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“Look, Mohammed the Terrorist Is Coming!”

*Cultural Racism, Nation-Based Racism,
and the Intersectionality of Oppressions after 9/11*

NADINE NABER

IN AN OCTOBER 2006 SPEECH to the National Endowment for Democracy, George Bush used the phrase “Islamofascism” in defining “the enemy of the nation” in “the war on terror.” He argued that “These extremists distort the idea of jihad into a call for terrorist murder against Christians and Jews and Hindus—and also against Muslims from other traditions, who they regard as heretics. The murderous ideology of the Islamic radicals is the great challenge of our new century. These militants are not just the enemies of America, or the enemies of Iraq, they are the enemies of Islam and the enemies of humanity” (Bush 2005). Bush’s spokesman, Tony Snow, explained that Bush uses the term “Islamofascists” in order to clarify that the war on terror does not apply to all or most Muslims, but to tiny factions (Nir 2006). Since the attacks of September

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11, 2001, Bush has repeatedly claimed that "this is not a war against Islam" and that the "war on terror" is a confrontation with a particularly militant Islamic ideology. Yet federal government discourses coupled with the local and global implementation of the "war on terror" tell a different story—a story of an open-ended arbitrary war against a wide range of individuals and communities.

This chapter provides a historically situated, ethnographic account of the ways in which "the war on terror" took on local form within the particular "anthropological location" of Arab immigrant communities in the San Francisco Bay Area of California within the first two years following September 11, 2001.¹ In part I, I will explore the ways in which dominant United States discourses on "terrorism" and "Islamic fundamentalism" were reproduced within 9/11-related immigration policies in California.²

I argue that official federal government policies such as special registration, detentions, and deportations have constituted particular subjects as potential enemies within the nation—specifically working-class nonresident Muslim immigrant men from Muslim majority countries. In this sense, a set of solid and fixed signifiers have come to demarcate the "Muslim Other/enemy within" (e.g., masculinity, foreignness, and Islam). Yet at the same time, a wide range of subject positions have been drawn into the "war on terror" through federal government policies, including Arab Christians, Iranian Jews, Latinos/as, and Filipinos/as, women, and queer people, among others, illustrating that dominant U.S. discourses on "Islam" and "Muslims" are not only malleable and fluid but are arbitrary, fictional, and imaginary at best.³ Here I draw upon Althusser's

1. Here I use Akhil Gupta and James Ferguson's term "anthropological locations." They define such "location work" as "an attentiveness to social, cultural, and political *location* and a willingness to work self-consciously at shifting or realigning our own location while building epistemological and political links with other locations" (1997).

2. Here I build upon Andrea Smith's notion of "racial logics." She argues against the assumption that all communities have been impacted by white supremacy in the same way. Instead, white supremacy operates through separate yet still related racial logics. Multiple logics operate depending on the context: "This framework does not assume that racism and white supremacy is enacted in a singular fashion; rather, white supremacy is constituted by separate and distinct, but still interrelated, logics" (2006, 67).

3. See Moallem (2002) for further analysis of discourses on "Islamic fundamentalism." She argues, for example, that discourses on "Islamic fundamentalism . . . [reduce] all Muslims to fundamentalists, and all fundamentalists to fanatical anti-modern traditionalists and terrorists,

(2003, 51; 1971, 121–73) definition of “the hailed individual.” He argues that capitalism constitutes us as subjects by “interpellating” us—calling out to us in the way a policeman calls out to someone in the street. Althusser writes, “the hailed individual will turn around. By this mere one-hundred-and-eighty-degree physical conversation, he becomes a subject” (1971, 164). As Althusser’s policeman creates a subject from the solitary walker in the street, one answerable to the law and to the state and system behind it, post–September 11 federal government and media discourses have created an arbitrary “potential terrorist” subject—intrinsically connected to “Islamic fundamentalism” and “terrorism.”⁴ I use the term “dominant U.S. discourses” to refer to systems of meaning about the “war on terror” produced among the federal government’s policy makers, the defense industry, the corporate media, and neoconservative think tanks. In the demarcation of boundaries between good versus evil and between “those who are with us” and “those who are with the terrorists,” dominant U.S. discourses on “terrorism” and “Islamic fundamentalism” have provided “definitions of patriotism, loyalty, boundaries and . . . belonging” (Said 2002, 578). They have also sparked nationalist sentiments that articulate subjects associated with “us” as those who are to be protected and those associated with “them” as those who are to be disciplined and punished.

In part 2, I explore the ways in which dominant U.S. discourses on terrorism were reproduced within the context of the post-9/11 backlash in the public sphere or in cases of harassment and hate crimes at school, at work, on the bus, and in the streets. I argue that the arbitrary, open-ended scope of the domestic “war on terror” emerged through the association between a wide range of signifiers such as particular names (e.g., Mohammed), dark skin, particular forms of dress (e.g., a headscarf or a beard) and particular nations of origin (e.g., Iraq or Pakistan) as signifiers of an imagined “Arab/Middle Eastern/Muslim” enemy.

even as it attributes a culturally aggressive and oppressive nature to all fundamentalist men, and a passive, ignorant, and submissive nature to all fundamentalist women.

4. Here I use Kent Ono’s term, “potential terrorists.” Ono argues that “potential terrorists” serves as a useful concept to begin to address political and media discourses that produce a creative, if fictional, ‘network’ or interconnection along racial, gender, national, sexual, political, and ideological lines. Hate crimes, surveillance by the repressive apparatus of the state, and surveillance and disciplining technologies have erected a powerful discursive barrier to full participation in society by those marked as ‘potential terrorist’” (2005, 443).

In this sense, the category "Arab/Middle Eastern/Muslim" operated as a constructed category that lumps together several incongruous subcategories (such as Arabs and Iranians, including Christians, Jews, and Muslims, and all Muslims from Muslim-majority countries, as well as persons who are perceived to be Arab, Middle Eastern, or Muslim, such as South Asians, including Sikhs and Hindus).⁵ Persons perceived to be "Arab/Middle Eastern/Muslim" were targeted by harassment or violence based on the assumption "they" embody a potential for terrorism and are thus threats to U.S. national security and deserving of discipline and punishment. Although these markers (name, skin color, dress, and nation of origin) were not the only signifiers that hailed individuals into associations with "Islamic fundamentalism" or "terrorism," they were among those most prevalent within my research participants' encounters with the post-9/11 backlash. While these signifiers were not mutually exclusive and operated relationally, particular signifiers were more salient than others, depending on the person or the situation. For example, in some contexts, a name such as Mohammed coupled with a beard signified the "Arab/Middle Eastern/Muslim" identity and in other contexts, it was nation of origin coupled with dark skin and a form of dress that signified the "Arab/Middle Eastern/Muslim."

I further argue that the post-9/11 backlash has been constituted by an interplay between two racial logics, cultural racism and nation-based racism (see footnote 3). I refer to "cultural racism" as a process of othering that constructs perceived cultural (e.g., Arab), religious (e.g., Muslim), or civilizational (e.g., Arab and/or Muslim) differences as natural and insurmountable.⁶ Here, I build

5. The category "Arab/Middle Eastern/Muslim" as a signifier of the "enemy of the nation" was not produced after 9/11 but has permeated government and corporate media discourses for decades. After the attacks of September 11, 2001, the subcategory "South Asian" has been encompassed within dominant U.S. discourses on the "Arab/Middle Eastern/Muslim" enemy (Rana and Rosas 2006; Maira and Shihade 2006). Federal government policies, for example, tended particularly to target Arabs and South Asians, and hate crime incidents following 9/11 throughout the U.S. disproportionately targeted Arabs and South Asians, illustrating that Arabs and South Asians have been similarly associated with "Islamic fundamentalism," "terrorism," and the "enemy of the nation" in the context of the "war on terror." Because my research did not include a focus on South Asian communities, I will focus specifically on how Arab and Arab American research participants were perceived to be associated with the notion of an "Arab/Middle Eastern/Muslim" enemy, even though this term has taken on different form in other contexts.

6. See Moallem (2005), Balibar (1991), and Goldberg (1993).

upon Mino Moallem's analysis of contexts in which religion may be considered "as a key determinant in the discourse of racial inferiority" (2005, 10) and Balibar's argument that "race," when coded as culture, can be constituted by a process that makes no reference to claims of biological superiority, but instead associates difference and inferiority with spiritual inheritance (1992, 25). In such instances, "culture can also function like a nature, and it can in particular function as a way of locking individuals and groups a priori into a genealogy, into a determination that is immutable and intangible in origin" (Balibar 1992, 22). As in European histories of anti-Semitism, histories of Islamophobia have deployed biological features in the racialization process. In this analysis, as in European histories of anti-Semitism, biological features are deployed, but "within the framework of cultural racism" (Balibar 1992, 22).⁷ In other words, bodily stigmata become signifiers of a spiritual inheritance as opposed to a biological heredity (Balibar 1992, 22). In the context of my research, the term "cultural racism" refers to cases in which violence or harassment was justified on the basis that persons who were perceived to be "Arab/Middle Eastern/Muslim" were rendered as inherently connected to a backward, inferior, and potentially threatening Arab culture, Muslim religion, or Arab Muslim civilization.

I use the term "nation-based racism" to refer to the construction of particular immigrants as different than and inferior to whites based on the conception that "they" are foreign and therefore embody a potentiality for criminality and/or immorality and must be "evicted, eliminated, or controlled."⁸ In the context of the "war on terror," the interplay between culture-based racism and nation-based racism has articulated subjects perceived to be "Arab/Middle Eastern/Muslim" not only as a moral, cultural, and civilizational threat to the "American" nation, but also as a security threat. The mapping of cultural racism onto nation-based racism has been critical in generating support for the idea that

7. See Stockton (1994), Rana and Rosas (2006), and Moallem (2005) for further analysis of cultural racism and the relationship between anti-Semitism and Islamophobia. Moallem, for example, argues that "this imputation of an intrinsic nature to a cultural or religious system has roots in European race theory, in particular, in the discourse of anti-Semitism" (10).

8. Although the construction of an Arab Muslim Other has permeated dominant U.S. national discourses for decades, it became increasingly pronounced—and expanded in scope—in the aftermath of September 11 (Ono and Sloop 2002, 35). See Abraham (1989), Joseph (1999), Saliba (1999), and Suleiman (1989) for analyses of the history of Arab American marginalization.

going to war "over there" and enacting racism and immigrant exclusion "over here" are essential to the project of protecting national security. Under the guise of a "war on terror," cultural and nation-based racism have operated transnationally to justify U.S. imperialist ambitions and practices as well as the targeting and profiling of persons perceived to be "Arab/Middle Eastern/Muslim" in the diaspora.⁹

Throughout my field sites, "racism" did not operate as a separate, mutually exclusive, axis of power. Rather, it intersected with multiple axes of oppression, such as class, gender, and sexuality. According to Linda Burnham, the idea of a simultaneity of oppressions "emerged among women of color feminists in fierce contention with the notion that racial identity trumps all other identities and that the struggle against racism should take precedence over all other forms of resistance to inequity" (2001, 9). My research illustrates that intersections between race, class, gender, and sexuality produced a range of engagements with "racism" among my research participants, depending on their social positioning. For example, the reproduction of government policies and media discourses in day-to-day interactions at work, on the bus, or on the streets were more violent and life threatening in working class urban locations than in upper-middle-class locations (Naber 2006). Because of their class privilege and the longer duration in which they had been in the United States, middle- to upper-class research participants had access to social, cultural, and economic privileges that allowed them to distance themselves from proximity to the "potential terrorists" compared to their working-class counterparts. Alternately, working-class immigrants were often perceived to be in closer proximity to "geographies of terror" (i.e., Muslim-majority nations) and were therefore perceived to be in closer proximity to the "potential terrorists" than their middle-class counterparts.¹⁰ Throughout my field site, socioeconomic class intersected with race

9. See Robert Young for further analysis of the concept of "imperialism" (2001, 25–44). Also see Harvey (2003), who maintains that the New Imperialism represents U.S. efforts to resort to military power in the process of controlling the world's oil resources and to ensure continued U.S. dominance in the global arena. Also see Rashid Khalidi, *Resurrecting Empire* for a historical analysis of Western intervention and empire in the Middle East (2004).

10. Here I build upon Tadiar's theorization of racism in the context of the "war on terror." She argues, "from the dominant cultural logic of the U.S. state, terrorism embodies an other relation to death, and it is on this basis that racism operates against other peoples who are deemed close to this other relation to death epitomized by the would be suicide bomber" (2005).

and gender in that dominant discourses tended to construct working-class masculinities as agents of terrorism and working-class femininities as passive victims of “the terrorists.”

RESEARCH METHODS

This essay is based on ethnographic research among Arab immigrants and Arab Americans in the San Francisco Bay Area between September 2002 and September 2003. Most of the research took place among two Arab/Arab American community networks, one that includes recent Arab Muslim immigrants and refugees from Iraq, Yemen, Palestine, and North Africa living in poverty and the other, middle- and upper-class professionals who are predominantly first and second generation and include Muslims and Christians from the Levant. The research entailed intensive interviews and participant observation with thirty board members representing eight religious, civil rights, and community-based organizations that serve Arabs/Arab Americans among their constituencies.¹¹ I conducted intensive interviews with six lawyers whose work was vital to community-based efforts in response to the anti-Arab/South Asian/Muslim backlash in the San Francisco Bay Area in the aftermath of September 11.¹² I also

11. I selected organizations that have played key roles in responding to the post-September 11 backlash, attracted the most members, and have the greatest membership size. I also selected organizations that were diverse, focusing on a range of issues that were educational, religious, cultural, and political and serving persons from various generations, socioeconomic class backgrounds, and countries or origin within the Arab world.

12. The lawyers who participated in this research worked on a wide range of issues and projects in solidarity with Arab and Muslim immigrant communities on a day-to-day basis. One lawyer, for example, was the co-chair of the Bay Area Arab American Attorneys Association and served via mayoral appointment on the San Francisco Human Rights Commission. The program director at the San Francisco Bay Area chapter of the National Lawyers Guild also participated in this research and helped to develop a “Know Your Rights” campaign. Several lawyers worked closely with special registration cases. Another lawyer helped organize a project that documented and monitored INS abuses in the city of San Francisco. A lawyer who was appointed as the Human Rights Commissioner of the city of San Francisco and participated in this research also organized a series of hearings where individuals targeted by the post-9/11 backlash narrated and recorded their stories.

conducted intensive interviews and participant observation among fifty community members from various class, generational, and religious backgrounds and various countries of origin in the Arab world.

Considering that the backlash had an impact not only on Arabs and Arab Americans, my research focused on the experiences of Arabs and Arab Americans as one among other entry points into interrogating the complex, nuanced ways in which the post–September 11 backlash operated. I thus conducted participant observation and open-ended interviews among diverse activists from various community-based organizations, multiracial coalitions, progressive organizations, and antiwar coalitions, including the American Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee, San Francisco Chapter; the Women of Color Resource Center; United Communities Against War and Racism; the National Lawyers Guild; Nosej; Asian Pacific Islanders for Community Empowerment; Asian Pacific Islanders Against War; La Raza Centro Legal; the Alliance of South Asians Taking Action; and the Committee for Human Rights in the Philippines.

HISTORICAL CONTEXT

On a global scale, the repeated framing of the aftermath of September 11 as an endless, fluid war has facilitated the Bush administration’s conflation of diverse individuals, movements, and historical contexts such as bin Laden, Saddam Hussein, any and all forms of Palestinian resistance to Israeli occupation, Hizballah, Hamas, and al-Qaeda under the rubric “Islamic fundamentalists/Muslim terrorists.”¹³ It has also justified war on Afghanistan and Iraq, support for Israeli

13. The differences between Hizballah and al-Qaeda affirm this point. Hizballah is “a political party” and “a powerful actor in Lebanese politics” and “a provider of important social services” (Deeb 2006). According to Deeb, Hizballah’s militia arose to battle Israel’s occupation of southern Lebanon in 1982–2000 and to advocate for Lebanon’s disenfranchised Shi’i Muslim community. Hizballah represents approximately 40 percent of the Lebanese population and has seats in the Lebanese government and a radio and a satellite TV station, as well as various social development programs. There is no international consensus that Hizballah is a terrorist organization, and the European Union does not list Hizballah as a terrorist organization. Al-Qaeda is an international alliance of militant Islamist organizations, a fringe group and, a diffuse movement, comprising individual nonstate actors or small cells operating independently.

occupation, Israel's war on Lebanon, and the transfer to the Philippines of U.S. troops who have enacted human rights violations against local people under the guise of "saving innocent people from terrorism." Within the geographic borders of the United States, the "war on terror" took on local form in the expansion of anti-immigrant discourses and practices beyond the axes of "illegal criminal" to "evil terrorist enemy within." On April 6, 2002, former attorney general John Ashcroft succinctly captured the federal government's framing of the aftermath of September 11 as a war against terrorists who are everywhere and anywhere with the following statement: "In this new war our enemy's platoons infiltrate our borders, quietly blending in with visiting tourists, students and workers. They move unnoticed through our cities, neighborhoods and public spaces. . . . Their tactics rely on evading recognition at the border and escaping detection within the United States" (Ashcroft 2002).

September 11-related immigration policies have targeted immigrants who fit amorphous characterizations of a "terrorist profile" through FBI investigations and spying, INS police raids, detentions, deportations, and interrogations of community organizations and activists. The INS targeted noncitizens from Muslim-majority countries as well as some individuals from Muslim-majority countries who were naturalized. These tactics were part of the federal government's implementation of a "wide range of domestic, legislative, administrative, and judicial measures in the name of national security and the war on terrorism" (Cainkar 2003, 1).¹⁴ The "war on terror" also justified an intensification of anti-immigrant policies that affected a range of immigrant communities, particularly those historically racialized as nonwhite. For example, in the months following September 11 in San Francisco, the INS passed as local police in an effort to uphold Ashcroft's message that undocumented immigrants are the enemy, and members of local law enforcement are part of the solution. Reflecting on this period, Rosa Hernandez, a Latina community activist, reported in an interview that "the INS was engaging in random raids—at supermarkets, bus stops, and among unlicensed flower vendors." In

14. Cainkar argues: "These measures have included mass arrests, secret and indefinite detentions, prolonged detention of 'material witnesses,' closed hearing and use of secret evidence. . . . FBI home and work visits, seizures of property, removals of aliens with technical visa violations and mandatory special registration" (2003, 1).

February 2002, the federal government officially took over airport security. In the San Francisco Bay Area, this meant marking Filipino/a airport screeners as scapegoats in the attacks and laying them off en masse. Improving security meant replacing noncitizen workers with citizens who tended to be retired white military and police who received better pay, more benefits, and more respect. Several scholars and activists have added that the “war on terror” has legitimized an intensification of police brutality within working-class communities of color, exposed low-income students of color to unprecedented levels of military recruitment, and forced massive budget cuts that have disproportionately diminished social services and funding for schools in low-income communities of color.¹⁵

1. ANTI-IMMIGRANT LEGISLATION IN CALIFORNIA

Behtan Safeed,¹⁶ a leading Iranian American immigrant-rights lawyer who represented more than six hundred clients in cases related to the post-9/11 backlash, summarized the impact of federal government policies on persons perceived to be Arab, Middle Eastern, South Asian, and/or Muslims as follows:

They locked our men and our boys and our senior citizens away for the most ridiculous charges. A lot of them had valid visas. The edict that came from Attorney General Ashcroft, from the Department of Justice, was “guilty until proven innocent.” No one who was held received a Notice to Appear. Even if they were served a bond for a Bond Hearing, it was going to be days—if not weeks—and in some cases months away, for no reason. It happened in stages: first came the PATRIOT Act; then came the first 5,000 men placed on a list; then came random FBI investigations; then came missing placed in lock down for 24 hours at a time while their families didn’t know anything about them.

My research indicates that the FBI would either stop by a person’s house without previous warning or arrange for a phone interview. In the Tenderloin, a

15. Rania Masri argues that “People of color communities comprise 60 percent of the U.S. military’s front line: African Americans, Latinos, and, let us not forget, Native American” (2003).

16. I use pseudonyms to protect the confidentiality of research participants.

low-income neighborhood where several thousand recent Arab Muslim immigrants reside, many people received consecutive phone calls from the FBI.¹⁷ On several occasions, the FBI went from building to building and did not explain that the interviews were voluntary. While lawyers, social service providers, and community activists who worked closely with the individuals and communities disproportionately targeted by 9/11-related legislation articulated the *kinds* of anti-immigrant measures that the federal government implemented with ease, their explanations of exactly *whom* these measures targeted were less explicit. The range of explanations they provided about exactly *who* was targeted, and the inconsistencies in their narratives, epitomizes this point. Consider the following three quotes. As Lana Salam,¹⁸ an immigrant-rights lawyer and community activists explained, “I’d have to say that they focused on people with student visas and nonimmigrant visas—although it was also more broad-based and included people with green cards and U.S. citizenship. It also focused on known Muslim thinkers, writers, and clerics. It seemed focused mostly on Muslims—people who went to Friday prayers. I think they

17. The Tenderloin, where over 70 percent of the residents live in low-income households, is one of San Francisco’s most impoverished neighborhoods. It is an urban inner city, densely inhabited, low-income neighborhood with many homeless people and single-resident-occupancy (SRO) hotels. Within San Francisco, the Tenderloin is where the greatest incidents of homicides, aggravated assaults, and drug use take place. Despite these statistics, over 25,000 people live in the Tenderloin. Most Arab Muslims living in the Tenderloin came to the United States from Iraq, Egypt, Tunis, Morocco, and Yemen. While no research exists on the number of Arab Muslims in the Tenderloin neighborhood, community activists agree that there are approximately 100 Yemeni families and over 1,500 Yemeni men who have citizenship or green cards and are in the country supporting their parents, siblings, wives, and/or children who live in Yemen. The majority of Arab Muslims in the Tenderloin are single men who share studio apartments with two to four other single men. In addition to working within the Tenderloin, I also conducted interviews and participant observation among a group of Iraqi refugees who had recently moved out of this neighborhood to Santa Clara, California, where they were granted better housing conditions through the Section 8 Certificate and Housing Program.

18. Lana Salam was the director of legal education and outreach for the American Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee directly after September 11 and played a key role in community education on legal topics relevant to a post-9/11 political landscape. She also organized a legal workshop on FBI questioning among local Arab American communities when the FBI starting questioning thousands of Arab men.

were looking for people with Islamic affiliations. I specifically recall that they interviewed Hamzah Yousef.”¹⁹

Community leader and activist Ahmad Masri, a university lecturer and the director of two Muslim American organizations, explained, “Definitely, the policies impacted immigrants more than indigenous Muslims. That doesn’t mean that in the long run the indigenous Muslims aren’t going to be dragged into it, willingly or unwillingly. Among immigrants, the impact on Arabs was higher than other immigrant communities, with the exception of Pakistanis, who were also included in this.” According to immigrant rights lawyer Behtan Safeed, “It was mostly Muslims [who] were detained, but there were Christians among them. There was an Iranian Armenian family. There were Jews among them. The gamut. The ones that look darker were more targeted. There was a particular age group I saw—twenty-somethings and forty-somethings, but I also saw sixteen-year-olds and I saw sixty-four-year-olds.” These quotes reflect a broader pattern emergent throughout the San Francisco Bay Area within the first two years following 9/11. While particular persons were disproportionately targeted by federal government policies (most were Arab or South Asian and most were Muslim), the Bush administration’s “terrorist profile” had the potential to single out a wide range of individuals, including Arab and Pakistani Muslims, non-Arab/non-South Asian Muslims; Christians and Jews; aliens, permanent residents, and citizens; and young men in addition to teenagers and the elderly.

A closer exploration of the process of special registration, part of the National Security Entry-Exit Registration System, exemplifies the arbitrary scope of the federal government’s “terrorist profile.” Special registration required non-resident men, such as students, visitors, and those conducting business in the U.S. from North Korea and twenty-four Muslim majority countries, to be fingerprinted, photographed, and interviewed.²⁰ According to Ashcroft, those required to register were “individuals of elevated national security concern who stay in the

19. Hamza Yusuf is a white American convert to Islam. In some cases, he is referred to as the “Great White Sheikh.” See <http://www.islamonline.net/english/views/2001/11/article8.shtml>.

20. Under Special Registration, the U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement established mechanisms to track nonimmigrants who enter the United States each year by interviewing immigrants in person and restricting entry and departure to specially designated ports (see U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement 2006).

country for more than thirty days" (Ashcroft 2002). According to activists who monitored the process of Special Registration, the interviews entailed questions about the immigrants' family members and their names and addresses, their e-mail address, the names and addresses of their contacts in the U.S., and a form of identification other than their passport and immigration documents. Interviewers tended to ask how the person arrived in the United States and when as well as whether they have any connection to any "terrorist organizations" (Revolutionary Worker Online 2002). They asked about the interviewees' religious and political affiliations and about the mosques they attended. Interviewees were digitally photographed and fingerprinted—and the photo and prints were processed against various criminal and immigration service databases. Special registration resulted in the deportation of more than thirteen thousand individuals. Not one terrorist suspect was found in the process.²¹

The Bush administration purported that special registration would assist the federal government in locating "militant Islamic fundamentalists." That Iranian Jews were detained along with Muslims from Iran, Iraq, Libya, Sudan, and Syria during the first phase of Special Registration in Los Angeles (Jan. 27, 2003 and Feb. 7, 2003) is but one example of the arbitrary identity of groups linked to "militant Islam." Sources from the Iranian Jewish community said that up to a dozen Iranian Jews had been detained or arrested, though one attorney in Los Angeles had stated that he was trying to raise bail of \$1,500 per person for thirty-five Iranian Jews. Moreover, eight of the Jewish detainees had moved from Iran to Israel and later came to the United States, and many held Israeli citizenship. Zvi Vapni, the Israeli deputy consul general in Los Angeles, said he had received complaints that Iranian Jews faced "very hard conditions," perhaps because of overcrowding, and had conveyed the consulate's concern to the INS (Fitleberg 2002).

Referencing the 9/11 attacks, Attorney General Ashcroft determined that "certain nonimmigrant aliens require closer monitoring." Thus, policy makers have named particular Muslims from particular countries of origin as those who fit this profile. Yet because the enforcement of such policies has been directed at such a broad range of identities, the question of exactly *who* these

21. See Rana and Rosas's argument that "'Muslim' has come to represent an ambiguous racial community that encompasses persons perceived to belong to the homogenous, fictional category, 'Arab-Middle Eastern-Muslim,' South Asians (including Christians, Hindus, Muslims and Sikhs), and possibly Latinas/os, and African Americans" (2006).

“immigrants” *are* remains unclear. On the one hand, the category “Muslim” is signified by fixed, solid referents (i.e., Muslim men from Muslim majority countries). On the other hand, it is open-ended and arbitrary in its potential to draw a wide range of subjects into association with “terrorism.” Paralleling the Bush administration’s “endless, fluid war,” 9/11-related immigration policies have targeted persons who tend to “fit” the federal government’s profile of a “potential terrorist” (i.e., Muslim immigrant men from Muslim majority countries), yet at the same time, they have rendered a range of subject positions as deserving of discipline and punishment under the guise of the “war on terror.” This, in turn, facilitates any abuse or “defense” against them.

2. EMBLEMS OF TERRORISM: THE OPEN-ENDED
TERRORIST ON THE STREETS

Paralleling federal government policies, day-to-day forms of harassment, violence, and intimidation in the public sphere also operated to hail a range of subject positions into discourses of “Islamic fundamentalism” and “terrorism.” Consider the series of murders that took place within weeks after 9/11. On September 15, 2001, a Sikh man, Balbir Singh Sodhi, was gunned down in Mesa, Arizona, outside his gas station. According to Anya Cordell, who launched the *Campaign for Collateral Compassion* in February 2002 to bring attention to murders associated with September 11, Sodhi’s killer spent the hours before the murder in a bar, bragging of his intention to “kill the ragheads responsible for September 11” (Hanania 2004). On September 15, 2001, a forty-six-year-old Pakistani, Waqar Hasan of Dallas, Texas, was shot to death in his convenience store. The man convicted of murdering him was also convicted of murdering Vasudev Patel days later in Mesquite, Texas. Anya Cordell explained that he admitted to authorities to blinding a third victim, a Bangladeshi, in between the murders of Hasan and Patel and that after his arrest he stated, “I did what every American wanted to do after September 11th but didn’t have the nerve.” On September 15, 2001, Adel Karas, a Coptic Christian grocer, was killed in his store in San Gabriel, California. On September 21, 2001, Ali Almansoop, a Yemeni American citizen and father of four, was murdered in his Detroit, Michigan, home (Hanania 2004). These murders took place within a broader context of a 1,600 percent increase in hate-based incidents against persons perceived to be Arab, Muslim, or South Asian in the United States (between 2000

to 2001).²² These incidents illustrate how racialization within the context of the post-9/11 backlash operated throughout the United States to constitute South Asians from diverse religious backgrounds, Arab Christians, and Muslim immigrants from Muslim-majority countries as somehow intrinsically connected to Islamic fundamentalism and terrorism.

Among Arab immigrants and Arab Americans in the San Francisco Bay Area, September 11–related hate crimes and other forms of harassment in the public sphere disproportionately targeted persons who displayed what dominant government and corporate media discourses often constructed as emblems of a constructed “Arab/Middle Eastern/Muslim” identity, including particular kinds of names, appearances, or nations of origin that signified an association with the enemy of the nation. Such identity markers hailed multiple subject positions into the “war on terror” through hate crimes and various forms of violence, harassment, and intimidation in the public sphere—at school, on the bus, at work, at home, and on the streets.

Names and Naming: “Look, Mohammed the Terrorist Is Coming!”

Repeatedly throughout my research, participants’ narratives on harassment in the public sphere were stories in which particular names operated as signifiers of an “Arab/Middle Eastern/Muslim” identity. Teachers and youth group leaders agreed that boys with names such as Mohammed or Osama were disproportionately harassed at school. Consider the following stories. Nayla, a Muslim American youth group leader, recalled an incident where school kids would frequently shout, “Look, Mohammed the terrorist is coming!” when a young boy named Mohammed would enter the playground. Amira, a college student, recalled reading the words, “I hate Mohammed. All Mohammeds should die,” on a wall outside the Recreation and Sports Facilities Building at the University of California, Berkeley. Reflecting on difficulties that he and his wife faced in deciding whether or not to name their son Mohammed, Saleh, a small business owner, explained: “After September 11 no one would have thought about naming their son Mohammed in this country if they wanted him to be treated like

22. A press release posted on the American Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee website from Congresswoman’s Marcy Kaptur’s office states: “The FBI reports that the number of anti-Muslim incidents rose 1600% from 2000 to 2001, largely due to post-9/11 backlash” (Kaptur 2003).

a normal person. We thought about what would happen to our son in school, and how he would be discriminated against growing up. But we felt that this is our religion and our culture, and long before September 11 we decided that if we had a second son, we would name him Mohammed. We decided not to change what we stood for, but imagine what happens when your neighbor says, 'what is that cute little boy's name?' You say 'Mohammed' and they say, 'Oh . . . ' This is how September 11 impacted even the relationship between you and your neighbor."

Several Christian Arabs and Arab Americans with whom I interacted were similarly targeted based on associations between their name and the notion of a "potential enemy of the nation." In such cases, Christians were perceived to be Muslim because they had Arabic names, illustrating the ways that federal government and corporate media discourses that conflate the categories "Arab" and "Muslim" take on local form in the public sphere. A youth group leader at a Roman Catholic Arab American church reported that after their son Osama was repeatedly called "Muslim terrorist," his parents changed his name to "Sam." Recurring throughout the period of my research were similar stories of individuals who changed their Arabic names to anglicized names, including an Arab American Christian who changed his name from Fouad to Freddy after facing 9/11-related harassment. Misidentifications of Arab Christians as Muslims reify the absurd generalizations and misconceptions underlying hegemonic constructions of the category "Arab" or "Muslim." They also reify that encounters with racism are informed by fiction and comprise a wide variety of complexities and contradictions. As Amitava Kumar puts it, "In those dark chambers, what is revealed always hides something else" (2000, 74). In the cases of misidentified Arab Christians, the simple reality that not all Arabs are Muslim and not all Muslims are Arabs is hidden and erased from history.

Like federal government legislation, harassment against "potential terrorist men" in the public sphere operated within the logic of nation-based racism that considers discipline and punishment the "proper mechanism to set the tide of criminality intrinsic to them" (Ono and Sloop 2002, 33). Nation-based racism is not specific to the post-9/11 environment, but it has been critical to the justification of many cases of immigrant exclusion by the idea that citizens should be protected against "others" who are "potentially or already criminal" (33), or in this case, terrorists. Ono and Sloop argue that the post-Cold War period has witnessed a proliferation of the notion of the enemy of the nation and that discourse is constituted by the idea that "enemies threaten the moral, cultural, and political fabric of

the nation state and must be evicted, eliminated, or controlled. . . . The production and proliferation of new enemies to blame, to oppose, and to conquer is part of a distinct contemporary culture" (35). Referring to histories of Asian immigrant exclusion, Lisa Lowe (1994, 55) writes that nation-based racism has operated through the construction of a binary opposition between patriot and enemy. After 9/11, in the process of legitimizing imperialist ambitions through appeals to nationalist narratives about protecting national security, dominant U.S. discourses have refashioned post-Cold War binaries from patriot versus enemy to those who are with us versus those who are with the terrorists.²³ Names signifying an "Arab/Middle Eastern/Muslim" identity rendered particular men and boys at once foreign, or alien, to the nation, but at the same time connected, in the most familial and instinctive terms, to "the terrorists." In this sense, nation-based racism conflates "Arab/Middle Eastern/Muslim" masculinities with an inherent potential for violence and terrorism and legitimizes the discipline and punishment of "Arab/Middle Eastern/Muslim" masculinities "over there" (in the countries the United States is invading) and "over here" (within the geographic borders of the U.S.). Moreover, that Saleh, in the narrative above, reconsidered whether to name his son Mohammed indicates that he came to understand that he was required to engage with the hegemonic conflation of names such as Mohammed with Muslim masculinity and terrorism. In this sense, the interpellation of subjects through hegemonic discourses produced disciplinary effects in them. While the conflation of the "Arab/Middle Eastern/Muslim" and "terrorism" brought into play dualistic mechanisms of exclusion (patriot vs. enemy/with us or against us), it simultaneously induced within individuals a state of consciousness that I refer to as "internment of the psyche" (Naber 2006). I use this term to refer to the ways in which engagements with racialization produced a sense of internal incarceration among my research participants that was emotive and manifested in the fear that at any moment one could be harassed, beaten up, picked up, locked up, or disappeared.

Although gender permeated nation-based racism through the conflation of particular names with Muslim masculinity and terrorism, a mapping of nation-based racism onto cultural racism also operated to articulate "Arab/Middle Eastern/Muslim" masculinity as inherently violent toward women. One cab driver

23. See Howell and Shryock (2003) for further analysis on the implications of the binary "those who are with us and those who are with terrorists" on Arab American identities and experiences.

told a story of his passengers' reaction to him after they read that his name was Mohammed: "Once, a woman got in my car. She looked at me, then read my name, then asked me if I was Muslim. When I said 'yes' she replied, 'how many girls have you killed today?'" In this case, a form of cultural racism that essentializes Muslimness as if the association between violence against women and Muslim masculinity is natural and insurmountable constitutes the articulation of Muslim masculinity as intrinsically connected to misogynist savagery. The woman's reaction to the cab driver reifies what Moallem refers to as "representations of Islamic fundamentalism in the West" that are "deeply influenced by the general racialization of Muslims in a neo-racist idiom which has its roots in cultural essentialism and a conventional Eurocentric notion of people without history."

Here, "religion" functions like a nature (Balibar 1999, 22) as "Mohammed," like the Osama and Fouad references above, becomes monstrously subversive, a metonymic source of sedition and danger within the nation, as well as to U.S. "interests" and to "American" bodies, white and nonwhite.

Appearances: Unveiling the Terrorist's Daughter

The intersection of race and gender was also apparent in the harassment of women who wore a headscarf. A general consensus among community leaders was that federal government policies disproportionately targeted men while hate crimes and incidents of harassment in the public sphere disproportionately targeted women. As Farah, a Muslim American woman community activist put it, "Women who wear *hijab* were more of a target because they're more visible than Muslim men in public. The awareness that they were in more danger and were more impacted than men could be seen by all of the events that were organized in solidarity with veiled women in response to the backlash. There were days of solidarity organized across the nation." Several cases in which employers fired women from their jobs for wearing headscarves instilled a sense of apprehension about the acceptability of discrimination against Muslim women in the public sphere among several of my research participants. As Manal, a university student explained, "We felt supported, but at the same time, there was a concern for our safety. I had never carried pepper spray. I started carrying pepper spray after 9/11 and was really being mindful of my surroundings. I remember the Muslim Student Association meetings—afterwards everyone would make sure that no one was walking alone to their cars." Several Muslim

American community leaders recalled cases in which women debated whether they should remove their scarves. As Amal, another university student put it, "I knew I had to prepare for at least some kind of backlash because I was visually identifiable. My mother, who doesn't cover, specifically told me 'Don't go outside for a month or two. Wait till things die down.' I was like, 'I shouldn't hide. I shouldn't be scared or restrain my lifestyle because of ignorance.'" In this sense, considerations of whether and to what extent one should wear or remove a headscarf or go out in public generated an "internment of the psyche" or the awareness that one must become habitually concerned about hegemonic misinterpretations and mistranslations.

While "Arab Muslim" masculinities were produced as the subjects of discourses that construct their primary and stable identity as violent agents of terrorism and/or misogyny, or the "true" enemy of the nation, "Arab Muslim" femininities, signified by the headscarf, were articulated as extensions of those practices.²⁴ In several cases, that headscarves signified an identification that transformed particular women into daughters or sisters of terrorists in general, or Osama or Saddam in particular, exemplifies one of the ways in which gender permeated nation-based racism in the context of the "war on terror." Lamia, a community activist summarized what she witnessed through her work among Arab Muslim youth in the Tenderloin, "After September 11, girls who wear *hijab* received lots of harassment on the bus, at school and on the street. People would try and pull their *hijab* off." The following excerpt from a group interview with Iraqi youth elucidates Lamia's point:

Maha: "My sister was coming home from school one day and people were calling her, 'Osama's daughter.'"

Salma: "At school, kids take off their shirts and put them on their heads and say, 'We look like Osama's daughter now. We look like you now.' Some kids would come up to us and say, 'Why don't you take it off? Are you still representing Osama?'"

24. For further analysis on representations of femininity as extensions of masculinity, "abject beings," or the construction of the feminine as objects that supply the site through which the phallus penetrates, see Butler (1993, 56–60). Also see Tadiar (2002, 5) for a discussion of the ways that women within a colonialist, patriarchal society are not only imprisoned within particular ideals about gender, but also function as useful objects that serve patriarchal, national, and international structures and processes.

In this narrative, young Arab Muslim girls are constructed as though patriarchal kinship ties are the sole determinants of their identities. Reduced to "daughters of Osama," they are transformed into the "property," "the harmonious extension" (Shohat and Stam 1994) of the enemy of the nation within, or symbols that connect others to the "real actors" or "terrorists" but who do not stand on their own (and lack agency). The "daughter of a terrorist" metaphor also articulates a condemnation of Muslim women for veiling.²⁵ Reifying the logic of nation-based racism that constructs a binary between us versus them and good, or moral Americans versus bad immoral potential criminal terrorists, Salma's peer not only asks her to "unveil" but also reduces her realm of possibilities to either "taking off her veil" or "representing Osama." For Salma's peer, either she is unveiled/with us, or she is with terrorism. In this sense, the "veil" serves as a boundary marker between "us" and "them," and as long as women remain "veiled" they remain intrinsically connected to "potential terrorists."

Dark-Skinned, Bearded Terrorists, and the "Queery-ing" of "Muslim Masculinities"

Several research participants reported incidents in which beards, coupled with dark skin and in some cases a particular form of religious dress, emerged as signifiers of "Islamic fundamentalism" or "terrorism." Salah Masri, director of one of the largest mosques in San Francisco, explained,

I know this man who is a peaceful Tunisian Muslim that dresses in white robe with a long beard. He is extremely quiet and polite. He is a good engineer. He is an internet web designer. After September 11, we didn't see him at the *masjid* for a long time. When we asked about him, it turned out he didn't feel comfortable changing his clothes or shaving his beard so he decided to stay home. Some people didn't want to look Muslim. I know people who dyed their hair blond. One of them was a Turkish guy who dyed his hair blond because he thought he looked Arab or Middle Eastern. We had many cases of people shaving their beards or people who stopped attending the mosque. But why dye your hair?! He still looked Middle Eastern with it!

25. See Shohat and Stam for an analysis of colonialist discourses on "veiling." Ella Shohat and Robert Stam, in their critique of colonialist Hollywood films write, "The orient is . . . sexualized through the recurrent figure of the veiled woman, whose mysterious inaccessibility, mirroring that of the orient itself, requires Western unveiling to be understood" (1994, 149).

That Salah conflates “looking Muslim” with “looking Arab or Middle Eastern” epitomizes a consensus among many of my research participants that dominant U.S. discourses do not distinguish between “Arabs,” “Middle Easterners,” or “Muslims” and construct an image of an “Arab/Middle Eastern/Muslim look.” Persons who closely resembled the corporate media’s “Arab/Middle Eastern/Muslim look” were particularly vulnerable to federal government policies and harassment on the streets.²⁶ One immigrant-rights lawyer explained that the federal government went after “the CNN version of what a terrorist looks like. He was dark, Middle Eastern, and had a full beard. He was the typical terrorist looking guy—or at least the guy who CNN portrays as the terrorist. Timothy McVeigh is a terrorist, but he is not associated with terrorism because he does not look like the typical terrorist-looking guy.” My research indicated that men who had beards, coupled with dark skin, were among those most severely concerned for their safety—particularly if they wore religious forms of dress perceived to be associated with Islam. That non-Muslim South Asian men such as Sikhs who wear turbans were repeatedly misidentified as Muslims (and in some cases killed) points to the ways that a range of signifiers can stand in as symbols of an “Arab/Middle Eastern/Muslim look.” Cases such as these reify dominant U.S. distinctions between those who are with us and those who are with the terrorists by rendering particular kinds of bodies not only as unas-similable or “fundamentally foreign and antipathetic to modern American society and cultures” (Lowe 1996, 5), but also as threatening to national security and therefore legitimate targets of violence and harassment. Moreover, cases in which men considered shaving their beards or avoiding attendance at their mosque illustrate that while dominant discourses on “potential terrorists” often pulled particular bodies into associations with a violent “crazy” Muslim masculinity, they simultaneously produced an “internment of the psyche” that they themselves come to resist, transform, or reproduce.

On the streets, perpetrators of incidents of harassment often deployed sexualized tropes in targeting men whose appearances “fit” the “terrorist profile,” reifying what Eman Desouky (2000) refers to as the “query-ing” of Arab-Muslim subjectivities. Dominant U.S. discourses have often depicted the United States as feminist and gay-safe through comparisons between U.S. and Afghan

26. See Shaheen (1984) and Shohat and Stam (1994) for further analysis on the corporate media’s representation of an Arab or Muslim “look.”

views on gender and sexuality. Yet, as Puar and Rai explain, “the U.S. state, having experienced a castration and penetration of its capitalist masculinity, offers up narratives of emasculation as appropriate punishment for bin Laden, brown-skinned folks, and men in turbans” (2002, 10). A highly patriarchal and homophobic discourse has been central to the racialization of persons associated with “Islamic fundamentalism” and justifications for violence against them. In one case I learned of, hegemonic confluences between queerness, sexual deviancy, and the monstrous figure of “the terrorist” (2002, 126) underpinned the subjection of particular masculinities to physical or epistemic violence because they “appeared” to be Muslim. Consider the following community activist’s narrative:

A guy from Afghanistan called into the hate-crime hot-line. He had gone to help his friend whose car had broken down when he was doing some off-road-ing a couple of miles away from his house—which is also near a military base in Dublin. By the time his friend got out there to help him, there were two tow trucks out there. The tow truck drivers called the police because the men had beards so the drivers thought they were terrorists. They were near a reservoir and the tow truck drivers were saying things like, “Oh, okay . . . they’re tapping the water.” So they took them to the military base to interrogate them. Fifteen to twenty cops came. They all thought they were trying to contaminate the water. One of the guys had prayer beads with him and officers said quotes like, “your faggot beads. We’re going to f—you up; we’re going to [give you oral sex].” The officers were intimidating them.

In this narrative, the tow-truck drivers transform the Afghan men into terrorists vis-à-vis assumptions that conflate “the beard” with “Muslim masculinity” and “terrorism.” Inscribing hegemonic discourses that “they” are trying to kill/penetrate “us” on the Afghan men’s bodies, the tow-truck drivers transform them into terrorist threats/enemies within. Here, patriarchal, homophobic discourses of emasculation mark Islam—represented by the prayer beads—as “faggot,” or not quite the right/straight kind of masculinity. The police’s speech implicitly positions heterosexuality on the side of good and queerness on the side of evil. Moreover, as the police punish Muslim masculinities (read terrorists) with the threat of sodomy, a logic of militarized patriotism intensifies the normativity of heterosexuality. In this incident, as in the Abu Ghraib prison scandal, homophobia and racism intersect in the conceptualization that sexual

degradation and the transformation of Muslim masculinities into “faggots” is an appropriate form of punishment.

Underlying this conceptualization is the heteronormative conflation of shame, humiliation, and homosexuality. Several LGBTST activists of color have produced alternative frameworks for understanding this conflation. Trishala Deb of the Audre Lorde Project argues that we need to ask ourselves what this latest chapter (Abu Ghraib) teaches us about the inevitable homophobia and racism in military culture as well as cultures of militarization (Deb and Mutis 2004, 7). She adds “that there are more than two genders and the subjugation of people who are any of those genders is not closer to femininity [or emasculation] but to dehumanization” (6).²⁷

Nation of Origin and the Silencing of Political Dissent

My research indicated that emblems signifying particular nations of origin also placed persons into associations with the “potential terrorist” enemy of the nation. This process was based upon a logic that conflated particular nations with “Arabness,” “Islam,” and a potentiality for “terrorism.” The signifier “nation of origin” often intersected with other emblems signifying the “Arab/Middle Eastern/Muslim” (such as name, skin color, facial hair, or headscarf). In particular, emblems representing “geographies of terror,” or the nations that the Bush administration has referred to as terrorist-harboring countries or terrorist training grounds (e.g., Palestine or Iraq), tended to operate as signifiers of the enemy of the nation. Moreover, the potential for encountering harassment was often exacerbated when one was perceived to be an “Arab/Middle Eastern/Muslim” *and* simultaneously expressed solidarity with one or more of these nations. For example, Zainab, a Palestinian woman who wore a *kuffiyah* (a scarf representing Palestinian resistance) on a daily basis and posted a sticker of a Palestinian flag on a window near the front door of her home encountered some of the most severe forms of harassment I learned of throughout the period of my research. Zainab lived in the Mission District of San Francisco. She described her experience as follows: “I walked out [our door] and saw all this graffiti. I didn’t

27. Trishala Deb argues that the military police and interrogation officials who oversaw these acts [of torture] might have intended to inflict what they perceived to be worst form of sexual degradation possible—which included what looks like gay sex (Deb and Mutis 2004, 5).

know. . . . Should I be afraid? angry? Then I looked at the sidewalk and saw 'Kill Arabs' in big blocks right in front of our house. The graffiti was all done in black spray paint. On top of the door, it said 'Die pig' in big block letters over where the Palestinian flag is. On the side wall were the words, 'Die pig.'" Afterwards, the perpetrator returned to her home five times. In one incident he threw feces and garbage all over her front door. "Whatever it is that he hits us with," she explained, "you can't leave. You can't open the door and get out, because it's just shit and garbage all over the place."²⁸

For Zainab, the "war on terror" took on local form in that her public expression of Palestinian identity and political solidarity with Palestinian people put her in close proximity with the "terrorists." The perpetrator's articulation of violence against Zainab paralleled the Bush administration's rhetoric that violence is essential to patriotism, Americanness, and the protection of national security in the context of the "war on terror." In the ongoing hate crimes that took place in the two-year period following 9/11, vandalism and death threats emerged as critical venues for the articulation of nation-based racism against persons who were perceived to be intrinsically associated with "Islamic fundamentalism" and "terrorism" in the public sphere. Perpetrators deployed tactics "officially" banned by the state that simultaneously supported government discourses on militarized patriotism and war against the enemies of the nation—in this case, Palestinian Arabs.

Acts of harassment and intimidation against Arab and Arab American activists who participated in antiwar and/or Palestine solidarity movements exemplify the ways in which the targeting of activists who were perceived to be Arab/Middle Eastern/Muslim was influenced by an interplay between cultural and nation-based racism. This interplay set the stage for incidents of anti-Arab/Muslim racism coupled with political repression. On one university campus, for example, a series of peaceful demonstrations organized by an active Palestinian students' organization sparked an official university reaction that rendered members of the student group potentially "dangerous." Nadeem, a university student, recalling one of these demonstrations, explained,

28. With very little assistance from the local police, Zainab and her friend discovered who the perpetrator was by tape recording him in action. She discovered he lived a block away from her home. She continued to face resistance from the local police to put a restraining order on him or assist her with the case.

The police set up a barricade around us in the shape of a horseshoe so people would have to walk an extra 150 meters to get into the demonstration and so that they could protect people from us. The cops came, locked all the barricades together with plastic handcuffs and then his group of students stood outside the barricades shouting things like, "Sand nigger, camel jockey, f—ing terrorists, get the f— out of here." Students from our group got upset and were shouting back things like, "F— you, you know, blah, blah, blah." Later, the university president came out with a letter completely blasting the Palestinian students saying that in his fourteen years at this university, this was the most severe case of "lack of civility" that he has ever seen. A month later, the university imposed sanctions on our group and we were put under probation. We did not receive funding after that for a year.

Similar attacks targeted Arab and Arab American activists on other university campuses in the San Francisco Bay Area. Tamara, recalling an event on another university campus explained, "We were having a memorial for victims of the Israeli massacre of the refugee camp Jenin. Two people came over to disrupt the event. They were saying, 'Go blow yourself up' to a group of Arab American students who were there." This quote further illustrates the ways in which the silencing of political dissent, when directed against Arab student activists, took on specific form that connected them intrinsically to "the terrorists."

The difference between how official public discourses in the local media, among civil rights organizations, and among university officials represented white American and Arab American student involvement in the Palestine solidarity movement illustrates the racial logic underpinning the silencing of political dissent in the context of the "war on terror." In spring 2002, during a period of intense Israeli aggression against Palestinian civilians, two student groups on two different college campuses in the San Francisco Bay Area organized similar demonstrations in support of Palestinian people. The first group was composed of predominantly white students, and the second group was composed primarily of Arab students. The university tried to impose harsh punishments on the first group, including administrative detention and suspension. In this case, various civil rights groups quickly came to the student activists' support and framed the problem as an attack on political dissent on that campus. On the other campus, where the students were predominantly Arab, the same civil rights groups did not lend their support when the university imposed similar restrictions on the student organization. This response reflected a broader official discourse in

that both universities and local media reports framed the tensions on the first campus as a free-speech issue while referring to the incidents on the second campus in terms of potentially dangerous Palestinian students. An immigrant-rights lawyer and community activists who worked with the Palestinian student group explained, “It was really easy to see the anti-Arab anti-Muslim sentiment in the university’s assumptions that they were fighting the war on terrorism and that Palestinian students were dangerous supporters of terrorism.”

In the cases above, nation-based racism was exacerbated in contexts where persons perceived to be “potential terrorists” by virtue of their name, appearance, or nation of origin engaged in public expressions of dissent, particularly against U.S. and/or Israeli policies in Arab homelands. As Tadiar argues, “from the dominant cultural logic of the U.S. state, terrorism embodies an other relation to death, and it is on this basis that racism operates against other peoples who are deemed close to this other relation to death (epitomized by the would be suicide bomber)” (2005). By framing Palestinian students as potentially dangerous and therefore deserving of disciplinary measures, dominant local discourses reified dominant corporate media and government discourses that position Palestinians in close proximity to “real terrorists” and thus legitimize statements such as “get out of here” and “go blow yourselves up.” In referring to Palestinian students as “dangerous” and “lacking in civility,” the university president reifies racialized representations that construct Palestinians as not only inherently violent, full of hate, and threatening to Israeli and U.S. national security, but also as backward and uncivilized. By justifying the targeting of students in terms of a civilizational discourse (i.e., their “lack of civility”), the university president deploys the logic of cultural racism that defines difference in terms of an “incompatibility of lifestyles and traditions” that are insurmountable. In this sense, a liberal politics of progress, legitimated by cultural racism, naturalizes the distinctions between self and Other, tradition and modernity, barbarism and civilization. Cultural racism and nation-based racism become critical to the structures of power through which the exclusion of particular Arabs and Arab Americans has functioned in a post-9/11 environment.

CONCLUSION

In the aftermath of September 11, 2001, in response to the backlash, the category “Arab, Muslim, South Asian” has been incorporated into liberal U.S.

multicultural discourses. Consider, for example, diversity initiatives that have operated to single out Arabs, Muslims, and South Asians as the *only* “targeted communities” in the post-9/11 moment (Lee 2002). In such instances, terms such as “targeted communities” have reinforced a multicultural rainbow where specific marginalized groups are associated with specific historical moments while occluding the long-term historical circumstances that produce oppression, marginality, and institutionalized racism, and overshadowing links between groups that have shared similar histories of immigrant exclusion and racism. That many liberal immigrant-rights organizations referred to anti-immigrant policies underlying the PATRIOT Act of 2001 as an “Arab, Muslim, and South Asian” issue and the “Border Protection” Bill HR4437 of 2006 as a Latino/a issue—even though both pieces of legislation affected Arabs, Muslims, South Asians, Latinos/as (and other immigrants as well as citizens) and even though the intensified anti-immigrant sentiment sparked by the aftermath of September 11 facilitated support for the HR4437—exemplifies this pattern.

Transgressing liberal multicultural approaches, many racial justice activists and scholars have agreed that while survivors of 9/11-related federal government policies and incidents of harassment in the public sphere tended to be Arab, Muslim, and South Asian, this is not an isolated case of group marginalization.²⁹ A new racial justice discourse thus emerged that called attention to anti-Arab/Muslim/South Asian racism; insisted that racial justice movements take the link

29. Among the widespread responses to the backlash among civil rights advocates, The New York City Commission of Human Rights published the report “Discrimination Against Muslims, Arabs, and South Asians in New York City since 9/11” (2003). In San Francisco, the organization Grantmakers concerned with Immigrants and Refugees published a report entitled, “Arab, Middle Eastern, Muslim, and South Asian Communities in the San Francisco Bay Area” to “inform the Bay Area foundation community about the most salient issues facing these communities and encourage foundations to support programs and strategies that respond to these issues” (Ahuja, Gupta, and Petsod 2004, 4). The U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission issued a report entitled, “Questions and Answers about Workplace Rights of Muslims, Arabs, South Asians, and Sikhs” (2002). The national antiwar organization Not in Our Name, produced a documentary entitled, “‘Under Attack:’ Arab, Muslim and South Asian Communities Since 9/11” (2004) and a coalition of over two hundred individuals and organizations supported the first national day of solidarity with Muslim, Arab, and South Asian Immigrants (2002). The aftermath of September 11 also sparked new alliances between Arab American, Muslim American, and South Asian American organizations that joined forces in resisting the post-September 11 backlash against their communities and the expanding U.S.-led war in their homelands (Naber 2002).

between U.S.-led war in Muslim majority countries and the marginalization of Arabs, Muslims, and South Asians in the United States seriously; and linked the targeting of Arabs, Muslims, and South Asians to experiences of other communities with shared histories of oppression, including, but not limited to, Japanese Americans, Filipinos, Latinos/as, and African Americans. Despite these efforts, prevailing articulations of “race” within U.S. racial and ethnic studies tend to preclude comparative research and teaching on the links between the racialization of Arabs, Muslims, Middle Easterners, and South Asians and other communities that have been historically targeted by racism and state violence.

In the late 1960s, San Francisco State University was the site of the longest campus strike in the nation’s history, spearheaded by the Black Students Union and the Third World Liberation Front (a coalition of the Black Students Union, the Latin American Students Organization, the Filipino-American Students Organization, and El Renacimiento, a Mexican American student organization). This movement demanded the expansion of the college’s new Black Studies Department (the nation’s first), the creation of a School of Ethnic Studies, and increased recruiting and admissions of minority students. On March 21, 1969, this strike officially came to an end with the establishment of the School of Ethnic Studies, which included a focus on Asian Americans, Latinos/as and Native Americans, and an expanded Black Studies Department (San Francisco State Univ. 2003). This movement, based on the strategic deployment of the terms “Third World people” and “people of color,” legitimized the establishment and expansion of ethnic studies programs that place communities that have shared histories of oppression by the United States government at the center of study, analysis, activism, and empowerment. Yet this paradigm, which operates according to a 1960s understanding of what constitutes racism, limits our categories of analysis to those established during the height of student movements for ethnic studies in the 1960s. Contemporary articulations of this paradigm foreclose discussions on how the meaning of “race” has continued to shift and preclude analyses of how “racism” is constantly being remade. At the same time, many recent conversations within U.S. racial and ethnic studies have explored how research on emergent forms of racialization in relationship to both previous as well as new and current historical processes might contribute to conceptualizations of race and racism in a post-9/11 environment.³⁰

30. See Ono (2005), Volpp (2003), and Maira and Shihade (2006).

In this chapter I sought to bring new questions to bear on the study of race and racism within U.S. racial and ethnic studies: What are the implications of continually reevaluating our understanding of racialized-gendered identities in light of new and changing historical moments? What are the possibilities for envisioning U.S. racial and ethnic studies in ways that remain connected to the 1960s student and civil rights struggles through which they were produced while becoming more attentive to current gendered racialization processes? How might becoming attentive to the gendered racialization of Arabs, South Asians, and/or Muslims contribute to explorations of the relationship between race, gender, sexuality, and empire or the structures of racism, sexism, and homophobia that operate against immigrants with whose homelands the United States is at war?

This chapter has reinforced existing theoretical approaches that tend to define U.S. race and ethnic studies that contend that "race" is malleable and shifting, that racial categories are socially and historically constructed, and that the construction of racial categories is a continuous process that takes on new and different form within different historical moments. It has also affirmed existing women of color feminist approaches that have called attention to differences within racialized groups (such as those of class, gender, sexuality, and religion) and contended that experiences of oppression that are shaped by both racism and sexism simultaneously cannot be subsumed within either a feminist framework that critiques sexism or an antiracist framework that is only critical of racism (Crenshaw 1991).³¹ It has also illustrated that research on the gendered racialization of the "Middle Eastern/Muslim" or the "Arab/Muslim/South Asian" "enemy within" can generate important new questions, such as: To what extent does the rhetoric of an endless, fluid "war or terror" that "knows no boundaries" produce new forms of gendered racialization that are similarly arbitrary, open-ended, and transgress borders and particular geographic places?

31. I draw from Kimberlé Crenshaw's work on intersectionality. She argues that women of color often have to choose between participation in an antiracist movement or a feminist movement, yet the experiences of women of color mark intersections that cannot be captured *only* by a gender or race analysis that stand separate from each other. Crenshaw's work on the intersectionality transgresses this limitation by opening up a space for intersectional organizing/resistance (1991).