

Su'ad Abdul Khabeer

## CITIZENS AND SUSPECTS: RACE, GENDER, AND THE MAKING OF AMERICAN MUSLIM CITIZENSHIP

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### Abstract

*Working at the intersection of anthropological engagements with cultural citizenship and interdisciplinary scholarship on the racialization of Muslims in the United States, I examine the making and unmaking of American Muslims as both citizens and suspects. Based on my ethnographic research with young Chicago Muslims, I argue that state surveillance and multiculturalism shape U.S. Muslim claims to citizenship as rights and belonging. I chart racialization across different domains to argue that the fetish of Muslim body and behavior can actually render Muslim identity both legible and illegible. It is instances of legibility and illegibility, I argue, that illuminate how race and gender coproduce differential experiences of suspicion for American Muslims, and also different beliefs in the very possibility of, and thus desire for, citizenship. Ultimately, I contend that the experience of the American Muslim indexes the centrality of both race and gender to citizenship in the United States. [race, religion, gender, citizenship, United States, Muslims]*

### INTRODUCTION

Naeemah: People do ask me where I am from a lot, even when I was younger, maybe because of my name.

Su'ad: How does that make you feel?

Naeemah: Well, with my scarf on...I have no accent and I am dark, not White. And because people don't think of Muslims as Black, they are like, "You must be from somewhere else." [So] when they ask, "From where?" I'm like, "From Chicago." People are curious and that doesn't bother me.

Su'ad: Do Black people ask you that?

Naeemah: Black people ask, White people ask, but it also depends on how I wear my scarf, like, if to[ward] the back [of the neck]... I have a blurb: "I am African American and my parents converted in the '70s with the NOI [Nation of Islam] movement..." I give them all the info upfront to avoid the follow-up questions, like, "Oh, when did you convert." You know, so we can just move on with regularly scheduled programming [laughs].

I met Naeemah at the Inner-city Muslim Action Network (IMAN), a Muslim-run non-profit organization on the South Side of Chicago. At the time, Naeemah was a college student, poet, and budding activist who was active in the organization's arts-based young leadership programming. I observed Naeemah at IMAN activities, attended her performances (including taking her to a gig at one point), and occasionally served as an academic mentor of sorts. I also ran into Naeemah and her family at Friday prayers and social gatherings within the broader Chicago Black Muslim community. Like many African American Muslims in Chicago, Naeemah's parents became Muslim by way of the Nation of Islam (NOI) and now practiced Sunni Islam in association with Elijah Muhammad's son, Imam WD Mohammed. I saw Naeemah's choice to volunteer at IMAN as an extension of her parents' NOI background. Although Naeemah was raised in an African American enclave of a White middle-class suburb of Chicago, her activist aspirations brought her to the urban Black communities on Chicago's historic, yet economically impoverished, South Side.

I came to know Naeemah while conducting almost two years of fieldwork on the relationship between Blackness, Muslims, and hip hop in Chicago. I worked at IMAN as the event coordinator for the organization's biennial music festival

during my first six months in the field. Utilizing art, particularly hip hop, as a means for social change is a key to IMAN's work. IMAN's other initiatives include running a free health clinic, lobbying to reform drug laws, and marching for immigration rights. IMAN's projects are not exclusively for Muslims, yet central to this work is using social activism to assert *Muslim belonging as Americans*. At IMAN, I met many of my core group of interlocutors for whom, like Naeemah, the organization was critical to their American Muslim self-making.<sup>1</sup>

A few months after officially "ending" my fieldwork as a graduate student, I met up with Naeemah at a café close to her summer public health internship because I wanted to ask her some follow-up questions about 9/11's impact on her everyday life.<sup>2</sup> In her response above, Naeemah described herself as "dark, not White" and as not having a "[foreign] accent." These markers—skin color and language—can mark Naeemah as African American; yet her name and scarf-style cause cognitive dissonance for her interlocutors. Because of an additional set of markers—an Arabic name and a headscarf—strangers do not read her as a Black American but rather presume she "must be from somewhere else." Accordingly, depending on how her body and behavior are read—"how I wear my scarf"—Naeemah's Blackness is illegible: at times, she is not recognized as African American even by other Black Americans.

In this context, Naeemah has constructed a "blurb" that preemptively attempts to make her racial and religious identity legible. Naeemah assumes that most people know very little, if anything, about African American Muslims, and this unfamiliarity makes them curious about her origins. Naeemah reads this unfamiliarity and curiosity as benign, yet I read it as a direct result of the contemporary racialization of Muslims in the United States. In certain instances, because of phenotypical (skin color), sartorial (headscarf-style), and linguistic (name and accent) markers, Naeemah's Muslim identity is rendered *illegible*. In other instances, Naeemah, a U.S. citizen, is misread as being "from somewhere else." This misrecognition occurs when Naeemah's scarf is read as a gendered marker of the "Muslim." Unable to be legibly Black American *and* Muslim, Naeemah moves between two equally problematic subject positions—raced citizen or foreign Muslim suspect. This oscillation is not particular to Naeemah or even to Black American Muslims. Rather, it exemplifies how state narratives and policies, authored by

formal institutions and enacted as "state effects" (Trouillot 2003) in the behaviors of everyday people, routinely make and unmake American Muslims as citizens and suspects.

In this article, I chart the status of Muslims in the United States as citizens and suspects. I argue that the American Muslim's status as citizen and suspect is constructed by state logics of surveillance as well as discourses of multiculturalism. Surveillance and multiculturalism are two techniques of state governance in the United States that presumably have different aims—to exclude certain populations and to include others. Yet they operate dialectically, relying on rendering the "Muslim" as an identifiable racial type—a type that is made legible through the raced and gendered body and its behavior. Drawing on the narratives of two of my interlocutors, Naeemah and a Pakistani American young woman I call Huma, I argue that, just as markers of race and gender make "Muslim" a racial type, such markers they also coproduce different experiences of racialization and differing claims to cultural citizenship in the United States.

In contemporary anthropology, the ethnographic emphasis in the study of race in the United States has centered on the "persistence of race" (Harrison 1995). Scholars have shown that, although race is a social rather than biologically determined construct, it continues to have very real consequences for individuals and communities (Gregory 1999; Hill 2008; Mendoza-Denton 2008; Rouse 2009). These consequences are tied to the fact that race is not only marked by phenotype but also determined by way of bodily practices such as language, dress, and gesture (Bucholtz 2011; Jackson 2003).

Naeemah's identifications of body and behavior echo an interdisciplinary body of work that documents the post-9/11 racialization of Muslims (Jamal and Naber 2008; Maira 2009a; Rana 2011; Razack 2008; Volpp 2002). This scholarship argues that, in a post-9/11 environment, to be legibly Muslim is to be neither Black nor White but to have brown skin, "Middle Eastern" looks, and particular national origins. Muslim legibility is also marked by behaviors such as praying, carrying specific names, and displaying gendered markers like beards and headscarves. Critically, each marker of legibility serves "as proxy for risk" that perpetuates a narrative of Muslim exclusion and Muslim threat (Razack 2008, 32). This narrative of Muslim exclusion and threat undergirds the state surveillance deemed necessary to protect the

nation from terrorism—a narrative that, as Junaid Rana (2011, 155) argues, “deploys the Muslim body as a concrete objective entity to control and regulate.”

In the context of 9/11 and the War on Terror, American Muslims disproportionately feel the gaze of state surveillance in their prayer spaces, charities, schools, homes, and even intimate lives, where their bodies and behaviors are monitored for signs of threat. Civil liberties groups document practices of “discriminatory targeting,” which include “FBI interviews conducted in the community without suspicion of wrongdoing; extensive and invasive questioning and searches at the border...and data gathering and mapping of the community based on cultural and ethnic behavior.”<sup>3</sup> Press investigations reveal the use of undercover informants like Craig Monteilh, who was authorized to pursue sexual relationships with American Muslim women “if it would enhance the intelligence.”<sup>4</sup> Monteilh was an FBI operative in southern California where the Los Angeles Police Department (LAPD) has also been accused of targeting of Muslim communities.<sup>5</sup>

Internal documents of the New York Police Department (NYPD) contain records of its Demographics Unit, which mapped Muslim communities in the tri-state area. This police unit used informants to report on activities in key sites of “suspect” behavior, such as businesses, religious schools, and community bulletin boards.<sup>6</sup> NYPD officers allegedly worked with a green light from the Newark Police Department, led by Garry McCarthy, before he served as superintendent of the Chicago Police Department (CPD).<sup>7</sup> Chicago Mayor Rahm Emanuel made assurances that there would be no similar programming in Chicago; however, the CPD is a member of the FBI-led Chicago Joint Terrorism Task Force (JTTF), which has been instrumental in the terrorism indictments of several young Muslim men in the region. In each of these cases, the alleged plots involved individuals the JTTF refers to as “cooperating sources.”<sup>8</sup>

While the state enforces policies of surveillance that single out Muslim citizens and immigrants for regulation and control, it also maintains a parallel multiculturalist narrative. In the discourse of U.S. multiculturalism, racial, and ethnic diversity—marked by signs such as skin color and even headscarves—is configured not as risk but as the nation’s most valuable asset and achievement. For example, in his famous 2009 Cairo address, President Obama cited Islam as part of the story of the United States. That same year, his administration

inducted the first Special Representative to Muslim Communities. Similarly, the U.S. State Department has engaged American Muslim intellectuals and artists as ambassadors of goodwill to Muslim-majority communities. In 2014, the Department released a report for its embassies that celebrated American Muslim contributions to the United States. Deployed in this way, American Muslims stand as proof that the United States is an inclusive and multicultural nation, in contrast to parochial Islamic extremists, and thereby justified in its imperial pursuits (Alsultany 2012; McAlister 2005). Yet, the tie that binds this diverse body of citizens does not displace the racial hierarchies that privilege the White Christian citizen in the United States. Surveillance parallels inclusion, thus underscoring that U.S. multiculturalism “remains appropriately hierarchal” (McAlister 2005, 259). Racial classification continues to be a key to the expression and maintenance of modern forms of governance, including access to citizenship (Clarke and Thomas 2006; Gilroy 1993).

Anthropological engagements with race and citizenship identify citizenship not just in terms of rights but also in terms of the ways in which people *feel like they belong*. This link between citizenship as legal rights and citizenship as affective belonging motivates the anthropological concept of cultural citizenship. Rosaldo (1994, 1) defined cultural citizenship as an affirmative claim to citizenship that demands the “right to be different...without compromising one’s right to belong.” Drawing on the specific case of Latinx in the United States, this definition is grounded in the ways the making and unmaking of citizens is primarily contingent on race and specifically on proximity to Whiteness.<sup>9</sup> Dominant White cultural norms, from language use and accent to notions of what counts as knowledge, produce hegemonic conceptions of who counts as a *real* citizen and who has access to the privileges of *full* citizenship. Importantly, in this context, the demand to be different challenges exclusion not only by staking a claim to be included in the body politic but also in the construction of alternate cultural criteria that legitimate the right to belong.

Yet, as Ong (1996, 737) argues, cultural citizenship does not only describe affirmative self-making but is also “made by power relations that produce consent through schemes of surveillance, discipline, control and administration.” Here, the emphasis moves from the progressive ways marginalized groups challenge their exclusion to the contested terrain of inclusion. Ong helpfully

identifies how various institutions of governmentality, the church, the nonprofit, and the law do, in fact, include marginalized groups. However, this inclusion is contingent on appropriately raced and classed performances of belonging (Ong 1996).

The state can make and unmake citizens. However, as Kamari Clarke (2013, 470) contends, individuals and communities also make citizenship through modalities that are “deterritorialized” and fashioned independently of the “regulatory role of the state.” Thinking through the practices of cultural citizenship in the Black Atlantic, Clarke notes that this transgression is relative because the state continues to wield the power to control access to mobility and resources. However, Clarke’s key insight is that demands for rights and belonging can be formed not only through the state but also through the transgression of national boundaries.

My analysis builds on these varying conceptions of cultural citizenship. As the narratives of my interlocutors demonstrate, the state’s regulatory power—specifically, its logics of surveillance and multiculturalism—deeply structure U.S. Muslim claims to citizenship as rights and belonging. At the same time, these narratives articulate modes of cultural citizenship that assert the right to belong and be different, as well as forms of self-making as citizens that are made beyond the state. Research on cultural citizenship traces not only the collective experience of exclusion and inclusion, but also how exclusion and inclusion can be experienced differently *within* a collectivity. Racialization and state regulation is uneven—differential experiences depend upon how different groups are marked according to race, class, gender, national origin, and so on.<sup>10</sup> My analysis extends this point by illuminating the complex ways this unevenness can be felt, not only by groups but also in the experience of the individual. As Naeemah illustrates, the same person can at times be recognized as a citizen and at other times misrecognized as a suspect, depending on the racial, religious, and gendered context.

My focus on American Muslims also makes a necessary contribution to anthropological scholarship. Despite a long history of engagement with Muslim communities (Asad 1986; Bowen 1998; Geertz 1968; Gellner 1981; Mahmood 2005), with notable exceptions (Abdullah 2013; Grewal 2014; Mir 2014; Rouse 2004), there is still a significant gap in the ethnographic literature on Muslims in the United States. Furthermore, my selection of the experiences of an African American and a

Pakistani American as examples works to undo the erroneous “Arab/Muslim” dyad that is at the root of the racialization of Muslims in the United States. The racial otherness tied to the religious category of the Muslim is grounded in the idea that all Muslims are Arab, a racial category that is marked as always and already foreign—perpetual outsider and potential threat—to the United States.<sup>11</sup> My comparative analysis rejects this racial formation with nuance and complexity, using ethnography to destabilize the logics of racialization.

### GOOD MUSLIMS, BAD MUSLIMS, AND BLACK CITIZENS

As a Black Muslim...I wasn’t covering [wearing a headscarf] then [September 2001]. I was eleven. So people didn’t know I was Muslim. And I was in junior high school. And not that people didn’t care, but it wasn’t that important to us as kids. And my suburb was Black and Latino, so maybe Rabya [her Pakistani American friend] had a different experience living in Bridgeview [a southwest suburb of Chicago] with Republicans and stuff, but Blacks and Latinos didn’t think of 9/11 in the same way. When I hear stories, I am always like, “Aww, man, sorry I didn’t get to share that time with you.” I had conversations with my mom [who wore a headscarf] and my brothers and sisters, and none of us had that experience, people asking, “Are you a terrorist?!”...And for me to be Muslim and not have been discriminated against, or only at the airport, there must be two different faces of Muslims. It’s something weird. Something is going on for that to happen to me but for others to have stories about their houses burning down. I’m like, “Where do they live?!”

Puzzled by the contrast between her experiences and those of other American Muslims, Naeemah concludes that there are “two faces of Muslims”: one that is free from anti-Muslim racism, and the other that is its victim. Naeemah’s “two faces of Muslims” resonates with the “good Muslim, bad Muslim” culture talk that Mamdani (2004) argues dominates our contemporary understanding of Muslims. This culture talk distinguishes two kinds of Muslims based on essentialized notions of culture and behavior. This discourse characterizes bad Muslims as prone to violence, intolerant, anti-democratic, and, as Maira (2009b) adds, working-



class and undocumented. In contrast, good Muslims are imagined as well-educated, upwardly mobile, multicultural citizens. Culture is a key to this distinction: bad Muslims stick rigidly to culture and religion, whereas good Muslims are culturally and religiously flexible, that is, “moderate.” Culture also has consequences: bad Muslims are detained, surveilled, and even killed without due process, while good Muslim citizens get face time with politicians and stand as exemplars for a global Muslim community.<sup>12</sup>

Naeemah asserted, “Blacks and Latinos didn’t think of 9/11 in the same way” as “Republicans,” which I understand as code for White Americans. Although non-Muslim attitudes toward Muslims were not uniform post 9/11, the attitude Naeemah presumes for her neighbors is important because of the way it complicates the good Muslim/bad Muslim binary. Naeemah reminds us that place matters; good Muslim/bad Muslim culture talk does not resonate everywhere. Similar to Naeemah’s observation, reviews of African American expressive culture immediately following 9/11 also noted that Black Americans did not wholly take on “the ‘Us vs. Them’ rhetoric that White America embraced after 9/11.”<sup>13</sup> Furthermore, Naeemah sheds light on a relationship that Black communities have to Islam and Muslims that is not often highlighted in the literature on anti-Muslim racism.<sup>14</sup> Most Black Muslims in the city of Chicago and its suburbs live in predominately Black neighborhoods—or, like Naeemah, Black and Latinx neighborhoods—in which, for generations, the alternative cosmologies, histories, and ways of life promoted by African American Muslims have not been foreign, but have been valued as a cultural reserve for identity formation and self-determination (Aidi 2003; McAlister 2005).

Although she feels secure as a Black Muslim woman among her Black and Latinx non-Muslim neighbors, Naeemah has been targeted as a Muslim in other spaces. Naeemah also narrated a story about a flight to Houston, in which she had to “sit in that glass room and wait for someone to come pat my head,” although the metal detectors did not go off. Initially, she assumed she was stopped because of her Arabic name. She based this assumption on the experiences of her brother, who, she claimed, is always detained at the TSA checkpoint for additional screening. Yet when she flew back to Chicago, without wearing a headscarf, she breezed through TSA security. Naeemah concluded that she was marked “Muslim” in the first instance because she wore her hair covered. I

assumed she wore her scarf pinned under her chin in the style commonly seen in popular depictions of Muslim women. However, she explained to me that she wore her headscarf in an Afrodiasporic style, tied at the nape and wrapped in a bun. Nevertheless, she still believed she was profiled as a Muslim or as suspicious at the very least because she wore a headscarf and a long sweater.

Naeemah believes she was read as a Muslim and therefore a suspect on her outbound flight because her body and her sartorial style were legible to TSA security as signs of a threat. In contrast, on her return, without a scarf, she was read as Black, which at the TSA checkpoint signified “citizen.” Like Naeemah, American Muslims consistently self-report being singled out as Muslims for extra scrutiny by TSA as well as Customs and Border Patrol.<sup>15</sup> They express concerns about “flying while Muslim” or “flying while Brown.” These concerns are spurred by the changes made to boarding procedures since 9/11, including the creation of “no-fly” lists and multiple incidents in which Arab and Muslim men, women, and children have been detained before or after flying and taken off of planes (Cainkar 2011).

“Flying while Muslim” underscores the logic of state surveillance in which racial distinctions become shorthand for distinguishing citizens from suspects (Razack 2008). Naeemah’s phenotype (“dark”) and other markers—her headscarf and, possibly, her name—marked her as suspicious, foreign, and therefore no longer a citizen. While it is unclear if Naeemah’s name was part of what marked her as suspicious on the outbound screening, her assumption that it could have played a role in her profiling is not unreasonable. Names function as markers of an Arab/Middle Eastern/Brown/Muslim identity in public spaces like airports (Naber 2008).

Naeemah’s assumption that the name on her driver’s license signified “Muslim” and made her a suspect illustrates what Trouillot (2003, 81) identified as the state’s legibility effect: “the production of both a language and a knowledge for governance, of theoretical and empirical tools that classify, serialize and regulate collectivities and of the collectivities so engendered.” Through the legibility effect, people experience the state in everyday life through practices of documentation. Documents, such as driver’s licenses and passports, classify populations and the kinds of resources, rights, and obligations that engender discrete categories of people, such as citizens and suspects, in relation to the state (Das and Poole 2004).

TSA security is a checkpoint where documents make citizens legible to both TSA officials and other passengers and therefore distinct from suspects. On her return trip, Naeemah carried the same document but this time wore no headscarf and thus, quite unlike her brother, she was not flagged as a suspect but rather was seen as a citizen. This difference is a critical illustration of the relationship between race, gender, and racialization. Documents help erect the boundaries that determine which population belongs to the state, yet documents alone are not a sufficient condition for legibility. Rather, in order for a person to be read as a legitimate citizen, documentation must be paired with the raced and gendered body.

Importantly, although Naeemah's experiences of legibility and illegibility as a Muslim are post-9/11, the racial formation of "the Muslim" has a longer history. Rana (2011) has shown that the roots of the racialization of Muslims began in the fifteenth century, during which Muslims, who had ruled Spain since the eighth century, were configured as a religious other in the discursive practices of the Spanish Reconquista. This religious other was the prequel to the biocultural taxonomies of modern "science" that set the parameters for the racial othering of African and Indigenous peoples in European colonial practice. Yet, racialization is bound to the body and behavior, and the move from religion to race as the mark of the other was not absolute. Religion became framed as part of cultural difference, thereby continuing to play an important role in the construction of racial others (Rana 2011).

Today, the "dangerous Muslim man" and the "imperiled Muslim woman" are two prominent racialized and gendered Muslim others in the War on Terror who stand in contrast to their binary opposite: "the civilized [male and female] European" or American (Razack 2008, 5). From these types has emerged what I call the "potential jihadi." Potential jihadis are young Muslims, born to immigrant parents and seen as particularly vulnerable to religious extremism; these young Muslims therefore become the prime targets for state-sponsored counter-radicalization efforts. Critically, as mentioned previously, these bad Muslims have good Muslim counterparts.<sup>16</sup> Thus, the Muslim as a racial other is strategically deployed according to particular political aims—the racialized religious other can be the bad Muslim suspect *or* the good Muslim citizen.

Yet, before being parsed as good or bad, one must be, as Naeemah pointed out, legibly Muslim.

Racialization relies on that which is visible—the body and behavior. Indeed, it is legibility as opposed to visibility that I find to be a more appropriate analytical framework for examining American Muslim citizenship. In part, I am guided by the state's legibility effect, which constructs American Muslims as citizens and suspects based on raced and gendered markers of body and behavior. I am also guided by the particular history of Blackness in the United States. Unlike Whiteness in the United States, Blackness is never unmarked but instead is hypervisible. Accordingly, as Black people, African American Muslims never cease to be seen. However, they can, as I have shown, be rendered illegible as Muslims if their bodies and performances do not bear the "appropriate" racialized markers of the Muslim. Consequently, Naeemah noted, quite as a matter of fact, "people don't think of Muslims as Black."

Nevertheless, the vocabulary necessary for reading Muslims as a specific racial type is intimately tied to the ways Blackness is made legible in the United States. Blackness is made legible through the body and behavior: skin color, lips, noses, hair texture, posteriors, penises and hypersexuality, violence, and a culture of poverty. Furthermore, from the tracking technologies of slavery (Browne 2012) to the raced, gendered, and classed markers that define "welfare queens," fuel hip hop wars (Rose 2008), and legitimize "stop and frisk" policing, Black bodies are also under surveillance as suspects and threats marked for exclusion.

Like the "Muslim," Blackness is also made legible through multiculturalism. Examinations of Hollywood films have identified the Black citizen as an ideal type—protector and patron saint of liberty and the nation (Bayoumi 2010; Edwards 2011). As protector and patron of the nation, Black Americans are situated as citizens—"native" and not foreign. Black "nativeness," which is also buttressed by a presumably Christian identity, bolsters the rhetoric of U.S. multiculturalism, which then undercuts contemporary claims of racial injustice and supports the moral authority of the United States abroad. Von Eschen (2004) detailed similar repositioning of Blacks as citizens when the Civil Rights movement was co-opted by the U.S. government during the Cold War. Likewise, Melanie McAlister (2005) argues that, during the Gulf War, the U.S. military was framed as an idealized site of U.S. multiculturalism, where Americans of any racial or ethnic identity, including Black Americans, could "be all they can be."

Contemporary U.S. racing makes Blackness and Muslimness racially legible in the administration of state surveillance and multiculturalism. Importantly, the parameters of racialization require Blackness and Muslimness to be distinct. As a result, the good and bad “Muslim” are foreign and *brown*—neither racially White nor Black. Racialization marks the Muslim body as brown and foreign for regulation and control within the formal locations of state power, such as a checkpoint, and in the locations of everyday life as well.

### DRIVE-THRU RACIALIZATION

Huma: I put the hijab (headscarf) on a week after September 11th and I don’t know, *Insha’Allah* (God willing) it was an OK intent, like a reason. . .

Su’ad: What was your reason, then?

Huma: I want people to know there is a *completely American* girl who has the scarf on, is a good citizen and, like, you know, somewhat of a role model or whatever. And that’s why I wanted to do it. And I kind of did it well, . . . not out of anger but kind of like, “I can do this and I don’t care what you guys are going to say.”

Su’ad: Like resisting?

Huma: Exactly. . . And we went to [a local] Burger King once. My sister [had] cut this [White] guy off in the road and he followed us to Burger King. We’re ordering and he comes up. . . They can all hear this inside,

Su’ad: You’re at the drive-thru?

Huma: Yeah. And he is like, “Take that towel off, you don’t belong in this country” and whatever. And I was like, “What does that mean? I do belong in this country.” You know what I mean?

Huma shared this story with me after the “Sunday School” class on Islamic history and religious practice and the Arabic language that she taught at a *masjid* (mosque) on Chicago’s North Side. Pakistani immigrants opened this *masjid* in the early 1980s. Likewise, her all-boys Sunday school class was also predominately Pakistani American, although the *masjid*’s congregation now

included immigrants from Morocco and Somalia. Like Naeemah, I met Huma at IMAN where she was an occasional volunteer, and Huma was also motivated by a desire to “give back.” She believed Sunday school classes had helped to reinforce her identity as a Muslim, and she wanted to help provide the same kind of support for other young people. Although still a student herself—a junior at a prestigious college—Huma was a dedicated teacher and her efforts included revamping the curriculum to be more relevant to her students’ experiences as second generation American Muslims.

As an adolescent, Huma had travelled to that same north side *masjid* for Sunday school classes, but she grew up in the Arab American enclave of the southwest Chicago suburb, Bridgeview. Bridgeview is home to a sizable Arab American community, predominately Palestinian American, with over 100 businesses, two private Islamic schools, and a fairly large *masjid*. Huma’s parents moved to Bridgeview to ensure their children would be raised in a Muslim neighborhood; yet—as Pakistani Americans—Huma and her siblings’ had a tenuous relationship with their local Muslim community. Like the majority of Muslim communities in the greater Chicago metropolitan area, the Muslim community in Bridgeview is what Karim (2008) calls, an “ethnic Muslim space.” I frequently encountered other non-Arab American Muslims in the field who similarly felt marginalized by the Bridgeview community’s cultural norms, in which the Muslim identity was tightly bound to a Palestinian immigrant cultural experience.

Accordingly, for Chicago Muslims, even the name “Bridgeview” signifies an only-Arab American enclave, although the suburb itself is predominantly White. Indeed, Huma’s incident at Burger King matches numerous stories in which, “9/11 constituted a trigger event for the open expression of animosity toward Arab and Muslim Americans living in the southwest suburbs of Chicago” (Cainkar 2011, 229). While this “open animosity” could be cast as the aberrant acts of misguided individuals, I suggest that these actions also mimic the state’s practices of profiling and surveillance. Even outside of TSA screening checkpoints, the logic of state racialization in which race and gender make one legibly “Muslim” continues to operate.

Like federal and local law enforcement guidelines that target Muslim communities based on raced and gendered markers of body and behavior, Huma’s assailant mapped her race and gender by

demanding that she “take that towel off!” In effect, the demand made by Huma’s attacker at Burger King could be understood as a response to the U.S. state’s post-9/11 call to citizens, “If you see something, say something.”<sup>17</sup> Critically, this call’s “Scope” and “Standards for Review,” like FBI surveillance protocols of Muslim communities, are ambiguous to the public.<sup>18</sup> This ambiguity enables the state to call on the public to perpetuate discrimination against Muslims without seemingly violating its own rhetoric of multiculturalism. The man who assaulted Huma saw something—Huma’s raced body (skin color) and gendered sartorial behavior (headscarf)—and said something.

Huma was born and raised in the United States, yet her assailant charged, “You don’t belong here!” Following the logic of racialization, Huma’s American identity was rendered *illegible*. Her assailant could not read her as a citizen because of how she looks: she is “brown” and wears a headscarf. Like Naemah, Huma’s legible race and gender matter. People also made it clear to Huma that she “must be from somewhere else.” In her study of hate incidents in Bridgeview, Louise Cainkar found that women in headscarves were specific and primary targets of anti-Muslim racism. Cainkar (2011, 230) calls this gendering of anti-Muslim racism, “cultural sniping,” in which Muslim women are targeted because “women in hijab symboliz[e] and embod[y] the perceived threat to the neighborhood’s moral fabric.”

The neighborhood stands in for the nation. Calls to “go home” do not “simply mean to leave the neighborhood but [also mean to] leave the country” (Cainkar 2011, 246–247). Indeed, as Minoo Moallem (2005, 32) argues, gender and sexuality are central to the “invention and reinvention of the nation.” The headscarf is linked to the narrative of the oppressed (foreign) Muslim women who is seen as in need of saving (Abu-Lughod 2013) and a “discourse of protection” that justifies Euro-American intervention in Muslim communities (Moallem 2005). Typically, the location of this Euro-American intervention is understood as occurring someplace else—in the Muslim majority nation-state—yet this discourse of protection also plays out in relation to Muslim communities in the “West.” In her work with young Muslims in the San Francisco Bay Area, Naber (2012) argues that the disproportionate targeting of Muslim women for everyday harassment is linked to the perception that the hijab-clad woman is a victim of gender oppression. Furthermore, as Aziz (2012) points out, gender oppression is also at the root of

the Muslim women’s status as suspect—because Muslim women are seen as oppressed, they are understood as having no agency to resist the terroristic machinations of Muslim men.

The language of Huma’s aggressor does not carry any of the sugary paternalism typically associated with the rhetoric of “saving Muslim women.” Nevertheless, he is marking the hijab as a sign of gendered oppression. Rather than only tell her to “go home” his command specifically orders that, in order for Huma to properly be a woman in the United States, she must “take off” her scarf. This aggression echoes an attitude documented by feminist scholarship in which the demand to remove the headscarf by aggressors is understood itself as a form of Western liberation of Muslim women (Selby and Fernando 2014). In staking an authoritative and paternalistic claim to, in a sense, “save” Huma from Islam through the removal of her headscarf, the assailant’s chosen epithet of “towel” also references the racial slur, “towel head,” which has historically been used to identify Muslim men as enemies of the U.S. state. Accordingly, he also shouts, “You don’t belong here!” Huma’s headscarf thus effectively marks her as suspect—foreign and a bad Muslim who does not belong in his neighborhood/nation.

Huma’s drive-thru attack illustrates the key role race and gender play in racialization of the Muslim as suspect, as well as the ways in which non-Muslim citizens embody the state when they attempt to regulate the behaviors and rights of others. In this policing, these non-Muslim citizens’ act as self-appointed deputies who “fill in” for state agents, where they might believe the state has failed or cannot surveil all potentially dangerous suspects. Unlike claims of cultural citizenship that affirm the right to belong and to be different, these self-appointed citizen-deputies see themselves and the state as one and the same. Therefore, they act to protect and preserve not some distant bureaucracy but their very selves/nations/neighborhoods (Greenhouse 2002). This form of self-making in relation to the state’s call to “see something, say something” plays a critical role in maintaining state hegemony by extending its reach. As a result, state surveillance can operate in an everyday location like a fast food restaurant.

#### **“I DO BELONG HERE”: INDIGENEITY AND GOOD [AMERICAN MUSLIM] CITIZENSHIP**

After her cherubic and mischievous *kufi*-clad students left the masjid classroom, Huma described how she came to realize she did “belong here.”



She told me how, she had first heard about the idea of a “Muslim American identity” in college from an American Muslim scholar, Umar’s Faruq Abd-Allah, who articulates the idea of “doing both”—of being American and Muslim. It was the first time that she had thought about these two identities together, and she realized that she had been “combining the two” since high school:

I kind of did do that. You know what I mean? In high school, I was in band and so my homeroom was in the music rooms, which were soundproof. And I would go and pray there. Or, like I used to be in color guard. I did that for a long time and really loved it. And I wore a scarf. And if I worked at Culver’s [restaurant] on Sunday and on Saturday [and] we had a competition, people [who came into the store] would be like, “I saw you performing at this high school.” . . . And of all the people performing they remembered me cause I was the only one completely covered. My outfit’s kinda different. So it was just like, “I could do them both.” I didn’t understand it then, but when I was finally being told it [in college, it] kind of explained it. It was like, “Yeah, it [a Muslim *and* American identity] could happen.”

Huma’s inability to see herself as both Muslim *and* American until college, demonstrates the psychic violence of racialization and citizenship. Huma’s lived experience was not one where she felt she belonged. Only in retrospect does she realize that she does indeed belong in the nation and can be both Muslim and American. When she revisits her high school experience, she is able to identify the ways she always belonged in her community. Interestingly, the two sites she identifies as part of her local and everyday experience are the public school and the fast food restaurant. Citing a fast food restaurant is significant considering that it was also at a fast food restaurant where a citizen-deputy attacked her for not belonging. Similarly, although Huma did not describe being attacked at school, public schools are also contested sites of belonging for American Muslim students (Maira 2009a; Sarroub 2005). However, Huma’s choice speaks to the way these two sites are identified with normative ideas of the “American teen” and America, which is seen as distinct from places like Pakistan that loom in the popular imagination as a home to terrorism and thus as an omnipresent threat to so called

American freedom (Rana 2011). As a Pakistani American, grounding claims of belonging in two iconic American institutions is a particularly meaningful intervention, as Huma positions herself as a citizen and not an otherized threat to U.S. democracy and freedom.

In claiming cultural citizenship, Huma declares the right to belong, to be American, and also, be “kinda different.” She cites Dr. Abd-Allah’s articulation of being both American and Muslim as central to her trajectory. Abd-Allah is representative of a cohort of American Muslim intellectuals who advocate a discourse of Muslim “indigeneity” in the United States. In his article, “Islam and the Cultural Imperative,” Abd-Allah (2004, 9) argues that, “Islam in America. . . must become indigenous.” He proposes “indigeneity” as a practice of Muslim Americanness. Grounded in the Islamic tradition and Muslim people’s lived experience as Americans, he links American Muslims to broader U.S. society through shared American cultural values (Abd-Allah 2004, 9).

The claim to be “indigenous” to the United States does not only look forward to “what Islam in America must become” (Abd-Allah 2004, 9), but also, in a turn similar to Huma’s, looks to the past. This historiography of American Islam begins early in the making of the United States, with the enslaved African Muslim and reclaims the contributions that Muslims have always made as part of the founding of America. For example, a Muslim Civil Rights organization composed a public service ad campaign, “Islam in America,” demonstrated American Muslim “indigeneity” by drawing on the story of a contemporary African American Muslim who was the descendent of enslaved Africans, which is offered as evidence of a long Muslim presence in the United States (Alsultany 2012, 147). Likewise, Abd-Allah writes on the “roots of Islam in America,” documenting Muslims in colonial America and the life of a nineteenth century White American convert, Muhammad Russell Alexander Webb.<sup>19</sup>

It must be noted that this U.S. Muslim claim of “indigeneity” is fundamentally distinct from the conception of indigeneity articulated and embodied by autochthonous communities of the Americas and worldwide. Although they are making a historical claim, there is no necessary aboriginal tie to land or ethnic identity attached to the “indigeneity” of American Muslims. This claim to history is also a claim to the nation and, as a result, tends to invest in normative notions of citizenship and ethnic difference that can reproduce state

power. Thus, “indigeneity” as used by U.S. Muslims, and marked with quotation marks when used in this article, does not represent an “utter opposition and struggle with the state” (Simpson 2007, 68), nor is it a righteous claim of sovereignty in relation to the settler-colonial state (Byrd 2014). Instead, it is a claim of inclusion. Given the distinction between the usages of the term “indigenous,” the U.S. Muslim appropriation of the term renders U.S. Muslims who are, in fact, indigenous to the Americas, invisible, while doing a particular kind of work that makes other U.S. Muslims visible as legitimate citizens in a post-9/11 United States. This narrative of belonging built on “indigeneity” has gained broader acceptance, most significantly among non-African American Muslims, since the events of September 11, 2001.

Along with Abd-Allah, the teachings of Imam WD Mohammed were frequently cited in IMAN’s work and events. In particular, Imam Mohammad’s ideas were utilized as a roadmap for enacting “indigeneity” through civic engagement. Mohammed argued that Islam, “Sanctions and encourages the democratic process...[and] teaches us [Muslims] that we should be active and supportive of all good things that a society has established” (In Curtis 2002, 123). For Mohammed, these “good things” included electoral politics and paying taxes, active engagement in civic groups, military service, business enterprise, and art and cultural expression.

IMAN was the place where Huma and my other interlocutors whom I observed, interviewed, and spent time with in the field would *claim* “indigeneity” by locating themselves in the American past, and *do* “indigeneity” through civic engagement as Muslims in the American present. Claiming and doing “indigeneity,” young Muslims participate in IMAN’s work from volunteering in “get out the vote” efforts, attending Muslim music festivals, working at IMAN’s free health-care clinic, and learning about American Muslim predecessors like Malcolm X in IMAN’s educational programming. For Huma, claiming and doing “indigeneity” meant working at Culvers restaurant, playing in her high-school band, and volunteering, whether at Sunday school or with IMAN.

Huma identifies the American Muslim who *belongs here* as a “good [Muslim] citizen.” She is a “completely American girl,” who is “somewhat of a role model” and *has the scarf on*. Huma links legal rights and affective belonging by using “cultural expression to claim public rights and recognition” (Rosaldo 1997, 36). She inverts the racialized unmaking of her citizenship as in the example of

the drive-thru aggression by recuperating the headscarf as itself a sign of the citizen. Therefore, Huma’s “hijab as resistance,” is not the broader disavowal of American state power commonly found in a number of Muslim-majority contexts, where the hijab symbolizes resistance to European and U.S. hegemony. Rather, she joins other, second-generation South Asian and Arab American Muslim women, who use the headscarf to claim Muslim inclusion into the U.S. body politic (Haddad 2007; Mir 2014; Williams and Vashi 2007).

Huma’s demand to belong and be different is a critique of the state’s practices of surveillance that identify her “difference”—brown skin and headscarf—as signs of the suspect. However, as Maira (2009a) notes, this kind of critique is limited by the parallel demand for a recognition that the state regulates: citizenship. Furthermore, while Huma’s good Muslim citizen critiques state-sponsored exclusion, embedded in a language of the “good,” it also aligns with neoliberal forms of citizenship. To be a good citizen, and a good Muslim, Huma volunteers. Volunteerism is *good* but *only necessary* because of neoliberal decimation of state services. In fact, while Huma’s activities signal deep commitments to her community and a sense of Islamic ethics, they also index a high level of individualized self-motivation, which is highly praised within a neoliberal framework that places emphasis on citizens as individual “entrepreneurs of their own human capital,” rather than collectivities that hold the state accountable (Ong 1996).

“Good” here is also in tension with the “good Muslim, bad Muslim” culture talk. Huma embraces good Muslim citizenship as a way to undercut the binaries of racialization. Yet, good Muslim citizenship is also used by the state in support of its triumphant narrative of U.S. multiculturalism. The rhetoric of U.S. multiculturalism, as noted in the introduction, reconfigures ethnic and racial difference as a national “good,” thereby allowing for the affective recognition that Huma desires. However, only particular models of good Muslim bodies and behaviors are afforded inclusion.

In the case of the “good Muslim feminist,” the performance of good Muslim citizenship means decrying “Islamic” gender oppression in unaccented English, with elite affiliations and without a headscarf (Maira 2009b). In other instances, the good Muslim citizen-subject is recognized as an educated, professional, and politically astute hijab-clad Muslim woman who is solidly middle-class and heterosexual (Alsultany 2012). Always cast against the bad Muslim—working-class, undocumented, and

sexually perverse (Puar 2007)—good Muslims who *belong here* are appropriately different (and yet similar enough) and upwardly mobile.

In certain ways, Huma's imaginary of citizenship, shown in how she articulates and shapes her own body and behavior, aligns with these models of good Muslim citizenship. She stakes her belonging in the suburban public school and the fast food restaurant that are also markers of the idealized American middle class and "boot-strap" values—through diligence and hard work, a fast food job and a free public education lead to upward mobility.<sup>20</sup> Furthermore, Huma attended an elite educational institution and participated in electoral politics. Yet, I am not arguing that Huma necessarily desires to be aligned with the state. Rather, I aim to illustrate the contested terrain of American Muslim citizenship.

Huma's story illustrates the constraints placed on the process of self-making by a discourse of multiculturalism in which certain kinds of raced, gendered, and classed performances afford certain kinds of access to citizenship. Furthermore, Huma's articulations and aspirations toward good Muslim citizenship echo a broader community discourse that seeks to undo racial exclusion through claiming "indigeneity" and the act of doing good Muslim citizenship. Nevertheless, these efforts are themselves undone by the racialized hierarchies of the state's multiculturalist frameworks.

Moreover, because Huma *looks like* a Muslim, she is racialized as "suspect" by state surveillance. She also has very real connections to the lands and peoples also racialized as suspects by the state, such as many migrating relatives who use her family's home as a way station. Indeed this is a very telling difference between Huma and Naeemah. For Huma, a young Pakistani American Muslim woman, 9/11 was a watershed moment in which the discourse of "indigeneity" became the route to belonging. For Naeemah, an African American Muslim woman, 9/11 was almost a non-event because it paled in comparison to a much longer history of civic ostracism.

## TO BE YOUNG, MUSLIM, AND A BLACK CITIZEN

Su'ad: Do you see yourself as an American?

Naeemah: Like ownership? No. And, I don't really want ownership. I don't feel like I don't have citizenship rights, but I don't feel like

I'm American...What does America look like? What does America believe? What a typical American believes is not what I believe. The images of an American, the thoughts of an American, are what a White person does. What a White person thinks. And that is not my reality. I took a "Sociology of Latinos" class and they kept talking about assimilation. And, like every week I would ask, "Why do you want to be American so badly?" If America doesn't want me, I don't want it. I mean I am not saying don't come here. Come here. But, don't wear a flag. It's like wanting to be a part of that which oppresses you. I get that I'm American, and all my ancestors are, but American values are not my values.

Like Huma, much of Naeemah's activism happened through IMAN, where claiming and doing "indigeneity" is the dominant frame for Muslim citizenship in the United States. Although Huma adopts this frame, Naeemah has very different ideas. When she says, "I don't feel like I *don't* have citizenship rights, but I [also] don't feel like I'm American," her declaration recalls the distinction between citizenship as rights and citizenship as belonging. She concedes that she is legally a citizen because of her American ancestry. However, the United States is not a site of affective belonging for her, because, what America looks like and what America believes are, for her, what White people *do* and *think*. Naeemah argues that affective citizenship is impossible for her because Americanness is tightly bound to Whiteness. By extension, when she identifies the desire to "be American" by the Latinx students in her class, she sees this as a desire to "be a part of what oppresses you."

Naeemah's is not a singular case. She echoes other Black youth, Muslim and non-Muslim, who question the state's promise of equality. In her study of Black youth politics, Cohen (2010, 141) argues that personal experiences of racial discrimination in the 'hood, "the classroom and boardroom alike" make Black youth skeptical of the state. Furthermore, Black youth are also impacted by a prevailing discourse that deems their behaviors, tastes, styles, and choices to be pathological. Black American youth contend with a durable myth of young Black nihilism that casts young African Americans as social parasites and predators who threaten the nation. This "systemic pathologization," to use Cohen's (2010) term, is also gendered—the Black female body is targeted

by myths of immoral and irresponsible sexuality (Harris-Perry 2011). Moreover, as Naeemah's narrative indicates, the experience of systemic pathologization is operative irrespective of the religious identity of Black youth.

Furthermore, unlike Huma's experience, where links to the Americana of the suburbs enables inclusion, Naeemah identified the suburbs as a space where Blackness can be excluded:

I grew up in 'burbs, so all Blackness is suspect [there]. [So] we tended to stay in the suburbs where people looked like us. But when we [Naeemah and her friends], went to the mall, if you really wanted to shop you had to go to Orland [Park Mall] ... Today, there are more Black people in Orland, but as a teen it was awkward, it was all White, and when we went there we got stared at.

As Naeemah describes above, when she leaves the security of her small multiethnic neighborhood in the suburbs, she is the target of "cultural sniping." However, in this instance, it is not because she is Muslim, but because she embodies the threat of Blackness. Naeemah explains how the mall closest to her was subpar, but that the alternative in a wealthy suburb southwest of Chicago, with better stores, also had more surveillance. In Naeemah's narration of her mall experience, it was neither the police nor mall security, but other patrons who policed her and her friends.

Naeemah's comments predate the deaths of Trayvon Martin, Renisha McBride, and other young Black Americans for whom the phrase "cultural sniping" was not metaphorical. Naeemah was never the target of physical violence, yet her experiences are linked to these deaths as they underscore the widespread policing of Black bodies, behaviors, and movements. As a "threat to the nation," Black youth are suspect and subject to state surveillance through profiling, harassment, and state violence at the hands of law enforcement and citizen-deputies.

Young, Black, Muslim, and female, Naeemah is subject to the logics of Muslim racialization and Black youth pathologization. This intersection of Blackness and Muslimness creates a complex field of race and suspicion. Public spaces, like the fast food restaurant and the public school, where Huma locates a sense of belonging, are locations where young Blacks, like Naeemah, are targeted, and their belonging as citizens is challenged (LaBennet 2011). Yet at the airport where the

Muslim is suspect, Naeemah's Black Americanness and gender can render her Muslim identity illegible and mark her as a citizen. It must be noted that this instance of legibility is momentary. While the surveillance technology of the airport checkpoint is unable to read Black Americanness as Muslim, other arms of the state do, and have read the "American Black Muslim" as an "ethnicity of interest."<sup>21</sup>

Naeemah's skepticism and alienation reflect historic Black Nationalist sentiments that remain durable among African Americans (Dawson 2003). However, she expresses these sentiments in a specific historical moment: the post-Civil Rights era. This period is defined by legal gains, from which Naeemah benefits but also by continued systemic racial inequality. Furthermore, Blackness is both surveilled and policed by the state, as well as strategically included in state multiculturalism. As described earlier, prefiguring the inclusion of the good Muslim, the Black Citizen (often constructed as Christian), is configured as a testament to the triumph of American ideals and culture.

Because multiculturalism is "appropriately hierarchal," the incorporation of Black Americans into the narrative of American exceptionalism does not challenge White privilege. However, in the contemporary logic of state surveillance and multiculturalism that racializes Muslims as brown and not Black—Naeemah can access citizenship in certain moments where Huma cannot—even while recognizing Black American's exclusion from full equality. These moments rely on the simultaneous browning of Muslims and the "nativizing" of Blackness in U.S. multiculturalist rhetoric and state surveillance practices. They do not however override the reality that Naeemah is also cast as suspect in multiple ways: as a Muslim woman and as a Black American woman. I argue that, as a young person subject to these intersectional layers of suspicion, the claims to state and Muslim belonging made by Huma are untenable for Naeemah.

Because Naeemah made a distinction between who she is and what an "American" is, I asked her if she ever considered leaving the United States:

Naeemah: I've always wanted to move. I went to Senegal when I was twelve and fell in love. Always wanted to go back. My whole life plan is about going back. I took French, and I'm now taking Arabic. I want to do study abroad there if I can. I always wanted to do



healthcare and now I am really interested in community health. So I would do community health in Senegal.

Su'ad: But, what about the community you are leaving behind?

Naeemah: I have to think about what community I am part of and where I am more needed. I feel like Senegal is a community I am a part of—they may not know it [laughs], but when I was there, no one asked me where I was from. Maybe if I went now, I might change my mind, or find something here to be really committed to, and I'll stay, but I don't think I'll ever feel most comfortable here [in the United States].

For Naeemah, Senegal is a place where, “no one asks where I am from.” Naeemah makes a claim to Senegal, a Black African country, and she sees this claim as legitimated by her Blackness. Naeemah also appears to identify Senegal as “a community I am a part of” because it is also predominately Muslim—and, thus, Senegal has room for both her racial and religious identities. Naeemah is honest about the fact that there may be some naïveté in her recollection of Senegal and that her feelings of community with the Senegalese may not necessarily be reciprocated. Nevertheless, she is quite certain that she will “never feel most comfortable” in the United States.

It is worth noting that Naeemah's declarations of alienation are accompanied by active participation in social justice work. Moreover, Naeemah may be alienated from the state but not with her Black and Latinx neighbors who she sees as also having a contested relationship with the United States. Consequently, her alienation is neither paralyzing nor all consuming. Her feelings of belonging emerge both through and beyond the state, articulating an alternate form of cultural citizenship—a Black cultural citizenship. Clarke (2013, 467) identifies Black cultural citizenship in the territorialized and “deterritorialized notions of belonging” in which Blackness “is signified and citizenship is embedded in multiple modalities,” contested, state, and non-state modes “for producing legitimacy.” The political consciousness that Naeemah inherited from her parents and that motivates her work at IMAN emerges through the state's legibility effect. Yet, Naeemah does not follow Imam Mohammed's trajectory from NOI-informed consciousness to good American Muslim

citizenship but instead makes alternative claims to citizenship that is based on two overlapping modalities of belonging: (i) pan-Africanism and, (ii) the *ummah* (the global Muslim community).

By making her own and different claims, Naeemah articulates a notion of belonging that is not completely tethered to the state's regulatory power. Yet in the intertwined discourses of race, gender, and religion, where the practices of the state and neighbors continue to criminalize and selectively include the American Muslim and the Black American, neither Naeemah's nor Huma's claims of belonging can be completely secure. Rather, they are in a constant state of negotiation—shifting and being shifted between citizenship and suspicion.

### **RACE, GENDER AND THE MAKING OF AMERICAN MUSLIM CITIZENSHIP**

The American Muslim's status as citizen and suspect is made through state logics of surveillance and multiculturalism that rely on making the “Muslim” a racial type that is made legible by raced and gendered markers of body and behavior. The Muslim women's headscarf is a central figure in this narrative, highlighting the gendered body as a primary site in which citizenship is made and unmade by the state and the self. Once she dons a headscarf, a Muslim woman's own racial identification can be subsumed by her raced Muslimness, which was true for Naeemah when she wore her headscarf, yet only in a very specific location: the airport. Naeemah describes herself as legibly Muslim to the Black and Latinx residents of her neighborhood who did not read her and her family members' Muslimness—which included headscarves and Black skin—as a threat. In contrast, Huma was attacked by a White resident who read her Muslimness—hijab, brown skin, and “Arab” ethnicity—as a foreign threat to the nation. Thus, the headscarf, as a religious marker, is contingent. It is raced and gendered and as such can be read in different ways by the state and its various citizens. As I have shown, depending on whether Muslim women are Black or brown, they are seen as either suspects or citizens. Public spaces are thus particularly precarious sites for Muslim women in the United States.

While always in a dialogue with state power (through policies, discourse, and citizen-deputies), Naeemah and Huma's narratives also highlight their own acts of agency. Huma “race-s” herself—by wearing a headscarf, she is choosing to make her Muslimness legible. Huma wears this religious symbol as an icon of good citizenship and as a

claim to belong. For Huma, who “looks like a Muslim,” “indigeneity” and good Muslim citizenship build affective ties of belonging that attempt to expand the state’s boundary making. In contrast, Naeemah, who “does not [always] look like a Muslim,” charts her belonging beyond the discourse of the state. Although not fully formed, her desire to travel to Senegal reflects a similar decision made by a distinguished group of historical Black Americans, including W.E.B. DuBois, who chose emigration and travel “back to Africa,” when alienation became too much. Importantly, Naeemah chooses a potential new home that is both Black *and* Muslim—a location where she would be racially and religiously legible—and thus where she believes she would belong.

By unpacking the inner workings of racialization, I have shown how race and gender play a critical role in the uneven application of citizenship and suspicion launched on American Muslim communities. Huma and Naeemah are both young, female, Muslim, and U.S. citizens; however, the ways that race and gender intersect with their own identifications and experiences result in different, though related, sets of consequences. Their narratives illustrate that Muslims oscillate between citizen and suspect according to certain markers and preconceptions. Hence, there are times when the Muslim is the “dangerous other” that threatens the state and other times when the Muslim escapes certain kinds of surveillance by not “looking” the part. There are still other times when the Muslim is the model citizen that proves American exceptionalism. These contradictory moments, I suggest, further complicate Muslim American self-making because the signs and symbols deployed as modes of belonging can also reproduce the very logics that American Muslims seek to escape. Naeemah and Huma reflect different responses to racialized exclusion—donning a headscarf and moving to Senegal—and subsequently, divergent conclusions about Muslim belonging in the United States, thus illustrating the American context in which race, gender, and religion remain entangled in the ties of citizenship.

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**Su’ad Abdul Khabeer** *Purdue University, West Lafayette, IN, USA,*  
*sak@purdue.edu*

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## NOTES

1. My main interlocutors included eighteen- to twenty-two-year-olds and a slightly older cohort of young adults ranging in age from the mid-twenties to the late-thirties. I also engaged parents and older community figures. My methods included participant-observation and interviews in homes, at IMAN, and at a broad range of events, from banquets, fashion shows, and rallies, to lectures and Friday prayers in the Black, South Asian, and Arab American Muslim communities of Chicago.

2. My initial fieldwork took place in Chicago, Illinois from January 2007 through August 2008 while I was a graduate student. I also conducted follow-up interviews like this one as well as subsequent fieldwork in Chicago, New York City, the California Bay Area, and London, UK, from 2009 to 2014.

3. See “Hearing on Racial Profiling and the Use of Suspect Classifications in Law Enforcement Policy Before U.S. Committee on the Judiciary Subcommittee on the Constitution, Civil Rights and Civil Liberties,” 111th Cong. (2010) (Written Testimony by Farhana Khera, President and Executive Director Muslim Advocates), 3.

4. See Paul Harris, “The ex-FBI informant with a change of heart: ‘There is no real hunt. It’s fixed,’” *The Guardian*, March 20, 2012. Accessed September 1, 2012. <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2012/mar/20/fbi-informant>.

5. This included mapping (which was later discontinued due to community protests) and Suspicious Activity Reports (SAR), for which police officers and citizens were instructed to report any suspicious activity, including taking photographs. SAR is now used across the United States.

6. See New York City Police Department website, “The Demographics Unit,” *NYPD Intelligence Division*, 2011. Accessed March 23, 2012. [wid.ap.org/documents/nypd-demo.pdf](http://www.nypd.org/documents/nypd-demo.pdf)

7. See the March 4, 2012 article, “Newark’s former police director addresses Muslims in Chicago, pledges no ‘blanket surveillance.’” Associated Press, March 4. Accessed March 23, 2012.

[http://www.nj.com/news/index.ssf/2012/03/former\\_newark\\_police\\_director\\_2.html](http://www.nj.com/news/index.ssf/2012/03/former_newark_police_director_2.html)

8. See the cases of Derrick Shareef: Department of Justice, “Federal Task Force Arrests Rockford Man in Foiled Plan to Set Off Grenades in Rockford Shopping Mall,” Northern District of Illinois, December 8 2006, accessed October 9, 2012, [https://www.justice.gov/archive/usao/iln/chicago/2006/pr1208\\_01.pdf](https://www.justice.gov/archive/usao/iln/chicago/2006/pr1208_01.pdf); Michael C. Finton: Federal Bureau of Investigations, “Illinois Man Admits Plotting to Bomb Federal Courthouse and Is Sentenced to 28 Years in Prison,” Springfield Division, May 9, 2011, accessed October 9, 2011, <https://archives.fbi.gov/archives/springfield/press-releases/2011/si050911.htm>; and Adel Daoud: Federal Bureau of Investigations, “Hillside Man Arrested after FBI Undercover Investigation on Federal Charges for Attempting to Bomb Downtown Chicago Bar,” Chicago Division, September 15, 2012, accessed November 4, 2013, <https://archives.fbi.gov/archives/chicago/press-releases/2012/hillside-man-arrested-after-fbi-undercover-investigation-on-federal-charges-for-attempting-to-bomb-downtown-chicago-bar>

9. Latinx is a gender-neutral term for those U.S. citizens and residents with roots in Latin America and the Spanish-speaking Caribbean. As I illustrate in this essay, other categories, such as class, gender, religion, and sexuality, are also important, yet their significance in the U.S. is attenuated by how they relate to race.

10. For example, Maira (2009b) shows how working-class immigrant Muslims’ access to citizenship differs from that of elite Muslims in the U.S.

11. U.S. Muslims are approximately 30 percent African American, 30 percent South Asian, and 30 percent Middle Eastern, with smaller percentages of West African, Southeast Asian, and Eastern European immigrants as well as White American and Latinx converts. See Toni Johnson, “Muslims in the United States.” *Council on Foreign Relations*, 2011. Accessed June 26, 2017. <http://www.cfr.org/united-states/muslims-united-states/p25927>

12. I am specifically contrasting the U.S. government’s treatment of Anwar Al-Awlaki, an American Muslim who was killed in a drone strike in 2012 without due process, and Farah Pandith, an American Muslim who was appointed to be a Special Representative to Muslim communities in 2009.

13. See Jimmy Jenkins, “9/11 and its Aftermath in Hip-Hop Culture: The Hip-Hop Critique of 9/11 and the Bush Administration,” March 4 2013, accessed June 1 2015, <https://tropicsofme>

[ta.wordpress.com/2013/03/04/911-and-its-aftermath-in-hip-hop-culture-the-hip-hop-critique-of-911-and-the-bush-administration](http://ta.wordpress.com/2013/03/04/911-and-its-aftermath-in-hip-hop-culture-the-hip-hop-critique-of-911-and-the-bush-administration), and Lanita Jacobs-Huey, “The Arab Is the New Nigger: African American Comics Confront the Irony and Humor of September 11th.” Presentation at Celebrity, Politics and Public Life Faculty Seminar at the Norman Lear Center, Los Angeles, CA January 24, 2002. Cainkar (2011) also cites similar attitudes among her interviewees.

14. One notable exception is Maira (2009a).

15. Between 2001 and 2009, the Council of American Islamic Relations received 778 reports of airport discrimination, which accounted for between 2 and 26 percent of all reporting. See Council on American Islamic Relations, *The Status of Muslim Civil Rights in the United States*. Washington: Council on American-Islamic Relations Research Center. CAIR’s data are based on self-reporting, and the actual number of incidents may be higher. Muslim Advocates and the American Civil Liberties Union have led a multiyear campaign to remove religion and national origin as well as exceptions for national security and border security, from Federal Law Enforcement profiling guidelines. In 2014 guidelines, religion and national origin were added as protected categories; however, the “revised Guidance is not applicable to screenings, inspections, and other protective activities related to border and air security.” See Muslim Advocates, “Fact Sheet on Federal Guidance on Racial Profiling,” December 14, 2014. Accessed July 7 2015. <http://www.muslimadvocates.org/files/Factsheet-on-Revised-Guidance-Racial-Profiling.pdf>.

16. One example of this is the media framing around Kareem Rashad Sultan Khan and his family. Khan was a U.S. soldier who died in combat in Iraq receiving a Purple Heart and Bronze Star. He and his parents have been celebrated as symbols of successful integration of Muslims in U.S. society. See, for example, “More on Solider Kareem R. Khan.” *The New York Times*. October 19, 2008. Accessed June 27 2017. <https://thelede.blogs.nytimes.com/2008/10/19/more-on-the-soldier-kareem-r-khan/>

17. “If you see something, say something” is the tagline for a campaign started by the New York City Metropolitan Authority and is now licensed by the U.S. Department of Homeland Security: <https://www.dhs.gov/see-something-say-something>. This national campaign seeks to engage citizens in national security by asking them to be alert to “suspicious” activities by other citizens and to report such activities to law enforcement.

18. FBI guidelines released under the Bush Administration and amended by President Obama include a practice of “Undisclosed Participation” (UDP) in which “an FBI employee or confidential human sources (CHS)” works as an undercover informant. See Federal Bureau of Investigations, “Undisclosed Participation” In Domestic Investigations and Operations Guide, 2009, DC: Federal Bureau of Investigations. The exact extent of the procedures within local Muslim communities was not disclosed; sections of the report including “Purpose,” “Scope,” and “Standards of Review” of UDP were redacted in the version of the guidelines released to the public.

19. Abd-Allah’s work is preceded by that of others such as the Afro-Canadian scholar Quick (1996).

20. One classic example of this is a McDonald’s commercial aired in the early 1990s featuring a young Black teen, named Calvin. Calvin passes all the “temptations” of his urban Black neighborhood to work diligently at McDonalds. His hard work earns him a management position, and he is able to hire others.

21. See New York City Police Department, “The Demographics Unit,” *NYPD Intelligence Division*, 2011. Accessed March 23, 2012. [wid.a-p.org/documents/nypd-demo.pdf](http://www.nypd.org/documents/nypd-demo.pdf)

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