The Racialization of Islam in the United States: Islamophobia, Hate Crimes, and "Flying while Brown"

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Abstract: This paper explores the intersectionality of race and Islamophobia by using a set of empirical data relating to the experiences of American Muslims and non-Muslims in the United States. Through a multi-tiered methodology, the paper reveals how racialization processes interact with Islamophobic discourses and actions in American society. Specifically, the dataset is anchored in U.S. public perceptions of American Muslims, hate crime incidents against Muslims and non-Muslims, and the institutionalization of Islamophobia. The paper, which shows how race is endemic to Islamophobic incidents, appeals to the general U.S. public, especially community members from religious, political, academic, civil rights, and social justice backgrounds.

1. Introduction

This paper explores the racialization of Islam in the United States and how this discriminatory process is influenced by historic, domestic and geopolitical trends surrounding American Muslims and people who "look Muslim". In the context of the "war on terror", the racialization of American Muslims generates local and palpable experiences of exclusion and abuse for both Muslims and non-Muslims. These experiences are captured by the term Islamophobia, which is now accepted and designating as a special form of discrimination. Although it is widely used in international media, "Islamophobia" still appears in inverted commas to imply the meaning of Islamophobia is not clear, or not as clear as others claim (Richardson n.d., p. 3). A further implication of the inverted commas "is that there is in reality no such thing as Islamophobia: it is merely the figment of a paranoid or politically motivated imagination; or constructed out of a desire to perpetuate a siege mentality and sense of victimhood against Muslims, or to put an end to legitimate criticism, or to engage in lazy abuse" (Richardson n.d., pp. 3–4). Islamic organizations and advocacy groups in the United States criticize this approach towards Islamophobia, citing racial profiling and hate crimes as evidence of anti-Muslim racism in American society.

The Council on American-Islamic Relations (CAIR), a civil rights and advocacy organization based in Washington, D.C., is at the forefront of combatting Islamophobia in the United States. In a 2016 report, Nihad Awad, CAIR's Executive Director, stated that fear and hatred of American Muslims have "moved from the fringes of American society to the mainstream" (Council on American-Islamic Relations 2016, p. v). During the 2016 presidential campaign, candidates of the Republican Party made several controversial comments including, "Islam hates us," "[Muslims are] uncorked animals," and "I would not advocate that we put a Muslim in charge of this nation" (Bradner 2015; Waldman 2015). Another Islamophobic buzzword, the fear of "creeping *sharia*," or Islamic law, has led to legislation designed to vilify or otherwise target Muslims at an institutional level. To date, at least 32 states across the United States have introduced and debated anti-*sharia* or anti-foreign law bills (Rifai 2016). This movement reached its climax in 2011 and 2012, when 78 bills or amendments designed to denigrate Islamic religious

practices were introduced in the legislatures of 29 states as well as the U.S. Congress (Saylor 2014). Seventy-three of these bills were introduced by Republicans, while only one bill was introduced by a Democrat from Alabama. In total, only three anti-*sharia* bills at the state level were bi-partisan (Kansas, South Carolina, and South Dakota (Saylor 2014). Anti-*sharia* bills were signed into law in Arizona, Kansas, South Dakota, and Tennessee in 2011 and 2012 (Saylor 2014). According to the Institute for Social Policy and Understanding (ISPU), a solution-seeking research institute that tracks Islamophobia in the United States, approximately 80% of U.S. legislators who sponsor this type of legislation also sponsor bills restricting the rights of other minorities and vulnerable groups in the United States.

Islamophobia is also exacerbated by the Islamophobia industry (Lean 2012). In recent years, anti-Muslim groups and organizations have enjoyed access to at least $205 million to spread fear and hatred of Muslims (Council on American-Islamic Relations 2016, p. v). In 2011, the Center for American Progress (CAP), a public policy research and advocacy organization based in Washington, DC, found that seven charitable foundations spent $42.6 million between 2001 and 2009 to support the spread of anti-Muslim and anti-Islam rhetoric in the United States (Ali 2011). The CAP's report, "Fear, Inc.: The Roots of the Islamophobia Network in America," identified several key foundations that help to fuel Islamophobia, including the Donors Capital Fund, the Richard Mellon Scaife Foundation, the Lynde and Harry Bradley Foundation, the Newton and Rochelle Becker Foundation and Newton and Rochelle Becker Charitable Trust, the Russell Berrie Foundation, the Anchorage Charitable Fund and William Rosenwald Family Fund, and the Fairbrook Foundation (Ali 2011). The culmination of anti-Islam legislation and rhetoric has undoubtedly inspired attacks against Muslims and non-Muslims across the United States. In the last two months of 2015 alone, American Muslims reported 34 violent incidents against their mosques, acts that serve to intimidate Muslim worshippers (Council on American-Islamic Relations 2016, p. v).

In addition to the activities of anti-Muslim groups and organizations, media and entertainment representations of Islam and Muslims are key factors in the rise of Islamophobia across the United States. According to Media Tenor International, a research institute that studies data for NGO's and governments, news outlets such as Fox, NBC, and CBS depicted Islam primarily as a source of violence between 2007 to 2013 (Media Tenor International n.d.). In another 2011 report, Media Tenor found that U.S. and European news outlets focused on the Middle East primarily through the context of Muslim militancy (Media Tenor International 2011). The entertainment industry, too, contributes to the racialization of Islam and Muslim, which exacerbates anti-Islam and anti-Muslim sentiments. In a study on news coverage from LexisNexis Academic and CNN for all terrorist attacks in the United States between 2011 and 2015, researchers found that news outlets gave drastically more coverage to attacks by Muslims, particularly foreign-born Muslims—even though these attacks are far less common than other kinds of terrorist attacks (Kearns et al. 2017a). Attacks by Muslim perpetrators received, on average, 449% more coverage than attacks carried out by non-Muslims (Kearns et al. 2017b). Erin Kearns, an author of the study, told National Public Radio (NPR) in June 2017 that when the perpetrator of a terrorist attack is Muslim, "you can expect that attack to receive about four and a half times more media coverage than if the perpetrator was not Muslim." Put another way, as Kearns notes, "a perpetrator who is not Muslim would have to kill on average about seven more people to receive the same amount of coverage as a perpetrator who is Muslim."

The term "racial formation," as introduced by Omi and Winant (1994), is a useful starting point to explore the ways in which media determine the content and importance of Muslim identities, by which they are then shaped by racial meanings. The reaction of Americans to the genre of action-adventure film, and its increasing use of Arabs and Muslims as villains, shows how Americans' perceptions of Arab and Muslims populations can be shaped and skewed (Wilkins 2008). Jack Shaheen, author of *Reel Bad Arabs: How Hollywood Vilifies People* and *A is for Arab: Archiving Stereotypes in U.S. Popular Culture*, spent his career analyzing the way that Arabs have been portrayed in American film and television over the last century. In 2006, his book *Reel Bad Arabs* showed that Hollywood depicts Arabs as "brute murderers, sleazy rapists, religious fanatics, oil-rich dimwits and abusers of women."

Shaheen's research documented well over 1000 films depicting Arabs and subsequently found that 932 films depict them in a stereotypical or negative light. Only 12 films have a positive depiction. He also cites films that portray Arabs as cold, money hungry Muslims or inept villainous terrorist that seek to destroy "Western civilization." In the plot of one film, the popular movie "Back to the Future" (1985), the antagonists who shoot the main character are portrayed as Libyan Muslim terrorists who shout Arabic gibberish as they ruthlessly gun down the protagonist. Omi and Winant (1994) suggest that these representations lead to a kind of "racial etiquette," or a set of interpretative codes and racial meanings that operate in the daily interactions of people living in the United States. By reinforcing stereotypes of the Middle East as a place of extremism and Muslims as terrorists, these representations produce support for policies that have dire consequences for Arabs, Muslims, and people who are believed to be Arab and Muslim (Alsultany 2015). These caricatures of Arabs and Muslims also provide a popular "permission to hate," which often unfolds through a synthesis of racial and religious discrimination (Poynting and Mason 2006, p. 367).

Despite the conflation of Arab identity and "radical Muslims," the facts reveal that American Muslims are far from homogenous. The Pew Research Center estimates that there were about 3.3 million Muslims of all ages living in the United States in 2015 (Mohamed 2016). No single racial or ethnic group makes up for more than 30% of the total Muslim population (Mohamed 2016). Overall, 30% describe themselves as white, 23% as black, 21% as Asian, 6% as Hispanic, and 19% as other or mixed race (Mohamed 2016). Of those aged 18 and older, more than six in 10 (63%) were born abroad, and many are relative newcomers to the United States (Pew Research Center 2011). Approximately one-quarter of all Muslim adults (25%) have arrived in the country since 2000. Despite the high proportion of immigrants in the American Muslim population, the vast majority (81%) report that they are citizens of the United States (Pew Research Center 2011). Recent studies carried out by the Pew Research Center (2007) also reveal that nearly one-quarter of Americans Muslims say they have converted to Islam; nine in 10 (91%) converts to Islam were born in the United States, and almost two-thirds (67%) of all converts to Islam came from Protestant Churches (Pew Research Center 2007). With this heterogeneity in mind, nearly all Muslim racial or ethnic groups have higher odds of reporting one or more types of perceived discrimination than white Muslims (Zainiddinov 2016). Asian Muslims report the lowest frequency of perceived discrimination than other Muslim racial or ethnic groups (Zainiddinov 2016).

The experiences of European Muslims reveal additional insight on the dynamics of contemporary Islamophobia in Western countries. According to the European Islamophobia Report (2017), Islamophobia has become "a real danger" to the democratic foundations of the European Union. The 2016 EIR country reports, which cover almost all the European continent, shows that the level of Islamophobia in fields such as education, employment, media, politics, the justice system and the Internet is on the rise (European Islamophobia Report 2017). In terms of politics, as Hafez (2014) notes, "Islamophobia has become a useful tool for right-wing parties to mobilize electors in many European nation-states." This development, he continues, means that Islamophobia has become a kind of "accepted racism" found not only on the margins of European societies, but also at the center. In one European nation-state (Ireland), Carr (2014) found that over 50% of Muslims indicated that they did experience some form of hostility between 2010 and 2014. Over one in three (36%) of Carr's survey participants felt they had been targeted on the basis of their being identified as Muslim. In the context of Pakistani Muslims in Ireland, they are positioned between exclusionary notions of Irish national identity and their racialized Muslim identities, even as Pakistani Irish Muslims report a preference for more democratic-oriented conceptualizations of Irishness (Considine 2017). By recognizing anti-Muslim racism as a distinct phenomenon, the Irish State and other European countries can take "a first step in a process towards the formation of evidence based, effective policies that can challenge anti-Muslim racism and concomitantly encourage the reporting of this phenomenon" (Carr 2014, p. 2).

2. Methodology

A methodological overview is needed before the author engages with the intersectionality of race and Islamophobia in the United States. In selecting an appropriate research design, the author deployed several methodological tools. This paper follows Yin (1994, p. 23) because the boundaries between the phenomenon (Islamophobia) and the context (race) is not clearly evident, hence multiple sources of evidence must be used. Coding of news media stories is one source of examination. Coding in qualitative inquiry is most often used to identify words or short phrases that symbolically assign a summative, salient, essence-capturing, and/or evocative attribute for a portion of language-based or visual data (Saldana 2009, p. 3). The coding process of this research entailed looking through a selected sample of relevant news media coverage and systematically noting its traits as it pertains to the racialization of Islam in the United States (Pew Research Center n.d.). Choosing a sample of articles involved a focus on representativeness and the practical use of the article, specifically in terms of two units of analysis: "race" and "racial profiling."

In terms of the sampling technique, this research can best be described as purposeful sampling. Purposeful sampling is widely used in qualitative research for the identification and selection of information-rich cases for the most effective use of limited resources (Patton 2002). Because there are numerous purposeful sampling designs, the author opted for a criterion technique that identifies and selects cases that meet some predetermined criterion of importance. In light of this research, the criterion of importance included terms like race, racism, hate crime, racial profiling, Muslims and Islamophobia. The selection of the material involved identifying and selecting news articles that are especially pertinent to the role that race played in incidents of anti-Muslim discrimination and violence. Embedded in the purposeful sampling strategy is the ability to compare and contrast, to identify similarities and differences across the selected articles. The author framed "news articles" in a broad manner to include print, online news sites, network TV programs, cable TV programs, radio broadcasts, and blogs (Pew Research Center n.d.). In total, 98 articles were examined for initial inclusion in the content analysis. Using the key search words, "racial profiling of Muslims in the United States" and "hate crimes against Muslims in the United States," the news websites were reviewed for further consideration, particularly in light of incidents involving race and racialization. The publications were identified based on a number of reasons; first, to embody a diversity of political orientations in the United States, a country that plays an important role in framing Muslims and linking it with terrorism. All the news articles examined in the research are considered to be reputable sources and among the largest media outlets in terms of online circulation.

A total of 42 relevant articles were chosen for the final analysis. These 42 articles revealed data which support the idea that race serves as a symbolic justification for Islamophobic incidents in the United States. A smaller selection of these articles is examined in the data sections of this paper. Throughout the research phase, the author used content analysis, a research tool used to determine the presence of certain words or concepts within texts or sets of texts. The content analysis of this paper examines numerous sources of evidence through pattern matching, a methodological technique that provides potential linkages between pieces of information (race), while simultaneously applying the same theories (Islamophobia) (Campbell 1975). In the case of this paper, the proposition or phenomenon is the intersectionality between race and Islamophobia.

It should also be made clear that the author allowed the analytical categories to flow from the articles themselves (Kondracki et al. 2002). In this regard, the author approached the texts in a subjective manner, but classified the texts by coding and identifying language, themes or patterns (Hsieh and Shannon 2005, p. 1278). The language used in the articles is important because of what it describes and what it is associated with. As Fowler (2007) notes, anything that is written about the world is articulated from a particular position: language is not a clear window but a refracting, structuring medium. As the examination of language played a pivotal role within this study, it is important to remember that language is not neutral. Instead, language is seen as a set of symbols that

describe something. It is this meaning that the author focuses on while analyzing how Muslims and non-Muslims experience anti-Muslim racism in the United States.

At the first level of coding, the author looked for two categories in the available articles: "race" and "racism." These two categories formed the basic units of the first phase of analysis. Headlines that contained potential information about the representative concepts were examined and noted as a specific Islamophobic incident against Muslims or those perceived to be Muslim. Additional search entries into LexisNexis included "race and hate crimes against Muslims" and "racism and anti-Muslim attacks." After exhausting an online news search of these units of analysis, the research moved to the second level of coding, which focused on locating articles for coverage of specific hate crimes against groups such as Muslims, Arabs, Sikhs, South Asians, and People of Color. The sample of articles examined in the second coding stage relate to concepts such as "looking Muslim," "flying while brown," and "racial profiling" at airports and on planes. Once these stories were identified, the author started to code and relate that coding system to several broad conceptual themes including Islamophobia, racial profiling, racism and civil rights violations. Islamophobia is the most common word in the cluster of competing phrases that emerged from the coding system. All of the recorded material analyzed in the paper is available online to be re-analyzed for reliability checks.

The final analysis of the articles was undertaken at a "micro" rather than "macro" level, meaning, the author engaged with stories relating to everyday lived experiences of Muslims rather than poll numbers or surveys. Ultimately, the author decided to frame the inquiry largely as a contemporary analysis of how Islamophobia operates in the United States, focusing particularly on research-based evidence and current events that point to the racialization of Islam. Ultimately, the goal of this study is to reveal how race is a symbolic form of Islamophobia as well as Islamophobic incidents in the United States.

3. The Intersectionality of Race and Islamophobia

There is a cluster of terms and phrases referring to hostility towards American Muslims. The most widely known term is Islamophobia. One of the first uses of Islamophobia in English appears in an article by Said (1985); he initially brought into focus the stigmatized identity of Muslims in his work *Orientalism*, which unpacked the Western perspectives that create dehumanizing representations of the "exotic" and "barbarous" countries of the Middle East, Africa, and Asia (Said 1978). Said (1978) saw many features of Western representations of the "Arab Other" as based on a fear of Muslims. Lurking behind these depictions is the menace of violent *jihad*, and a fear that Muslims (and Arabs) will destroy "Western civilization" and then take over the world (Said 1978, p. 287). These discourses, as Said notes, represent Muslims as systematically different from the "rational, developed, humane, superior" Westerners, while the Muslims and Arabs of the Orient are framed as "aberrant, undeveloped, inferior" (Said 1978, pp. 300–1). The Otherness of Muslims, as Said (1978) points out, is a narrative that judges a Muslim or Muslim group as inferior. This position requires an a priori assertion that the racialized Muslims actually have a core culture or a uniform way of expressing their Islamic beliefs and practices (Modood 2005, pp. 13–14). To assert such a shared cultural inferiority is hardly different from asserting a shared biological inferiority (Dunn et al. 2007, p. 567).

The racialization of Islam and Muslims nonetheless draws heavily upon observable elements of culture. This is a continuity of the so-called biological realities—that racism still depends on physical features for the selection of victims (Dunn et al. 2007, p. 567). In today's Western context, as noted by Meer and Modood (2009), Orientalism and Islamophobia have resulted in the racialization of Muslims and the social construction of a "visible archetype" of Muslims, who are characterized as inimical to "Western" culture and religion. The racialization of American Muslims also signifies an ideological process, and a historically specific one, which extends racial meaning to Islamic social practices and Muslims themselves (Omi and Winant 1994). These constructions of Orientalism and Islamophobia (incivility, inferiority, and incompatibility) are key tools of contemporary racism in the United States. Following Carr and Haynes (2015), American Muslims appear to be caught in a "clash of racializations"

between exclusionary notions of American national identity and racialized "Muslimness," both of which operate to expose Muslims to racist activity while concomitantly excluding them from the protection of the state.

Despite the heterogeneity of the American Muslim population, Muslims in the United States are racialized, meaning they are cast as a potentially threatening Other based on racial characteristics. Racialization, in this light, is a process by which American Muslims are identified and labelled through racial differentiation, such as genetics or skin color, and also through perceived cultural features such as religious symbols, like a beard or head covering. While Muslims are not a "race," they are examined through a racial process that is demarcated by physical features and racial underpinnings. In terms of "war on terror" discourses, this can be seen "in the dichotomy between the benevolent, deviant masculinity of the 'brown man'" (Khalid 2011, p. 20). This gendered Orientalist representation relies on binaries, but also employs racialized hierarchies (Khalid 2011, p. 20). Through this racialization, racism surfaces to demonize Muslims as "threats" who need to be handled through racial profiling, coercion, and violence.

The term Islamophobia gained further traction when the Runnymede Trust defined Islamophobia in two reports: *A Very Light Sleeper*, which led to the following report, *Islamophobia: A Challenge for Us All* (Runnymede Trust 1997). The 1997 Runnymede report defined Islamophobia as the unfounded and close-minded fear and/or hatred of Islam, Muslims or Islamic/Muslim culture. The definition identifies eight components as characteristic of Islamophobia in this sense:

(1) Islam is seen as a monolithic bloc, static and unresponsive to change;
(2) Islam is seen as separate and Other. It does not have values in common with other cultures, is not affected by them, and does not influence them;
(3) Islam is seen as inferior to the West. It is barbaric, irrational, primitive, and sexist;
(4) Islam is seen as violent, aggressive, threatening, supportive of terrorism, and engaged in a *clash of civilizations* (original emphasis);
(5) Islam is seen as a political ideology and is used to acquire political or military advantage;
(6) Criticism of the West by Muslims is rejected out of hand;
(7) Hostility towards Islam is used to justify discriminatory practices towards Muslims and the exclusion of Muslims from mainstream society;
(8) Anti-Muslim hostility is seen as natural or normal.

Adding to the theoretical foundation provided by the Runnymede Report, Allen (2010, p. 188) suggested that three different components of Islamophobia exist. The first is that Islamophobia is an ideology, one that provides meaning about Islam and Muslims in the contemporary setting "in similar ways to that which it has historically" (Allen 2010, p. 188). The second component of Islamophobia is the "modes of operation" through which meaning about Islam and Muslims is sustained and perpetuated. The final component of Islamophobia is exclusionary practices: practices that disadvantage and discriminate against Islam and Muslims in social and political spheres. Exclusionary practices include the subjection to violence as a tool of exclusion.

Since the Runnymede Trust popularized "Islamophobia," many scholars have raised methodological and theoretical concerns about the term (Bleich 2011; Savelkoul et al. 2012). Joppke (2009) dismisses the concept outright, and Halliday (1999) questioned the utility of the term. Bravo-Lopez (2011, p. 559) rejects the notion of Islamophobia being a type of racism because it is "devoid of any of the biological or cultural determinism" of racist discourses. Other critics maintain that the term Islamophobia is a politically manipulative coinage designed to silence critics of "Islamic supremacism" (Berlinski 2010). Moreover, Larsson and Sander (2015) discuss a further potential implication with the Runnymede Trust's definition of Islamophobia. They question whether an individual must hold and assent to all of these beliefs to be considered Islamophobic or, *mutatis mutandis*, responsible for Islamophobic action (Larsson and Sander 2015, p. 15). Critics have also

argued that Islamophobia is a propaganda term coined by the Muslim Brotherhood and seamlessly adopted by its Western confederates (Semkiw 2015).

The notion that Islamophobia intersects with race is rooted in the idea that race is a social construct rather than a biological fact or reality. Race, a pre-eminently socio-historical concept, is given concrete expression by the specific social relations and historical context in which they are embedded (Omi and Winant 1994). In terms of scientific data, experts conclude that there is no single gene or cluster common to various "races" such as Asian, Black, or White. Recent analyses of the human genome have established that human evolution has been recent, copious, and regional, meaning that races or racial identities are fluid rather than static (Wade 2014). As such, the 17th century concept of defining race based on physical and generic variations is no longer accepted by most sociologists, anthropologists and biologists. The science of race is now concerned with the social production of race, or what the American Scientist (2011) refers to race as "folk taxonomy, not science." While there are geographical differences in human biology, in light of vulnerabilities of particular diseases, we would be remiss to see the differences as meaningfully organized around race. Note carefully that these declarations do not claim that "there is no such thing as race." What scholars mean is that there is no "biological entity the warrants the term 'race'" (Brace 2000).

The other side of the argument sees nothing wrong in defining, categorizing, and naming the different human populations of the world. Some forensic anthropologists, for example, support the idea of the basic biological reality of human races (Gill 2000). Biologists scanning the genome for evidence of natural selection have detected signals of many genes that have been favored by natural selection in the recent evolutionary past (Wade 2014). Of course, no forensic anthropologist or biologist would make a racial assessment based upon these methods, but in combination they can make reliable assessments; in other words, multiple criteria are the key to success in all of these determinations (Gill 2000). Andreasen (2000), too, challenges the tendency to reject the biological reality of race by arguing that *cladism*—a school of classification that appeals to common ancestry—provides a new way to define race biologically.

Racism as defined by ancestral genome differences is rooted in biological essentialism and the idea that there exist incontestable differences among the "races" of the world. In the U.S. historical context, racial and religious minority communities have been objectified and exploited as "colored" men and women through racial classifications. This form of discrimination manifested in a direct and personalized prejudice by white Americans against different "races" (Welty 1989). These "races" are People of Color who were literally pre-judged—that is, they were judged before the relevant evidence about their abilities and interests were available to those who would come to judge them (Welty 1989). To reiterate, scholars might refer to "races," but it does not make them coherent biological realities. The approximately 1.8 billion Muslims worldwide do not carry genes for tribalism or violence, nor do they lack genes for freedom or democracy.

Though race and racism appear to be similar, they can be differentiated by a number of factors. Race is a way of classifying human beings based on perceived biological, cultural, and social relationships. Racism, on the other hand, is a way of treating others based on their "race." Racism has been defined as "the coordinated interaction of particular types of stereotypes, prejudices and discrimination" (Jones 1997). Jones further states that racism reflects the discrimination by individuals and institutions in ways that are justified by—and tend to perpetuate—negative beliefs, attitudes, and consequences. Escaping accusations of racism is a common tactic among certain critics of Islam. Those who fall under the umbrella of Islamophobia, for example, might see themselves not as racist or xenophobic, "but as defenders of democracy and human rights against the adherents of a religion they believe is incompatible with both" (Musharbash 2014). Racism and Islamophobia, as Hussain and Bagguley (2012, p. 4) explain, are "analytically distinct," but they also note that these two concepts are "empirically inter-related."

While biological racist discourses have declined, racism derived from perceptions of cultural and religious superiority has emerged as a dominant form of racism worldwide. These kinds of racisms do

not even mention the word "race." They are focused on the cultural inferiority/superiority dichotomy of a group of people based on habits, beliefs, behaviors, or values. With increasing frequency, this kind of racism draws links between physical characteristics and perceived social customs, manners and behavior, religious and moral beliefs, as well as cultural practices, language, aesthetic values, and leisure activities (Halstead 1988). Islamophobia has been described as a type of racism that oppresses American Muslims on the grounds that their perceived "Islamic culture" is nefarious, and that their "Islamic culture" is antithetical to "American culture." This kind of racism represents intolerance towards cultural and ethnic diversity as a whole, rather than Muslims alone (Welty 1989). Racism, in this context of cultural orientation or imagined cultures, involves prejudice or discrimination against individuals because of their perceived cultural preferences. This kind of "subliminal racism," or "racism without race," lacks a formal system of segregation and other forms of overt racism, but it does suggest a system of inequality, injustice and racial differentiation (Cole 1997; Gilroy 1987; Hall 1992, pp. 256–58). Islam and American Muslims play a dominant role in these kinds of racist discourses. The contemporary tropes of Muslims as "uncivilized," "barbarian," "primitive," "authoritarian," and "terrorist" depicts Islam as an inferior set of beliefs and cultural practices. These tropes are a repetition of older biological racist discourses.

Nation-states are also able to construct racial classifications, not as units of biology, but as ways to regulate the nation and demarcate the boundaries of national identity. Goldberg (2002) provides a mechanism to unpack the intersectionality of race and Islamophobia as viewed through the prism of U.S. institutions. His conceptualization of the racial state—a state that "defines populations in racially defined groups"—is used by institutions to regulate social categories (Goldberg 2002, p. 110). Building on Goldberg's concept of racial state, Sayyid (2014) refers to Islamophobia as "a form of racialized governmentality" that results in a series of institutional interventions and classifications that affect the well-being of populations designated as Muslims. In this context, Islamophobia preserves institutional racism while masking, but not eliminating, the individual displays of prejudice that gave racism based on biological differences its vulgarity (Welty 1989).

The theoretical grounding of this paper is that discrimination of, and hate crimes against, American Muslims are infused with racialized understandings of "Muslim identity," which shed light upon the manifestations of the U.S. racial state and racialized governmentality. In this light, race has emerged as a "symbolic form" of Islamophobia (Allen 2010). The paper reinforces the racialization framework by arguing that in the United States, American Muslims have become victims of race-based violence through the construction of "visible archetype" of "Muslim identity," utilizing symbolic markers such as name, dress, phenotype, and language (Naber 2008). In the next section, three sets of findings are provided to examine the intersectionality of race and Islamophobia. The first section examines public opinion polls to reveal the extent of anti-Muslim sentiments in the United States. The second and third datasets use a content analysis of news articles that cover hate crimes against Muslims and the racial profiling of "Muslim-looking" people.

4. Islamophobia, Hate Crimes, and "Flying While Brown"

A review of recent polls shows that the majority of non-Muslims in the United States have become increasingly hostile towards Muslims, paralleling the developing discourse among politicians and media outlets. The most recent compilation of Islamophobic hate crimes data by the Council on American-Islamic Relations (CAIR) (2017) shows that, between 2014 and 2016, anti-Muslim bias incidents increased by 65%. In 2016 alone, incidents of Islamophobia rose by 57% (Council on American-Islamic Relations 2017). CAIR's findings were similar to data collected by the Center for the Study of Hate and Extremism (CSHE) at California State University San Bernardino, which accounted for 20 states and documented a total of 196 incidents in 2015 (Levin 2016b). This number is 29% higher than 2014's total of 154 for the entire nation, as tabulated by the FBI (Levin 2016b These are levels not seen since the attacks of 9/11, a year that recorded 481 anti-Muslim hate crimes (Levin 2016b). The largest previous increase since 2001 was in 2010, when anti-Muslim hate crimes rose from

107 to 160, a rise of 49.5%, amid the controversy over the "Ground Zero mosque" in New York City (Levin 2016b). Anti-Muslim attacks are not only rising in total numbers, but as a percentage of overall hate crimes (Lichtblau 2016).

Out of all religious groups in the United States, Americans view atheists and Muslims most coldly (Pew Research Center 2014). In 2015, unfavorable attitudes toward American Muslims rose to a high of 67% (Arab American Institute 2015). A YouGov/Huffington Post survey on American's views of Muslims show that 55% of those polled had "a somewhat or very unfavorable view" of Islam, while one in four said they were not sure how they viewed the faith (Kaleem 2015). Of the Americans that were surveyed in the YouGov/Huffington Post poll, only one in 10 said they had ever visited a mosque, and 44% said they would not want to learn more about Islam. In addition to their broadly unfavorable views of Islam, a large percentage (42%) of Americans believe that law enforcement agencies are justified in using racial profiling tactics against Muslims and Arabs (Siddiqui 2014). These trends inevitably contribute to Islamophobic discourse and sentiment. Furthermore, Zogby Analytics, an advocacy group, found the favorability toward Muslims living in the United States was just 27%, compared with 36% in 2010 (Siddiqui 2014). The Zogby poll also found that a growing number of Americans doubt that Muslims or Arabs would be able to perform in a government post without their ethnicity or religion affecting their work (Siddiqui 2014). Finally, anti-Islam and anti-Muslim sentiment is more common among Americans who are 45 and older, those who are Republican, and those who are white (Chalabi 2015). The Americans who voice an unfavorable opinion of Islam may have sympathized with Donald Trump's call for a "total and complete shutdown on Muslims entering the United States" during the 2016 presidential election (Johnson 2015).

While attitudes towards Islam and Muslims should be considered separately, studies suggest that the two overlap considerably, as many people fail to distinguish between the two (Chalabi 2015). According to a poll conducted by Telhami (2015), Americans do differentiate between Muslims and Islam, and they view Islam more unfavorably than they do Muslims. This may have many reasons, but at the core, it is probably easier for Americans to express dislike of an abstract idea (Islam) rather than to appear prejudiced toward people (Muslims) (Telhami 2015). Despite claims that the United States has entered a "post-racial era," racial profiling, a discriminatory practice, occurs every day in cities and towns across the country, when law enforcement and private security target People of Color (American Civil Liberties Union n.d.). According to the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU), this policing tactic is patently illegal because it violates the U.S. Constitution's core promises of equal protection under the law to all, as well as freedom from unreasonable searches and seizures (American Civil Liberties Union n.d.).

4.1. Hate Crimes

A hate crime is understood as "a criminal offense motivated in whole or in part by the actual or perceived group status of another, such as race and ethnicity, religion, disability, sexual orientation, gender and gender identity" (Levin 2016a). According to this definition, an anti-Muslim hate crime constitutes a form of religious hate crime, although these hate crimes can also be understood as a "race hate crime" or by hate that is politically motivated. A persistent difficulty, of course, is that such neat distinctions often break down in the real world (Copsey et al. 2013, p. 6). In reality the distinction between "religion hate crime" and "race hate crime" can often become blurred, making conceptual and reporting clarity difficult (Copsey et al. 2013, p. 6).

What is more transparent is that hateful rhetoric towards American Muslims has consequences. When a significant number of Americans hold unfavorable views of Islam and Muslims, it can hardly be a surprise, as the Southern Poverty Law Center (SPLC) (2016) points out, that some percentage of them engage in hate crime attacks. Since 9/11, American Muslims, and those living in the United States who are perceived to be Muslims, have faced a spike in racially and religiously motivated hate crimes. A May 2017 report by The Council on American-Islamic Relations (CAIR) showed that hate crimes against Muslims in the United States rose dramatically in 2016, just as they did in 2015 (Pitter 2017).

Key findings in the report highlight how Islamophobic bias continues its trend towards increasing violence (Council on American-Islamic Relations 2017). In 2016, CAIR recorded a 57% increase in anti-Muslim bias incidents over 2015, which was accompanied by a 44% increase in anti-Muslim hate crimes in the same period. Harassment (a non-violent or non-threatening bias incident) was the most frequent type of abuse in 2016, accounting for 18% of the total number of incidents. According to FBI statistics, the number of hate crimes against Muslims, as of 2015, had stabilized at approximately five times the pre-9/11 rate (Ingraham 2015). The number of anti-Muslim hate crimes incidents in the United States is likely higher than the numbers documented in the 2016 CAIR report. American Muslims, the organization wrote, "will often not report incidents such as harassment and bullying since there is a certain level of desensitization." CAIR added that some American Muslims often feel like "nothing can be done" when they are harassed for their faith, feeling that such incidents "have become normal" (Mathias 2017).

What is thought-provoking about the prevalence of anti-Muslim hate crimes is that they have not been limited to Muslims. Readers do not need to look far in our time to find people being targeted for "looking Muslim." The case of Cameron Mohammed is notable for being one of the most explicit examples of how the racialization of Islam leads to Islamophobic hate crimes (Goeman 2013). Mohammed, a Florida resident, was shot repeatedly with a pellet gun outside of a Walmart in 2013 (Orlando and Sullivan 2013). The assailant explicitly asked Mohammed if he was in fact a Muslim or from the Middle East; when he answered negatively, the attack did not stop (Goeman 2013). The assailant's remarks to the police after the incident reveal his real motive. When deputies told the assailant that his victim was not Muslim, he told them he did not care, that "they're all the same." In this case, "they" (or "Muslim-looking people") are painted as a monolith. Mohammed's physical appearance, in particular his skin tone, was connected with a social identity (Muslim or Arab). The discrimination that he experienced reinforced a racial identity that was linked to Islam.

Because many U.S. citizens perceive them as threatening and inferior, American Muslims endure regular expressions of hostility in public places, particularly U.S. airports. Selod (2014) interviewed 48 South Asian and Arab Americans about their experiences pre- and post-9/11 in Chicago and the Dallas/Fort Worth area between 2009 and 2012. Her research found that the association of Islam with terror, violence, and the oppression of women contribute to a process of racialized governmentality at airports, which conveys the message that American Muslims are a threat to national security and require careful monitoring and surveillance. This process of racialized governmentality regularly targets Muslims at U.S. airports and has led to many American Muslim men and women being treated with suspicion.

Non-Muslims, too, have been impacted by racial profiling and the racialization of Islam. In May 2016, Guido Menzio, a decorated Ivy League economist from Italy, was removed from an American Airlines flight because his seatmate expressed concerns after seeing him writing math equations in a notebook before the plane's take-off. Menzio, who was described by a passenger as having "dark, curly hair, olive skin and an exotic foreign accent," was taken off the plane for questioning (Danner 2016). Authorities told him he had been suspected of terrorism. Menzio's case is an instance of racial profiling of airline passengers whose skin color, actions, or speech make airline passengers and flight attendants think they are Muslim. His experience highlights the way that internalized racial bias against Islam and Muslims can lead to the perception that U.S. Muslims pose a security treat.

In light of Menzio, Chu (2015) argues that it is hypocritical to say that Islamophobia is a simple consequence of "rational disagreement" with the tenets of Islam rather than xenophobic distrust of people who look different from "normal" Americans. Chu's point becomes clearer when we see how much of Islamophobia falls on Sikhs. Sikh communities across the United States have been victims of hate crimes perpetrated by Americans. Reports of incidents in the immediate aftermath of 9/11 and concerns that hate crimes would rise prompted the founding of the Sikh Coalition, now the largest Sikh advocacy and civil rights organization in the country (Basu 2016). In the first month after 9/11, the Coalition documented more than 300 cases of violence and discrimination against Sikhs in the

United States (Basu 2016). Fifteen years after 9/11, many Sikhs say they feel no safer in the country, primarily because of the continued confusion between Sikhs and Islam (Basu 2016). Ultimately, linking such features of "Muslim-ness" means that people who are not Muslim are also subjected to violence as a result of the racialization of Islam.

Those who attack Sikhs do not appear to care much about such fine distinctions as Sikhism and Islam being two different religions. In September 2001, Balibar Singh Sodhi was shot and killed outside of his Mesa, Arizona, gas station by Frank Roque, a U.S. citizen who told law enforcement he wanted to "kill a Muslim" in retaliation for the attacks on 9/11 (Sikh American Legal Defense and Education Fund 2011). According to one prominent Sikh advocacy group, Sodhi was selected by Roque because he had a beard and wore a turban in accordance with his Sikh faith (Sikh American Legal Defense and Education Fund 2011). Although the Sikh turban signifies commitment to upholding freedom, justice and dignity for all people, "the physical appearance of a Sikh is often ignorantly conflated with images of foreign [Muslim] terrorists, some of whom also wear turbans and many of whom have received copious publicity in our mainstream media in the post-9/11 environment" (Sikh Coalition 2012). In Roque's case, he confused Sodhi's long beard and turban as a representation of Islam. He then effectively used Sodhi's "race" to categorize and ultimately harm him in the worst way imaginable—murder.

Sodhi's murder is not an isolated case; two other examples alert us to the racialization of Islam and its connection to hate crimes against non-Muslims in the United States. In December 2015, a robber shot an Indian store clerk in Grand Rapids, Iowa. The clerk, a non-Muslim from the Punjab in India, was shot in the face after the assailant called him a "terrorist" (McVicar 2015). Indeed, terms such as "terrorist," "*jihad*," and "*sharia*" are elements of a widely used Islamophobic lexicon. These components of bias comprise a structure of Muslim-hating that depicts Muslims as the visibly identifiable Other (Singh 2016). In another incident in September 2013, a highly accomplished Sikh doctor was attacked while walking near Central Park in New York City. He had a long beard and wore a turban (Basu 2016). The victim, Prabhjot Singh, heard someone yell: "Terrorist, Osama, get him!" In American public discourse, the name "Osama" is popularly linked to Osama bin Laden, the "terrorist extremist" who allegedly planned the 9/11 attacks. Singh eventually ran from his attacker, but not fast enough. A group of boys and young men on bicycles taunted him using racial slurs (Basu 2016). One pulled his beard and then the attackers punched and kicked him repeatedly (Basu 2016). Singh's attackers conflated religion and race such that religion—in this case Islam—became the inherently "defining criterion" of Muslim identity (Bayoumi 2006, p. 278). Thus, the "visible archetype" became attached to a Sikh, such that religious, ethnic, cultural, and national differences are transformed into racial differences (Naber 2008).

The conflation of Muslims and Sikhs shows how shallow Islamophobia can be—Sikhism does not share Islam's Abrahamic lineage and has no direct connection to Islam, unlike Judaism or Christianity. Sikhs also do not originate from anywhere in the Middle East, but from the Punjab region of India (Chu 2015). Nevertheless, Sikhs are conflated with Muslims for the oversimplified reason that the turban—one of the most common forms of headgear in the world—is associated with the Middle East and ultimately Islam. While turbans are commonplace in many Muslim-majority countries, there is no similar requirement to wear a turban in the Islamic tradition. These hate crimes against Sikhs suggest that one does not actually have to be a Muslim in any theological or cultural sense to be singled out for an Islamophobic assault (Goeman 2013). Rather, what matters is how one expresses their culture, how one looks, and whether those "looks" are conflated in a negative manner with Islam and Muslims.

The data presented on hate crimes against American Muslims and non-Muslims in the United States demonstrate how Islamophobic incidents result from, and contribute to, the idea that "Muslim identity" has racial underpinnings (Samari 2016, p. 1921). Although Sikhs and other "Muslim-looking" people continue to experience hate crimes on account of their identity, the FBI has recently begun to track hate crimes against Sikhs (Sikh Coalition 2015). The Sikh Coalition claims that officially categorizing hate crimes against Sikhs is imperative "because it is impossible to address a problem

unless it is being accurately measured" (Sikh Coalition 2012, p. 3). The next section, which examines racial profiling at the institutional level, sheds further light on the idea that race serves as a symbolic form of Islamophobia.

4.2. *"Flying while Brown"*

Racial profiling has been defined as "any use of race, religion, ethnicity or national origin by law enforcement agents as a means of deciding who should be investigated" (Leadership Conference Education Fund n.d., p. 11). Under this definition, "racial profiling does not only occur when race is the sole criterion used by a law enforcement agent in determining who to investigate" (Leadership Conference Education Fund n.d., p. 11). Racial profiling heightened with the 2001 Patriot Act and associated legislation, which gave the State new powers to categorize Muslims or "Muslim-like" Americans. The Patriot Act legislation not only contributed to social segregation and differential access to resources (Love 2009), but also effectively "securitized" Muslims such that they became defined as a unique security threat (Hussain and Bagguley 2012). To account for these kinds of institutional security measures, Larsson and Sander (2015, p. 16) use the term structural or institutional Islamophobia, that is, something along the lines of the following suggestion by the Commission on British Muslims and Islamophobia:

> . . . those established laws, customs and practices which systematically reflect and produce inequalities in society between Muslims and non-Muslims. If such inequalities accrue to institutional law, customs or practices, an institution is Islamophobic whether or not the individuals maintaining those practices have Islamophobic intentions.
>
> (Richardson 2004, p. 14)

According to this definition, institutional Islamophobia is "distinct from the attitudinal Islamophobia of individuals in being caused by the existence of systematic, pervasive and habitual policies and practices that have the effect of disadvantaging certain racial, religious, or ethnic groups" (Larsson and Sander 2015, p. 16). At the institutional level, programs such as the National Security Entry–Exit Registration System (NSEERS) target Muslims on the basis of their names and national origins rather than religion (Bayoumi 2006). This practice of racial profiling perpetuates "a logic that demands the ability to define what a Muslims looks like from appearance and visual cues" (Rana 2007, p. 149). Because Muslims are often represented as coming from non-white groups, their religious identity becomes linked to their racial identity (Samari 2016, p. 1921). As the author previously highlighted, Islamophobia affects the lives of people with "Muslim-like" appearances in the United States (Samari 2016, p. 1921).

Racial profiling systems in the United States have targeted South Asians, presumably focusing on their perceived racial, ethnic, and religious similarities to the 9/11 hijackers (Chandrasekhar 2003, p. 215). One highly visible and contested manifestation of post-9/11 race-based discrimination has been the widespread increase in airlines' disparate treatment of people of South Asian descent and those individuals who "look Muslim" (Chandrasekhar 2003, p. 216). Since 9/11, airlines have racially profiled "brown, Muslim-like" passengers and subjected them to heightened security screening on the belief that ethnicity or national origin increases passengers' risk of carrying out an act of terrorism (Chandrasekhar 2003, p. 216). In January 2016, for example, an attendant of American Airlines kicked four Brooklyn men off a flight for "looking too Muslim"—claiming their appearance made the captain "uneasy" (Carrega-Woodby 2016). Passengers surrounding the men allegedly made racist comments and clutched their children "as if something was going to happen," a lawsuit charges. The four men—two Bangladeshi Muslims, an Arab Muslim, and a Sikh from India—were all ordered off the flight. All of the men have a darker skin complexion; one wears a turban and another has a beard. One man—who communicated by the pseudonym M. K.—asked the agent if they were thrown off because of their appearance. The agent said their appearance "did not help," according to the lawsuit. Put another way, the detained individuals were "passing" as people who are thought to be Muslim

based on a racialized meaning of "Muslim identity." This discriminatory treatment of racial profiling reveals the way that internalized racism against Muslims can lead to the perception that Muslims are a threat (Credo Action n.d.). It also is clear that airline staff may not have adequate skills to protect the rights of passengers who are being racially profiled.

There is a common misperception that all Muslims are the same and all Muslims are Arabs. Muslim, however, does not mean Arab. Moghul (2016) makes this point while discussing a Muslim airline passenger and Iraq asylee, Khairuldeen Makhzoomi, who was removed from a Southwest Airlines flight because his appearance reportedly set off "alarm bells." According to a Southwest Airlines (2016) statement, Makhzoomi triggered anxiety among other passengers by speaking Arabic. The crew reported the situation to law enforcement agencies to prevent any threat to civil aviation, and later requested Makhzoomi to leave the aircraft. Makhzoomi also had a beard and a generically Middle Eastern appearance, which allegedly contributed to the anxiety of the plane's passengers. The willingness to communicate publicly in a language (Arabic) associated with Islam, as well as "looking Muslim," is correlated with being "religiously Muslim" (Moghul 2016). The common thread in these cases of racial profiling seems to be that anyone who does not conform to the standardized appearance of an "American" is made to feel like a criminal. Nor is what happened to these men and others a mere misunderstanding or mistake; it can be viewed as racism based on profiling (Dharas 2016). This kind of racism involves the subordination of People of Color based on institutions that enforce or extend people's personal dislike or mistrust of individuals and groups such as Muslims or those perceived to be Muslims. The implication of these incidents is that Muslims are depicted as "radicalized," or potentially so, and that they present a "security threat" to American society because they "look Muslim."

In the case of Muslims and non-Muslims who "look Muslim," race and religion have effectively comingled to form aspects of an Othered identity, which has been effectively criminalized by the State (Singh 2016). To be clear, racial profiling on airlines does not attack Islamic theology, but rather Muslim people or people perceived to be Muslim. In this light, racial profiling is not based solely on ideas about Islam, but rather on the color and physical appearance that are associated with Muslims. It is worth noting that, under current laws, an airline "may not subject a person in air transportation to discrimination on the basis of race, color, national origin, religion, sex, or ancestry" (United States Government 2016). The Department of Transportation is authorized to prevent and seek redress for acts of discrimination (Khan 2016). Given the increasing frequency of, and seemingly arbitrary grounds for, the removal of Muslims and passengers who others perceive to be Muslim from domestic airlines, it is clear that the Department of Transportation needs to act to counter Islamophobia.

5. Conclusions

The findings presented suggest that race is a symbolic form of Islamophobia. According to Allen (2010, p. 189), symbolic forms of Islamophobia are relayed, produced, and constructed before being disseminated through incidents of anti-Muslim discrimination. The incidents examined in this paper suggest that Islamophobia does not belong in the realm of "rational" criticism of Islam or Muslims; it is often discrimination against people who look different to the majority of U.S. citizens. The manifestation of Islamophobia in the United States also often fuses racial and religious bias, largely because the stereotypical Muslim has been constructed as an ominous figure: the bearded, dark-skinned, turban-wearing terrorist guided by perceived archaic religious practices (Singh 2016). The production of Muslims as "visible archetypes" sustains and perpetuates negatively evaluated meanings about Islam and Muslims in the United States. Race, therefore, shapes and determines the perception of Muslims, which then informs and constructs thinking about Islam as "Other" (Allen 2010, p. 190). Racism against Muslims and non-Muslims in the United States, as this paper highlights, plays out at the social/interactional as well as institutional level. While anti-Muslim racism often unfolds in everyday interactions between Muslims and non-Muslims, institutionalized power struggles in the United States are key to exacerbating Islamophobia (Allen 2010, p. 188).

Hate crimes against American Muslims and those perceived to be Muslim have created circumstances of second-class citizenship, whereby Muslims and groups linked to Islam see their safety and freedoms limited in the United States. Taking a "colorblind" understanding of Islamophobia—that is, to dismiss the role that race plays in anti-Muslim racism—legitimizes certain racialized practices and maintains inequalities such as racial profiling at airports, police brutality, housing and job discrimination, and voter disenfranchisement (Bonilla-Silva 2013). The Department of Justice (2011) has started to take measures to protect Muslims, as well as members of the Arab, Sikh, and South Asian communities, from threats and violence directed at them because of their race and religion. Identifying the impact that racialization plays in hate crimes and institutional racial profiling illuminates a major impediment to building a more pluralist society, one in which people are judged by the content of their character instead of their racial or religious backgrounds. Moreover, following Hopkins (2004, pp. 268–69), improving public understanding of Islam and "Muslim identity," as well as expanding public recognition of American Muslims outside of stereotypical depictions of "Muslim identity," might lead to a decrease in hate crime incidents and racial profiling. Going forward, advocacy groups and organizations could do more to incorporate race and racialized processes in their approach to understanding and combatting Islamophobia. By noting the impact of race and racialization on Islamophobic incidents, these entities can help American Muslims secure their civil rights protections. Whether the term Islamophobia captures the endemic suspicion and vilification of Americans Muslims is a promising and important area of inquiry in terms of future research.

In summary, American Muslims can be simultaneously profiled in terms of race and religion. While it might appear that traditional Islamophobic arguments are more likely to come in the form of abuse on the basis of religion, we would be misguided to ignore the role that race plays in incidents where Muslims and non-Muslims are targeted due to stereotypes of "Muslim identity." "Muslim identity," as far as the American context goes, appears to be weighted with racial meaning.

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