although studies have been carried out that analyzes the Muslim population at large, there has not been much focus on Muslim youth with the exception of Maira (2009) who focused only on South Asian Muslim immigrant youth. I chose to interview both South Asian and Arab Muslims because in the aftermath of 9/11 both of these groups were subjected to discriminatory treatment by state policies and the general public. Also, the general public does not easily discern between Arab Muslim and South Asian Muslims.

I also utilized primary governmental documents including statistical data ranging from 2001-2010 from the City of Los Angeles Commission on Human Relations annual Hate Crimes Report, FBI Hate Crimes Report, Congressional Research Service report on racial profiling, and the Department of Justice's Research Institute reports. Additionally, I analyzed qualitative and quantitative data from a diverse variety of special human rights reports that were issued in the aftermath of 9/11 from several non-profit organizations and research centers including: Human Rights Watch, Amnesty International, Arab American-Arab Discrimination Committee Research Center, Council of American Islamic Relations Research Center, South Asian American Leaders of Tomorrow, Muslim Advocates, Brennan Center, and the ACLU. Lastly, I used news articles from

major newspapers across the country including the Washington Post, New York Times, and LA Times among other smaller newspapers.

I worked for the last year and a half as a volunteer Research Fellow at the Council of American Islamic Relations Los Angeles chapter in their Civil Rights Division. The Council of American Islamic Relations (CAIR) has been in existence for over 16 years and has 32 chapters in 20 different states, making them the largest Muslim civil rights organization in the country. They offer direct services to the US Muslim community as well as have an excellent reputation for defending civil liberties on an institutional level. They have processed over 10,000 civil rights discrimination cases over the last decade. Given their longstanding reputation, I felt that working as a Research Fellow would provide an opportunity to inform my research from the “ground up” with a focus on the daily challenges faced by Muslims. I also thought it was highly important to pursue a research project that was articulated by the community itself, instead of imposing an external research agenda. In the spirit of public sociology (Burawoy 2004), it was also crucial to put my research skills in service of social justice for the community I was writing about in order to bring to light some of the oppressive social conditions they were facing in the aftermath of 9/11. After a collaborative conversation with the staff at CAIR, they asked me to author a research report on FBI investigations in the Muslim community in Los Angeles. I designed a data set from 113 intake legal cases that were self reported over the span of the last 5 years. CAIR redacted any identifying information before they gave me the cases to analyze. I primarily analyzed intake forms that were a compilation of interviews with clients who had called CAIR for assistance after being investigated by

the FBI. Typically, CAIR would receive a call from a person who had just been visited by the FBI and would take notes in the form of a short report on the FBI incident. Individuals ranged from being detained, arrested, deported, or simply questioned at their homes, workplaces, or airports by FBI agents. All of the cases occurred in Los Angeles. I organized, cleaned, and coded the data into an excel sheet. I then employed both descriptive quantitative data analysis and also qualitative narrative analysis to produce a special report on the nature and use of racial profiling by the FBI in the Muslim community. I also worked with the legal team in order to gather more information in the history and challenges faced by the community by the FBI. CAIR along with the ACLU filed a class action lawsuit against the FBI in Los Angeles in March 2011 for their use of agent provocateurs at a mosque in Irvine, CA, a case I describe in more detail in Chapter 3. I feel that while this research is only reflected in one chapter of my dissertation, my position as a Research Fellow at CAIR assisted tremendously in my conceptualization and direction of my topic in general. It kept me abreast of the latest and most important developments in the community which kept my perspective fresh and strengthened my passion for producing research that spoke to the needs of the community.

Within this research topic, I occupy a dual status of both insider as well as outsider. Naples (1996) notes that, “outsiderness and insiderness are not fixed or static positions, rather they are ever-shifting and permeable social locations that are differentially experienced and expressed by community members” (84). There are many aspects of my background that positioned me as an insider within the community I am studying, while other aspects of my identity and experiences rendered me as an outsider.



While growing up in a Muslim, South Asian family in Los Angeles, I have many networks in the area and was familiar with core community centers and hubs. However, Southasian Muslim communities differ substantially from Middle Eastern and North African Muslim communities. With respect to my research question, I know that it helped establishing myself as a fellow Muslim when requesting respondents for my study. But, it also constrained the type of information I was trying to illicit from respondents. Since I was read as Muslim by the respondents, it also reinforced the pressure of respondents to perform a shared communal identity as Muslim. In particular, when marginalized communities feel under attack, group solidarity is even more important to survive such oppressive conditions. Feminists of color have long discussed how exposing sexism within their own racial/ethnic communities felt as if they were airing their dirty laundry in front of white folks (hooks 1983). Since Muslims have been constructed as religiously fundamentalist and overtly patriarchal, these representations conditioned their interview responses. As Goffman (2000) notes,

Just as the member of any group is expected to have self-respect, so also he[sic] is expected to sustain a standard of considerateness; he[sic] is expected to go to certain lengths to save the feelings and the face of others present, and he[sic] is expected to do this willingly and spontaneously (98).

Muslims comprise a marginalized group within the US, and often are met with the pressure to make sure that white, Christian Americans will not be offended when issues of white privilege or racism arise, even if it is to the detriment of Muslims. In fact, when issues of racism and white privilege are brought up, many white people respond with denial because “whites are carefully taught not to recognize white privilege” (McIntosh

2000:164). Even when people of color are amidst others of the same racial background, the intensity of being raised under the weight of white supremacy does not necessarily mean that they will be able to express themselves more freely. The nature of white supremacy and patriarchy for that matter are such entrenched systems with significant consequences for those who challenge them that often marginalized people protect these systems to their disadvantage. Being conscious of the way Muslims have felt marginalized will help me to understand how “the research setting can affect the person’s responses” (Babbie 2002:286).

DuBois’ idea of the double consciousness of Black Americans can be applied to the interview situation. Since Muslims are acutely aware of the negative representations about their community, the interview can be perceived as an opportunity to combat those negative images. This was particularly evident when I was interviewing Muslims in regards to gender and their families. For instance when I asked the question: “What are some of the differences in how you were raised being a girl versus a boy?” women respondents often stated that there were no differences or that men had it much harder than women because men are expected to attend Jumma (Friday prayer session). There could be many reasons why Muslim women chose to predominately answer the question this way, but it is quite evident that the stereotype of Muslim women being treated poorly compared to their male counterparts has an impact on the way they answer this question. This conclusion was also supported by the fact that when I inquired about whether their curfew was earlier than their brothers the majority responded that this was true. It was very difficult to juggle both the expectation that respondents knew that I wasn’t there to

confirm stereotypes of Muslims, but also to draw out the ways racism shaped women and men's experiences differently.

While I may be seen as an insider in some respects, I was also seen as an outsider in terms of acting in the role of a researcher. As Babbie (2002) points out, "in experimental and survey designs, the researcher clearly has more power and a higher status than do the people being studied" (287). The power imbalance between the researcher and the people being studied can support what is already a strongly held skepticism on the part of some regarding the purpose of academia. The mistrust held by many people towards not only academia, but US institutions would cause some community members to be critical of involvement within such a study. The people who responded to this study or participated in it would more likely feel as if their participation would not jeopardize their lives or families in any way. Due to the necessarily self-selecting nature of my recruitment strategy, a truly systematic sample would be almost impossible to produce. The results of my study will not be generalizable either, as the purposes of this study are only exploratory and utilize non-probability sampling procedures.

Attempting to reach a multitude of respondents from diverse backgrounds was a challenge. I solicited a diverse group of respondents from different nationalities. Within this study, I refer to all respondents under pseudonyms. I want to uphold this practice because of the importance in adhering to ethical guidelines of confidentiality. Protecting confidentiality is important in acting in accordance with upholding sociological ethical

guidelines and also ensuring respondents feel comfortable participating in the research study.

The format of the interviews consisted of three sections: “Demographics”, Race and Discrimination”, and “Gender and Family” (Refer to Appendix A). All questions, with exception to the demographic section, were open ended to allow for flexibility in the responses. Due to the exploratory nature of this study, I wanted respondents to talk in depth about their experiences and feelings about their position within the US. Open-ended questions should help focus further studies on specific issues of discrimination for Muslims.

After conducting all the interviews, I reviewed the responses several times to look for common themes. I looked for whether respondents felt discrimination was present in their experiences and lives as well as how they felt it operated within different contexts. I highlighted the common themes in all of the participants’ answers. I read the responses for repeating phrases that allude to a similar concept. I coded these various themes within each of the participant’s responses. I worked inductively from the answers that were collected and then extrapolated on how discrimination operates in the lives of young Muslims today.

## **Conclusion**

The oppression of Muslims is shaped on multiple levels with impacts resonating on the structural and individual levels. The War on Terror has commanded a reorganization and redirection of resources on the macro level, but with significant

impacts on the everyday, individual level. In Chapter 2, “Homeland Security Inc.: Race, Capital, and the War on Terror” and Chapter 3, “Cointelpro 2.0: FBI Investigations, Surveillance, and Racial Profiling of Los Angeles Muslim Communities”, I illustrate the macro changes that have occurred in the US since the War on Terror commenced. I contrast these macro structural shifts with Chapter 4, “Unveiling the War on Muslim Women” and Chapter 5, “Generation Islam: Arab Americans and Racial Politics after 9/11” which both focus on the individual impact of discrimination on the everyday lives of the newest generation of Muslims who came of age during the War on Terror. I examine the racial politics of “Generation Islam”, arguing that young Arab American Muslims are more likely to situate their post 9/11 identities as non-white due to the enhanced discrimination they recently experienced. I also discuss the ways young Muslim women disproportionately have become the victims of hate crimes and public discrimination. This research combines both an analysis of systemic changes in the development of the Homeland Security Department and the federal guidelines governing the investigatory procedures of the FBI, along with documenting interviewee responses that highlight discrimination in order to demonstrate how important these recent changes have been on an institutional and individual level in the lives of US Muslims.

## CHAPTER 2

### HOMELAND SECURITY INC.: RACE, CAPITAL, AND THE WAR ON TERROR

*“In the councils of government, we must guard against the acquisition of unwarranted influence, whether sought or unsought, by the military-industrial complex. The potential for the disastrous rise of misplaced power exists and will persist. We must never let the weight of this combination endanger our liberties or democratic processes. We should take nothing for granted. Only an alert and knowledgeable citizenry can compel the proper meshing of the huge industrial and military machinery of defense with our peaceful methods and goals, so that security and liberty may prosper together.”*

- Dwight D. Eisenhower 1961

The “War on Terror” is characterized as the preeminent global conflict of the 21<sup>st</sup> century and popularly conceived of as a legitimate war waged against terrorism following the attacks on the World Trade Center and Pentagon on September 11, 2001. From its inception, it has been described as a “war without borders” whereby the United States has assumed an offensive position and moral authority in combating global terrorism.

However, this unwarranted assumption masks the ways in which white supremacy and capital intersect in the sustenance of the War on Terror along with its disastrous effects on the lives of Muslims. While it is often a war depicted as occurring outside the national boundaries of the US, the War on Terror is also being waged on the domestic front. The uninhibited growth and investment of private capital in the massive build up of the domestic homeland security state has been facilitated by the logic of white supremacy whereby US Muslims are viewed as an internal, racialized threat.

This chapter examines the rapidly expanding private industrial sector in the development of the Homeland Security State that is facilitated by the State’s unabated racism against US Muslims. As an analytical framework, I assert that the domestic wing

of the War on Terror, that is, the Homeland Security State, should be more appropriately conceived of as a “racialized industry” which draws its resource base from the nexus of private capital and state sponsored racism. Understanding the expansion of the Homeland Security State as a “racialized industry” attunes our attention toward linking profit-seeking industry and its collusion with white supremacy. The Homeland Security State purports to serve the interests of the public good, such as protecting the citizenry from terrorism. However, by recasting the Homeland Security State as a racialized industry, we are able to delineate the constitutive logics of racism and private capital as the real motivating factors in the growth of this corporate bureaucracy. Omi and Winant (1994) employ the term racialization to “signify the extension of meaning to a previously racially unclassified relationship, social practice, or group” (64). Applying the concept of racialization to analyze the Homeland Security State allows for a more nuanced analysis of the industry that centers the logic of racism as both a structuring modality of the security industry itself, not only in terms of the racialized labor forces it employs, but also as the guiding principal driving its racialized target: Muslims, both in the United States and around the world.

The racialized industry is thus sustained via an ideological and material base. The construction of Muslims as a racialized enemy of the State and corporate capital provides the key ideological basis driving the industry. Workers of color also serve as the racialized labor force (Bonacich, Alimahomed, and Wilson 2008), composing the lowest paid ranks within the Homeland Security State. Viewing the War on Terror as a

racialized industry allows for an analysis that examines the intersection between global and domestic interests of private capital.

The development of the Homeland Security State falsely conveys domestic security as a separate and distinct priority aside from the so-called global War on Terror. However, upon closer examination, there is an extensive overlap between the political and corporate sector involved in both the global War on Terror and the Homeland Security State. Therefore, the concept of a racialized industry brings into sharp precision the interrelated relationships of capital in both the domestic and global arenas of politics and security. While the intent of this paper is to locate Muslims as the target of this racialized industry, the future of the Homeland Security State is adaptable, and open to reconfiguring any number of other racialized enemies as the source of its profits. We can, for example, apply the concept of the racialized industry to other state and private capital ventures which target people of color who have been racialized as threats or enemies of the state, such as the subordination of African Americans within the prison industrial complex, or the targeting of Latina/os through expansive immigrant policing and border detention facilities.

The War on Terror is the single most privatized war in the history of the United States, making it an important site of analysis to explore the burgeoning capitalist industry created and sustained by fear of Islamic terrorism. Capital has monopolized the opportunity to provide private contracting services in both the United States as well as in Iraq and Afghanistan. Within the Homeland Security Department, as well as the wars waged abroad, private contractors actually outnumber government and military



personnel. Private contractors are involved in every level of the war effort abroad, including the provision of defense weaponry, water, food, logistics, security, prison interrogators, and even health services for returning veterans.

Research on the role of capital in the “War on Terror” has been mostly limited to a geopolitical analysis of the pursuit and economic reliance on oil in the Middle East (Chomsky 2008; Harvey 2005). Chomsky (2008) in his recent article, “It’s the Oil, Stupid!” argues that the US has a clear, vested position in securing dominance in Iraq precisely because it is the second largest oil reserve in the world. Through an examination of the “Declaration of Principles” approved by both the Prime Minister of Iraq and former President Bush, Chomsky points out the passages in the agreement that guarantee Iraq be open to foreign investment, especially from the US. Moreover, after the agreement was signed, President Bush made public that he would oppose any congressional restriction on funding that would interfere with the US’ ability to secure control over the oil resources of Iraq (Chomsky 2008). In a similar vein, Harvey (2005), in “All About Oil”, a chapter from *The New Imperialism*, offers a more nuanced interpretation of US motives in regards to the pursuit of oil in the Middle East. In particular, he argues that the US is motivated by global capital’s interest in securing control over the oil reserves in the Middle East more generally. Harvey describes this aptly when he states: “whoever controls the Middle East controls the global oil spigot and whoever controls the global oil spigot can control the global economy” (19). In Harvey’s analysis, the US’s strategic interests go beyond an “oil mafia” thesis, and are more appropriately conceived as a desire of the US to have global control over the oil reserves

within the Middle East as a whole. The role of US capital then must be conceived of its position in relation to the unfolding of global capital domination as well.

It would be narrow-sighted to dismiss the pivotal role of the global oil industry in securing access to profit following the declaration of wars waged abroad. However, private capital has much to gain in other arenas as a result of these military invasions. Of parallel significance has been the role of private companies in assuming positions of importance in war related tasks in Afghanistan and Iraq. Given the quick descent into the war in Afghanistan, coupled with weak military enrollment, private corporations became positioned to take over a host of previously governmentally related services sustaining the occupation and war effort. The US government's reliance on corporations such as KBR, XE (formerly Blackwater), and Haliburton as the major suppliers of privatized war related services, technologies, and logistics support took effect rather quickly.

In the domestic realm, private contractors also play an essential role throughout multiple components of the Department of Homeland Security industry; including a substantial portion of intelligence gathering and operations for the FBI and CIA. In 2010, the global homeland security market reached approximately \$50 billion, making the United States the largest civil security market in the world (Jeremiah 2010). While there has been extensive focus on the role of private contractors in war operations abroad, including the legal and moral problems associated with relying upon non-military personnel in a war zone (Scahill 2007), there has been scant attention paid to the unchecked growth of the Homeland Security State domestically and the function of capital within this budding institution.

The role of capital in the War on Terror differs from historical forces of the economic agenda of the state. In the case of Muslims, they are not positioned as an exploitable labor force, but instead are the primary motivation and ideological justification for supporting this trillion dollar war and occupation. In an effort to continually increase profit accumulation, capital must create a demand for new industries. Historically, war often has served as an outlet for private capital investment and profit. However, after the end of the Cold War there was a substantial decrease in money funneled to military defense industries. Corporations wanted to avoid the lull in military related production and services that occurred at the end of the Cold War where defense companies lost lucrative contracts. In a move to avoid this previous military slump, private capital seized the opportunity to maximize profits by creating a domestic industry focused on securing the homeland from terrorism. This domestic industry allows for military technologies and information gathering systems to be translated for use in state security. Even through a major recession in the United States on par with the Great Depression, capital has forged a way to sustain profit and growth by keeping the War on Terror a national pressing issue. Consequently, the homeland security market has been the fastest growing industry in the United States over the past decade. The wars waged in Afghanistan and Iraq will inevitably come to an end. However, domestic security will continue as an ongoing project that allow for future unimpeded investment and accumulation of private capital.

The War on Terror finds a way to both increase access to raw material resources in the Middle East and secure unprecedented investment into the procurement of

domestic security related technologies, infrastructure, and labor. The distinctive features of capitalism are the continuing expansion of markets, the exploitation of raw materials and resources, capital accumulation, and the continued degradation of labor power. At its core, capitalism relies on a model of unlimited growth in order to produce more profit. As Marx notes, “the need of a constantly expanding market for its products chases the bourgeoisie over the whole surface of the globe” (Tucker 1978). The expansion of markets as a fundamental process of capital accumulation is a global process. Marx argued that within capitalist production, surplus value necessitates the process of accumulation. Workers have to produce more value than their necessary labor capacity in order to make a profit for the capitalist class. This process results in capital accumulation that needs to be reinvested in new markets or opportunities in order for its profit to be realized. “The search for additional constant capital (in particular, more and newer materials) drives capital toward a kind of imperialism characterized by pillage and theft” (Hardt and Negri 2001: 225). Thus, capitalist expansion relies on imperialism in order to sustain its need for accumulation. The military occupations of Afghanistan and Iraq function as an imperialist endeavor of the United States. However, the military invasions of these countries cannot be supported indefinitely. While the wars will eventually end in Afghanistan and Iraq, investment in the Homeland Security State will become a more permanent enterprise, due to the adaptability and flexibility in refashioning new internal “security threats” to defend against. In the case of the Homeland Security State, the construct of the Muslim terrorist becomes the ideological figure that legitimates continued investment.

The racialized industry of the Homeland Security State sustains its growth from the perceived threat of terrorism. The identification of a persistent racialized threat from which the United States needs to defend itself ensures the survival of the industry. The persistent subjugation of US Muslims within this racialized industry is also intricately linked to the global War on Terror. The institutional mistreatment and abuse of Muslims domestically is reliant upon the global political agenda of the US in the Middle East. Maira (2009) reminds us that “US empire continues to rely on the twin processes of foreign coercion and domestic repression” (41). Public approval for US foreign policies draws its support from “scapegoating ‘outsiders’ and conflating internal and external enemies that link the domestic and foreign fronts of US imperialism” (41). Muslims in the US are rendered suspect by the very nature of their supposed association with the “enemy” abroad. The conflation of domestic Muslims with “foreign” Muslims in the Middle East serves to strengthen the function of the Homeland Security State. The US nation state thus acts to “defend” itself against Muslims in the domestic realm, while simultaneously taking “offensive” moves against Muslims abroad in the Middle East. The War on Terror then serves both as an impetus to militarize the state against Muslims at every possible level of threat – both at the local and global level.

It is with great importance that an analysis of the Homeland Security State keeps in sharp precision the interrelated relationships of the global and local dimensions of this racialized project. There are overlapping economic interests between the domestic security build up and the neoliberalist agenda globally. Sudbury (2005) marks this intersection in her own work on the globalization processes that are implicated in the

lockdown of surplus populations, and in particular women of color on a global scale. Sudbury's (2002) discussion of the ways neoliberalism is implicated in the proliferation of Black women's imprisonment globally advances our knowledge of the ways colonialism, race, poverty, and gender intersect. This analysis is useful in its application to the increasing domestic security state as its security directly correlates to the threats of the US economic order imported abroad.

As noted earlier, the War on Terror necessitates the creation of a racialized threat, in order to rationalize its military and domestic security infrastructure buildup. Although terrorism appears on the surface to be race neutral, it actually has specific gendered and racialized referents, in this case, the violent Muslim male terrorist. Davis states, "Crime is thus one of the masquerades behind which "race", with all of its menacing ideological complexity, mobilizes old public fears *and* creates new ones" (James 1998: 62).

Similarly, terrorism draws upon racist historical constructions of Muslims as irrational, violent, and barbaric (Joseph, D'Harlingue, and Hin 2008). This construction is rooted in imperialist discourses that juxtaposes Muslims as oppositional to Western, Christian civilization (Said 1978). The stereotype of the Muslim terrorist is so salient in the West, that prior to the apprehension of Timothy McVeigh following the Oklahoma Federal Building bombing, CNN newscasters initially reported that Arab and Muslim suspects were being pursued. Even leading terrorist expert, Steven Emerson mentioned on CBS that there was a "Middle Eastern trait" that could be identified in the attack (Cainkar 2009: 108). The term terrorist therefore serves as a proxy for "Arab" and/or "Muslim." The reduction of the terrorist to a racialized configuration precludes whites from

inhabiting such a category, meaning that when whites commit acts of terrorism, such as abortion bombings they are never referred to as terrorists, nor are whites collectively judged as a racial group for the extreme acts of members of their group. Furthermore, acts of right wing Christian terrorism, such as the lynching of African Americans, are rarely viewed as acts of war, or as a substantial threat to the collective well being of American citizenry (Markovitz 2004).

The American public's fear of Muslims created as a result of the War on Terror is an ideological strategy that diverts attention away from profit motives of private capital expansion in security and defense, while instead fueling the public's racialized and gendered anxieties or fears of Muslims. This Orientalist process legitimizes the continued othering and surveillance of Muslims. In a similar fashion, the successful merger between private capital and the State in regard to the prison industrial complex was fueled by bi-partisan support of tough on crime policies and the ideological construct of the Black criminal. Parenti (1999) asserts that the social upheaval and racial struggles waged during the 1960s-1970s paved the way for the expansion of the prison system. The "face" of crime was constructed as Black and sold to the American public. While men of color became the surplus population that filled the prison, white working class men became the "managers" or prison guards in this budding institution. However, Parenti departs from traditional critiques of the prison industrial complex in his analysis of the profit motivations in the growth of this system. Parenti argues that the prison industrial complex is far different than the military industrial complex in that corporate profits and interest have been overestimated in their role in the prison system. He attacks

the “prison as Pentagon” argument that claims incarceration is profitable to capitalism through its Keynesian stimulus, privatization of prisons, and private corporations’ reliance on prison labor (213). While these are factors in the growth of prisons, Parenti claims that this lockdown economy is not just based on specific corporate interests but is more appropriately described as “punishment and terror as class struggle” waged from above (214). While Parenti (1999) is interested in teasing out the subordination of African Americans as a surplus labor pool, this varies greatly from the middle class position of most US Muslims. Their subordination cannot be summed up as a class division within the US; in fact, their scrutinized status is more closely tied with the ascendancy of the global security market and its concurrent interests in oil. While I argue that there are specific corporate interests driving this racialized industry, the useful assumption implicit in Parenti’s critique is that class struggle involves more than one specific actor. Similarly, the growth of the Homeland Security State draws upon a constellation of political and economic actors that make possible the growth of the Homeland Security State.

The unchecked spending and investment on security and counter-terrorism programs has also drawn upon a similar relationship between government, private capital, and bi-partisan political support. Although, terrorism ranks low as a potential threat to the everyday life of an American, in recent years it has consistently remained a top priority of American citizens and financial and governmental resources. This is similar to how rates of violent crime in the US has declined in recent decades, yet the public still



strongly believes that crime is growing, fueling the expansion of the prison industrial complex and increased policing efforts of communities of color.

The rise of the penalization of Black communities was constituted after the challenges posed by social movements in the 1960s. Wacquant (2009) argues that the decline of the welfare state and the upsurge in the penal state have served to strengthen the state's power under neoliberalism. Thus, the penalization of the poor, the sub-proletarianization of Black communities, and the targeting of post-colonial immigrant communities are essential to ramped-up state control in this post-Keynesian era. By linking the twin processes of the social ostracization of African Americans that emerged in the formation of the ghettos with their overall decline as wage workers in the post-Fordist era, Wacquant contends that the penal state successfully employs a type of "carceral affirmative action" in warehousing African Americans in the prison system (197).

The huge expansion in the criminal justice system is directly related to the increase in racialized policing of communities of color. Davis (2005) reminds us that "regardless of who has or has not committed crimes, punishment, in brief, can be seen more as a consequence of racialized surveillance. Increased punishment is most often a result of increased surveillance" (40). Similarly, in order to justify the continued growth of the Homeland Security State, increased scrutiny of Muslims will produce the ideological justification for continued capital investment and growth in the private and state security apparatus. More importantly, the surveillance of the Muslim community has only produced a type of preemptive policing ultimately demonstrating that tax dollars

are hard at work to prevent terrorism. Increased surveillance of the Muslim community has largely produced deportation of immigrants for minor visa violations along with a substantial investment in the mapping of the Muslim community. The preemptive policing strategy demands significant investments in security and information related technology gathering strategies. FBI, ICE, TSA, and local law enforcement agencies who all work in concert with private contractors, continuously gather information on Muslims in order to prove their worth and secure more funding. The relationship between security and counter-terrorism program blurs the lines between private capital and public agencies.

Cainkar (2009) argues that preexisting negative social constructions of Arabs and Muslims as possessing an inherent proclivity towards violence prior to 9/11 paved the way for their institutional mistreatment after the attacks. Their institutional subjugation then relied upon essentialized notions of their racial status as inherently pathological, and fundamentally different from white Christians. The subjection of Muslims to state scrutiny is based upon their racialization as “inferior to whites, potentially violent and threatening, and therefore deserving of policies that target them as a distinct group of people and criminalize them without evidence of criminal activity” (Jamal 2008: 116). The racialization of Muslims as subordinate, non-citizens confers upon them a sub-human status in which their extraordinary (mis)treatment is not only justified, but necessary. Extralegal apparatuses are therefore needed to contain such a population that is excessively dangerous and culturally inferior. Muslims collectively pose both an

internal domestic threat and external global threat. Their global threat also justifies the containment and surveillance of this population in the United States.

The continued assault on the Muslim community domestically has progressed uninterrupted and with much public support because it is both a product of the specific history of racialization of Muslims as a group but also due to the history of US imperialism and institutionalized racism targeted at other groups of color. Thus, the suppression of Muslims follows a long line of racist oppression, ranging from the State's internment of Japanese Americans, the criminalization of African Americans, the genocide and disenfranchisement of indigenous communities, and impetus for massive raids and deportation of immigrant Latino communities. The subjection of groups of color to unwarranted scrutiny and policing by the State and within public institutions has a long and established history well rooted in the treatment of racialized groups throughout various times in history. While the ideological justifications circulated publicly emphasize Muslims as the specific target and new threat to the United States, the tactics employed to subjugate Muslims draws on the "toolbox" of strategies employed to contain other communities of color. For example, the use of racial profiling to detect Muslim terrorists draws its support from the widespread acceptance of racial profiling used against Black Americans under the guise that the police are keeping neighborhoods safe from crime. A similar logic undergirds the assumption that even Muslim domestic residents and citizens have divided loyalties, and are therefore rendered always suspect, is directly connected to the history of anti-Asian racism that posits Asians Americans as forever foreign and inherently disloyal to the imperialist aims of the US state. The use of

racism to contain and restrict immigrant and communities of color clearly overlaps and reinforces the targeting of Muslims. This relationship is also evident in the usage of War on Terror rhetoric to strengthen the surveillance of the Latino/a immigrant community. Securing the Mexican/US border thus became a security issue, which led to increased resources for ICE to target immigrants to be deported. Therefore, the War on Terror has commanded a reorganization of various structures of racism that have proved successful in stripping communities of color of their rights.

The ideological construction of Muslims as a national threat is an extension of racially conservative discourses that have gained momentum since the 1980s. Bi-partisan support for the War on Terror, including increasing funding for the War on Terror through both Republican and Democratic administrations caters to the resounding nativism that has become a staple of electoral politics in recent decades. Reese (2005: 148) argues that the rise of the Republican Right and the New Democrats at the turn of the century both competed to win the vote of white traditional voters. Republicans were effective in constructing a powerful, emotional discourse that articulated the nation as a metaphor for the family, who is guided by a “strict father” whose paternal authority emphasizes self-discipline and self-reliance (Lakoff 1996). This metaphor connected electoral politics and morality, ultimately forging an emotional resonate identity among the white working class with Republicans. Reese (2005) further demonstrates that the appeals to the white working class by the Republican Party relied on both economic and racial conservatism. The Republicans increased their attacks on affirmative action, immigration, and social programs appealing to race-based nativism in order to gain

support from the white working class. While the Democrats could not afford to abandon their support for affirmative action, they also made appeals to this race based nativism in more subtle ways by attacking welfare programs and supporting tough on crime campaigns, which would disproportionately affect African Americans and Latinos (Reese 2005: 142). These historical shifts in the discourse of electoral politics ultimately laid the groundwork in which claims to the moral superiority of the US in its fight against the War on Terror became hard to contest on a political level and implicitly reinforced racial nativism in its moral panic of Muslims.

### **The Development and Funding of the Department of Homeland Security**

The War on Terror has not just been a war that has been waged abroad, but also has relied heavily upon an important shift in the US state domestic apparatus. The Homeland Security Act of 2002 ushered in a new wave of government that was intent on closing the intelligence gap between government agencies by creating the Department of Homeland Security. This branch merged over 22 agencies of the government and boasted a \$62 billion budget that was intended to secure the borders of the United States and to prevent any future terrorist attacks on domestic soil. Over 79% of growth in recent government employment has occurred in departments related to the War on Terror (Dinan 2010). The Homeland Security Department houses a record number of 230,000 employees, the biggest government employer after the Department of Defense. However, private contractors working as employees under the Department of Homeland Security are equal to the number of government employees working in this department. Even

more telling is the fact that within intelligence operations, private contractors make up 6 out of 10 employees under the Homeland Security Department (Tate 2010).

The move to establish the Homeland Security Department as an outgrowth of the events of 9/11 has also led to the economic growth in a variety of other “risk” arenas, i.e. new markets, such as bio-terrorism, cyber-terrorism, transportation and border security. An outcome of the funneling of large sums of investment into the economic growth of security related industries is the diversion of resources away from social programs. Davis (2005) points out that both the military industrial complex and prison industrial complex “generate huge profits from processes of social destruction. Precisely that which is advantageous to those corporations, elected officials, and government agents who have obvious stakes in the expansion of these systems begets grief and devastation for poor and racially dominated communities in the US and throughout the world.” The opportunity cost of this burgeoning homeland security industry has the effect of draining jobs that could potentially focus on social problems associated with healthcare, environmental degradation, employment, and education.

Recently, President Barack Obama reported that all discretionary spending would be halted for three years except for spending on security (Calmes 2010). The cuts to social programs will inevitably result in a loss of investment in human capital. Interestingly, popular discussion in the media has focused on whether or not Obama’s halt on discretionary spending is an effective remedy for the mounting debt. However, popular discussion failed to ever interrogate the continued investment in the category of security spending. In this case, security spending is an unquestioned feature of our

economy, while funding toward social programs remains within the realm of popular debate. Moreover, it is a taken for granted assumption that security spending actually results in “more security”. This ever-increasing financial commitment and public backed consensus became unlimited following 9/11. In a Washington Post interview, CIA Director, Leon Panetta, pointed to this unchecked spending growth. He remarked that he will begin “mapping out a five year plan for his agency because the levels of spending since 9/11 are not sustainable” (Priest and Arkin 2010). This important reality has not become an issue of debate among the agenda-setting corporate media.

### **Financial Recovery and the Impact of Private Security Expansion on Employment Growth**

The American Recovery and Investment Act of 2009 signed into law by President Obama had two major objectives; to preserve and create jobs and assist those most impacted by the recession (Office of the Secretary 2009). Despite these objectives, the Department of Homeland Security was awarded \$3.5 billion from the American Recovery and Investment Act. The \$3.5 billion is being allocated to six agencies within the Department of Homeland Security: United States Customs and Boarder Protection (\$980 million), Immigration and Customs Enforcement (\$20 million), Transportation and Security Administration (\$1 billion), United States Coastguard (\$240 million), Federal Emergency Management Agency (\$615 million), and DHS Management Directorate (\$200 million). The majority of the funding allotted to these agencies will be awarded through competitive contracts, of which most has already been designated to private

security companies. While the government has steadily increased spending toward the Homeland Security Department and has protected it from the halt on discretionary spending, it seems paradoxical that more funds would be allotted to the department through the Recovery Act.

The job growth in security related industries has flourished in the War on Terror era and has been significantly supported by the Recovery Act. However, the procurement of security related technologies along with the reliance on a highly skilled, white-collar labor force does not offer any benefits to “those most impacted by the recession” as what the Act purported to do. Therefore, the Recovery Act’s subsidy for the Homeland Security Department has had a very limited resonance among aiding the general public and possibility for stimulation of the economy. The government’s decision was to direct financial resources for subsidizing employment in security related industries having no impact on unemployment rates among lesser skilled workers. In addition to the uneven impact of this job growth on different laboring populations, growth in this sector has also caused an exacerbation of the economic crisis in communities of color in the United States. Immigrants have suffered major obstacles during the recession, and the additional resources invested into policing immigrants resulted in a two-fold attack on those marginalized immigrant communities.

### **Political Officials as Profiteers**

The development of the Homeland Security Department is the domestic arm of the military industrial complex. Many of the same corporations that were successful in



the past defense industry have expanded their scope to become the top contractors in the homeland security industry. Lockheed Martin, Northrup Grumman, Boeing, and L-3 Communications are among the top awarded contractors in both the Departments of Defense and the Department of Homeland Security. Additionally, they are among the top government contractors overall, when taking into account all the agencies under the federal government (US Government 2010). CEOs of the top defense companies have profited more than any other industry executives since the War on Terror commenced in the aftermath of World Trade Center attacks. CEO salaries of the top 34 defense contractors in the nation received a 108% pay increase from 2001 to 2005, while salaries for their CEO counterparts in other industries only rose 6% during this same period (Pizzigati et al. 2006).

C.W. Mills (1956) argues that the power elite are composed of economic, political, and military elites whose power is concentrated institutionally. These three domains are entwined and reinforce the power of each institutional branch of authority. Mills asserts that “one feature of these hierarchies of corporation, state, and military establishment is that their top positions are increasingly interchangeable” (Mills 1956: 10). The elites located at the top tier of institutional authority hold more power to influence military, economic, and governmental agendas. The officials located in these elite positions leverage more status and have more access to other elites, which only begets more wealth, power, and prestige. Mills emphasizes that the elite participate in overlapping circles of prestige creating a cumulative effect on those in power. For instance, if one already has top military credentials, they are able to gain access to other

positions and networks of prestige, blurring the divide between the private and governmental realms. The power elite is not just noteworthy in casting light on who inhabits these top positions, but is more importantly indicative of where power is constituted at the institutional level. The relationship between the economic, military, and political realms is where the bulk of national power resides in the US. This phenomenon is clearly illustrated in the War on Terror in that the expansion into fulfilling contracts for the military becomes a new economic engine of corporate industry, meanwhile boasting support from politicians who profit from war and the homeland security industry. The relationship between these three sectors in terms of their allegiance to the 'war' agenda becomes so interconnected it becomes impossible to discern whether industry is responding to the needs of the political apparatus, or if corporations are creating economic pressure for supporting the war machine.

Several key political officials that were integral designers of the War on Terror have transitioned into the private sector to profit from the increased resources diverted to counterterrorism and security. Some of the most prominent cases that characterize this burgeoning field are the Chertoff Group, founded by Michael Chertoff, the former Secretary of the Department of Homeland Security; the Ashcroft Group, founded by former Attorney General Tom Ashcroft, Ridge Global, founded by the first Secretary of the Department of Homeland Security, Tom Ridge; the Giuliani Group, led by former Mayor of New York City, Rudolph Giuliani; and the Rice-Hadley Group, headed by former Secretary of State, Condoleezza Rice. While serving in political office, these key leaders were politically invested in supporting the War on Terror, including prioritizing

these efforts and enhancing governmental subsidies. The revolving door between political officials and private corporations streamlines the process of bidding and securing governmental contracts for security related tasks and technologies. Former political officials hold intimate knowledge of how to navigate the institutional processes that govern contract negotiation and oversight, thereby placing them in a distinct advantage for companies wanting to invest and produce products and services that will be purchased by the government. They are also able to effectively draw upon governmental networks with current political officials. In effect, ex-political officials create the demand for security procurement while in office and routinely leave their posts to start companies that fulfill this demand, which often results in a lucrative financial move for these individuals. The newly expanding niche ex-political officials have carved out within the homeland security infrastructure essentially fulfills a middleman role as brokers between capital and government. They become the new “designers” of security and risk consultant agencies. Along with leveraging their own former political status to turn a profit, including drawing on their invaluable networks and contacts, many of these security and risk assessment firms regularly employ their prior political colleagues that they worked alongside in government, creating an integrated revolving door of political and economic elites. These firms often boast of their “all star lineups” of former top intelligence, military, and political officials who now are employed as consultants, staff, and members of the Board of Directors.

Within months of leaving office as the Secretary of the Department of Homeland Security from 2005-2009, Michael Chertoff founded his new company, the Chertoff

Group, which provides security and risk management services to both private firms and governmental agencies on issues of national security. Chertoff's firm boasts that their principal employees are a "new team, [with] long-term colleagues" (Chertoff Group 2009). This is quite evident in that his firm employs Michael Hayden, the former director of the CIA from 2006-2009 and Charles Allen, the creator of the Department of Homeland Security Unit. Chertoff came under public criticism in 2010 for advocating the need for increased acquisition of body scanners at the airports to safeguard against terrorism without disclosing that his own company represents the leading manufacturing firm of body scanner technology. This firm, Rapiscan Systems, sold the Department of Homeland Security the first batch of body scanners while Chertoff was in office in 2005. Most recently, Rapiscan Systems was the only company to qualify for securing a \$25 million contract paid through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act to provide another batch of body scanners to the TSA (Kind 2010). Rapiscan Systems is currently a client of the Chertoff Group, further underscoring the reality that former governmental officials act as a bridge between capital and government, ultimately streamlining the private contracting business, creating a new class of political profiteers. Moreover, upon leaving office, Chertoff and his profit motivations for his company were clear when he authored an article on "How to Reinvigorate the War on Terrorism Here at Home" where he emphasized the persistent threat of Al-Qaeda and the need to implement technology that could detect terrorist threats (Chertoff 2009). Ex-political officials have a clear stake in sustaining panic and fear of the Islamic terrorist. Moreover, drawing on their political

and expert status as former government officials, creates more trust with the general public and bolsters popular support for sustaining funding for the War on Terror.

In a similar fashion, Tom Ridge, the first Secretary of the US Department of Homeland Security, founded his own private security firm Ridge Global, immediately after leaving his government post. Ridge's company claims to advance the security and economic interests of businesses globally, with particular emphasis on minimizing risk and challenges to capital. Security companies provide emphasis on protecting private business interests to ensure risk-free movement of capital's goods across nation states and through international borders. In particular, Ridge Global boasts expertise in analyzing and protecting companies' supply chains. Bonacich and Wilson (2008) argue that global supply chains offer a critical leveraging point for labor to organize against capital. In a post 9/11 environment, investment in security and counterterrorism measures play an essential role in capital globally. Protection from any possible threats of challenges to capital has become an essential new industry and key ideological component of homeland security.

### **Homeland Security State: Surveillance, Mapping, and Intelligence Operations in Muslim Communities**

The Homeland Security Department has been driven by the fear of the Islamic terrorist. As a result, Muslims have been subjected to an array of government initiatives that have rendered them both as a persistent suspect and in need of further scrutiny and surveillance. During 2002-2003, the National Security Entry-Exit Registration System

(NSEERS) focused on the registering, fingerprinting, and photographing of male foreign nationals from countries who had been known to support or harbor terrorists. The domestic component solicited registrations from more than 80,000 males who were living inside the United States on temporary visas from Muslim-majority countries. In September 2003, of the more than 80,000 individuals who complied with call-in registration, 13,799 were referred to investigations and received notices to appear in court, and 2,870 were detained (Arab Discrimination Committee 2009). Of those visitors who were detained, not one single individual was ever brought up on terrorism related charges; most were deported for simple visa violations. The visa violations were usually minor, such as failing to report a change of address within 10 days of moving. The NSEERS program was ineffective in combating terrorism and only legitimated suspicion of visitors based upon nationality and religious affiliation. The impact on Muslim communities within the United States has been quite pronounced. Furthermore, it holds a number of long-range consequences for those US Muslims who still have significant familial ties outside of the country. The program also undermined the global reputation of the US for its blatant discriminatory treatment of Muslims.

The NSEERS not only failed to produce any suspected terrorists or foil any potential terrorist activities but it also infringed on the civil liberties of Muslims. Based upon this information, the program should have been abandoned altogether. However, the information gathered and stored in the NSEERS system was later mined for new and continued investigations into the Muslim community. In the time period spanning from May 2004 through February 2005, Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) agents

developed “Operation Frontline” a program that systematically mined the NSEERS database, the Student and Exchange Information System (SEVIS), and the US Visitor and Immigrant Status Indicator Technology Program (US VISIT) in order to target foreign nationals who posed a security threat. Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) documents clearly reveal that Operation Frontline disproportionately focused on individuals who were from Muslim majority countries. Of the 2,400 individuals who were under surveillance and investigation, 2,000 (83%) were from countries that were predominately Muslim. Once again, Operation Frontline failed to make a single arrest of anyone on terrorist related charges, nor did it even determine that there were any suspected terrorists among the population that was investigated. This program demonstrates that not only was Operation Frontline ineffective, due to its reliance on data that was previously determined by NSEERS to be useless in tracking terrorists. The exact same personal information that was already shown to exhibit not a single demonstrated terrorist threat by the FBI’s NSEERS program was once again used for further investigations by ICE. This demonstrates that the Homeland Security State is less concerned about safety and actual security, and more concerned with continuing to build up the domestic realm of security infrastructure, even if a particular project is doomed to fail from its inception, like Operation Frontline.

In 2003, FBI Director Mueller authorized an initiative aimed at counting mosques around the country. The 56 FBI field offices nationwide were instructed to develop demographic profiles of their localities. In February, 2003 FBI field offices were sent a six page questionnaire, including a section titled, “Vulnerabilities” which asked for the

number of mosques in their communities (ACLU 2010). This information would then be used to assist in setting quotas for wiretaps and counterterrorism investigations (Isikoff 2010). FBI officials claim that the mosque tallies are only one of several indicators that are used to assess the potential terrorist threat in a specific area. Of interest to the FBI are the number of other "vulnerable assets" in a region, including bridges, dams, nuclear plants, flight schools and Islamic charities that have been linked to terrorism. A senior FBI official stated, "We're trying to set performance goals and objectives for a particular field office. We're not targeting mosques" (Isikoff 2010). The FBI's focus on counting mosques as a strategy to evaluate the performance of field offices steers intelligence operations in a misguided direction. This leads FBI agents to focus on the generalized mapping of Muslim communities, as opposed to developing quality intelligence that hones in on specific terrorist related activities.

In 2007, the Los Angeles Police Department (LAPD) announced its efforts to develop a program that would create a map of all of the Muslim neighborhoods in Los Angeles. Current Deputy Police Chief, Michael Downing, and head of the Counter-Terrorism Bureau in Los Angeles, told a congressional hearing that "While this project will lay out geographic locations of many different Muslim populations around Los Angeles, we also intend to take a deeper look at their history, demographics, language, culture, ethnic breakdown, socioeconomic status and social interactions" (Hall 2010). The LAPD claimed that the mapping program would be able to identify populations that were susceptible to extremist elements in order to thwart future terrorist threats. However, due to mounting public pressure the LAPD decided to scrap the project (Hall



2010). Civil rights organizations pointed out that the singling out of a population based upon first amendment protected religious beliefs and activities rather than on any suspicion of criminal activity is a clear act of religious profiling. Racialized surveillance is not just conducted within the realm of the police; it is also inherent within the realm of federal government agencies such as the FBI and CIA. Interagency collaboration, as demonstrated in the case with the proposed LAPD mapping project, is an outgrowth of a new trend by which local police departments become more integrated with federal agencies such as the FBI and ICE, in order to more effectively enhance the racialized surveillance of Muslims.

Since 2003, “fusion centers” became a new component of the homeland security infrastructure. Fusion centers were created in an effort to share intelligence among state, regional, and local authorities. According to the US Department of Justice, the purpose of the fusion center is to “provide a mechanism where law enforcement, public safety, and private partners can come together with a common purpose and improve the ability to safeguard our homeland and prevent criminal activity.” According to the Department of Homeland Security, as of July 2009, there are 72 fusion centers located across the country. There has been intensive federal and state funding of fusion centers, leveraging approximately \$327 million in direct grant funding from 2004 through 2008. In addition, President Obama’s stimulus plan awarded an additional \$250 million for upgrading, modifying, or constructing new sites for fusion centers (Cincotta 2010). The fight against terrorism therefore is not seen as a pursuit only of government agencies but includes a collaborative relationship between the private sector and government. The inclusion of

private interests into the development and staffing of fusion centers is an alliance that threatens to undermine civil liberties of US Muslims by legitimizing surveillance and preemptive information gathering on the populations.

The inclusion of private companies in the assessment and prevention of terrorism holds a number of potential ramifications for the public. The underlying assumption that private corporations should be included as key stakeholders in these joint counterterrorism efforts indicates the government's allegiance to protecting private financial capital. Therefore, homeland security initiatives and programs become less about securing the safety of Americans, since their civil liberties are being undermined in an effort to protect the interests of capital. Take for example, the Department of Homeland Security's program, InfraGard. In 2003, InfraGard, under the direction of the FBI, was transferred to the Homeland Security's Department of Critical Infrastructure Protection. The InfraGard program is a "partnership between the FBI and the private sector" which aims to allow "InfraGard members [to] gain access to information that enables them to protect their assets and in turn give information to government that facilitates its responsibilities to prevent and address terrorism and other crimes" (InfraGard 2010). The FBI's 56 field offices all designate at least one special agent coordinator with each respective local InfraGard chapter. Since most of the "critical infrastructures" are privately owned and operated, this underscores the extent to which the FBI and the Department of Homeland Security value and rely upon private companies as key shapers and stakeholders in counterterrorism effort. As of September 2010, InfraGard boasted a membership base of 40,255 members with 86 chapters nationwide.

InfraGard members have access to sensitive but unclassified information. According to the Middle Tennessee chapter of InfraGard, one of the primary purposes of InfraGard is to “increase the quantity and quality of infrastructure intrusion/threat reports provided to local FBI field offices for investigation and follow-up and the NIPC for national-level analysis” (InfraGard Members Alliance 2010). The focus on generating new and more abundant reports on possible terrorist and criminal threats in effect authorizes private corporations to police the public along with their employees. As one InfraGard private corporation member boasted,

We are the owners, operators, and experts of our critical infrastructure, from the CEO of a large company in agriculture or high finance to the guy who turns the valve at the water utility. Schneck, who by day is the vice president of research integration at Secure Computing said they could sick the FBI on ‘disgruntled employees who will use knowledge gained on the job against their employers (Rothschild 2008).

Given that private corporations are not trained in intelligence gathering nor versed in civil liberty violations, at the encouragement of the FBI, reporting suspicious threats opens the door for widespread surveillance of potentially thousands of innocent individuals, including benign customers (Cincotta 2010). Furthermore, there is wide latitude to racially profile workers and customers by individual corporate employees. The reliance on corporations to increase the amount of tips to the FBI circumvents important policy and critical safeguards built into government agencies’ conduct in investigations.

The mapping of Muslim communities through surveillance and information gathering is purportedly aimed to counter terrorism. The drive to collect vast amounts of information on Muslim communities has become an industry that is validated by the notion that tracking any and all Muslims will “secure” the homeland. This faulty presumption not

only renders unwarranted and illegal intrusions into the lives of everyday Muslims but also opens the door for privacy intrusions of other Americans as well.

Young (2003) quite aptly describes the State's drive to secure the homeland as a function of masculinist protection. The State wages war abroad out of a defensive, and risk taking necessity in order to protect women and children at home figuratively. The extension of the State as benevolent, masculine protector entails a bargain struck between the public citizenry and the State which is best described in the following passage by Young:

There are bad people out there who might want to attack us. The state pledges to protect us but tells us that we should submit to its rule and decisions without questioning, criticizing, or demanding independent review of the decisions. Some of the measures in place to protect us entail limitation on our freedom and especially limitation of the freedom of particular classes of people. The deal is this: you must trade some liberty and autonomy for the sake of the protection we offer. Is it a good deal? (14).

The positioning of the State as the only defense against unwarranted attacks from outsiders reinscribes this power relationship. Therefore, to speak out against such civil liberty infringements would be to display a type of ingratitude towards this benevolent protector. The drive to accumulate information at the expense of civil liberties is buttressed by the defensive position assumed by this core, masculinist State strategy.

Examining an excerpt of a recent speech by DHS Under Secretary, Charles Allen (2008), highlights the importance of intelligence gathering and surveillance as a core strategy and key use of resources at DHS:

Intelligence is not only about spies and satellites. It is about the thousands and thousands of routine, everyday observations and activities. Surveillance, interactions - each of which may be taken in isolation as not

a particularly meaningful piece of information - but when fused together, gives us a sense of the patterns and the flow that really is at the core of what intelligence analysis is all about. What you may not know is that we, at DHS, actually generate a great deal of intelligence. We are virtually an "information factory" producing data based on thousands of interactions every hour.

Given that the majority of workers employed in DHS's intelligence efforts are private contractors, and since the quantity of observations in intelligence gathering is the goal of such efforts poses significant problems. First, since Muslims have become a population to fear in the public eye, increased scrutiny becomes supported by popular public opinion. Second, the allegiance of private contractors is not to security as the top priority, instead it is to their firm's shareholders and underlying profit motives, leading them to dismiss concern and priority of civil liberty issues that are usually expected of entrusted government officials. Lastly, the drive to accumulate vast amounts of intelligence on Muslims does not translate to a reduction in terrorism. It is a problematic assertion to assume that securing knowledge about an entire population in the US will effectively combat future terrorist attacks. This tactic instead supports the racial profiling of a population based upon a set of generalized criteria that ultimately reveals nothing about the acts of individual extremists. The idea of the "information factory" is therefore seen as a legitimized goal in and of itself without any measure of effectiveness other than the drive to collect more and more information. In discussing the growth of the enormous domestic intelligence infrastructure, retired Army Lt. General John R. Vines, who oversees the review of the Defense Program's most sensitive programs stated that "it's impossible to tell whether the country is safer because of all this spending and all these activities" (Priest and Arkin 2010). The intelligence bureaucracy, created at the

expense of the civil liberties of US Muslims, has not been evaluated for its efficiency precisely because corporations have been given unprecedented resource allocation and authority in this realm. Even Defense Secretary Robert Gates admitted that “he does not believe the system has become too big to manage but getting precise data is sometimes difficult.” He intends to review the intelligence units for waste, adding that “Nine years after 9/11, it makes a lot of sense to sort of take a look at this and say, ‘Okay we’ve built tremendous capability, but do we have more than we need?’” (Priest and Arkin 2010). Private corporations in concert with government intelligence officials reinforce the “need” for surveillance of Muslims by focusing on this aspect of counter-terrorism programs.

An incident that illustrates how private contractors have come to assume these positions of power without regard or allegiance to civil liberty issues has been the incorporation of private contractors in the realm of the Terrorist Screening Center that distributes the no-fly watch lists. Rahinah Ibrahim, a Stanford doctoral student who was flying to Malaysia with her daughter for a visit was abruptly arrested, detained, and jailed because her name appeared on the no-fly list. The United Airlines ticket agent found her name on the list and contacted the San Francisco police department who called the Transportation Security Administration in Washington. The watch officer who was contacted was a private contractor that worked for the US Investigations Services. This private contractor “told the police to ‘deny the flight to Ibrahim, contact the F.B.I. and detain her for further questioning” (McIntire 2010). Ibrahim was released later after a visit from the FBI and allowed to fly to Malaysia but upon returning for her flight back to

the US found that her visa had been revoked without reason. The incident with Ibrahim raises important concerns about the role of private contractors in homeland security work. In this case, the San Francisco Police were taking orders from a 24-hour call center that had hired private contractors. It is problematic that the police department is working under the orders of a private contractor's employee, ultimately substituting their own judgment for that of a civilian private corporation. Furthermore, if Ibrahim had not chosen to legally challenge her wrongful arrest in a lawsuit, the issue of private contracting would not have been subjected to scrutiny. The use of private contractors in such sensitive roles has also posed an additional problem, whereby the tasks of government and capital has become so enmeshed that it becomes difficult to ascertain where the boundaries are between the corporation and the state.

## **Conclusion**

The role of capital in the development, expansion, and continued sustenance of the Homeland Security State serves as an important site of analysis. The direction and rise of this racialized industry has blurred the lines between the state and the corporation. Private contractors compose a larger segment of employees under the Department of Homeland Security than governmental employees. Moreover, there is a revolving door of political officials occupying governmental posts and then later becoming the newest corporate leaders in this racialized industry. The role of private contracting in the War on Terror has become more monumental now than throughout any other time in history. Rather than examine the rise of the role of capital independently in the functioning of the

Homeland Security State, I argue that race and capital both play a crucial role in this new racialized industry. Muslims as a population have been subjected to a subordinated racialized status in order to justify the increasing flow of capital within this profit-seeking institution. The panic and fear of the “Islamic terrorist” has served as an ideological foundation to increase the role of the racialized industry in the US domestic state. The racialization of Muslims as the perennial suspected terrorist is vital to the security state in which both mainstream conservative and liberal political parties dare not oppose limitless funding support for counter-terrorism programs. Since both parties have to sustain their ideological party base, including racial and economic conservatism among its voters, they leverage the moral panic about Muslims to secure their continued support. The functioning of the Homeland Security State is therefore not just an extension of the military industrial complex, but is more fundamentally a racialized class-based structure whereby the state repression of Muslims induces a constant flow of funding opportunities for private firms. The Homeland Security State is also shaped by similar actors invested in the geopolitical landscape of the wars in the Middle East. Similar racial ideologies about Muslims are translated from the global to the local realm. Thus, the scapegoating of Muslims as suspected terrorists allows for the uninhibited development and justification for the increasingly privatized Homeland Security State. The racialization of Muslims has served to legitimize the intrusive policing measures employed by the state through this burgeoning racialized industry. These regimes of surveillance and discipline have adapted a similar logic from other institutions that have sought to repress communities of color such as the prison industrial complex or the policing of immigrants at the border.



Consequently, corporations and ex-political officials have been well positioned to seize such an opportunity to exploit the fear of terrorism to draw further economic support for the Homeland Security State and the wars waged abroad.

### CHAPTER 3

#### **COINTELPRO 2.0: FBI INVESTIGATIONS, SURVEILLANCE, AND RACIAL PROFILING OF LOS ANGELES MUSLIM COMMUNITIES**

This chapter examines 113 self-reported cases of FBI investigations of the US Muslim population from 2006-2010 occurring in Los Angeles, CA. Based upon the trends presented in this chapter's data, I argue that since 2006 there has been a definitive shift in counter-terrorism priorities and policing strategies domestically. Prior to 2006, most counter-terrorism efforts were primarily focused on safeguarding the US from *foreign* terrorists. However, the bombing of the London Underground on July 7, 2005 by homegrown Muslim radicals had an international ripple effect on the US fight against terrorism. During the period of 2006-2007, US public discourse on the growing threat of radical homegrown terrorism became an increasing media fixation and public priority. The shift to consider US born Muslims as important security threats set into motion a growing focus and scrutinization of the social activities, religious practices, and political beliefs of the US Muslim population.

In May, 2006 the first important homegrown radicalization FBI counter-terrorism report, *The Radicalization Process: From Conversion to Jihad* purported to delineate the indicators in the pre-radicalization stage of Muslim homegrown radicalism in which "Identification factors" included wearing traditional Muslim attire, growing facial hair, frequent attendance at a mosque or prayer group, and travel to a Muslim country. Shortly thereafter, in March, 2007 Charles E. Allen, DHS Assistant Secretary for Intelligence and Analysis presents written testimony to the U.S. Senate Committee on Homeland Security

and Governmental Affairs on the *Threat of Islamic Radicalization to the Homeland* in which he stated:

In general, we have found that it is more difficult for radicalized individuals in the United States to turn their ideologically-driven violent inclinations into successful terrorist attacks. We believe that in Europe there exist closer links between criminal and extremist social networks and that Europe's larger pool of disaffected Muslims have more opportunity to connect with terrorist groups tied to al-Qa'ida globally. In the United Kingdom, several cases of home-grown radicalization have been linked to al-Qa'ida, who provided both operational expertise and ideological reinforcement in attack planning. Thus far, we have not seen these types of linkages between homegrown extremists and international terrorist groups in the United States, but we remain vigilant, and recognize that we are not immune to the threat.

Despite the lack of evidence to support the claim of a new and growing homegrown Muslim threat, the counter-terrorism wing was officially mobilized by the Department of Homeland Security and the FBI.

Since 2006, heightened FBI probes and investigations of US Muslim community members has been a critical development that warrants further inquiry into this important matter. The increased scrutiny of US Muslim communities has occurred at such a rapid pace, there has been absence of any evaluation of neither the nature of such highly intrusive practices nor an examination of the deleterious effects on the US Muslim community. This chapter examines FBI practices and investigations of US Muslim communities. Drawing on data collected by CAIR's Los Angeles office from 2006-2010, this study will provide an evaluation of 113 reported cases of FBI investigations of Muslims.

Racial profiling, as defined by the Congressional Research Service, is "the practice of a law enforcement agent or agency relying, to any degree, on race, ethnicity,

national origin, or religion in selecting which individual to subject to routine or spontaneous investigatory activities or in deciding upon the scope and substance of law enforcement activity following the initial investigatory procedure” (Council of American Islamic Relations 2008). Historically, the racial profiling debate was primarily focused on issues related to state and local law enforcement agencies that targeted African Americans and Latinos as criminal suspects. However, increasingly since 9/11 the scope of racial profiling has been expanded to include Muslim, Arab, and South Asian Americans as suspected threats to national security. The dramatic heightening of this issue has led to an increase in the unlawful use of race as a factor in FBI investigations, immigration policies, and airport security procedures since the terrorist attacks on 9/11 (Amnesty International 2004).

While the majority of Americans disapprove of racial profiling in traffic related stops, most support the use of racial profiling in intercepting terrorists (Laney 2004). The week following September 11<sup>th</sup>, John Cooksey, a congressional representative spoke in support of racial profiling of Muslims to a Louisiana radio station, “If I see someone [who] comes in that’s got a diaper on his head and a fan belt wrapped around the diaper on his head that guy needs to be pulled over” (Human Rights Watch 2002: 26). In similar fashion another congressional representative, C. Saxby Chambliss, in meeting with law enforcement officers in Georgia noted, “just turn [the sheriff] loose and have him arrest every Muslim that crosses the state line” (Human Rights Watch 2002: 26). Racial profiling of Muslims has thus been legitimated by important policy makers as well as the public. Hassan (2002) notes that “As a de facto policy, racial profiling dismisses the

legal principles of innocent until proven guilty and preponderance of evidence, and instead relies on probable cause, reasonable suspicion and, perhaps most importantly, compelling interest to justify arbitrary interrogations and detentions” (17).

Racial profiling has multiple negative impacts on suspected populations. The distrust fostered by racial profiling can inhibit productive relationships between government and law enforcement officials and Muslim communities. According to the Department of Justice (2008), Arab and Muslim Americans report greater fear of federal policies and practices than individual incidents of public bias and harassment. This significant finding demonstrates the importance of analyzing the social costs of such systemic policies on Muslim communities. Furthermore, counter-terrorism efforts are more successful when aided by tips and information provided by community members. This important feedback loop is undermined when community members feel under threat of being racially profiled.

### **Government Policies Regarding the Use of Race in Federal Investigations**

The first FBI Domestic Security Guidelines were created by Attorney General Edward Levi in 1976, after it was revealed that the FBI had engaged in widespread targeting of civil rights and anti-war groups in pursuit of its counter-intelligence program (“COINTELPRO”). The Levi Guidelines were introduced to give clear guidance to agents in the field about the scope and selection of targets in their investigations as well as important restrictions designed to preserve civil liberties. After the introduction of the guidelines, each Attorney General who modified them did so in consultation with the

House and Senate Judiciary Committees. This remained the status quo until May 30, 2002, when Attorney General John Ashcroft modified the guidelines unilaterally to lift restrictions that he claimed “bar FBI field agents from taking the initiative to detect and prevent future terrorist acts” (Ashcroft 2002). Ashcroft claimed that the previous guidelines were outmoded in light of the new and more compelling threat posed by international terror networks. Moreover, he also asserted that the fight against terrorism was “the central mission and highest priority of the FBI...Our philosophy today is not to wait and sift through the rubble following a terrorist attack. Rather, the FBI must intervene early and investigate aggressively where information exists suggesting the possibility of terrorism, so as to prevent acts of terrorism” (Ashcroft 2002). The new guidelines advance this strategy of prevention by strengthening investigative authority at the early stage of preliminary inquiries. Also, even absent specific investigative predicates, FBI agents under the new guidelines are empowered to scour public sources for information on future terrorist threats. The 2002 changes to the guidelines demarcated an essential difference between the law of ‘common crime’ in the US and the law that would guide the ‘war on terror’. Hiroshi Motomura writes that there is a fear “that the criminal law cannot do the job [of stopping terrorism] alone because it generally investigates and prosecutes after crimes have been committed. Criminal law tries only exceptionally to identify those likely to commit future crimes” (Motomura 2004). Thus, FBI agents are put into the position to identify not only inchoate crimes, but also *potential* criminals and are given the widest possible latitude to do so. This creates a

climate highly susceptible to error, bias, and abuse in which the ordinary rules of conduct are suspended and thereby deemed irrelevant.

Despite the Attorney General's changes to the FBI operating guidelines in 2002, a year later the Department of Justice issued new guidelines in 2003 to ban the use of racial profiling in federal law enforcement. The "racial profiling guidance recognizes that race and ethnicity may be used in terrorist identification, but only to the extent permitted by the nation's laws and the Constitution" (Department of Justice 2003:5). However, there is an exemption for issues regarding national security and border integrity. Additionally, *religion* is not one of the covered categories that is deserving of protection under the guidance" (Muslim Advocates 2009:4). The guidance asserts, "The constitution prohibits consideration of race or ethnicity in law enforcement decisions in all but the most exceptional instances. Given the incalculably high stakes involved in such investigations, federal law enforcement officers who are protecting national security or preventing catastrophic events (as well as airport security screeners) may consider race, ethnicity, alienage, and other relevant factors" (Department of Justice 2003). The FBI can conduct investigations that are proactive assessments of possible threats to national security, collect foreign intelligence, or prevent against federal crimes.

In December of 2008, the guidelines were revised once again by Attorney General Mukasey. The newest guidelines allow the FBI wider latitude in conducting investigations whether or not they receive information of suspicious activity from an external source. In the 2008 Guidelines, under approved methods of investigation for proactive assessments, Section 4: part F states that the FBI can "Interview or request

information from members of the public and private entities” and additionally authorizes the FBI to “Engage in observation or surveillance not requiring a court order” (Mukasey 2008: 20). Thus, interviews with the public are not considered to be a measure of intrusiveness, therefore they do not require supervisory approval. This severely undermines the ability of oversight in the use of racial profiling in selecting members of the public to be investigated. Investigators can disguise their identities when conducting pretext interviews with neighbors, colleagues, and friends of a subject in order to assess a generalized threat (NY Times 2008). Furthermore, they can also engage in lengthy physical surveillance and covertly infiltrate law abiding groups. The FBI can pursue any of these avenues “without any single fact that a person has ties to a terrorist organization” (Johnson 2008). They are also permitted to search public databases, such as google, and observe public events (Ashcroft 2002). In a briefing with community organizations, an area of concern within the FBI draft Domestic Intelligence Operations Guidelines (DIOGS) in 2008 was a section entitled, “Community Race and Ethnicity as a Factor” including a provision relating to “Geomapping Ethnic and Racial Demographics” (Muslim Advocates 2008). The guidelines also proposed that agents collect information and create maps of “ethnic-oriented” businesses, behaviors, lifestyle characteristics and cultural habits in areas with concentrations of ethnic populations” (Hernandez 2010).

In order to implement the guidelines in 2009, FBI agents were required to pass an exam making sure that they were able to follow the new aggressive investigative measures while also managing to avoid intruding on civil liberties. However, allegations of widespread cheating on the exam by agents across the country has been reported,



including one of the top FBI most-senior managers, Joseph Persichini, who stepped down from his post in December, 2009 (Washington Post 2010). When speaking to a Senate Judiciary hearing in July 2010, FBI Director Robert Mueller would not disclose specifically how many agents were under investigation by the Department's Inspector General for cheating. Additionally, Mueller was questioned by Senator Patrick J. Leahy (D-Vt.), who stated "he knew that some agents had been caught cheating on the tests, in which they were supposed to show they understood the limitations in conducting domestic surveillance and launching new cases without first having evidence of a crime. Even Director Mueller misunderstood the guidelines, misleading the Senate Judiciary Committee when questioned by Senator Richard J. Durbin (D-Ill.), "the FBI director said reasonable suspicion was required before the FBI could begin surveillance of a person or location. The guidelines permit surveillance for any authorized purpose, and the FBI provided the senator with a correction after the hearing (Hsu 2010). Given that the 2008 Guidelines leads the FBI into uncharted territory of unprecedented power, significant oversight is necessary in order to protect Muslims from being unfairly racially profiled. Furthermore, the fact that the Director himself was unaware of the specifics of the guidelines and that there is evidence of cheating by agents demonstrates that the internal training and oversight of these investigations into the Muslim community is poorly managed and opens the door for detrimental civil liberty violations. The FBI has already been accused of abusing their power when previously conducting investigations. The *Washington Post* reported,

The Department's Inspector General has accused the FBI of abusing its authority to gather intelligence without warrants in terrorism cases. The

Inspector General has also alleged that agents improperly collected phone records from more than 3,500 numbers between 2003 and 2006, and that in some instances they cited nonexistent emergencies or used misleading language in applications to a court that authorizes national security wiretaps, violating federal privacy law and policies (Hsu 2010).

Yet again, in 2007, 2008, and 2010, the Inspector General during their general audits found widespread FBI abuses of National Security Letters authorized under the US Patriot Act, which provided expansive authority to request telephone, internet, and financial records. The FBI's relationship with private corporations in ascertaining and sharing this information is "illegal dissemination of private information protected under the Electronic Communications Privacy Act (ECPA) and the Right to Financial Privacy Act (German 2007). The Bill of Rights Defense Committee, composed of 46 civil rights organizations, including CAIR submitted a letter to the Senate Judiciary Committee in July 2010 requesting greater oversight of the FBI as well as detailing the problems with the 2008 Mukasey Guidelines, including their propensity towards racial profiling by the FBI (Buttard 2010).

### **Department of Justice's history of using race, religion, and ethnicity to target Muslims**

During 2002-2003, the National Security Entry-Exit Registration System (NSEERS) focused on the registering, fingerprinting, and photographing of male foreign nationals from countries who had been known to support or harbor terrorists. The domestic component solicited registrations from more than 80,000 males who were living inside the United States on temporary visas from Muslim-majority countries. In

September 2003, of the more than 80,000 individuals who complied with call-in registration, 13,799 were referred to investigations and received notices to appear, and 2,870 were detained (Arab Discrimination Committee 2009). Of those visitors who were detained, not one individual was ever brought up on terrorism related charges; most were deported for visa violations. The visa violations were often as minor as not reporting a change of address within 10 days of moving.

The NSEERS program was ineffective in combating terrorism and only legitimated suspicion of visitors based upon nationality and religion. The impact on Muslim communities within the US has been quite detrimental, and holds long range consequences for those with significant familial ties to the US, such as having family or spouses that are US citizens. The program also undermined the reputation of the US in its blatant discriminatory treatment of Muslims.

Given that the implementation of NSEERS did not produce any suspected terrorists and infringed on the civil liberties of Muslims, this program should have been abandoned altogether. However, the information gathered and stored in the system was mined later for further investigations into the Muslim community. In the time period spanning from May 2004 through February 2005, ICE agents used “Operation Frontline” to mine the NSEERS database, Student and Exchange Information System (SEVIS), and the US Visitor and Immigrant Status Indicator Technology Program (US VISIT) in order to target foreign nationals who posed a security threat. FOIA documents reveal that Operation Frontline disproportionately focused on individuals who were from Muslim majority countries. Of the 2,400 individuals who were under surveillance and

investigation, 2,000 were from countries that were predominately Muslim. Once again, Operation Frontline did not make any arrests related to terrorist charges, nor did it determine that there were any suspected terrorists among the population investigated. This program is alarming in that personal information that was shown to have no demonstrated terrorist threat by the FBI's NSEERS program was used in further investigations by ICE only to conclude, yet again, that there was no threat among this population under scrutiny.

In 2003, FBI Director Mueller authorized an initiative aimed at counting mosques around the country. The 56 FBI field offices nationwide were instructed to develop demographic profiles of their localities. In February, 2003 FBI field offices were sent a six page questionnaire, including a section titled, "Vulnerabilities" which asked for the number of mosques in their communities (ACLU 2003). This information would then be used to assist in setting quotas for wiretaps and counterterrorism investigations (Isikoff 2003). FBI officials claim that the mosque tallies are only one of several indicators that are used to assess the potential terrorist threat in a specific area. Of interest to the FBI are the number of "vulnerable assets" in a region, including bridges, dams, nuclear plants, flight schools and Islamic charities that have been linked to terrorism. A senior official stated, "We're trying to set performance goals and objectives for a particular field office. We're not targeting mosques" (Isikoff 2003). The FBI's focus on counting mosques as a strategy to evaluate the performance of field offices steers intelligence operations in a misguided direction. This leads FBI agents to focus on the generalized mapping of

Muslim communities as opposed to developing intelligence that hones in on specific suspected terrorist activities.

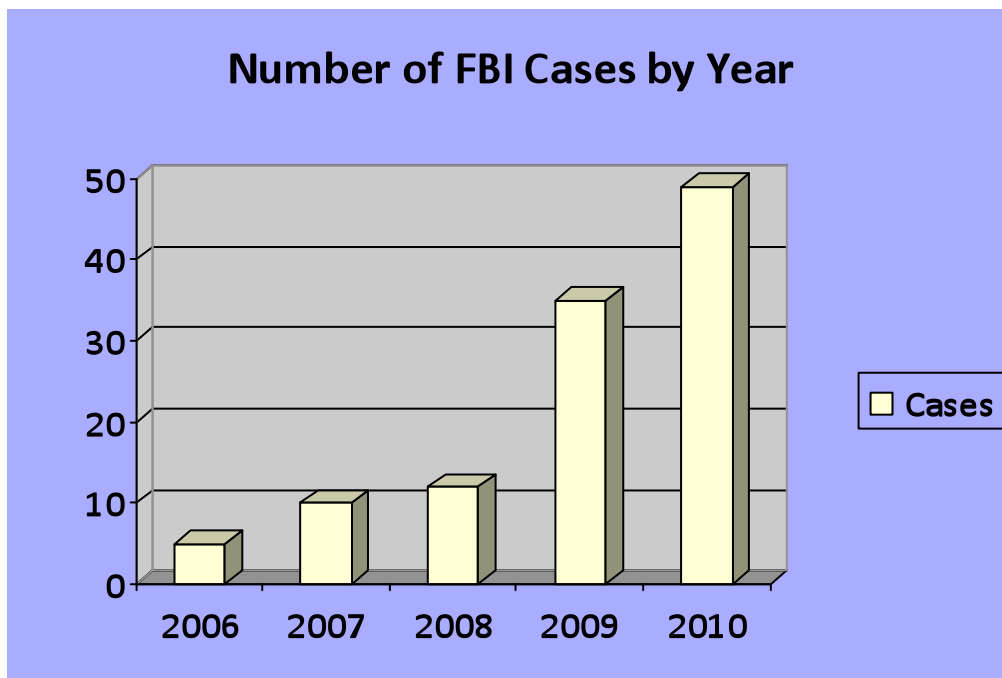
Attempts to map the Muslim population are not just restricted to the FBI. Police departments such as the LAPD have also sought to use this surveillance technique. In 2007, the LAPD announced its efforts to develop a program that would map the Muslim neighborhoods of Los Angeles. Current Deputy Police Chief, Michael Downing head of the Counter-Terrorism Bureau in Los Angeles, told a congressional hearing that “While this project will lay out geographic locations of many different Muslim populations around Los Angeles, we also intend to take a deeper look at their history, demographics, language, culture, ethnic breakdown, socioeconomic status and social interactions” (Winton, Watanabe, and Krikorian 2007). The LAPD claimed that the mapping program would be able to identify populations that were susceptible to extremist elements in order to thwart future terrorist threats. However, due to mounting public pressure the LAPD decided to scrap the project (Hall 2007). Civil rights organizations pointed out that the singling out of a population based upon first amendment protected religious beliefs and activities rather than on any suspicion of criminal activity is a clear act of religious profiling.

## **Findings**

This chapter evaluates a total of 113 self-reported cases of FBI contact with Muslim community members to CAIR Los Angeles’ office. The cases utilized in this research span from 2006 - 2010. Using descriptive statistical analysis and qualitative

methods, the findings in this study provide important insights into both the nature and scope of these FBI investigations. The statistical analysis of these cases cannot be inferred to the general Muslim population nor all Muslims that were contacted by the FBI as the cases were not randomly sampled. However, this study can still provide a detailed overview of the trends that were prevalent in the data self-reported to CAIR Los Angeles.

Figure 1: Number of FBI Cases by Year



When examining the cases, there has been a significant increase in the number of FBI probes and investigations over the last four years. Figure 1 demonstrates a steady increase in Muslims who have been contacted and questioned by the FBI within the sample. The pattern established by the existing data indicates that every year there has been an increase in the number of cases reported. During 2010 there has been more cases reported than in any other time frame previously. While CAIR could have become more

effective at outreach in the community and therefore yielded an increase in their caseload over the last few years due to a heightened awareness of their organization, this view neglects the structural dynamics that occurred in FBI practices during the same time period. In particular, given the shift in the FBI focus on homegrown terrorism since 2006 and the wider latitude afforded through the revised FBI guidelines in opening probes and investigations, the reported increase in cases could also be the outcome of an erosion of civil liberty concerns and political pressure to also attend to domestic extremism.

Another plausible consequence of this finding is that Muslim community members have been subjected to increased scrutiny by the FBI in recent years. This trend is in alignment with the Department of Justice's findings that Muslim community members have become more fearful of federal policies and practices than discrimination from the public. Since the data support that the FBI has increased their surveillance of the Los Angeles Muslim community, the fear expressed by Muslims can be directly linked to these federal practices and policies that are negatively impacting their lives and community institutions.

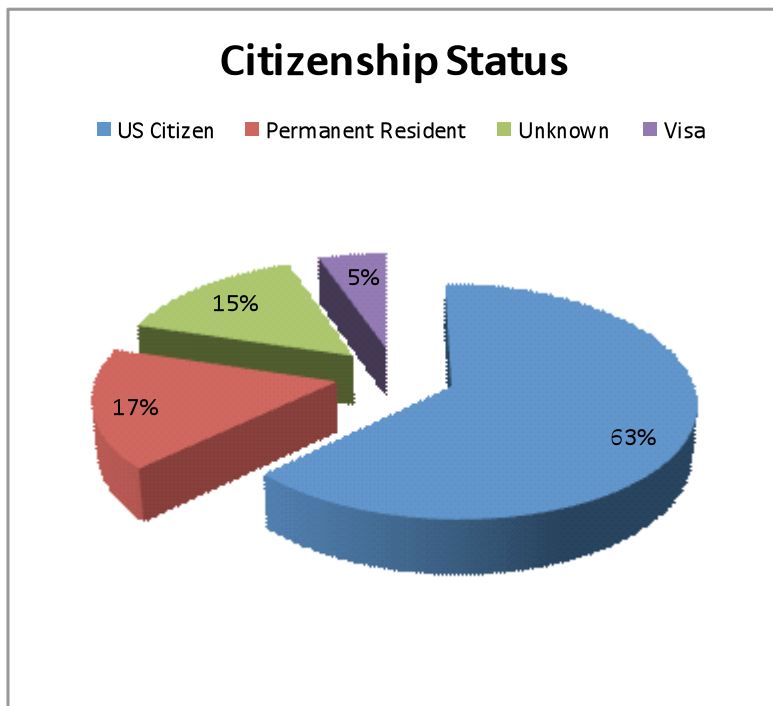
### **US Citizens and Permanent Residents under Scrutiny**

An important finding within the data collected were the high percentage of citizens that were targeted by FBI investigations and questioning. While previous measures instituted by federal agencies have tended to hone in on immigrant Muslims as potential security threats, the data self reported to CAIR demonstrates a persistent pattern of US citizens under surveillance as well.

The factual record demonstrates that the main terrorist threat to people living in the United States comes from foreign terrorists linked to Al Qaeda or similar groups. Yet a revived focus on domestic “extremism” appears to have supplanted systematic, sustained investigation of foreign threats as the highest counter-terrorism priority (Cincotta 2010: 15).

The study examined 96 reported cases who disclosed citizenship status; 15% cases were unknown. Of the known reported category of citizenship, 63% were US citizens, 17% were permanent residents or held a greencard, and 5% possessed visas.

Figure 2: Citizenship Status



While 63% of reported cases were US citizens, the second most reported category were permanent residents who composed 17% of the sample. Compiling these two categories, Muslims who are either citizens or permanent residents total an overwhelming 80% of the sample of cases. This demonstrates that within the sample collected the FBI's investigations of have been clearly aimed at Muslims who have significant connections to



the US, including primary residence, as well as strong family and community ties.

Moreover, those who are permanent residents are most likely in the process of applying to become naturalized as citizens.

In 2009, a US citizen who was naturalized almost 20 years ago after emigrating from Iraq was questioned by the FBI at his home. The FBI did not state any specific reason for the intrusion into his home. During the questioning, the agent asked him where his “loyalty” was. He responded that he had been living in the US for 19 years, therefore this was his home. This line of questioning further entrenches the stereotype that Muslims are inherently disloyal to the US, and therefore rendered suspect. While many of the earlier government policies and programs had honed in on foreign nationals who were on visas in the US, these recent cases demonstrate a profound shift in the targeting of US citizens and permanent residents who are Muslims. This pattern illustrates the wide latitude that has permitted FBI agents to intrude into the lives of law abiding citizens to proactively guard against terrorism. However, the widespread investigation of Muslims without any evidence of unlawful behavior has important ramifications including squandering government resources and alienating an entire community based upon their religious affiliation.

### **FBI Informants and Agent Provocateurs**

A highly intrusive method of investigation used by the FBI has been to employ the use of informants and agent provocateurs within the Muslim community. Several of the cases reported in 2008 were regarding a FBI provocateur who was posing as an

extremist Muslim at several Orange County mosques. Craig Monteilh was recruited by the FBI as a paid informant to spy and record conversations with Muslims in Irvine, Mission Viejo, and Tustin (Watanabe and Esquivel 2009). Monteilh, who has a criminal background, made statements to fellow mosque attendees that he had access to weapons and asked others if they wanted to join him in “waging jihad” (Southern California In Focus News). This agent provocateur’s rhetoric was so alarming that several of the mosque attendees contacted the FBI and Irvine Police Department to report Monteilh. Furthermore, many Muslims were so frightened by the behavior and anti-American views of Monteilh that they stopped attending the mosque altogether. The mosque in this instance applied for and received a restraining order against the informant, Monteilh. After reporting Monteilh to the FBI, a mosque attendee came under investigation by the FBI demonstrating that Muslims acting in good faith in reporting suspicious persons were collectively criminalized. After being visited by the FBI, the individual reported that he felt fearful, as if every move of his was being watched. He couldn’t “shake the feeling” that he was under surveillance. Actions of the FBI in this situation clearly indicate how the use of paid informants has negative repercussions on the Muslim community.

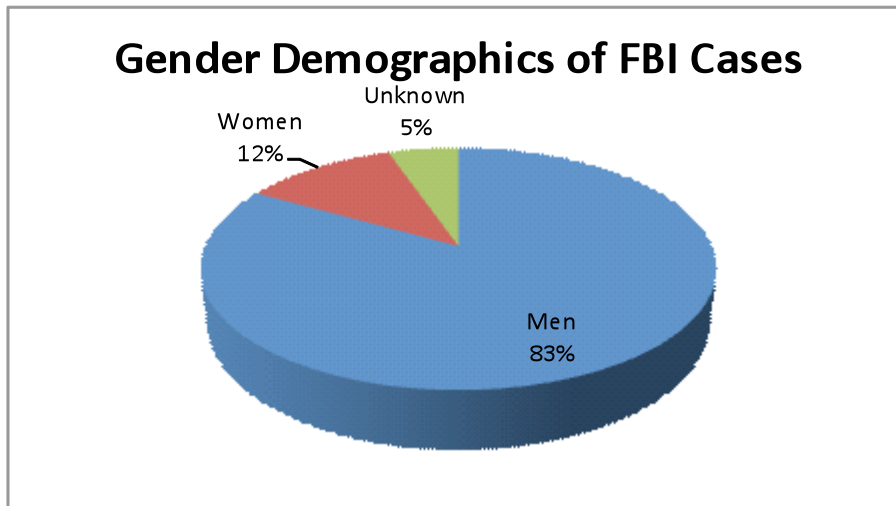
Among the cases where Muslims were in the position of applying for greencards, the FBI used this legal vulnerability as an opportunity to threaten these individuals with deportation if they did not agree to become informants. In 2007, a naturalized US citizen of South Asian descent was contacted by the FBI and asked to become an informant. After the individual refused, three months later he received a letter in the mail stating that his citizenship was being revoked. Coercion of Muslims to become informants relies on

the FBI exploiting the most legally vulnerable persons in the population. In another case, an individual who had a warrant for an unpaid ticket that he received for driving with a suspended license was detained and issued an ultimatum: if he opted to become an informant he would be only be cited and released. FBI agents told him that there had been reports of “extremist activity” at his mosque. He responded that he knew nothing concerning these reports at the mosque. They arrested him and he spent a week in various jails before being released.

### **Muslim Men as Selected Targets**

Muslim men were far more likely to be selected for investigation compared to Muslim women among the reported cases. The disproportionate focus on men as an important demographic variable of interest to the FBI is illustrated in the following chart. Maira observes, “The targeting of Muslim and Arab males highlights the gendered dimension of the War on Terror, whose public discourse relies on often hyper-Orientalist tropes of violent, fanatical Arab and Muslim men” (Maira 2007). Muslim men are subjected to stereotypes that fixate on their masculinity and religion as a precursor to commit violence and engage in terrorism. This makes them a selected target by the State and therefore, “deserving” of further scrutiny and surveillance.

Figure 3: Gender Demographics of FBI Cases

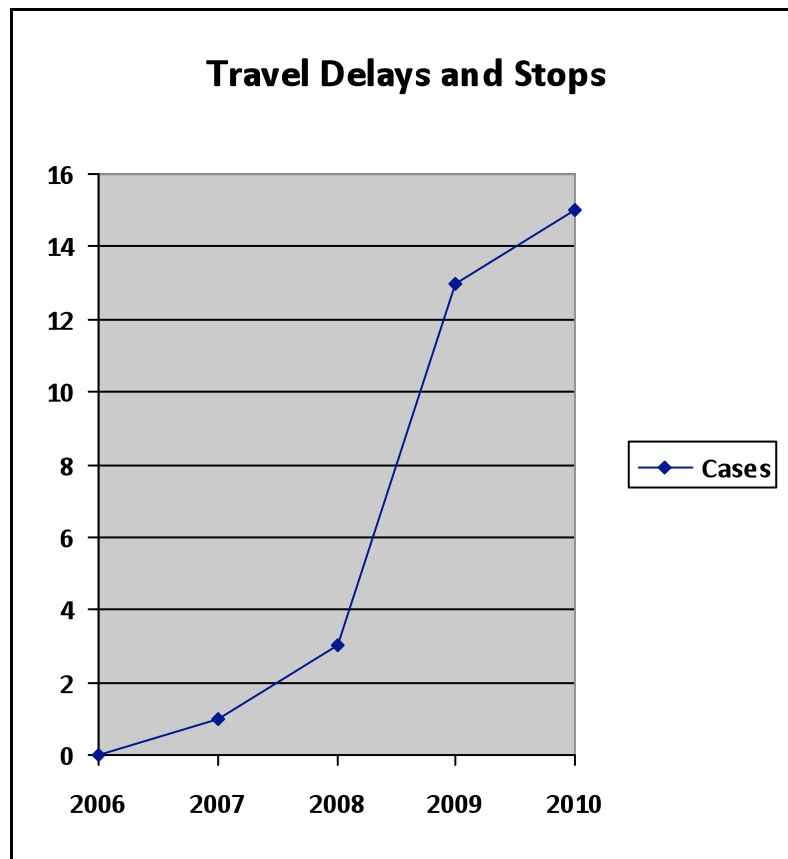


### **“Flying While Muslim”: Travel Related Issues**

Individuals subject to FBI investigations and questioning also encountered additional scrutiny by other government agencies. In examining the FBI cases, there were a substantial amount of individuals who also reported problems while travelling. The sample reveals that approximately 31% (32 cases) of the sample had encountered “additional problems when flying”. Most significantly, reported problems with travelling have increased over the last five years with the most reported cases occurring in 2010. If the cases continue on the same trend thus far reported in the first half of 2010, by the end of the year it should be expected that the sum of all cases in 2010 will far exceed all of the other years combined. This demonstrates a significant overlap between being questioned by the FBI and also experiencing travel problems. Muslims in this study were subjected to a range of civil liberty violations including secondary searches,

interrogations, placement on no-fly lists, detainment, and seizure of personal items without any evidence of wrongdoing.

Figure 4: Travel Delays and Stops



A Syrian man and his family decided to visit his country of origin, Syria. While abroad he looked into work opportunities in the United Arab Emirates and Saudi Arabia. When arriving home in the US, he was stopped and searched extensively at the airport. His laptop was seized and all information on his laptop and external hard-drive were copied. Additionally, two ICE officials questioned him about his activities abroad, names of people he met, and asked why he possessed a pilot's license. They informed him that they would complete a background investigation because they thought his travel

pattern was suspicious. After this incident he was contacted by the FBI and served a notice by the TSA stating that he was a security threat, resulting in his pilot license and badge being revoked, even without a background investigation being completed. Travelling abroad to Muslim countries is not a legitimate justification to interrogate, detain, search, and seize personal property. Since many Muslims have some type of familial connection abroad, there is reasonable assumption that families will travel to visit with relatives and friends. Unfortunately, for many Muslims travelling has become a site of unwarranted suspicion and scrutiny.

### **Categorical Patterning of FBI Questions**

The FBI honed in on particular categories of questions when investigating Muslims. Among the cases, there were significant patterns of what types of questions were asked of those under investigation. The most common questions asked of those included in the sample were pertaining to any subject regarding religious beliefs, mosques, or religious practices. In one instance, the FBI visited a house supposedly because the FBI received a report from American Airlines. They proceeded to ask this person whether or not they attended a mosque. The individual responded: “Yes, but what does that have to do with flying on an airplane? Does that mean you are a terrorist if you attend the mosque?” FBI agents further inquired about the gambling habits of this individual, including how much money he loses or wins when visiting the casino. On several occasions, other Muslims in the sample were questioned about their attendance at Islamic schools, educational conferences, and their association with particular mosques.

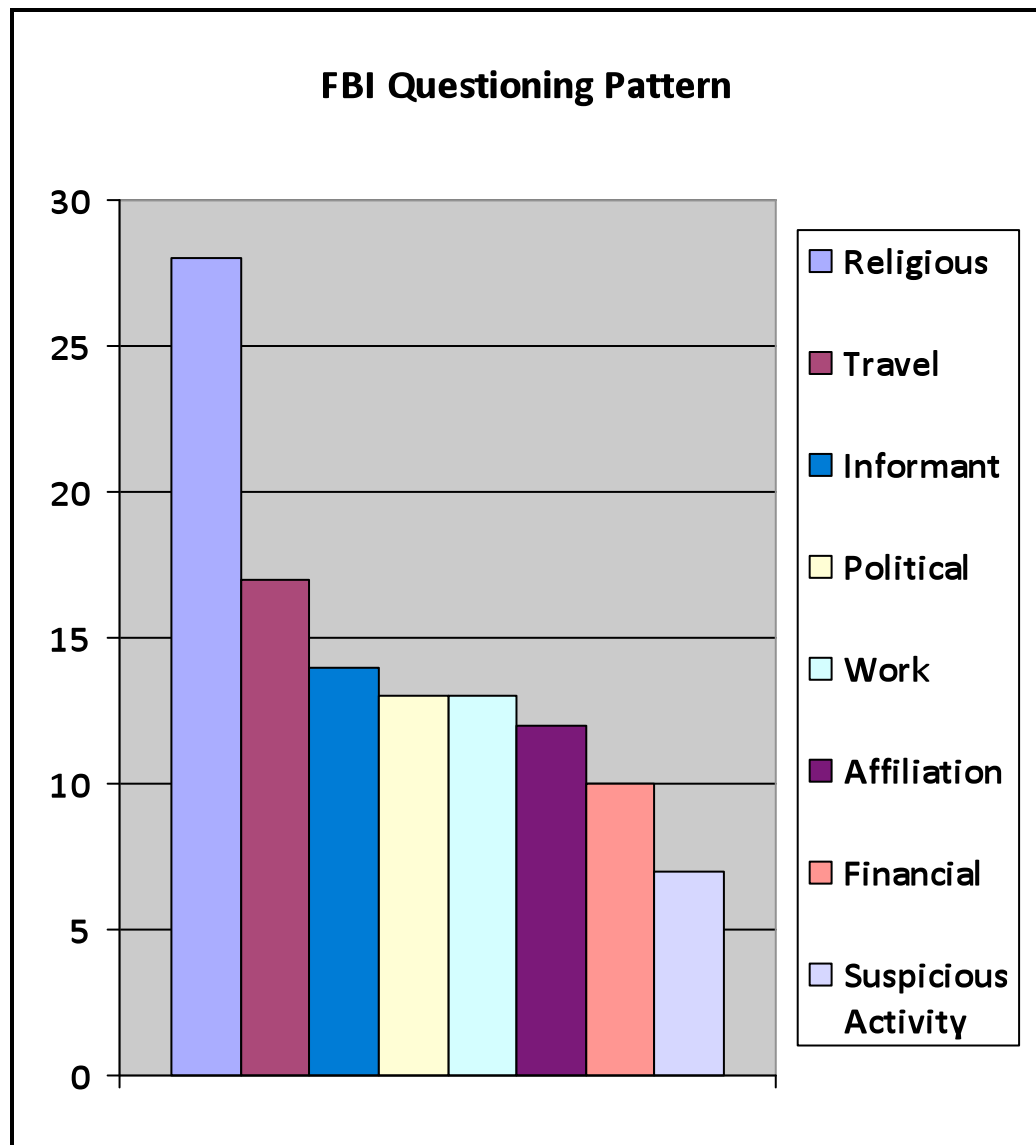
The second most common question asked in the sample was regarding travel patterns. Questions typically involved one's travels abroad, including places visited, purpose of the visit, and the names of people visited. In one particular case, the FBI visited a single household on five separate occasions to ask about the travel of the family living in the home. Some members of their extended family reside in Algeria, which was explained to the FBI, but the FBI visits to their home still continue to occur on a frequent basis. In another case, after an Imam declined to be an informant in 2002, he encountered several problems while travelling abroad, including flight delays and interrogations. After filing a TRIP request, his name was cleared but he continues to have problems while travelling so much so that he is now afraid to travel at all.

Questions regarding the political views of Muslims or their opinion of political organizations were also a commonly reported item among the sample. In a particular case, an FBI informant was visiting a mosque and asking aggressive questions of attendees, including children. The FBI informant was asking questions such as: "Why do you hate Israel?" In two other cases, individuals were asked about their opinions on a political party in Afghanistan. Additionally, in one of the cases the FBI agents asked about their political opinion regarding Hamid Karzai's government and suicide bombings in Israel.

Many reported that they were questioned about their occupations, financial transactions, personal affiliations, and lastly allegedly suspicious behavior witnessed by others. The questions regarding personal affiliations included general networks, such as "Do you know if this person attended your religious class?" and also familial or

friendship networks. The suspicious activity reports that the FBI was allegedly investigating were often of a benign nature, such as a passenger reported on an airplane that a Muslim individual was making multiple trips to the bathroom with a water bottle.

Figure 5: FBI Questioning Pattern





## **University Organizations Come Under Attack**

Among the sample, there were a portion of the cases involving the FBI's selection of university leaders and students for investigation and surveillance. A *Los Angeles Times* article reported that, "In 2006, an FBI agent was quoted as telling a business group in Newport Beach that the agency was monitoring Muslims at local universities" (Esquivel 2009). Muslim students from three prominent universities in Los Angeles, including UC Irvine and USC were targeted by the FBI. The head of the FBI's Orange County Al-Qaida Squad, Pat Rose spoke at a breakfast in 2006. Rose told the audience that her agency had intensified their surveillance of Orange County, stating that she was "quite surprised that there are a lot of individuals of interest right here in Orange County" (Caracamo and Jolly 2006). In response to an audience member who asked whether citizens should be concerned about Muslim activists at UC Irvine, Rose remarked, "another tough question to answer. Not only does UCI have a lot, she said, but so does USC" (Mickadeit 2006).

After Rose's comments were made, CAIR Los Angeles and the Islamic Center of Irvine hosted a town hall meeting to address concerns that Muslims in the Irvine area were being monitored. In a joint statement issued by the FBI Assistant Director of the Los Angeles Office, J. Stephen Tidwell, the FBI's Youth Advisory Committee, and its Multicultural Advisory Committee, the agency adamantly declared that the "FBI does not monitor student groups at educational institutions, including Muslim student groups at the University of California (UCI), or the University of Southern California (USC)" (Tidwell

2006). However, this statement proves to be factually inaccurate given that students at UCI, USC, and another Southern California university reported to CAIR that they had been approached and in one case followed by FBI agents. In one instance, students reported being followed by FBI agents during a week of political activities aimed at raising awareness of Israeli aggression against Palestinians. A student approached a vehicle that had been following him, which then proceeded to almost run him over. The vehicle was later determined to belong to a FBI agent (Council of American Islamic Relations 2009). At another university, three students belonging to the Muslim Student Association (MSA) were approached by the FBI. The agents asked for information regarding other Muslims at the school as well as background information on former and current MSA presidents. The investigation of legitimate, university sponsored campus organizations is eerily reminiscent of the COINTELPRO's efforts in the 1970's to surveil, disrupt, and neutralize college leaders and organizations that were seen as a potential risk to national security. This included groups that were seen as ideologically or tactically threatening; among the targeted were both leftist organizations and radical right wing extremists (ex. KKK).

Since the reported cases of investigation of UCI and USC university students occurred in 2007, the FBI has not arrested or apprehended any students on terrorism charges. This demonstrates that the measures undertaken by the FBI to monitor students was ill conceived and held two important ramifications for the community. First, the FBI surveillance practices implicitly reinforce the notion that having a large Muslim population in an area or university is a legitimate prerequisite to monitor "active" Muslim

students. Second, students who are practicing their first amendment protected rights through political speech or those with affiliation with law abiding religious organizations are being seen as possible threats. Since university students who were affiliated with MSA groups or political activities on campus were the ones selected for investigation, this evidence compels higher scrutiny of the purposes of such investigations taken on by the FBI under the guise of thwarting terrorism.

According to the study, FBI agents also approached a local mosque leader for information about university students involved in the MSA. The FBI agent claimed that he wanted to talk to the MSA and give a presentation about the FBI to demonstrate that their purposes are well intentioned. However, this tactic has been a common way to trap unsuspecting Muslims into investigative interviews. The primary task entrusted to the FBI is to be an investigative unit, so this purpose becomes obscured when they claim they are doing outreach to the Muslim community. The FBI uses “outreach meetings” with targeted individuals to then solicit information about members in the community; in essence it becomes a fishing expedition. These meetings have also been used as a method to recruit informants in the community. The sample also contained cases where past MSA members were questioned about their involvement in these Muslim campus organizations. For example, the FBI visited a family asking to speak to their 20 year old son who was active in his college MSA. The FBI agents also wanted to know about his travelling and his activities overseas, including who he had visited with while abroad. Similarly, in another case the FBI had visited the home of this individual to ask questions about his college activities, including his involvement in the MSA and his mosque. After

the FBI visit to his house, he was later stopped while flying and detained for approximately four hours and questioned at the airport.

In another case, the FBI agents visited the home of a Pakistani family claiming that they were contacting them for “community outreach” purposes. The same family was visited again on another occasion stating that there was a problem with their immigration status, despite having obtained their citizenship over 20 years ago. This demonstrates that FBI agents rely on fictitious claims in order to approach Muslims for questioning in the community. The mother and son in this family were known to be very active volunteers in the Muslim community. The son had been an integral member of the MSA on his college campus as well. The FBI’s reliance on using community outreach as a pretext to gain access to Muslims who have been actively engaged in service work, political activism, or mentorship has a negative impact on the Muslim community. Generally, these tactics instill fear within the community, and in particular, have especially deleterious consequences for Muslim organizations that are doing charitable or service work in the community. In other words, people might be less inclined to be actively involved if there is a threat of being subject to increased surveillance or investigation by the FBI.

A problematic issue that has arisen with the operation of the FBI and its contact with the Muslim community has been its bargaining tactics employed with Muslim organizations. The FBI makes promises of investigating hate crimes in the Muslim community and also simultaneously asks for assistance with its terrorism investigations. An article in the *Los Angeles Times* reveals this contradiction in FBI practices, “FBI Has

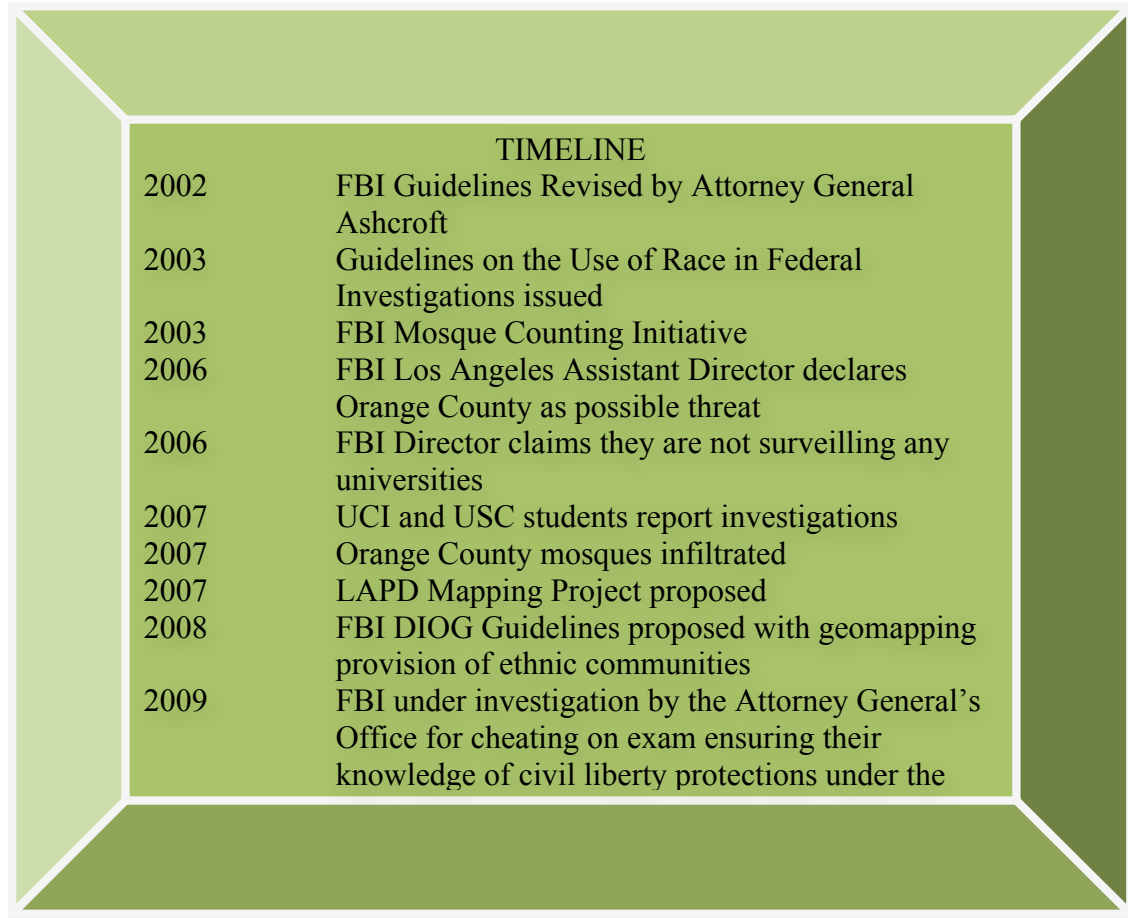
a Pledge and a Request for Muslims: The agency promises to investigate hate crimes and asks for help in finding terrorists” (Reza 2003). As the US was preparing for war in Iraq, the FBI was interested in locating possible terrorists and suspected Saddam Hussein sympathizers. FBI Director Mueller stated that, “protecting civil rights is a high priority, and he encouraged the Middle Eastern communities to work with the FBI in reporting hate crimes and assisting terrorism investigations” (Reza 2003). The statement made by Director Mueller indicates the contradiction in the FBI’s relationship with the Muslim community. The promise to investigate hate crimes should be carried out regardless of the Muslim communities’ commitment to assisting with terrorist investigations. This statement assumes that FBI employees are allowed to selectively choose which crimes they will investigate because of the cooperation provided to other cases of interest. Moreover, it demonstrates that Muslims’ civil rights can be withdrawn or selectively enforced depending on their cooperation with racial and religious profiling by the FBI.

## **Conclusion and Recommendations**

The data analyzed in this research reveal some troubling patterns within the FBI investigations of Muslim community members in Los Angeles. This data contains important findings regarding the investigation of Muslims without warranted suspicion of wrongdoing. Muslims who were citizens, permanent residents, and males were disproportionately represented in the data collected. In terms of the types of questioning patterns conducted by the FBI, the most prevalent questions asked by FBI agents were regarding religious practices or affiliation with religious organizations. Lastly, the

investigations of mosques and university campus organizations are areas of important concern that need to be fully disclosed by the FBI so that greater oversight can be implemented to make sure that Muslims' first amendment rights are not being violated by FBI agents. The evidence presented in this study requires a re-evaluation of policies and practices that contribute to the racial profiling of Muslims in federal investigations. There are three important recommendations that should be carried out in light of the information contained within this study. The FBI Domestic Investigations and Operation Guidelines should be amended in light of the provision allowing investigations to be initiated without suspicion of wrongdoing and that race may serve as a factor in prompting such investigations. Additionally, the Department of Justice's Guidance on Using Race in Federal Investigations should be amended to prohibit the use of race and religion in investigations pertaining to national security and border integrity (Muslim Advocates 2009). Lastly, the End Racial Profiling Act (ERPA) should be passed in order to guarantee the protection of all persons living in the US.

Figure 6: Timeline of FBI Investigations



TIMELINE	
2002	FBI Guidelines Revised by Attorney General Ashcroft
2003	Guidelines on the Use of Race in Federal Investigations issued
2003	FBI Mosque Counting Initiative
2006	FBI Los Angeles Assistant Director declares Orange County as possible threat
2006	FBI Director claims they are not surveilling any universities
2007	UCI and USC students report investigations
2007	Orange County mosques infiltrated
2007	LAPD Mapping Project proposed
2008	FBI DIOG Guidelines proposed with geomapping provision of ethnic communities
2009	FBI under investigation by the Attorney General's Office for cheating on exam ensuring their knowledge of civil liberty protections under the

## **CHAPTER 4**

### **UNVEILING THE WAR ON MUSLIM WOMEN**

This chapter will analyze the contradictions present in the imperial deployment of women's rights in justifying the "War on Terror" abroad alongside the widespread infringement on Muslim women's civil liberties in the US. It aims to juxtapose the 9/11 backlash towards US Muslim women with ideological discourses that posit Western nations as the embodiment of freedom from religious, sexual, ethnic/racial, and gender persecution. Moreover, this research aims to develop important interventions to improve the social status and resources for this vulnerable, and often misunderstood, diasporic population.

While Arab/Muslim American communities have been frequent targets of repression, I argue that gender significantly structures the post-9/11 backlash in qualitatively different ways for men and women. As discussed in Chapter 3, Muslim men have been characterized as dangerous, violent, and highly suspect within the popular imaginary and much of Western media, which has led to the sanctioning of civil and human rights violations, largely through detainment, deportation, and surveillance. In the United States immediately following 9/11, twelve hundred people were detained for their possible links to "terrorists". This group of people was primarily either Arab or Muslim men. The FBI requested over 8,000 interviews with men of Arab or Muslim descent following 9/11 and mandated fingerprinting of visitors from specific Middle Eastern countries (Human Rights Watch Report 2002). In contrast, Muslim women have been consistently portrayed as powerless victims lacking agency, further invisibilizing their



own lived experiences of systemic discrimination as well as the ways in which diasporic Muslim women navigate and resist such structures of exclusion in the public sphere.

In Naber's (2008) research on Arab Americans, she argues that "federal government policies [after 9/11] disproportionately targeted men while hate crimes and incidents of harassment in the public sphere disproportionately targeted women" (293). Cainkar (2009) also found in her Chicago study on the 9/11 backlash that Arab and Muslim women experience twice the rate of "hate encounters" than their male counterparts. A hate encounter is defined as an incident "in which perpetrators engaged in offensive activities motivated by feelings of prejudice toward a person or persons with the ascribed status of Arab or Muslim, without addressing whether the activity qualifies as a crime or not" (292). And, in particular women who wore hijab were disproportionately the victims of these types of harassment (230). Other scholars have also pointed to the scapegoating of women who wear hijab as a particular vulnerability for hate crimes (Bakalian and Bozorgmehr 2009; Bryan 2005). While "Muslim women emerged as the earliest targets of anti-Muslim and anti-Arab violence", they also "used their Muslim attire...as a means of educating Americans in general about their experiences and their religion" (Hatem 2005: 44). Some Muslim scholars supported women removing the hijab, but "this was shocking to some Muslim women who felt that their dress was once again used as the major marking separating Muslim and Western cultures" (44). After 9/11, some Muslim women felt an increased pride in defending their right to wear their religious attire because of the heightened scrutiny.

Additionally, there has not been a systematic theoretical examination of the impact these occurrences have on the daily lives of US Muslim women. Media coverage has been scarce and attributes this patterned discrimination to the “otherness” of Muslim women, in other words the visibility of their headscarves, without examining the social structures that contribute to an environment which allows for the occurrence of such discrimination. This research will directly address these gaps in the scholarly literature. Furthermore, the use of women’s rights in the War on Terror is only circulated in relationship to the US’s strategic military interests, and is overlooked in its application to infringements on the civil rights of Muslim women in the US. There has been scant attention paid by media to the harassment of Muslim women in the US since 9/11.

### **Bringing the War Home**

The persistent backlash against US Muslim women is intricately linked to the War on Terror which is described as a “war without borders.” The institutional treatment of Muslims domestically is reliant upon the political agenda of the US in the Middle East. Maira (2007) reminds us that “US empire continues to rely on the twin processes of foreign coercion and domestic repression.” Moreover, “the national consensus for US foreign policies is strengthened through historical processes of scapegoating ‘outsiders’ and conflating internal and external enemies (Stoler 2006: 12) that link the domestic and foreign fronts of US imperialism” (Maira 2007: 41). Muslims in the US are rendered suspect by the very nature of their supposed association with the “enemy” abroad.

Gender has become a critical stake in the construction of war and terrorism as articulated by US political officials, liberal and conservative alike, as well as the media and public at large. The ideology of saving Muslim women abroad has been a key feature of the War on Terror. However, this discourse precludes the possibility to interrogate the way American Muslim women in the US are victims of harassment by white men. There is an absence of voices concerning the experiences of Muslim women here in the US because it would implicate white men as perpetrators and not heroic rescuers in the war abroad. Muslim women's victim status only applies abroad because it serves as an ideological justification for war. In the discussions of Muslim men as possessing the inherent propensity to engage in violence there is a noticeable absence of discussion regarding Muslim women in the US who have been the victims of white male violence. Muslim women experience more hate encounters, meaning violence on an individual level, which mostly stems from white men. While the discourse of the US war on terror highlights the patriarchal culture of Muslim men, this obscures white men as perpetrators of violence and harassment towards Muslim American women in the US. It furthermore hypervisibilizes Muslim women as victims in the Middle East, and can only be victims of Muslim men. This precludes discussion of white, male patriarchy and its intersections with race. However, Muslim women's victim status is only rendered legible under the guise of the War on Terror. When Muslim women in the US are victims of patriarchal and racist violence, their victim status is invisibilized.

There has not been an investigation by government officials into the motives of white men in perpetrating these acts, nor a rendering of their masculinity, whiteness, or

religion in making them predisposed to commit such acts. A full interrogation of the ramifications of the war on terror needs to examine the domestic experiences of Muslim American women. Also, there is a need to examine the gendered implications of Muslim women becoming such targets after 9/11 in the US. Their absence in the media as citizens and residents of the US who are subject to such harassment has the effect of making US Muslim seem foreign. In other words, since the media fixates on Muslim women abroad, then they are never perceived as being at 'home' in the US. Therefore, their media presence seems to be only as immigrants and never as people deserving of full civil liberties. Also, there is an assumption that Muslim women are attacked because of their perceived cultural threat to mainstream culture, as opposed to the need for white men to exercise their racial and gender domination over women. In a newspaper report, Muslim women's cultural difference is highlighted as opposed to the motives of perpetrators,

...in these volatile times, the hijab can make Muslim women a target of hate crimes. Islamic groups nationwide have reported more than 500 incidents against Muslims, or people who resemble Middle Easterners, since the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks. Some police agencies have recommended that women stop wearing their hijab temporarily or stay at home. Most say that is not an option (Tampa Tribune Sept. 21 2001).

The fact that Muslim women have to hide temporarily from the public sphere is the only option according to state authorities. Muslim women should instead opt to discard their allegiance to their culture for fear of reprisal. Another article reports the motivations for hate crimes are that: "People tend to act out of fear or frustration to try to feel normal again," said Jerry Stratton, a detective with the San Diego Police Department who works with the Anti-Defamation League" (San Diego Tribune). The use of the term "people"

generalizes the feelings of the perpetrators of hate crimes to the rest of the population.

Also, this remark demonstrates that hate crimes perpetrators are not violent and instead are reasonably frustrated that their lives have been disturbed by the events of 9/11.

Another benign construction of the motivations for hate crimes was given by the City of Los Angeles Commission on Human Relations, “ The weeks immediately following the tragedies of September 11<sup>th</sup> provided a sad commentary to how some Americans acted on misplaced patriotism” (Hate Crime Report 2001: 18). The attribution of overzealous patriotism to Americans who commit these crimes conveys sympathy and collectivizes their sentiments. Both of these comments indicate that there are reasonable motivations for non-Muslims to feel frustrated or fearful at the events of 9/11. These are quite overarching generous statements made on behalf of such a narrow population. "We understand the anxieties of the general public and the feeling across the city and Long Island right now, but it's a time where we also have to show restraint and respect for people at the same time," Nassau Police Det. Sgt. Gary Shapiro said. In this comment, the sergeant identifies with the non-Muslim population and equates anxieties about 9/11 with motivations for perpetrators to commit crimes. According to the sergeant, instead of questioning the motivation and intention to do harm as a problem, he instead stresses using restraint to deal with such emotional times for non-Muslims. In other words, he is indicating that “we” the police understand why non-Muslims would want to act criminally towards this population, but it is important to control your anger. This legitimizes the emotion and intent of wanting to act, but only asks that people don’t act on that impulse. In contrast, Muslims who have felt the brunt of hostility and

discrimination since 9/11 would never be offered such sympathy. In fact, as a population under persistent scrutiny and attack have to dispel myths about their religion, culture, and ethnicity constantly.

In another hate crime, Faiza Ejaz was waiting to be picked up by her husband outside a shopping mall. Adam Lang, 76 years old, tried to run over Ejaz, but fortunately she jumped out of the way. He then proceeded to scream that he was “doing this for his country and was going to kill her” (Human Rights Watch Report 2002: 21). This example demonstrates not the “overzealousness” of patriotism but instead points to the violence inherently linked to the defense of the nation. Patriotism after 9/11 moved beyond mere pride in one’s country but is inextricably linked to prior racial making boundaries within the state. Patriotism has always been imbedded within formations of citizenship that inherently rely on whiteness and masculinity.

Because crimes motivated by hatred are generally committed by males—mirroring the prevailing pattern of violence—addressing issues of gender are central to understanding ethnoviolence in a post 9/11 society. Barbara Perry explains that perpetrators of ethnoviolence are responding to threats to their gender, race, and national identity since they realize that their whiteness no longer guarantees them status and security. ‘Consequently, many white men experience a sense of displacement and dispossession relative to people of color. This imagery of ‘white-men-as-victim’ provides an ideological rationale for recreating people of color as legitimate victims’. From the viewpoints of those unleashing ethnoviolence, their actions are believed to be justified because especially in the wake of 9/11 they are protecting ‘their’ country—the homeland—from the threat of outsiders (72-73).

The marking of white masculinity is important in understanding the backlash after 9/11.

It reveals that security is a relative term, and has only been extended to privileged

populations within the US context. Communities of color, queers, immigrants, and women have always faced insecurity within the nation; their status is always unsafe.

In 36% of the post 9/11 backlash hate crime cases in Los Angeles, the racial and ethnic backgrounds of victims were unknown or reported as other. “Many law enforcement agencies had difficulty identifying the racial and ethnic backgrounds of victims of post September 11th backlash, perhaps because they did not fall into the traditionally targeted groups” (2001 Los Angeles Hate Crime Report: 18). In 2001, Los Angeles County recorded the highest amount of hate crimes ever in the history of the Commission, that being 21 years.

Similarly, of the hate crimes compiled by the FBI in 2001, white offenders were the overwhelming majority of known offenders of hate crimes that were categorized as anti-Islamic. There were 200 whites of 240 perpetrators whose race was known in the offense committed, thereby making them 83.33% of known offenders (Table 5: FBI 2001 Hate Crime Report). Since the overwhelming perpetrators of hate crimes towards Muslims is being perpetrated by whites and that Muslim women are more likely to be the victims this significantly demonstrates a disturbing pattern that needs to be further investigated. Moreover, in Los Angeles, California of the known hate crime perpetrators in September 11<sup>th</sup> related attacks, the majority were also white. The Los Angeles Hate Crime Commission also collects data on hate crimes that have multiple motivations; however, gender is the most underreported category. While at the state level, such reporting might be mandated the federal level has been more complicated. The Hate Crimes Statistics Act does not mandate the FBI collect statistics on crimes motivated by

gender (Jenness 2003). Therefore it has been difficult to track crimes based upon the gender of victims and perpetrators in hate crimes. However, the FBI announced on November 23, 2009 that the Matthew Shepard and James Byrd Jr. Hate Crimes Prevention Act recently passed will begin the tracking of gender as an equal and important category in hate crimes in future reports.

Additionally, of all the hate crimes reported to the FBI in 2001, California was number one in its incidents per capita (Bryan 2005). The high incidence of hate crimes in California makes these interviews all the more pertinent in demonstrating why it is important to study the persistent harassment and intimidation that Muslim women experience in California. This study will provide a unique view into a site that has not been examined within this context.

### **A Feminist War?**

The US has always waged war on the basis of their assured superior moral position; one that is ultimately focused on freedom. In the case of Afghanistan, liberating women was an important aspect of the rhetoric of war that emerged. The inclusion of women either as US soldiers, or as victims on the “enemy’s” side was an important development in US war politics. While the East has always been depicted as backwards; Orientalism also focused on the sexual licentiousness of the East (Mohanty 1988; Said 1978). This image has been introverted in the recent “war on terror” as Arabs and Muslims have been constructed as religiously and sexually conservative.



The current East/West divide has been underpinned by certain gendered/racialized constructions of Arab Americans and Muslims (Mohanty 1988). In particular, we have seen a hyper-masculinity attributed to Arab and Muslim men where they are depicted as overly controlling, dangerous, abusive, and as terrorists. This is contrasted by the view of Arab and Muslim women as submissive, traditional, religiously devout, and uneducated. Mohanty (2003) discusses the tendency to construct Third World woman as a unitary, undifferentiated, and monolithic category. The discursive representation produces colonial constructions of non-Western women. Universal discourses, Mohanty argues, not only strip the active agency from women living in the Third World but also reinforce, and consolidate the notion of an “average third world woman [that] leads an essentially truncated life based on her feminine gender (read: sexually constrained) and her being ‘third world’ (read: ignorant, poor, uneducated, tradition-bound, domestic, family-oriented, victimized, etc)” (346). This monolithic construction of the Third World woman necessarily relies on the implicit contrast to “Western women as educated, as modern, as having control over their own bodies and sexualities, and the freedom to make their own decisions” (346).

This has been the focus in media stories and also has been utilized on the political front. The invasion of Afghanistan by the United States was constructed as having multiple justifications. Among justifications that emerged was the notion that a U.S.-led war that would not only “liberate” the Afghan people from the shackles of the fundamentalist Taliban regime, but would also serve as an equally important act to liberate women from their backward, oppressive male counterparts (Abu-Lughod 2002).

It was the first time where right wing conservative pundits were in agreement with leftist and liberal politicians in their united feminist front. Ironically, right wing conservative politicians are the first to criticize feminist agendas in the US, but in assessing the situations in Afghanistan and other Muslim countries, they transformed into feminists over night.

Afghanistan continues to be consistently depicted as backwards culturally, socially, and politically, and in need of being “saved” and brought out from the caves into modernity. The people of Afghanistan are often discussed in the media as living in caves, without electricity or any of the US’s modern day conveniences. This serves an important function in the U.S. public imaginary, as it solidifies the image of Afghanistan as barbaric, and living in the Stone Age. These constructions symbolically represent the opposite of everything it means to be “free” and Western. Furthermore, if Afghanistan is viewed as archaic, pre-modern, and backwards, then by default, the Afghan people and their values are also frozen in the Stone Age. So, while the US has propelled itself forward in terms of development; its values, traditions, and societal principles have progressed along with the State. A key element that has shaped the media portrayal of Afghanistan as a pre-modern society is its societal treatment of women, who are depicted as right-less veiled people lacking all access to work and education. An outcome of this construction is that Afghanistan has become frozen in time. There is no context to understand the past ruling regime, the Taliban, who had come to power only in recent times and had stripped women of the rights they once had under the previous regime

(Abu-Lughod 2002). These constructions of Arab and Muslim women have served to alter the ways in which women of these backgrounds are treated in the United States.

The War on Terror has been significantly entrenched in ideological discourses that demonize Muslim men and cast Muslim women as oppressed. Political discourse and media representation of Arabs and Muslims has focused obsessively on the deviant, cultural and religious characteristics of these populations. Abu-Lughod (2002) argues that the ‘War on Terrorism’ has preempted a hegemonic discourse to circulate that focuses on the cultural differences of the Middle East and Muslims in general. The emphasis on the cultural practices of this region and the links to religious rituals was the only explanation that was afforded by the mass media in terms of understanding the situation of 9/11. There was scant attention given to the US’s role in the political and historical dynamics of the Middle East. Most news programs focused on the religious beliefs about women as opposed to focusing on the poverty, malnutrition, and US intervention that had plagued the history of Afghanistan. The focus on cultural and religious beliefs only solidified the immutable differences between “us” (meaning liberated, free, and secular US) from “them” (backwards, oppressive, fanatically religious Middle East). Abu-Lughod cautions against the ways cultural justifications, and specifically women were used to justify the invasion of Afghanistan. Abu-Lughod cites Laura Bush’s radio address on November 17, 2001 to illustrate this point: “Because of our recent military gains in much of Afghanistan, women are no longer imprisoned in their homes. They can listen to music and teach their daughters without fear of punishment. The fight against terrorism is also a fight for the rights and dignity of

women” (784). Also, the focus on women as helpless victims rationalized their need to be saved from patriarchal Arab and Muslim men. This ideological construct was vital in garnering support for the war as illustrated by Laura Bush’s radio address on November 17, 2001.

The alleged feminist grounds in which war was waged and justified in Afghanistan was circulated widely among the US public. Davis (2008) suggests that “there are many feminisms, including the George and Laura Bush version, which evokes the putative status of women under Islam as a rallying call for state terrorism. In this ‘feminism’, Islam—within the Samuel Huntington ‘Clash of Civilizations’ framework—produces the terrorist enemy of democracy and the victimized woman who has to be saved by US democracy” (21). Furthermore, in a recent 2008 interview with past President Bush, he suggested that the invasions of both Afghanistan and Iraq have been in the interest of Muslim women (Bhattacharyya 2008).

Contrary to Bush’s claims that Muslim women benefitted from the US invasions, Kolhatkar (2007) points out that the ‘supposed gains’ by women in Afghanistan under the US occupation is deserving of further scrutiny. She examines the paradox of women’s increased access to the right to vote, arguing:

Women are being registered to vote in greater and greater numbers, although only 4-15% can read or write! Also, many women outside of Kabul are afraid to leave their homes to register. What did Karzai say? He made a statement on International Women’s Day, March 8, 2004, appealing to Afghan men: ‘Go and let your women vote. Go and let your wives and daughters vote, and later you can control who she votes for!’ (210).

The evidence provided by Kolhatkar contradicts the US media and politician's claims of the liberation of women and instead offers a more nuanced understanding of gender oppression in Afghanistan.

While politicians circulated this agenda, most feminist organizations did not support such a contention, with the exception of the Feminist Majority Foundation. Even several years after the invasion of Afghanistan, the general US public believes that fighting terrorism is almost as equally important as Muslim women's rights. In a survey conducted regarding the conditions that might change the largely negative perception Americans hold of Muslims in the US, researchers found that 68% of Americans would change their views if American Muslims would take measures to improve the status of Muslim women (CAIR Research Center 2006). This finding demonstrates that the public largely believes that Muslim women are oppressed by Muslim men and that this is a key underpinning of Islam.

Gender also is implicated in not only the binary representation of religiously fanatical Muslim men oppressing helpless Muslim women, but also is constructed in relation to American masculinity. Sjoberg (2007) argues that American masculinity is characterized by its traits of courage, benevolence, and self sacrifice, while Iraqi masculinity is defined by its defiance, lunacy, and its propensity for random violence. If the US media was to highlight the persistent harassment and violence experienced by Muslim women at the hands of white, American men in the US, then this would implicate their masculinity in deeply negative ways.

This is not to dismiss the patriarchal violence that occurs towards Muslim women by men in their families or communities, but instead this paper begs the questions of why this is the only assumed site of violence in Muslim women's lives. Since Muslim masculinity has been inscribed with negative attributes that are in opposition to Western masculinity, it is vital to understand what this binary misses in its oversimplification of these populations. Moreover, the War on Terror has yielded many victims across the globe, and in particular in Afghanistan and Iraq. However, the War on Terror has also been responsible for many negative repercussions for Muslims in the US. Their presumed link to the Middle East has rendered them suspect in the eyes of the US public and deserving of their mistreatment and violations of their civil liberties.

### **Intersections of Violence: Women as Targets**

Historically, women of color have been inundated with institutional and interpersonal violence in their daily lives (Bhattacharjee 2002). Institutional accounts of violence towards communities of color have been critiqued for gender-blind analyses and feminist theorization of interpersonal violence in women's lives has remained race-blind (Crenshaw 1991; Davis 2000). Many authors have suggested that a woman of color's experience with violence has been shaped by not only their gender, but also mediated through racism and colonialism (Bhattacharjee 2002; Crenshaw 1991; Davis 2000; Smith 2001, 2005). Women of color have suggested a redefinition of interpersonal violence towards women that would include systemic violence (Davis 2000). While the anti-violence movement sought to enlarge the definition of interpersonal violence to include

the ways women of color experienced structural violence, these analyses mostly focused on the impact of domestic violence. This research does differ in its focus, that is, it examines the interpersonal violence targeted at Muslim women by strangers, not intimate partners. However, there are important overlaps with these previous theoretical contributions. The violence waged against Muslim women is shaped by the convergence of race and gender in their lives and cannot be solely contributed to either their gender or race. Moreover, similar to Smith's (2005) finding that indigenous women are more often the victims of interpersonal violence by white men due to their perceived sexual violability and lack of accountability in prosecution of sexual crimes against indigenous women's bodies, I argue that these forces also shape the violence experienced by Muslim women.

It is important to understand why Muslim women are the disproportionate victims of harassment in the public sphere in contrast to Muslim men. One site that sheds light on this question is to examine the cultural stereotypes and representations of Muslim women. Popular Western perception of Muslim women has depicted Muslim women in two opposing constructions; on the one hand Muslim women have been viewed as passive and persistent victims of male violence or constructed as hypersexual, mysterious women subject to seclusion in the harem for the fulfillment of male sexual fantasies (Haddad, Smith, and Moore 2006; Mohanty 1988). These stereotypes simultaneously ascribe sexual exoticization and powerlessness to Muslim women which contributes to white men's presumed power and desire to overpower Muslim women. Muslim women, therefore represent a domain to be conquered and are not capable of resisting male

dominance as evidenced by their presumed inferior position to Muslim men in their own culture, which makes it seem that there will be no repercussions for white men who harass Muslim women. The intersection of sexual conquest, desire, and racism is evident in an incident involving a police officer and a Muslim woman on December 5<sup>th</sup>, 2001 in Burbank, IL. A Muslim woman was stopped by a police officer for suspended plates. While the police officer was checking her license and other information, he asked her when Ramadan would end. She answered the police officer and then was arrested for her suspended plates. “During the arrest, the officer pushed her three times before she got in his car. He also asked her inappropriate questions such as, “What is your hair color” and “is your hair long or short?” which she ignored. The woman was released later that day” (ADC Report on Hate Crimes 2003: 45). The police officer’s questions about the women’s hair in concert with him physically assaulting her are indicative of the way domination and desire is simultaneously operating. Furthermore, in the US, women are always available to men. In US culture, women’s bodies are circulated consistently as being available for visible consumption to men. Their bodies are always on display and there is a huge capitalist industry and cultural investment that promotes women’s bodies as inherently linked to their consumptive value for men. Also, the veil has been simultaneously exoticized, but also seen as repressive in US culture. For instance, representations of belly dancers have been eroticized for their mysterious but sexual nature. Being a police officer allows access to the public beyond the normal rights accorded to everyday people. In this instance, the officer takes this power to gain access to this women’s body by forcing her to reveal intimate details about herself that she does



not disclose to any man and also by pushing her physically. When Muslim women have been attacked they also face important obstacles that keep them from reporting it, such as immigration status. “An unknown attacker struck a Muslim woman in the head with a baseball bat. She struggled to get to the local mosque to take refuge. Although mosque officials urged her to contact the police and report the attack, she refused, citing her uncertain immigration status” (ADC Research Report 2001: 66).

The reporting of hate crimes by Muslim community members have been complicated by the state repression and surveillance of Muslims. An article in the LA Times reveals this contradiction, “FBI Has a Pledge and a Request for Muslims: The agency promises to investigate hate crimes and asks for help in finding terrorists.” As the US was preparing for war in Iraq, the FBI was interested in locating possible terrorists and suspected Saddam Hussein sympathizers. FBI Director Mueller stated that, “protecting civil rights is a high priority, and he encouraged the Middle Eastern communities to work with the FBI in reporting hate crimes and assisting terrorism investigations” (H.G. Reza: March 16, 2003). The statement made by Director Mueller indicates the contradiction in the FBI’s relationship with the Middle Eastern community. The promise to investigate hate crimes should be carried out regardless of the Middle Eastern communities’ commitment to assisting with terrorist investigations. This statement assumes that FBI employees are allowed to selectively choose which crimes they will investigate because of the cooperation provided to other cases of interest. Moreover, it demonstrates that Muslims/Middle Easterners rights’ can be withdrawn or

selectively enforced depending on their cooperation with racial and religious profiling by the FBI.

### **Harassment in Public Space**

Many of the Muslim women interviewed reported feeling fearful of harassment in public spaces. There was a variety of responses to such fear including modifying their appearance, avoiding specific places, and asking family or others to accompany them in particular spaces. Cainkar's study that was based upon interviews with over 100 Arab and Muslim Americans similarly found that women were almost twice as likely (83%) to report feeling unsafe in public spaces compared to 45% of men (2009: 235). During the course of my research, it was also apparent that this fear was an important factor in many of the women's decisions about their own mobility. Safeena comments, "I don't walk around in traditional clothes at the mall or most places anymore. I just know it's asking for trouble. I feel it has a lot to do with where you are going to. If I go to South Coast I definitely won't wear them, but if I go to some other mall like Cerritos I won't care as much." The South Coast mall Safeena is referring to is a shopping center located in a predominately middle class and majority white occupied area in California. In contrast, Cerritos mall is located in a predominately working class area and populated by mostly residents of color. Popular discourse often depicts neighborhoods with predominately working class and people of color as inherently unsafe or dangerous. However, Safeena's remarks lead to an opposite conclusion, spaces that are marked as white and middle class in this instance are the source of "trouble" for her.

Many of the other women interviewed also reported being harassed by strangers. Sara discusses, “I was walking down the street and this guy honked at me. When I looked up he started cursing me out and flipped me off. I ran around the corner and he followed me in his car yelling ‘you fucking sandnigger bitch go home’ until I finally ducked into a store.” After this incident Sara was careful to make plans to walk with others or get rides. If she knew she was not able to make alternative transportation arrangements, she avoided going out altogether. Sara’s story is not only important in terms of the dangerous backlash of harassment that is present in the public sphere but also represents the type of climate in which men feel empowered to target Muslim women without any consequence. Also, the comments made in this instance highlight Sara’s racial background with the use of the racial slur ‘sandnigger’, her gender in the use of ‘bitch’, and lastly the phrase ‘go home’ is alluding to her alien status in the nation. She doesn’t belong in the US under his account of what it means to be American. The Muslim woman is a threat to the social and moral fabric of the US and needs to be contained or put back in her place, which is also at home, with the meaning of the domestic sphere. She has no right or access to the public sphere in this sense to freely walk around. Jen also recounts, “I used to take the bus to school and I would get spit on or get trash thrown at me by guys at my school. Sometimes they would pour drinks on my hijab. I couldn’t take it anymore so I just started ditching school so I wouldn’t have to take the bus.” Jen’s experiences of harassment from men on the bus deeply affected her school attendance. In order to avoid such harassment, she stopped attending school regularly; thereby compromising her chances of getting into college. While some instances of

racial/gender/religious harassment are orchestrated by strangers and are one time occurrences, many of the women also reported ongoing harassment by the same men.

Despite either onetime events of hate encounters or ongoing harassment it is important to analyze any incidents as connected to larger systems of state violence. The situating of hate encounters as individual misses the ways the state structures and allows for such violence to occur in Muslim communities. Moreover, Muslim women are at a disadvantage in reporting such hate encounters given the siege on Muslim communities by state and federal authorities. The threat of violence and harassment positions Muslim women in a state of fear which controls their movements in the public, their interaction with outsiders, and their mode of dress and religious expression. These are all stereotypical qualities that are projected by the US in its representations of Muslim women abroad. Muslim women in the Middle East are assumed to be restricted from going out in public, cannot interact with men in the public sphere, and are oppressed by wearing the restrictive covering of hijab or burqa.

### **Institutional Harassment: Employment**

In contrast to the stereotype that Muslim women cannot go out in the public, most of the women interviewed worked outside the home. Since most of the women were college age in this study, they were most likely to work in part time jobs. There were two distinct patterns with their employment; they either received employment through networks in the community or worked in low paying customer service positions. Many of the women reported difficulty with getting hired or experienced harassment at their

places of employment. This harassment was expressed by both managers and customers in service occupations.

Dana, who works at Del Taco talked about the ongoing struggle at her work,

When I first started working there for a few months I didn't have any problems, but then a new manager was hired and constantly was on top of me for every little thing. The manager would call me out in front of everyone else and say that I didn't stand correctly, smile correctly, that I was a bad example of a worker. I was always being humiliated. The management always was telling me that I had to take off my scarf. They would say that I was scaring away the good American customers.

Apparently, Dana's Muslim attire is un-American according to the manager. The manager reifies Muslims as outside the realm of being American, thereby imputing citizenship with a non-marked religious signifier of being Christian. Additionally, being American is equated with being "good", while rendering the contrast of that identity in Dana as Muslim implicitly as "bad." The assumption that "good American customers" would be scared of Muslim women's attire reinforces the supposed dangerous qualities inherent in being Muslim. The wearing of hijab is then a threat to "Americanness," which is symbolized in its lack of assimilation, security risk, and alternative to consumption as illustrated in the divide between worker and customer. Dana's hijab as discussed by the manager is an obstacle to consumption of their product. Despite the continuous harassment at work, Dana remained committed to wearing the hijab, but with severe consequences.

Roukia also reported being harassed at work, but was subjected to such treatment by clients as opposed to management on a regular basis. In one such incident, Roukia comments,

One day a guy asked me where I was from. I said the Middle East. He told me that I should be worried about saying that out loud because we were responsible for Sept. 11<sup>th</sup>. He started yelling at me and saying that it was our entire fault and Arabs were violent people. Then, right before he walked out, he told me that I better watch out when I leave work because something bad could happen to me.

Roukia works in a medical office and was quite shaken up after the incident. Ironically, even though the client was accusing Arabs of being violent, he then threatens Roukia with violence. Even though Roukia's fellow co-workers were nice to her, this still didn't insulate her from being verbally harassed by clients. Given that women are more likely to be located in service positions, this proved to be an important site of ongoing harassment for Muslim women. Moreover, the unpredictability of interaction with the public made for an uneasy work environment, meaning that the women never knew who was going to blow up at them or not.

While working at Party City, Fizah stated, "that a customer complained to the manager that I didn't speak English and that I shouldn't work there because I am not American. The manager said yes, she is American and speaks English that's why I hired her...As they were walking out, they shouted go back to your country". Fizah luckily had a good manager who defended her to the customer, but nonetheless couldn't prevent the customer from yelling at her. Verbal harassment in employment seemed to be discussed as a common practice. Summiya said,

I was working at Bath and Body Works and this customer, who was a white guy wanted to take the shopping cart outside the store into the mall. He got upset because another worker told him he couldn't. I offered him another bag to take his stuff and he called me a stupid terrorist and left. I was shocked at first and upset but now I just expect it and laugh it off.

Similarly, Khaliya mentioned,

When I first started working at Target these guys came in and followed me around the store. They started saying stuff, ‘why do you wear that [scarf]? You know you are going to go to hell’. It kept going on and on. I tried to ignore them, but then they finally started yelling at me, you f\*\*\*\* terrorist! I ducked into the bathroom and started crying. I was so angry because I wanted to yell back at them but couldn’t. I decided to quit because I just couldn’t deal with my anger when things like that would happen.

Most of the women who worked indicated that they had multiple experiences with harassment, given some were much more severe than others. However, nonetheless the climate for work seemed to be hostile, particularly for those wearing the scarf. Given that most incidents were a series of unconnected events, the women were less likely to report such harassment and instead saw it as a necessary challenge they had to overcome in their work in order to keep their jobs. Adir said, “I don’t feel that I have much of an option to leave my job. I think these kinds of things will always happen no matter where I work.” Coping individually with such persistent harassment was a key dimension of their experiences and an active strategy to deal with their situations at work. Such routine experiences added an additional level of stress to their jobs that their non-Muslim co-workers didn’t necessarily have to deal with on a daily basis.

## **Conclusion**

Within the popular US imagination, Muslim women have been constructed as foreign and un-American. The war rhetoric of the invasion in Afghanistan has been focused on the lack of rights afforded women in Islam. This portrayal of Muslim women has conflated the practices of the Taliban and religious fundamentalists with all Muslims. Since fundamentalism is always equated with Islam, there is an inability to discern any

religious practices of Muslims as anything but extreme. This representation contributes to the invisibility of average Muslims living in the US. The religious practices of US Muslims are seen as threatening and in opposition to American culture and identity.

In this chapter, it is important to highlight the experiences of Muslim women to counter the dominant stereotypical portrayals of their lives. While the focus in this work has been on Muslim women in the US, it is apparent that these women are seen in a very similar way to Muslim women in the Middle East. While Mohanty's (1988) work is focused on the representation of Third World women, I would argue that Muslim women in the US are subject to similar assumptions about their positionality. Muslim women in the US are undifferentiated from their Third World counterparts, which makes them susceptible to harassment because of their assumed subservient status. The dominant portrayal of Muslim women as victims, uneducated, and domestic encourages an environment in which harassing them in public and institutional spaces seems warranted. If Muslim women were seen as valuable and deserving of the same rights as dominant members in society, this treatment would cease to exist because of the repercussions for those who commit such atrocious violence.



## **CHAPTER 5**

### **GENERATION ISLAM: ARAB AMERICANS AND RACIAL POLITICS AFTER 9/11**

In August 2009, a major US news media outlet ran a two hour special report entitled “Generation Islam”, which asked: “9/11 taught the US that it ignores rising Muslim resentment at its own peril. America can't have another generation of Muslims who hate it. Is it possible to win the hearts and minds of Muslim youth?” (CNN 2010). The expose honed in on the newest generation of Muslims as an imminent future threat to US security interests. In a sense of misplaced anxiety, the news special espoused an urgency to understand and speak to the politics of the newest cohort of Muslims. The focus on the future of “Generation Islam” is of significant global interest in the US led “War on Terror”. Young Muslims outside the US nation state are often constructed as potentially violent and religiously extremist, as in the case of their highly circulated media depictions as suicide bombers or training operatives in Al-Qaeda camps. Within the US, Muslims are viewed with great suspicion as the concern over homegrown terrorism has become a pressing national issue. In the local and global spheres, the fate of young adult Muslims, including their loyalties, racial identities, and politics remains unpredictable and therefore potentially dangerous to the imperialist aims of the US state.

This research maps the newest “Generation Islam”, that is Arab American Muslims who were under 18, or considered youth at the time of the 9/11 attacks through in-depth interviews with 60 Muslim respondents living in Los Angeles. Given that these young adults came of age in the height of the War on Terror, this allows for an analysis of their racial consciousness that takes into account the primacy of this event in its

shaping of their racial politics and identities. Moreover, these youth are far more likely than their older counterparts to situate their racial identity as post 9/11 “racialized” subjects.

While Arab Americans and Muslims have always been rendered as racialized suspects in terrorist threats to the US, the War on Terror commencing after the attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon on 9/11 intensified the targeting of Arab Americans and Muslims as a racialized threat. The state policies and practices deployed after these events in the name of homeland security have systematically entrenched the subordination of Arab Americans and US Muslims. Historically, Arab American Muslims have occupied a contradictory position within US relations. They have been designated by the government as categorically white, but simultaneously have been the victims of discrimination. After 9/11, scholars have honed in on the racialization of this population given the extreme repression of Arab Americans and Muslims within the US and abroad (Abdulrahim 2008; Cainkar 2008; Jamal 2008; Joseph and D’Harlingue 2008; Naber 2005, 2008). It is a widely held contention that Arab Americans’ white racial categorization does not reflect the current realities of their racialization (Abdulrahim 2008). US imperialist policies have propelled an intensification of the systemic mistreatment of Arab Muslims in that they have been singled out as an inferior, external and internal enemy to the US and the broader Western world. The widespread consolidation of anti-Arab and anti-Muslim racism has both affected Arab American Muslim racial identity formation as well as their collective social-structural position.

Scholars have been divided about the meaning in which Arab Americans define themselves racially (Jamal 2008; Shryock 2008). Drawing on the Detroit Arab American Study (DAAS) which surveyed over 1,000 Arabs and Chaldeans, Shryock (2008) finds that when asked to identify their race, 73% of Arab Christian Americans identify as white, while only 50% of Arab Muslim Americans identified as white. It appears that religious identification significantly alters how Arab Americans identify racially. Additionally, Arab Americans who were born in the US, or who are citizens, were more likely to identify as white than immigrants (Shryock 2008). Jamal (2008) argues that this statistical identification with whiteness is indicative of their 'desire' to situate themselves within the current racial framework. Moreover, the DAAS study also demonstrates that close to 50% of Arab Muslim Americans identify as "other" revealing that this racial classification could mean that they do not fit into the current racial rubric or choose to not identify as white. Therefore, while identification with whiteness is presumed to be linked to a desire to be included in the US racial schema, the designation of "other" could reflect multiple meanings of racial politics and categorization.

Cainkar (2008) reported a much higher disidentification with whiteness than the DAAS, whereas 63% of Arab American Muslims in Chicago reported that Arabs were not considered white. These results were slightly higher (13%) than the findings of the DAAS for Arab American Muslims who identified as white. While these finding might demonstrate the ambiguity of Arab Americans in relation to whiteness, other racial groups who have endured more long standing systemic discrimination than Arab Americans report similar levels of identification with whiteness. That is, 48% of Latinos

report white as their racial designation and 42% report some other race (US Census 2001). This demonstrates that “checking a box” might not always signify the racial status of Arab Americans’ loyalty to race or whiteness for that matter.

Sociological race scholar, Bonilla Silva (2004) argues that Arab Americans are more appropriately conceived of as “honorary whites”, an intermediary status between whites and collectively black groups. While he admittedly notes that post 9/11 America positioned Arab Americans as vulnerable targets, he asserts that this phenomenon did not lead “Arab Americans to develop a political program of identification and cooperation with racial minorities” (946). However, the research presented in this article contradicts Bonilla-Silva’s claim that Arab American Muslims do not identify with racial minority politics. The findings clearly demonstrate that Generation Islam is invested in a redefinition of their racial group status as nonwhite. Furthermore, the expression of their affiliation with the category of non-white is of a highly political nature and is informed through their racist treatment by the white supremacist structures of the State as well as a shared affinity with the collective mistreatment of other groups of color. Therefore, to consider oneself non-white is a contestation and marking of the ways racism assigns social worth to groups based upon their racialization as different from, and inferior to whites. It also stands in stark contrast to assimilation ideology that has been used to often describe the process where groups are incorporated into America’s melting pot. Bonilla-Silva’s claim that Arab Americans are honorary whites despite an intensification of racism since 9/11 is also rooted in an assimilation paradigm, whereby he assumes that Arab Americans are only experiencing a temporary setback in their racial ascendancy within the US racial

hierarchy. However, the basis in which he makes this claim is rooted in an unquestioned assumption that Arab Americans see themselves as different from other groups of color who express their struggle as entwined with and informed by the contours of historical white supremacy formations within the US.

Given that most scholars would agree that 9/11 was a pivotal moment in the lives of Arab Americans, studying the Arab Muslim youth population who were coming of age amidst the War on Terror lends key insights into the development of a new, and differing racial consciousness in contrast to earlier generations. Moreover, this paper argues that Generation Islam holds a distinguishing feature that older cohorts of Arabs and Muslims do not possess: namely, their racial formation processes have been significantly informed in the years following 9/11. Maira (2009) examines the construction of cultural citizenship among working class South Asian Muslim youth after 9/11, illustrating the ways empire and national belonging come to bear on the politics of this upcoming generation within the US context. In a similar ethnographic approach, Bayoumi (2008) traces the lives of young Arab Americans living in Brooklyn, NY in order to shed light on their experiences of growing up in post 9/11 America. Young Arab Americans are straddling a paradox of US hostility and suspicion on one hand, and are simultaneously the repository for the hopes and aspirations of their communities' elders. He further links US foreign policy interest as a motivating factor in the infringement on domestic civil liberties of Arab Americans.

Examining the generational role as an outcome of one's social location has an important impact on an individual's consciousness (Manheim 1928). While the research in

this article is also interested in understanding the newest generation of Arab American Muslims, the findings are divergent in terms of their implications. Generation Islam clearly adopts a non-white paradigm to understand their experiences and treatment after 9/11 that is not reflected in the collective social position of older Arab American Muslims. Identifying as non-white is not solely an outcome of an oppositional politic reflecting criticism of US foreign policy but is also a strong identification with historically oppressed people of color in the US. Conceiving of the continued subordination of Arab American Muslims as only an incidental outcome of foreign policy implicitly reinforces the notion that their subjugation is temporary and constructed only in relation to the external aims of the state. It also indicates that as a group, Arab American Muslims are somehow interchangeable with any other temporary foreign enemy, even white ethnic groups such as Russian Communists. Generation Islam rejects assimilating into whiteness and instead is critical of foreign imperialism and the violence waged by the US state domestically. They refuse to remain complicit with a white agenda that disenfranchises their community, which has historically appealed to previous generations of Arab American Muslims. The media's fixation over the politics of Generation Islam is clearly rooted in the possibility that Muslims will defy this invitation to temporary whiteness and instead opt to mark their experiences of racial profiling and discrimination as a platform to advance a social justice agenda that is engaged with a critique of white domination.

## **Race and US Muslims**

It is important to understand the way institutional practices and discourses represent and treat Arab Americans and Muslims based upon ideological assumptions about race. Cainkar (2008) highlights how selective targeting of Arab and Muslims through homeland security policies institutionalized assumptions about the innate characteristics of Muslims and Arabs. Public support of institutional targeting and mistreatment of Arabs and Muslims relies on a fictive and immutable essence of what Arabs and Muslims are; that is, how they are dangerous, violent, and suspected terrorists. Gallup polls taken in September of 2001 demonstrate the public's negative perception of Arabs. The majority of Americans favored the racial profiling of Arabs and the public was evenly split on the issue of whether Arab Americans, both citizens and immigrants should carry special identification cards. Moreover, the majority of Arab Americans report that they have experienced some form of discrimination since 9/11 (Human Rights Watch 2002). The subjection of Arab Americans and Muslims to state scrutiny is based upon their racialization as inferior to whites because of their stereotyped proclivity towards violence, and therefore deserving of policies that criminalize them without any evidence of wrongdoing (Jamal 2008: 116).

Despite the range of experiences and identities that exist in the Arab American community, Arabs are continually depicted on television as non-white and Muslim (Shaheen 2003). The conflation of Arab, Middle Eastern, and Muslim in media depictions is central to displacing them as racial subjects who neatly fit into the racial schema of the US. Naber (2000) further claims that this paradoxical status leads to Arab

American invisibility within US racial politics. Naber's analysis can be expanded upon since 9/11, in that Arab Americans have now been rendered hyper-visible, despite their continued classification by the US Census as white.

While theories of race and racism often linearly demonstrate the persistent and continued exclusion of groups from whiteness and its afforded institutional and economic privileges, Arab Americans' experiences with racism are unique from other historically disadvantaged groups of color. It has been argued that Arab Americans have not assimilated and instead experienced a fall from "the graces of marginal whiteness" (Cainkar 2008: 47). Cainkar (2008) argues that this fall from whiteness has corresponded to the rise of the US as a global superpower. Hence, the negative racialization of Arab Americans in more recent times, that is post 1960's is directly correlated to foreign policy and less with enduring domestic institutional racism. Arab Americans' recent experiences with racism positioned them very differently than other groups of color and whites within the racial schema of the US. "Since the darkening of Arabs began in earnest after the beneficiaries of the US civil rights movement had been determined and the categories of "nonwhite" and "minority" had been set, Arabs have experienced the double burden of being excluded from whiteness *and* from mainstream recognition as people of color" (2008: 80). The dual erasure from both whiteness and non-whiteness is exemplified in Bonilla Silva's (2004) categorization of Arab Americans as honorary white. After 9/11, Arab Americans faced isolation because of the residual civil rights categories of race that did not allow for them to be recognized as minorities. Their racial exclusion from whiteness and ambiguous status as people of color has led to



their marginalization within US racial politics, or as Naber (2000) argues “white but not quite white”. Another problematic factor in the grouping of Arabs as either white or non-white is the diversity of the population within the US. Arab Americans phenotypically range from people with blonde hair, blue eyes to kinky hair and dark skin (Naber 2000). This range allows some to ‘pass’ for white, while others are perceived and treated as people of color. It is difficult to reconcile this diversity in phenotype because the US racial framework is based upon phenotype, not necessarily ethnic or cultural affiliation.

Arab Americans and Muslims are constructed as the enemy ‘other’ in contrast to the ‘us’ who is morally superior. According to Jamal (2008), their racialization is not based on biological phenotype, but rather an “us/them” dichotomy that ‘others’ Arab Americans and Muslims. This racist framework is not the result of appearance, but focuses on cultural differences. Jamal further argues that the ‘othering’ process is premised upon culture and religion as opposed to phenotype. Arab Americans have been forced to deal with racism, not only because of their association with particular nation states, but also because of their presumed affiliation with Islam. Naber (2000) argues that Arab Americans are racialized according to religion (Islam) and not phenotype. It is difficult to assess whether the assumption that all Arabs are Muslim, or that all Muslims are Arab underlie their treatment in the US.

## **US Census**

According to the US Census, Arab Americans are classified as “white”. Despite this official classification, most Arab Americans do not view themselves as white (Naber

2008). The lack of inclusion on the census of either a Middle Eastern or Arab category has been attributed to the relative insignificance of economic issues facing these populations. “Traditionally, the tracking of minority groups has been used by the bureau to determine and better analyze economic and social issues. But various studies over the years have found that Arab Americans tend to be economically above average. As such, the argument goes; there has been no real need on the part of the U.S. Census bureau to conduct this type of analysis” (Arab American Forum 2009). Historically, in the US, analyzing class has been central in the theorization of race relations. In particular, groups of color have experienced economic marginalization, including the denial of good jobs, high poverty rates, and being excluded from various economic sectors. Arab Americans pose a challenge to these understandings of race, as their contradictory racial position within US society has been shaped both by their middle class economic position and their perceived cultural and religious differences.

There has been controversy over the inclusion of an Arab or Middle Eastern category on the census within the Arab American community. Samhan (1997) argues that these racial categories permeate every facet of US society. “From school and medical forms, job and loan applications, to political caucuses, polls and even market surveys, the race consciousness of American demographics is such that some Arabs have become accustomed to perennial “other” status, or to straddling their technical white identity with practical affinity to people of color –i.e., every other non-European national origin group” (11). Prior to 9/11, advocates in these communities supported the creation of such a category on the census, but struggled with how to define such a population that

spanned such different nations, regions, language, ethnicity, and backgrounds. Since 9/11 proponents are split over the inclusion of such category; advocates on one side argue that the inclusion of such a category would provide the most accurate way of tracking discrimination, while opponents argue that this information could be used to unfairly target these populations. The reason why this is also a significant problem for the Arab American population is that being classified as white makes it difficult to track discrimination in employment, housing, immigration, governmental policy, and education. While non-governmental organizations have reported on the rise in hate crimes, assaults, racial profiling, media bias, and harassment of Arab Americans, government agencies have been ill equipped to deal with the recent targeting of this population due to the lack of information about this group in large part because of their racial classification. While Arab Americans are classified under the census as “white”, their experiences of discrimination in the United States continually reinforce this population as non-white.

In December of 2003 the Census Bureau sent information to the Department of Homeland Security that compiled information on people who had identified Arab ancestry on the 2000 census. This information was tabulated by zip code to provide geographic information on the cities that contained Arab populations. This act on behalf of the Census Bureau and the Department of Homeland Security is reminiscent of the treatment that Japanese Americans faced during World War II. The Census Bureau provided information that assisted the War Department in rounding up 120,000 Japanese Americans to be confined in internment camps. The disturbing history of the US Census

in its collaborative efforts to discern Japanese populations for the purpose of detaining them undermines the positive uses of the Census. While the targeting of Japanese Americans was based upon race, Arab American Muslims have been viewed as suspicious because of their religious affiliation, which draws on a longer, more enduring Islamophobia perpetuated within white, Christian discourses of the State. Hence, the targeting of Muslims from predominately Muslim majority countries in immigration policies and the racial profiling and tracking of Muslims within US communities.

The actions by the Department of Security was defended when a Census Bureau analyst emailed a Department of Homeland Security official, stating: "You got a file of Arab ancestry information by ZIP Code Tabulation Area from me last December (2003). My superiors are now asking questions about the usage of that data, given the sensitivity of different data requests we have received about the Arab population" (EPIC 2009). According to government redacted documents in April 2004, a Department of Homeland Security Customs and Border Protection official responded in email by clarifying:

At U.S. International airports, U.S. Customs posts signage informing various nationalities of the U.S. Customs regulations to report currency brought into the US upon entry . . . . My reason for asking for U.S. demographic data is to aid the Outbound Passenger Program Officer in identifying which language of signage, based on U.S. ethnic nationality population, would be best to post at the major International airports (EPIC 2009).

Civil liberties groups were skeptical of the response by the Homeland Security official and stress the continuity in the dismal targeting and treatment of Arab Americans. More importantly, the use of public information in these ways further undermines the belief that some public agencies are supposedly politically neutral. In fact, the supposed

political neutrality of the Census Bureau buffers such uses by the government, citing its need to collect data only for the purposes of understanding the constituency of the US population more accurately. Additionally, Arab Americans remain more skeptical about responding in any way to government requests for information, despite the difference in the range of agencies who would be requesting such data.

Given the everyday encounters with government bureaucracies that classify Arabs as white, it is important to gauge how the newest generation of young Arab American Muslims responds to such racial claims. This research intends to explore the ways Arab American Muslims differ in their claims to race and racial consciousness by generations. Furthermore, in emphasizing post 9/11 racial formations that are informed and shaped by the experiences and reflections of Generation Islam allows for a more in-depth analysis of current race politics.

### **Generational Gaps in Racial Consciousness**

Arab American Muslims inhabit a vexed position with race relations currently, whereby their affiliation with whiteness can be seen as an outcome of racial designation by the state or a reflection of personal and collective embracement or defiance of the category white. Despite claims that Arab American Muslims still inhabit an ambiguous racial grouping in the US, the interviewees in this study clearly demonstrated a racial consciousness that configured them *outside* of the realm of whiteness. An overwhelming 90% of Arab American Muslims in this research did not think of Arabs as white. Moreover, 85% when filling out forms did not check white as a category and instead

opted to mostly identify as other, choosing to write in Arab or a specific nationality.

When they did choose to write in white, they mostly referred to the instructions on forms that listed their nation of origin as being white.

The participants interviewed within this research, demarcated a rift between their parent's racial designation and their own racial identities. In many instances, young Arab American Muslims contested their parents' racial designations and asserted their own contradictory racial affiliations. In answering the question posed in the interview, "What box do you check or write on forms when they ask your race?" Nisreen answered, "I consider myself Arab Palestinian but they usually don't have that. They usually only have white or other. My dad says to put white because our skin is white, but I know I am Arab because people treat me differently. I don't get treated like white people and neither does he. I usually put other and make sure to write in Arab." Nisreen's comments allude to the contradiction of being white and Arab as if they are mutually exclusive categories. White cannot for all intents and purposes include the category of Arab in her view as it signals inclusion and equal treatment in society. While her dad hones in on skin color as a prerequisite for identification as white, Nisreen contests this as her own racial identity, instead stressing her stigma as Arab.

Throughout many of the interviews, the generational rift was apparent in racial politics and consciousness. The anti-Arab and Islamophobic climate after 9/11 contributed to a heightened awareness of race for this generation of youth who would experience as well as contest racial categorizations. Ibrahim, who was born in the US but whose parents emigrated from Libya states, "I think Arabs were supposed to be white

before September 11<sup>th</sup>. That's at least what my grandma always said. But, I mean if you experience racism by whites how can you consider yourself a part of a racial group that is against you?" Ibrahim's remarks locate racism as emanating from white people only, which positions him outside of whiteness. In this case, allegiance to whiteness is signified as being racist and simultaneously displaces victims of racism as non-white. Omi and Winant (1994) posit that "Whites can at times be the victims of racism—by other whites or non-whites—as is the case with anti-Jewish and anti-Arab prejudice" (73). However, in Ibrahim's remarks, he indicates that being a victim of racism by whites does relegate him outside of the realm of whiteness. Also, notably Ibrahim collectivizes his encounter with racism as a result of group racializing processes, not as a result of individual identity. Knowledge of the ways whites are "against you" also stands in contradiction to the views his family held prior to 9/11. His grandmother's views of Arabs as white are juxtaposed in regards to the significance of the 9/11 events wherein he questions the possibility of claiming membership within whiteness. Whiteness accrues both a psychological wage of security and material protection from racist practices. Jaleel comments, "I don't know what it has ever been like to be white here. As long as I can remember everyone has hated us." Jaleel infers that there was a time in which previous generations of Arab Americans might have been considered white, but for him that has never been the case. Racial consciousness is time specific as he knows that his experiences have been shaped by recent events which have resulted in his membership in a group of "us" that is hated by "everyone" else. The disavowal of whiteness is not

necessarily a choice but instead indicates that Arab Americans have been expelled from the security of belonging to the mainstream.

For this generation of youth, they relatively have no prior experiences from which to contrast their current racial position. They mark a racial position that stands in clear opposition to prior racial formations of Arab Americans that they see as experienced by their parents. While they overwhelmingly identify as “not white”, they seem to also exhibit knowledge that there was a time in which Arab Americans were considered white. In these cases, knowledge of this phantom whiteness that seemed to be more accessible before 9/11 now seems implausible for Generation Islam.

The aftermath of 9/11 and its backlash on Arab American Muslims significantly shaped the interviewees’ assessments of whether Arabs were white. Saba comments: “Arabs are not white at all. I think they should just have their own race but I think it’s a good idea that they don’t because even if they check that box, I know afterward that there would be racial profiling. It depends also if you are applying to a school because that school might not want Middle Easterners there.” Saba is astutely aware of the tangible negative repercussions of identifying as Arab in the post 9/11 climate. While categories of racial identification are presumably used to enhance diversity or collect demographic information on specific populations within institutions, Saba links racial categories with the possibility of discrimination, in this instance with racial profiling and school admissions. Similarly, Zeina states the importance of 9/11 on Arab American Muslim’s racial consciousness: “I would say we are not white. We were treated like an outcast after 9/11. We were a racial minority after 9/11. People also tell me to go back to my



country. No one can tell a white person to go back to their country.” These remarks indicate the association of whiteness with the cultural and material privileges of US citizenship. There is a strong assumption that Arab Americans are foreigners. Their whiteness is challenged when their position within the US is questioned. Their status as an “outcast” renders them subject to discrimination and positions them beyond the boundaries of the US citizenry.

### **Racial Schemas in the US**

Another common pattern among Generation Islam was how their racial identification hinged on their relationship not only to whites but to other groups of color as well. They reflected an understanding that whiteness was predicated upon a category of power in which other groups were relationally disempowered. Claiming and representing a white identity meant to also situate oneself in opposition to groups of color. Shireen comments:

I don't want to be white in this America. I will not conform to white America. America was a blank canvas where people came with their culture and painted all their different colors, but one color did not blend and became superior, which just happened to be white. When we say we are white we ignore all the other colors in the US. Being white is thinking you are superior, that's why people wish to be white.

While Shireen still has the option to position herself as white as she indicates with her phrasing that she doesn't “want to be white”, she chooses not to because of the presumed superiority that whiteness entails. Additionally, she also explicitly marks the superiority of whites as a fluke when all the “colors” presumably meaning different non-white groups painted on the canvas; thus asserting that whites are not inherently superior but

that the outcome of race relations has secured a dominant position for whites. Most importantly, she does exhibit an understanding that Arabs might identify as white, but cautions against this affiliation because of its presumed othering or “ignoring” of non-white groups. Rather than discuss whether Arab Americans’ experiences can be categorized as white, she adopts a political stance towards race that positions Arab Americans firmly within and among non-white groups reflecting a racial consciousness that coheres with the experiences of groups of color. The reflected nature of Arab Americans’ social location among a highly stratified system of race in the US is significantly shaped by their encounters with racism and also informed by the racial politics of groups of color. This is evident when Laila states:

Arabs are not white. White is like American. Just because we are in America doesn’t mean we are white. We have our own separate category just like everyone else and it’s different from all of theirs. Everyone says we are Arab; even African Americans say Arabs are not white and Hispanics don’t think of us as white. When they say white they don’t think of Arab.

Laila asserts that Arab Americans’ racial grouping is contingent upon the perceptions of “not just whites” but also whether non-white groups, in this case African Americans and Latinos situate Arabs as outside the grouping of whites. The reference to non-white groups also demonstrates that Laila is astutely aware of the US racial politics whereby belonging to, and being recognized by groups of color, is an important factor shaping the racial position of Arab American Muslims. Both Shireen and Laila note the multiracial composition of race relations in the US, whereby Arab American Muslims not only position themselves relative to whites but also among and between the racial schemas of groups of color. Rania expresses: “I don’t think I am white. White people are American.

They are born here and their parents are born in America. Why are we classified as white? Why can't we be our own group? Hispanics have their own. Then there are Blacks, Asian Pacific Islanders, and Native Americans who have their own too, but there are other people like us." In Rania's statement, whiteness as it relates to being American is determinant upon place of birth over generations. Since Rania was born in the US, but her parents were born in Palestine, she further claims that whiteness has to be transmitted between generations as well. Additionally, she inscribes Arab American Muslims' exclusion as a negative phenomenon because they are denied having their own racial category in contrast to all other groups of color. She makes claims to an Arab category by referencing only non-white groups in her assessment. This demonstrates that Arab American Muslims position themselves as outsiders to whiteness and firmly within alternative positions of groups of color. Moreover, both Laila and Rania also indicate that being white is also the exclusive domain of being American. While this notion has been popularized among many other racial group processes for non-whites, it now has been rendered central to their racial consciousness as well.

### **Socializing Race at School**

Given the relative young age of respondents at the time of 9/11, that is they were between the ages of 10-17; they were in either primary or secondary school. If youth were attending public school, which was overwhelmingly the case in this sample, they were most likely to have been in contact with teachers and students outside of their own ethnic group. This positioned them to have to speak to inaccuracies about Islam and

Arabs as represented in educational biases as well prompting them to deal with the onslaught of racism by fellow peers and educators. Moreover, all of the interviewees were either 1.5 generation or second generation, rendering their experiences of school and childhood in the US unique within their families. All of their parents had not attended primary or secondary school in the US, which further widened the generational drift between the respondents and their parents in relation to the ways race informed and shaped their educational experiences; a primary socializing agent for racial identity in the US. While Cainkar (2008) notes that school has always served as a source of discrimination prior to 9/11, it has become more institutionalized in recent times. Cainkar focuses on the discrimination that Arab and Muslim parents and teachers experience in the setting of schools.

Similarly, Peek's (2011) research which focused on 140 interviews with Muslim Americans also found that significant stereotypes existed pre-9/11, but were intensified after the attacks. Through her interviews, she illustrates the importance of school as a source of negative stereotypes about Muslims. Furthermore, her respondents reported experiencing verbal harassment at school on a frequent basis. She argues that Muslims were susceptible to such harassment after 9/11 because of their status as a religious minority coupled with negative distortions and perceptions of their faith (53).

It is important to also understand the ways Arab Muslim youth are socialized into the racial schema of the school, whereby their immigrant parents are not privy to the everyday school practices of race and racism nor equipped to navigate the unfamiliar institution. Racial categories permeate the everyday fabric of schools. Asma relays, "My

teacher in biology was given a grant to give to minorities to work in the lab. He told me to apply for it. I was so excited and I told my dad, but he was not happy. He said that I can't apply because Algerians are white. I was so confused because I thought North Africans were minorities. I told my dad I'm not white, why else would the teacher have asked me to work on the project?" Although Asma's father is technically correct in his assertion that Arabs have not been designated as recipients of racially motivated programs, this contradiction for Asma led to a fight with her father. Asma also revealed that she "felt like he just didn't get it. It was such a great opportunity and here he was holding me back from doing it." While it may have been likely that Asma was not able to be considered for the position, she displaced her frustration on to her father's misunderstanding of race. Furthermore, her own racial awareness had been informed by her socialization into the racial rubric of the school, whereby even the teacher was unaware that she should be categorized as white in terms of governmental policies. Samhan illustrates this point that even prior to 9/11, school administrators were confused about the classification of immigrants from the Middle East, where it is estimated that at least 15% of students placed in the Asian/Pacific category are from the Middle East (Samhan 1997).

While racist practices at school mirrors much wider institutional patterns of racism in other arenas, it nonetheless does not translate to the ability for young Arab Muslims to connect with their parents about how to challenge such practices. Yasmine expresses her marginalization at school:

It was only the second day I had worn my hijab in middle school when some girl told me, 'It's not Halloween, take that thing off your head'.

Back then, I didn't have a strong personality. Later that year, this boy who used to torment me, said 'Is that a towel on your head?' He called me stupid and dumb. Just a few weeks later, he pulled my scarf off. His friends thought it was so funny that one of them pulled it off the next day in PE really hard and the pin broke and poked me. The teacher saw it and didn't say anything and I was so mad. It was so hard, my friends didn't understand, and I couldn't tell my parents because they don't know what it's like to be the only hijabi in school.

Yasmine who emigrated from Kuwait when she was only a toddler expresses a clear difference in the challenges she is forced to navigate that are different than her parents. Given her parents' schooling experience where they were not subject to such harassment in Kuwait, she resolves that they would never understand her subject position in the US as the only girl who wears hijab in the whole school. Similarly, Yasmine was left to fend for herself as the teacher did not respond to the situation, further isolating her and leading her to believe that she was the only one who could protect herself. Arab American Muslims are often forced to reconcile their disparate treatment at school without the reliance on familial support. This is not say that her parents would not have advocated on her behalf if they had been made aware of the situation, but it does point to the ways in which this generation of youth is socially isolated.

Most often, interviewees discussed the ways teachers disseminated distorted views of Islam and Muslims in class. Mohammed reflects on the months following 9/11 that he was often subjected to "tirades about Islam and terrorists. The teachers would give biased information about Muslims. Looking back I feel bad I didn't raise my hand and say anything. I was just scared that my teachers would fail me and that people would hate me. My parents told me to keep my mouth shut to avoid harm." Mohammed also indicates that his schooling experience was "brutal" because "I was known as

Mohammed Atta, or also nicknamed the terrorist. When people signed my senior yearbook they addressed it 'dear terrorist'." While Mohammed's parents were well intentioned in advising him to ignore the racism in order to prevent further escalation, he struggles with his decision to remain quiet under the significant backlash he experienced in the classroom. The enduring weight of racism at the hands of teachers and fellow classmates left him with little options to challenge his continued harassment.

## **Conclusion**

The experiences of Arab American Muslims in school as 1.5 and second generation youth who are the first to experience the social landscape of primary and secondary school after 9/11 indelibly leaves them in a unique position in which they both battle racism on an everyday basis as well as forge an identity in response to US racial schemas. For this generation of Arab Muslims, their racial identity and consciousness is rooted in a negation of whiteness and is simultaneously mediated through the social location of non-white groups as well. Their experiences signal the importance of 9/11 in shaping racial identities of Arab American Muslims and also demonstrate a nuanced understanding of race, whereby affiliations with whiteness exemplify particular social and political clout that is not reflected in their everyday encounters with race.

The impact of 9/11 on Arab American Muslims has been significant in various public and institutional arenas. However, this impact has been informed and shaped through racialization processes. This research demonstrates the ways young adult, Arab American Muslims are forging collective racial identities and consciousness in the wake

of 9/11. These young adults are more likely than previous generations to view themselves as collectively non-white. Their experience of race and racism in the context of US racial politics provides insight into the complexity of being Arab American and Muslim today. By rejecting whiteness as a category of identification, they reject prior notions of Arab American assimilation. Their rejection is informed by a distancing of previous generations' attitudes towards race in favor of a position inhabited alongside groups of color. Contrary to claims that Arab American Muslims have only experienced a temporary setback in their ascendancy into whiteness, this research concludes that Generation Islam has embraced a non-white stance in relation to the onslaught of systemic racism they continue to endure in US society. The adoption of such a racial consciousness by the newest inhabitants of Generation Islam is potentially an adversarial position that refuses the divide between the racial struggles of internal domestic politics with critiques of foreign imperialism. Instead, this generation's negation of whiteness in the US has the potential to link the racism within the US nation state with the US geopolitical agenda abroad. Framing their experiences within the historical rubric of race is a gesture for solidarity with other groups of color and acts as a catalyst for shared organizing. Therefore, the conscious adoption of a racialized, non-white consciousness can provide an impetus for future organizing on behalf of a group's marginalized status.



## **CHAPTER 6**

### **CONCLUSION**

This research argues that the War on Terror is a capitalist endeavor that operates through the uneven terrains of race and gender inequality. The use of highly charged racialized and gendered ideologies about Muslims is imperative in fabricating and “selling” the War on Terror to the US public. Most unfortunately, the War on Terror is waged at the expense of Muslims both in the Middle East and in the US. While the War on Terror is often conceived as a war fought abroad, I point to the important domestic ramifications, in particular those lodged at US Muslims. However, while I focus on the deleterious consequences that have been experienced by Muslims, there have been significant structural changes in the State infrastructure that will continue to impact other marginalized groups within the US as well. In particular, the investment in the domestic security infrastructure has the effect of drawing important financial resources away from social services and redirects them into socially destructive processes. The threat of “Islamic terrorism” has also lulled the public into a false sense of security whereby they are willing to assent to an erosion of civil liberties in order to better combat the imminent threat of terrorism. In the last decade the US has engaged in torture, extraordinary rendition, indefinite detention of prisoners without charges, warrantless surveillance of religious places of worship and outspoken critics of the war, and illegal surveillance of citizens. These acts, or more appropriately, systematic abuses have all occurred and been legitimated as part of the War on Terror.

Among the left, there has been a strong opposition to the War on Terror, including the occupation of Afghanistan and Iraq. However, there has been criticism lodged at leftist positions that espouse a strong stance towards imperialism abroad while negating the intensity of oppression directed at groups of color in the US, including the enduring effects of slavery and colonization that subjugate African Americans, Latinos, and indigenous people. This research attempts to draw out the connections between the ‘war abroad’ and the ‘war at home.’ The case of Muslims and the War on Terror demonstrates the simultaneous connections between state violence that is waged domestically with foreign imperialist wars and occupations. Rather than conceiving of the War on Terror as solely a foreign-based political and military project, I offer a new way to analyze the impact of this war on Muslims living in the US. This focus serves as an important link between global and domestic projects and policies of domination that structure the racialized-gendered dynamics underpinning this new era of post-9/11 politics.

Disciplinarily, I attempt to bring together subject fields that are often distinctly separated. For instance, within ethnic studies the focus on race is usually confined to the study and theorization of racism within the US context without much attention paid to the ways colonialism has operated outside the US. The global context of the racialization of Muslims plays a key role in shaping the experiences of US Muslims. Thus I use critical race theory to analyze the position of Muslims in the US in order to unravel the connections between their oppression domestically with the strategic interests of capital in the Middle East. Similarly, I attempt to connect transnational feminist theories that highlight the oppression of women in the Global South with the enduring violence waged

against Muslim women within the US in the form of public harassment. This also relies on intersectional women of color theories and methodologies to draw links between interpersonal violence and larger systems of patriarchy and race that collude in legitimizing violence against Muslim women. Lastly, I also contribute to an expansion of Middle Eastern Studies which has historically conceived of issues facing Muslims as mostly religious or political in nature. My position troubles this category and offers race and gender as useful theoretical tools to understand the systematic attacks on Muslims.

The oppression of Muslims is shaped on multiple levels with impacts resonating on the structural and individual levels. The War on Terror has commanded a reorganization and redirection of resources on the macro level, but with significant impacts on the everyday, individual level. In Chapter 2, “Homeland Security Inc.” and Chapter 3, “Cointelpro 2.0”, I illustrate the macro changes that have occurred in the US since the War on Terror commenced. I contrast these chapters with Chapters 4 and 5 which focus on the individual impact of discrimination on the everyday lives of the newest racial politics of “Generation Islam” and young Muslim women who have become the disproportionate victims of hate crimes. By tracing the systemic changes in the development of the Homeland Security Department and the federal guidelines governing the investigatory procedures of the FBI, this research demonstrates how important these recent changes have been on an institutional level. Moreover, I conclude that these changes have had disastrous impacts on the civil liberties of Muslims.

The prominent focus on homeland security as a central component of the War on Terror reifies that there is an “enemy” that the homeland must always protect itself

against. However, homeland security is an imaginary notion that requires further interrogation. Who is considered part of the homeland? And secondly, whose security is the US trying to protect? This research demonstrates that Muslims certainly are constructed and materially treated as if they are collectively threats to the US homeland and US foreign interests. Therefore, homeland security for all intents and purposes cannot include the protection of Muslims because Muslims, by definition, are defined as perpetual enemies of the State. Furthermore, I argue that the very notion of “homeland security” is inherently linked to whiteness, capitalism, and patriarchy. Whiteness has historically offered material and psychological protection from the daily assaults of systemic racism. Similarly, women have often experienced a displacement of home, including being cast out as refugees, victims of private violence, and a collective lack of access to private capital. Politicians have furthered the attacks on the most marginal of women by the slow erosion of welfare as well (Reese 2005).

To speak of security is to intimate that it protects people equally, but homeland security has instead posed significant challenges to the security and livelihood of many marginalized people in the US, including Muslim US citizens. The massive financial investment in promoting the expansion of the homeland security industry has further entrenched the subordinate position of the poor, people of color, women, and immigrants. The outcomes of the homeland security have produced scant benefits for marginalized people in US society. Moreover, not a single security measure following 9/11 has improved the lives of the most marginalized people in this society. On the contrary, it has actually hindered the quality of living of most people at the “bottom rungs” of society

given the profound impact of the recession on such susceptible populations. For example, the expanding security obsession has tightened border security, further aiding the massive criminalization of Latino immigrants. Thus, the idea of homeland security must be rejected as a false notion that only serves the interests of the most powerful segments of society, or as Mills would argue the 'power elite'. So if everyday people have not benefitted from the massive structural changes underscoring the notion of homeland security, who has benefitted? I contend that private capital has benefitted to the largest extent and it is clear that private industry, not the general American public, and certainly not marginalized communities, has the most to lose if the homeland project became abandoned for a more rational and thoughtful system of safety and protection from violence. This is precisely why the US government has to work to protect private capital because it is so reliant on its infrastructure as its core source of operations. This only strengthens the relationship between private capital and government. Their coinciding interests collide because the government's infrastructure is disproportionately reliant on the infrastructure and services of private capital. Meanwhile, political officials see this burgeoning industry as a lucrative opportunity to enhance their own private net worth. The privatization of the homeland security industry is thus reliant on the racialized-gendered construction of the Islamic terrorist.

It is far too simplistic to theorize the War on Terror as solely an attack on Muslims. While I do focus on Muslims as the primary target of the state assaults and the fuel behind the growth of the terror industry, the legacy of the War on Terror has the capacity to have a much more far-reaching impact. Particularly worrisome, is the way

terrorism is invoked in other arenas to sanction governmental intrusions on civil liberties and also authorize vast amounts of funding into the hands of private capitalists. It is important to conceive of homeland security as a flexible project that has the possibility of employing a range of coercive and oppressive policies and practices that deeply undermine democratic governance. If the US public tacitly accepts Muslims as the enemy of America, this will obscure the ways in which homeland security impacts all those residing within the US.

Another important outcome of the War on Terror rhetoric has reinforced a virulent form of patriotism whereby anyone who questions the actions of the US is deemed disloyal and branded anti-American. A return to patriotism always re-entrenches a notion of citizenship that is inherently male and white, whereby immigrants are often used as scapegoats and threats to the State. Anti-immigrant backlash since 9/11 has been embedded within security discourses that link the defense of the nation's borders with fighting terrorism. However, the significant financial investment in securing the US/Mexico border obscures the ways Latino/a immigrants in particular become the target of such ramped up policing and increased detention. Racial anxiety about Latino/as then becomes falsely conflated as another form of fighting terrorism. Since fighting terrorism has trumped most other national security issues, funding has also reflected this shift and shaped the way these discourses operate. Government agencies who operate "on the ground" have tapped into this unlimited well of funding by recasting their own issues, which previously had little to no official link to security issues, as being significantly tied to thwarting terrorism. The agenda of the War on Terror and its funding possibilities

therefore fundamentally reshaped other government institutions to reflect these new politicized priorities. However, despite the fact that the actions carried out by ICE, including raids and the dragnet at the border is actually about anti-Latino racism, but by recasting this crackdown on Latino/a immigrants into the security realm, legitimized the tightening of border security and opened up key funding sources in this area.

In Chapter 2, I theorize the ways private capital investment sustains a lucrative racialized industry as evident by the invention of the homeland security industry. Given that the War on Terror is the most privatized war in the history of the US, it allows for an essential site of analysis to explore the burgeoning industry created and sustained by a persistent and never-ending fear of Islamic terrorism. Terrorism has thus been redefined solely as a Muslim activity, further entrenching the deep racial dynamics of this construction. The scapegoating of all Muslims as suspected terrorists allows for the uninhibited development and justification for the increasingly privatized Homeland Security State. While there has been extensive focus on the role of private contractors in war operations abroad, there has been far less scholarly attention paid to the unchecked growth of the Homeland Security State domestically and the function of capital within this rapidly increasing institution. This dissertation fills this void. As an analytical framework, I argue that the domestic wing of the War on Terror, that is, the Homeland Security State is more appropriately conceived as a “racialized industry” that draws its sustenance from the nexus of private capital and state racism. Understanding the expansion of the Homeland Security State as a racialized industry attunes our attention sharply to the role of profit and its collusion with white supremacy. In recasting the

Homeland Security State as a racialized industry, we are then able to delineate the constitutive logics of racism and private capital as the primary motivating factors in the growth of this corporate bureaucracy.

In Chapter 3, I document and analyze 113 investigations of the Muslim community in Los Angeles. Using Los Angeles as a site to analyze such intrusive measures is important given that this city is home to the second largest Muslim population in the United States. Moreover, the Los Angeles Police Department was the first to launch a Joint Terrorism Task Force composed of FBI and police officials to work on combating terrorism. Incidentally, many of the investigations that I review demonstrate indiscriminate racial profiling of Muslims by the FBI. The singling out of Muslims for FBI investigations has often been governed by a loose set of guidelines without any supervisory oversight. While race as a precursor factor has not been historically allowed to be the basis of such investigations, the recent changes in the FBI Domestic Intelligence Operation Guidelines (DIOGS) demonstrates that this is no longer the case. More specifically, since the revisions to these guidelines in 2008 Muslims fall through a loop hole in being protected against racial profiling because investigations can be undertaken based upon religious criteria if there is a pressing issue of national security. This type of policy is widely accepted within US society, given the panic surrounding the possibility of future terrorist attacks. Pressure on the government to not let another 9/11 happen on their watch has in effect allowed for the pervasive use of preemptive policing. I argue that this preemptive policing allows the FBI to pursue fishing investigations within the Muslim community. By recasting the assault and



surveillance of the US Muslim community as a form of racial profiling, shifts our focus onto the very real role that race, and Orientalism plays in the harassment of Muslims in American life. Meanwhile, there is no accountability when these investigations turn up nothing to prosecute or pursue, which is often the case.

Another disturbing component of these investigations is that agent provocateurs are being sent into Muslim places of worship, most notably the case at the Irvine mosque. The paid FBI informant, and former criminal, tape recorded thousands of hours of private conversations with people he had met at the mosque. In March 2011, the ACLU and CAIR lodged a class action lawsuit against the FBI for its illegal intelligence gathering procedures that were conducted at the Irvine mosque alleging that it violated mosque attendees' religious freedom. While this incident is perhaps one of the most prominent cases known, other patterns that emerged in the data that I analyzed demonstrated that several mosques in the LA area were targeted for FBI investigations.

University student organizations were yet another frequent target of the FBI investigations, including reports that FBI agents were harassing and following Muslim group members of the Students for Justice in Palestine at one Southern California campus. Other prominent university organizations at other campuses experienced frequent visits from the FBI, in particular those that were involved in local Muslim Student Associations (MSA). At times the FBI investigations purported to be doing outreach to these groups, but often questioned members about their subjects of study, travels abroad, and affiliated networks.

The focus on domestic terrorism as a possible future threat is without historical merit, but the continued racial profiling of this population will only turn a sympathetic population into a target. Beyond the use of racial profiling, these investigations also demonstrate a horrific example of policing. The idea that keeping tabs on all Muslims will turn up plots of terrorism is likened to finding a “needle in a haystack”. This is a squandering of police resources, whereby they attempt to track most Muslims as opposed to examining those individuals that are engaging in illegal acts.

In Chapter Four, I analyze the contradictions present in the imperial deployment of women’s rights in justifying the “War on Terror” abroad alongside the widespread infringement on Muslim women’s civil liberties in the US diaspora. I theoretically juxtaposed the 9/11 backlash towards Muslim women with ideological discourses that posit Western nations as the embodiment of freedom from religious, sexual, ethnic/racial, and gender persecution.

While Muslim American communities have been frequent targets of repression, I argue that gender significantly structures the post-9/11 backlash in qualitatively different ways for men and women. That is, Muslim men have been characterized as dangerous, violent, and highly suspect within the popular imaginary and much of Western media, which has lead to a host of civil and human rights violations, largely through detainment, deportation, and surveillance. In contrast, Muslim women are consistently portrayed as voiceless victims without agency, further invisibilizing their own lived experiences of systemic discrimination as well as the ways in which diasporic Muslim women navigate and resist such structures of exclusion.

Media coverage has been scarce and attributes this patterned discrimination to the “Otherness” of Muslim women, in other words the visibility of their headscarves, without examining the social structures that contribute to an environment which allows for the occurrence of such discrimination. My research asserts that the use of women’s rights in the War on Terror is only circulated in relationship to the US’s strategic military interests, and is overlooked in its application to infringements on the civil rights of Muslim women in the US. This disconnect, between suppressing the rights of US Muslim women’s rights, while claiming to “free” Muslim women abroad, points to the contradictions inherent in the racialized-gendered project of the War on Terror.

It is important to understand why Muslim women are the disproportionate victims of harassment in the public sphere in contrast to Muslim men. One site that sheds light on this question is to examine the cultural stereotypes and representations of Muslim women. Popular Western perception of Muslim women has depicted Muslim women in two opposing constructions; on the one hand Muslim women have been viewed as passive and persistent victims of male violence or constructed as hypersexual, mysterious women subject to seclusion in the harem for the fulfillment of male sexual fantasies. These stereotypes simultaneously ascribe sexual exoticization and powerlessness to Muslim women which contributes to white men’s presumed power and desire to overpower Muslim women. Muslim women, therefore represent a domain to be conquered and are not capable of resisting male dominance as evidenced by their presumed inferior position to Muslim men in their own culture, which makes it seem that there will be no repercussions for white men who harass Muslim women.

Lastly, in Chapter Five, I explore what media outlets have dubbed the newest “Generation Islam”, the young cohort of Muslims that came of age during the War on Terror. This group of US Muslims “came of age” during 9/11, and represent the first generation of US Muslims to define their racial consciousness in a post-9/11 United States. The fixation on the politics of this generation of young adults is reflected in discussions of a looming homegrown terrorist threat. Despite scholarly claims that Arab American Muslims will return to their comfortable position as honorary whites, I demonstrate the Generation Islam has already staked out a position that articulates their racial politics as non-white. This stance has important political ramifications in that Muslims refuse an assimilative posture and see themselves in contradiction to the luxury of whiteness and its afforded privileges in the US. They have been critical of the racism and Islamophobia they have encountered in schools and the workplace. And of primary importance, they are more likely than any previous generation of Muslims in the US to see themselves as possessing a non-white identity. Further contributing to this trend, the most recent immigration patterns reveals that Arab immigrants are more likely to be Muslim and working class compared to previous generations of immigrants who were more likely to be middle class and Christian. This demonstrates that religious affiliation and class are significant indicators of racial identification among this population as well.

### **Aftermath of the War on Terror**

The War on Terror has been a war waged on two fronts; domestic and international. I have demonstrated the intricate ways Muslims have been repressed under the agenda of

the War on Terror. I have used the analytical frameworks of race, gender, and capitalism to understand how the War on Terror operates in the domestic arena of politics. It is clear that these axes of stratification are used by capital to further its interests in the War on Terror. The scapegoating of US Muslims as homegrown terrorist threats has led them to be singled out for horrific treatment since the attacks on 9/11. As a population, US Muslims have been subjected to institutional racial profiling and targeting while at the individual level they have experienced discrimination and harassment at their places of work, school, and mosques. The right wing continues to cast Muslims as a threat to the US, attacking their religious freedom and espousing a virulent Islamaphobia. This is particularly detrimental to a pluralistic society that purports to safeguard all of Americans rights.

There has been no basis in which to believe that US Muslims are or will be a significant terrorist threat to the US. Despite the long track record of peaceful Muslim existence in the US, there is still constant suspicion of this group. In line with my research findings that FBI investigations and surveillance of the Muslim community has only increased in recent years, there has been a more intense focus on domestic Muslims in politics as well. Most recently in March, 2011, there has been a congressional hearing convened by Rep. Peter King (R– NY) to assess the threat of homegrown terrorism. According to CBN news, “the House Homeland Security Committee was to investigate the extent of radicalization of the American Muslim community and that community's response” (Jessep 2011). Almost a decade has passed since the 9/11 attacks, but there has been no improvement in the status of Muslims. Two wars still wage in the Middle

East even when vast amounts of information have emerged contradicting the ‘weapons of mass destruction’ motive that was used to invade Iraq. Despite these truths surfacing, the occupation of Afghanistan and Iraq is still occurring, Guantanamo Bay is still open, and reports of soldier’s horrific torture and violence towards Muslim civilians in Afghanistan and Iraq carry on without question. How can the US expect Muslims to keep silent as they experience these large scale oppressive circumstances? In a similar vein, US Muslims and their leading organizations have consistently spoke out against Islamic fundamentalism and terrorism while experiencing constant scrutiny of their loyalty to the US. How long are they supposed to endure such mistreatment in the US for crimes they did not commit?

US Muslims have challenged their systemic discrimination without hesitation. One particular strong outcome of enduring such oppression has been Muslim organizations have built strong networks with other civil liberty organizations and have also been active in training the next generation of social minded activists. A steady current of volunteers and Muslims interested in civil rights advocacy and research has cropped up in response to such repression. Their passion has been ignited to fight for social change with real, meaningful impact for their community. Their future is at stake and they have met that challenge with a fierce opposition that is determined to not be silenced. Their opposition against the occupations in the Middle East along with a contestation of their treatment in the US is only gathering momentum and will continue to inspire the next generation of Muslims in their pursuit of social justice.

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## **Appendix A: QUESTIONNAIRE**

### **Demographics**

1. What is your name?
2. What is your age?
3. Male or Female
4. What is your birthplace?
5. How long have you lived in the U.S?
6. Where were your parents born?
7. What is your religion?
8. What is your highest schooling achieved?
9. What is your occupation?
10. What are your parents' occupations?

### **Race and Discrimination**

11. What is your race?
12. What box do you check or write on forms when they ask your race? Why?
13. What racial group do other people think you are from?
14. There have been discussions about whether Arabs are white or not, with different points of view. Do you think Arabs are white, not white, or something else?
15. Do you consider yourself to be a racial minority in the US? Why or why not?
16. Did you experience discrimination before 9/11? If yes, proceed to question 17. If no, skip to 18.
17. What areas did you experience discrimination before 9/11? Please give specific examples.
  - a. employment (getting a job, co-workers, boss)
  - b. public space (walking down the street, shopping malls, grocery stores)
  - c. airports, school (bias in curriculum, teachers, students)
  - d. law enforcement and government offices (FBI, police, immigration)
  - e. commercial transactions (business, getting service at stores, restaurants)
18. Did members of your family experience discrimination before 9/11? How?

19. Have you experienced discrimination since 9/11? If yes, was it more, less, or the same in comparison to pre-9/11? If yes, proceed to question 20. If no, skip to 21.
20. What areas did you experience discrimination after 9/11? Please give specific examples.
  - a. employment (getting a job, co-workers, boss, customers)
  - b. public space (walking down the street, shopping malls, grocery stores)
  - c. airports, school (bias in curriculum, teachers, students)
  - d. law enforcement or government offices (FBI, police, immigration)
  - e. commercial transactions (business, getting service at stores, restaurants)
21. Do you have any specific memories on the day or days after 9/11?
22. Has your community or mosque changed in any way after 9/11?
23. Have you or anyone in your family had to alter or change their names for fear of discrimination?
24. Do you feel comfortable telling people that you are Muslim? Why or why not?
25. Is Islam misrepresented in US culture? How so?
26. What do you think about the way Arab and Muslim people are portrayed on television?
27. Do you think the way television portrays Arab and Muslim people affects the way you are treated? How?
28. Did anyone in your family want to leave the US after 9/11?
29. Did your parents want you to go to college? Why or why not?
30. Do you feel your choice of job or career is limited after 9/11? Why?

**MEN – Gender and Family**

1. What are the difficulties that you feel Arab/Muslim men face in the US?

2. What are some of the differences in how you were raised being a boy versus a girl?
3. Do other people hold negative views of the ways women and men are raised in your culture or religion? How so?
4. What does it mean to you to be a Muslim man?
5. What is your family's view about marriage for you?
6. Are your views about what a Muslim man should be different than your parents? How?
7. Do you feel pressure to defend your culture or religion? How so?
8. What are the challenges Muslim women face in the US? How are they different than men's?
9. Do you think US culture holds a distorted view of the way women are treated in your culture or religion? Why?
10. Does your culture have different expectations for you than US culture does for men? What are those differences?
11. Have your views about your culture or religion changed since 9/11?
12. Do you believe women should wear hijab? Why or why not?

### **WOMEN – Gender and Family**

1. What are the difficulties that you feel Arab/Muslim women face in the US?
2. What are some of the differences in how you were raised being a girl versus a boy?
3. Do you feel other people view the ways women and men are raised in your culture negatively? Why?

4. What does it mean to you to be a Muslim woman?
5. What is your family's view about marriage for you?
6. Are your views about what a Muslim woman should be different than your parents? How?
7. Do you wear hijab? Why or why not?
  - a. If yes, have you experienced discrimination? Give examples.
8. Do you feel pressure to defend your culture or religion? How so?
9. What are the challenges Muslim men face in the US? How are they different than women's?
10. Do you think US culture holds a distorted view of the way women are treated in your culture or religion? Why?
11. Does your culture have different expectations for you than US culture does for women? What are those differences?
12. Have your views about your culture or religion changed since 9/11?
13. Do men in your family worry more about you being in public after 9/11?