

# ISLAMOPHOBIA

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## From Orientalism to Islamophobia

The attacks of 9/11, and the U.S. government's response known as the "Global War on Terror" that followed, positioned Muslim identity as the focal target of the national security state. The consequences have been characterized, understood, experienced, and named by grassroots communities and leaders to include not just the unjust foreign wars and interventions that the U.S. has waged under the Global War on Terror, but also the racial profiling, surveillance, spying, detention, and deportation our government has inflicted on Muslim, Arab, and South Asian communities in the U.S. In swift fashion, the Bush Administration restructured the national security, immigration and tracking apparatuses of the state, consolidated into the newly minted Department of Homeland Security (DHS). This Executive Branch restructuring resulted in what legal scholar Leti Volpp called the "consolidation of a new identity category that groups together persons who appear 'Middle Eastern, Arab, or Muslim.' This consolidation reflects a racialization wherein members of this group are identified as terrorists."<sup>2</sup> Finding a minority scapegoat allowed for sweeping legislation that eroded the civil liberties of citizens, and residents, who were or perceived to be Muslim. An expanding legal architecture committed to policing Muslims – built upon formative policies like the U.S. PATRIOT Act, the National Security Entry and Exit Registration System (NSEERS), and the Total Terrorism Information Act (EPIC) – were driven by a "redeployment of old Orientalist tropes."<sup>3</sup> Stereotypes, entrenched deep in the epistemic and legal memory of the nation, were wielded more furiously by the state to justify its overbroad and ominous policing of a vulnerable faith group.

In his landmark book, *Orientalism*, Palestinian scholar Edward Said crafted the master discourse that shaped the oppositional binary that shaped "western thought."<sup>4</sup> Said wrote that Orientalism is:

Not an airy European fantasy about the Orient, but a created body of theory and practice in which, for many generations, there has been a considerable material investment. Continued investment made Orientalism, as a system of knowledge about the Orient, an accepted grid for filtering through the Orient into Western consciousness, just as that same investment multiplied-- indeed, made truly productive--the statements proliferating out from Orientalism into the general culture.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>2</sup>Leti Volpp, "The Citizen and the Terrorist," *UCLA Law Review* 49, no. 5 (June 2002): 1576.

<sup>3</sup>Leti Volpp, "The Citizen and the Terrorist," 1576.

<sup>4</sup>Edward Said, *Orientalism* (New York: Random House, Inc., 1978).

<sup>5</sup>Said, *Orientalism*, 6.

This cogent, carefully constructed epistemology oriented the Orient (e.g., the Muslim world) as not only the inferior foil of the Occident (e.g., the West), but also its ominous antithesis bent on destroying it and everything that it represented. Thus, Orientalism—as a generative discourse that colored the arts, literature, law, and, most potently, politics—framed Islam as “violent” and “warmongering,” “static” and “savage.” These tropes, and collateral ideas and images, were ascribed to the very subjects that hailed from the Muslim world. Not Muslims exclusively, but most potently and powerfully, those that adhered to Islam and identified as Muslims.

American Orientalism was most starkly on display during the Naturalization Era—the period from 1790 until 1952 when whiteness stood as an express, per se prerequisite to naturalized citizenship. During this period, Islam was perceived by civil court judges that presided over the citizenship petitions of immigrants as a distinct civilization or a an inassimilable faith.<sup>6</sup> More than just religion, judges framed Islam as an ideology, a civilization, and commonly, a “distinct” race that was inimical to American values and irreconcilable with whiteness; which functioned as the racial gateway toward citizenship.

In his law review article, “Between Muslim and White,” law scholar Khaled A. Beydoun examines how white supremacy enshrined into American citizenship law functioned alongside Orientalism to prohibit naturalized citizenship for Muslim immigrants from 1790 until 1944, a period of 154 years.<sup>7</sup> Long before the 9/11 terror attacks conflated Muslim identity with terrorism, American courts associated Islam and its adherents with violence, war and core and collateral Orientalist tropes that pushed them beyond the margins of the nation. The War on Terror, and the ensuing system of Islamophobia it spawned, fed off the deeply rooted culture of Orientalism that long preceded it.

### **(Re)Defining Islamophobia**

The War on Terror and its rapid protraction ignited prolific state and societal violence against Muslims, and “Muslim looking people.” Emboldened by the growing network of legislation and corroborating state action, members of the broader polity participated in a national campaign to police, punish, and extra-judicially prosecute Muslims. This popular “rage shared by law,” to quote law scholar Muneer Ahmad and his important treatise bearing that title, witnessed a moment where state-sponsored Islamophobia was stoking hate crimes and violence on the ground.<sup>8</sup> As a result, Islamophobia—as a distinct, cognizable form of bigotry—was taking shape. And even more, forming into a system of bigotry propagated by the state, private institutions, and a broader dialectic that tied governmental action with popular vigilantism. Like racism, Islamophobia was being fluidly constructed to legitimize the counterterrorism objectives of the state, and beyond the home-front, the string of wars carried forward in Iraq, Afghanistan, and by way of proxy campaigns in other Muslim-majority countries.

<sup>6</sup>Khaled A. Beydoun, “Between Muslim and White: The Legal Construction of Arab American Identity,” *New York University Annual Survey of American Law* 69, no. 1 (2013): 44, 47.

<sup>7</sup>Khaled A. Beydoun, “Between Muslim and White,” 53-56.

<sup>8</sup>Muneer I. Ahmad, “A Rage Shared by Law: Post-September 11 Racial Violence as Crimes of Passion,” *California Law Review* 92, no. 5 (October 2004): 1261-63.

Islamophobia emerged. Scholars and activists, pundits and politicians wielded fear of Muslims to peddle their discrete interests, while opponents of nefarious policies and attitudes incriminating Muslims as presumptive terrorists championed the term to describe the threat rising from state and society. While alternatives, like “anti-Muslim racism” and “anti-Muslim hate” were posed to describe it, Islamophobia won out in the court of public opinion. In rapid order, the term’s resonance and reach spread quickly, finding itself being uttered by news anchors and professors, activists organizing off and online, and elected officials. “Islamophobia” was part of the popular and political parlance, but its prevailing definition remained too narrow.

Circa 2014, Islamophobia was overwhelmingly understood as a form of aberrant hate or violence, unleashed largely by hatemongers or bigots. An excellent study by a group of scholars and advocates, titled *Fear Inc.*, moved the framing of Islamophobia toward an institutional understanding—focusing on a host of public and private institutions spreading anti-Muslim views.<sup>9</sup> However, this—and other definitions that preceded and followed it—fell short of explicating the state’s instrumental role in establishing, advancing and readapting Islamophobia. Apart from being a focal maker of Islamophobia, the state in fact was the principal spearhead of Islamophobia.

In a 2016 article, Beydoun offered a new framework of Islamophobia that integrated the role of the state and law.<sup>10</sup> This framework was anchored by a definition of Islamophobia as, “the presumption that Islam is inherently violent, alien, and inassimilable. Combined with this is the belief that expressions of Muslim identity are correlative with a propensity for terrorism.”<sup>11</sup> Beyond this foundational understanding of Islamophobia is a framework for examining its distinct dimensions, or manifestations: (1) private Islamophobia; (2) structural Islamophobia; and (3) dialectical Islamophobia. A brief description, and following example, is provided below:

§ (1) Private Islamophobia – “the fear, suspicion, and violent targeting of Muslims by individuals or private actors.”<sup>12</sup>

Example: the white supremacist gunmen that shot and killed 51 Muslims in Christchurch, New Zealand, in March of 2019.

§ (2) Structural Islamophobia – “the fear and suspicion of Muslims on the part of institutions—most notably, government agencies—that is manifested through the enactment and advancement of policies.”<sup>13</sup>

Examples: the US PATRIOT ACT, the Muslim Ban, the War in Iraq, state anti-Sharia Bans, and the Countering Violent Extremism (CVE) policing.<sup>14</sup>

§ (3) Dialectical Islamophobia – “Islamophobia is also a systematic, fluid and deeply politicized dialectic between the state and its polity: a dialectic whereby the former

<sup>9</sup>Wajahat Ali et al. “Fear, Inc.: The Roots of the Islamophobia Network in America,” *Center for American Progress*, Aug. 26, 2011, <https://www.americanprogress.org/article/fear-inc/>.

<sup>10</sup>Khaled A. Beydoun, “Islamophobia: Toward a Legal Definition and Framework,” *Columbia Law Review* 116, (Nov. 1, 2016): 108.

<sup>11</sup>Beydoun, “Islamophobia: Definition and Framework,” 111.

<sup>12</sup>Beydoun, “Islamophobia: Definition and Framework,” 111.

<sup>13</sup>Beydoun, “Islamophobia: Definition and Framework,” 114.

<sup>14</sup>Beydoun, “Islamophobia: Definition and Framework,” 115-16.

shapes, reshapes, and confirms popular views or attitudes about Islam and Muslim subjects inside and outside of American borders.”<sup>15</sup> The dialectic force of structural Islamophobia is most acute during moments of crisis, when state action authorizes and emboldens private Islamophobia violence.

Example: Trump’s Muslim Ban, and accompanying rhetoric (“Islam hates us), triggering “private targeting of Muslim Americans” to the highest levels since the aftermath of 9/11, “proliferat[ing] by a staggering 584 percent from 2014 to 2016.”<sup>16</sup>

This framework drives our analysis of Islamophobia in this study. By centering the role of the state as the leading purveyor of Islamophobia in the United States and beyond, the symbiotic role of private actors and private institutions reveals its operation as a system fueled by an ongoing dialectic that may bear a novel name, but feeds off longstanding misrepresentations.

### **Trajectory of Islamophobia and Anti-Muslim Sentiments Over the Last Ten Years: This is Not Something New**

The codification of Islamophobia, evident in naturalization and immigration law well before 2001, took on heightened salience after the 9/11 attacks.<sup>17</sup> Immediately after 9/11, initiatives including the USA PATRIOT Act, the National Security Entry-Exit Registration System (NSEERS), and other War on Terror policies enabled and amplified existing anti-Muslim bigotry.<sup>18</sup> Since 9/11, policies such as Countering Violent Extremism, Muslim registries, and Executive Order 13769, titled “Protecting the Nation from Foreign Terrorist Entry into the United States,” known colloquially as the “Muslim Ban,” further contributed to the demonization of Muslims and their profiling and surveillance by law enforcement.<sup>19</sup> Additionally, in courts of law, Muslim-perceived defendants receive harsher and longer sentences than non-Muslim-perceived defendants for similar crimes.<sup>20</sup>

Elected officials can shape how people interpret events, but it is the policies of elected officials that speak louder than their words. As discussed by Dalia Mogahed in an article for the Islamic Monthly,

<sup>15</sup>Beydoun, “Islamophobia: Definition and Framework,” 119.

<sup>16</sup>Khaled Beydoun, *American Islamophobia: understanding the roots and rise of fear* (California: University of California Press, 2018), 34, 42-47.

<sup>17</sup>Khaled A. Beydoun, “Boxed In: Reclassification of Arab Americans on the U.S. Census as Progress or Peril,” *Loyola University Chicago Law Journal* 47, no. 3 (2016): 693.

<sup>18</sup>For a list of post-9/11 government initiatives targeting Muslims see: Louise Cainkar, *Homeland Insecurity: The Arab American and Muslim American Experience After 9/11*, vol. 34 (New York: Russell Sage Foundation, 2009); Evelyn Alsultany, *Arabs and Muslims in the Media: Race and Representation after 9/11* (New York: New York University Press, 2012); “Timeline of the Muslim Ban,” *ACLU of Washington*, May 23, 2017, <https://www.aclu-wa.org/pages/timeline-muslim-ban>.

<sup>19</sup>Sahar F. Aziz, “A Muslim Registry: The Precursor to Internment?” *Brigham Young University Law Review* 2017, no. 4 (May 2017): 783-84; Sahar F. Aziz, “Losing the War of Ideas: A Critique of Countering Violent Extremism Programs,” *Texas International Law Journal* 52, no. 2 (Summer 2017): 256-59, 265.

<sup>20</sup>Kumar Rao and Carey Shenkman, “Equal Treatment? Measuring the Legal and Media Responses to Ideologically Motivated Violence in the United States,” *Institute for Social Policy and Understanding*, April 2018, <https://www.imv-report.org/>.

in March of 2001, before the 9/11 attacks, 45% of Americans had favorable opinions of Muslim Americans and 24% had unfavorable opinions.<sup>21</sup> In November of 2001, two months after the attacks, American opinion of U.S. Muslims actually *improved*, to 59% favorable and 17% unfavorable.<sup>22</sup> The president set the tone for the country. In those first few weeks after 9/11 when emotions were raw, when we could have had a disastrous period of anti-Muslim hatemongering, the leader of the nation called for tolerance.

Days after the terrorist attacks, President Bush visited the Islamic Center of Washington, D.C. and stated that “the face of terror is not the true faith of Islam. That’s not what Islam is all about. Islam is peace.”<sup>23</sup>

On September 20th, President Bush restated this principle in an address to Congress and the American people: “The terrorists are traitors to their own faith, trying, in effect, to hijack Islam itself. The enemy of America is not our many Muslim friends; it is not our many Arab friends.”<sup>24</sup>

However, these words rang empty, as incidents of hate violence against Muslims and those racialized as Muslim surged in the months following 9/11. Even the vastly underreported FBI data showed a twenty-fold increase in anti-Muslim hate crimes from 2000 to 2001. According to an ABCNews poll, between January and November of 2002, the percentage of the public that had an unfavorable opinion of Islam, believed Islam did not teach respect for other faiths, and perceived Islam encouraged violence, went up between nine and thirteen percentage points.<sup>25</sup> Between 2002 and 2014, annual hate crimes against Muslims remained five times higher than the pre-9/11 rate before surging again to 9/11 levels in 2015 as the one of the most divisive presidential election cycles began.<sup>26</sup>

It turns out that the actual policies implemented by elected officials matter much more than their words. The policies of the War on Terror, combined with “a well-documented media campaign to drum up support for the Iraq war, the Axis of Evil speech, and a number of anti-Islam statements from prominent white Evangelical leaders, played a major role in tipping the public opinion against Islam.”<sup>27</sup> Notably, Rev. Franklin Graham who gave the invocation at President Bush’s inauguration, “remarked (without irony), ‘Islam—unlike Christianity—has among its basic teachings an intolerance for those who follow other faiths.’”<sup>28</sup>

<sup>21</sup>Dalia Mogahed, “Islamophobia is Made Up,” *The Islamic Monthly*, September 25, 2013, <https://www.theislamicmonthly.com/islamophobia-is-made-up/>.

<sup>22</sup>Mogahed, “Islamophobia is Made Up.”

<sup>23</sup>Mogahed, “Islamophobia is Made Up.”

<sup>24</sup>Mogahed, “Islamophobia is Made Up.”

<sup>25</sup>“Critical Views of Islam Grow Amid Continued Unfamiliarity,” *ABC News Poll*, September 11, 2003, <https://abcnews.go.com/images/pdf/931a4Islam.pdf>.

<sup>26</sup>Lakshmi Sridaran, “Power, Pain, Potential.” *South Asian Americans Leading Together*, 2017, [https://saalt.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/01/SAALT\\_Power\\_rpt\\_final3\\_lorez.pdf](https://saalt.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/01/SAALT_Power_rpt_final3_lorez.pdf).

<sup>27</sup>W. Lance Bennett, Regina G. Lawrence, and Steven Livingston, “Press Politics in America: The Case of the Iraq War,” in *When the Press Fails: Political Power and the News Media from Iraq to Katrina*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2008), 18.

<sup>28</sup>Mogahed, “Islamophobia is Made Up.”

## The Obama Effect

During the period from 2009 to 2013, under President Obama, public opinion of Islam among Democrats improved. “Following an initial spike in negative perceptions of Islam as encouraging violence among Democrats and Republicans during the run-up to the Iraq war, Democrats’ negative views began to decrease slowly.”<sup>29</sup> From 2008 to 2009, Democrats’ views that Islam encourages violence more than other religions decreased from about 40% to 30%, where it has remained.<sup>30</sup> However, despite these shifts among personal opinions of individual Americans, the Obama administration continued the policies of the “War on Terror,” and even implemented new programs like the Countering Violent Extremism Program (“CVE”).

This program, which continued and expanded under the Trump administration to target the Movement for Black Lives, is now being repurposed under the Biden administration to address white supremacist violence through surveillance. But all manifestations of this program are based on the deeply flawed notion that the government can take “proactive actions to counter efforts by extremists to recruit, radicalize and mobilize followers to violence” by identifying specific behavioral traits and choices as designated by the government. Rather than examining the policies and actions of the state in justifying white supremacist violence, the program’s myopic focus on individual behavior will always render it unsuccessful. CVE’s historically outsized focus on Muslim communities has gained much attention and criticism from Muslim, Arab, and South Asian advocacy organizations, but it persists nonetheless, offering grants and other resources to organizations who are willing to spy on their communities and turn in individuals they believe are potentially being violently radicalized. According to the Brennan Center for Justice, CVE programs allow federal agencies to “mask efforts to gather intelligence, identify individuals who are not suspected of wrongdoing for surveillance, recruit informants and co-opt community leaders to promote government messaging.”<sup>31</sup> Much like NSEERS—a “War on Terror” government policy that required men ages 16 and over from designated Muslim-majority countries to register with the government, leading to over 13,000 unjust deportations and zero-terrorism related charges—CVE has proved ineffective. And just like NSEERS, it has unnecessarily destroyed trust within American Muslim communities.

Unsurprisingly, among Republications during this same period, from 2008 to 2013, there was sharp increase in anti-Islam sentiment. “By May of 2013 Republicans were roughly twice as likely (62%) as Democrats (30%) to say Islam is more likely than other religions to encourage violence among its believers.”<sup>32</sup> While there was “steady growth” in anti-Islam views among republicans during this period, there were also two distinct “spikes in negative sentiment, coinciding perfectly with the 2008 and the 2012 presidential election.”<sup>33</sup> These spikes illustrate the use of anti-Muslim rhetoric as a campaign tool by many Republican politicians.

<sup>29</sup>Mogahed, “Islamophobia is Made Up.”

<sup>30</sup>Mogahed, “Islamophobia is Made Up.”

<sup>31</sup>“Why Countering Violent Extremism Programs Are Bad Policy,” *Brennan Center for Justice*, September 9, 2019, <https://www.brennancenter.org/our-work/research-reports/why-countering-violent-extremism-programs-are-bad-policy>.

<sup>32</sup>Mogahed, “Islamophobia is Made Up.”

<sup>33</sup>Mogahed, “Islamophobia is Made Up.”



It is also notable that “public opinion on the link between Islam and violence did not change after the Boston Bombing among Republicans or Democrats, but *rose ten percentage points among Republicans during election cycles.*”<sup>34</sup>

## The Trump Effect

Donald Trump ran on a campaign that promised a “total shutdown of Muslims” in America, and made good on his promise with the Muslim ban. His rhetoric and policies were unflinchingly and consistently Islamophobic.<sup>35</sup> And the impact was clear: A staggering 70% of Republicans in 2017 endorsed the statement that Islam encourages violence more than other religions, spiking on cue in 2015 with the beginning of the Republican primaries.<sup>36</sup> It is especially striking to compare this number to the percentage of Republicans who endorsed this view in 2001, only months after the attacks of 9/11: 33%. Rhetoric matters more than events. Islamophobia is not organic. It is manufactured.

Interestingly, Trump’s hostility toward Muslims and his unfavorable ratings among Democrats may have helped improve Democrats’ views of Muslims slightly in the short term. After the initial spike in Democrat endorsements of a link between Islam and violence in 2015, this perception waned from 2015 to 2017. However, Democrats were still more likely in 2017 than in 2011 to hold this view.

Right wing political candidates have long relied on anti-Muslim tropes to garner support among their conservative constituents as evidenced during Trump’s 2016 “Make America Great Again Campaign.”<sup>37</sup> Though indiscriminating in his abuses, Trump was particularly vitriolic toward Muslims, famously stating, “I think Islam hates us,” and supporting the ideas of registering all Muslim American citizens and shutting down American mosques.<sup>38</sup> In South Asian Americans Leading Together’s (“SAALT”) 2018 report “Communities on Fire,” in one of every five incidents of hate violence documented, perpetrators directly referenced President Trump, a Trump Administration policy, or a Trump campaign slogan while committing the act of violence.<sup>39</sup> However, the Democratic party and supposedly left-wing elected officials and candidates have also doubled down on their support of Israel’s violent occupation of Israel, quelled Palestinian resistance across college campuses, engaged in anti-Muslim rhetoric, and supported anti-Muslim policy such as spying, surveillance, and indefinite detention. Lastly, like anti-Semitism,

<sup>34</sup>Mogahed, “Islamophobia is Made Up.”

<sup>35</sup>Brian Klaas, “Opinion: A short history of President Trump’s anti-Muslim bigotry,” *Washington Post*, March 15, 2019, <https://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/2019/03/15/short-history-president-trumps-anti-muslim-bigotry/>.

<sup>36</sup>Pew Research Center, “How the U.S. General Public Views Muslims and Islam,” July 24, 2017, [https://www.pewresearch.org/religion/2017/07/26/how-the-u-s-general-public-views-muslims-and-islam/pf\\_2017-06-26\\_muslimamericans-07-06/](https://www.pewresearch.org/religion/2017/07/26/how-the-u-s-general-public-views-muslims-and-islam/pf_2017-06-26_muslimamericans-07-06/).

<sup>37</sup>Brian Robert Calvano et al., “Muslim Mistrust: The Resilience of Negative Public Attitudes after Complimentary Information,” *Journal of Media and Religion* 15, no. 1 (January 2, 2016): 30-32, <https://doi.org/10.1080/15348423.2015.1131041>; Desirée Schmuck, Jörg Matthes, and Frank Hendrik Paul, “Negative Stereotypical Portrayals of Muslims in Right-wing Populist Campaigns: Perceived Discrimination, Social Identity Threats, and Hostility among Young Muslim Adults.,” *Journal of Communication* 67, no. 4 (2017): 611-14, 616 <https://doi.org/10.1111/jcom.12313>.

<sup>38</sup>Gregory Krieg, “Trump’s History of Anti-Muslim Rhetoric Hits Dangerous New Low,” CNN, November 30, 2017, <https://www.cnn.com/2017/11/29/politics/donald-trump-muslim-attacks/index.html>.

<sup>39</sup>Radha Modi, “Communities on Fire,” *South Asian Americans Leading Together* (2018): 10, <https://saalt.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/Communities-on-Fire.pdf>.

Islamophobia has historically relied on a network of transnational groups and global discourses. The state-sanctioned oppression and repression of the Rohingya in Myanmar/Burma, Muslims in India and Kashmir, Uyghurs in China, and the occupation and demonization of Palestinians by the state of Israel all point to the global and interconnected manifestations of Islamophobia.<sup>40</sup>

## Muslims Uniquely Experience Institutional Religious Discrimination

The Institute for Social Policy and Understanding's American Muslim Poll illustrates the particular ways that American Muslims experience religious discrimination. Certainly, other groups experience religious discrimination—indeed, Jews reported an equal rate of religious discrimination in 2020.<sup>41</sup> However, “[m]ore than any other group that experiences religious discrimination, Muslims do so on an *institutional*, not just interpersonal, level.”<sup>42</sup> As ISPU reports: “This includes at the airport (44% of Muslims vs. 2% of Jews and 5% of the general public), when applying for a job (33% of Muslims vs. 5% of Jews and 8% of the general public), when interacting with law enforcement (31% of Muslims vs. 2% of Jews and 8% of the general public), and when receiving healthcare (25% vs. 5% of Jews and the general public).”<sup>43</sup>

## Gendered Islamophobia

In addition to its ideological and racial dimensions, Islamophobia manifests in ways that are both gendered and sexualized. Consider that Muslim men are imagined as dark-skinned misogynists but also emasculated “terrorists”<sup>44</sup> and Muslim women as the threatening extensions of their male relatives or as oppressed but simultaneously eroticized victims of their culture and religion.<sup>45</sup> The implications of gendered/sexualized Islamophobia are far-reaching—from the abuses of Muslim men at Abu Ghraib<sup>46</sup> to the ways Muslim women who choose to wear a headscarf or hijab are “marked” as quintessentially

<sup>40</sup>Nicole Kalczynski, “Global Islamophobia: China, India, and beyond: The Journal of Diplomacy and International Relations,” *Journal of Diplomacy and International Relations*, May 7, 2021, <http://blogs.shu.edu/journalofdiplomacy/2021/05/global-islamophobia-china-india-and-beyond/>; Knox Thames, “Why the Persecution of Muslims Should Be on Biden’s Agenda,” *Foreign Policy*, January 6, 2021, <https://foreignpolicy.com/2021/01/06/muslims-islam-china-india-myanmar-persecution-repression-biden-human-rights/>; Hatem Bazian, “The Islamophobia Industry and the Demonization of Palestine: Implications for American Studies,” *American Quarterly* 67, no. 4 (December 2015): 1057–58.

<sup>41</sup>Dalia Mogahed and Erum Ikramullah, “American Muslim Poll 2020,” The Institute for Social Policy and Understanding, October 1, 2020, <https://www.ispu.org/american-muslim-poll-2020-amid-pandemic-and-protest/>

<sup>42</sup>Mogahed and Ikramullah, “American Muslim Poll.”

<sup>43</sup>Mogahed and Ikramullah, “American Muslim Poll.”

<sup>44</sup>Jasbir K. Puar, *Terrorist Assemblages: Homonationalism in Queer Times*, Second edition, Next Wave (Durham: Duke University Press, 2017): 129–31; Jasbir K. Puar and Amit S. Rai, “Monster, Terrorist, Fag: The War on Terrorism and the Production of Docile Patriots,” *Social Text* 20, no. 3 (2002): 145, [https://doi.org/10.1215/01642472-20-3\\_72-117](https://doi.org/10.1215/01642472-20-3_72-117); Muhammadali P. Kasim, “Mappila Muslim Masculinities: A History of Contemporary Abjection,” *Men and Masculinities* 23, no. 3–4 (August 2020): 542–57, <https://doi.org/10.1177/1097184X18803658>.

<sup>45</sup>Lila Abu-Lughod, “Do Muslim Women Really Need Saving? Anthropological Reflections on Cultural Relativism and Its Others,” *American Anthropologist* 104, no. 3 (September 2002): 783–90, <https://doi.org/10.1525/aa.2002.104.3.783>; Sahar Aziz, “The Muslim ‘Veil’ Post-9/11: Rethinking Women’s Rights and Leadership” *Institute for Social Policy and Understanding and British Council* (November 1, 2012): 17.

<sup>46</sup>Jasbir K. Puar, “Rethinking Homonationalism,” *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 45, no. 2 (May 2013): 336–39, <https://doi.org/10.1017/S002074381300007X>; Mark Danner, *Torture and Truth: America, Abu Ghraib, and the War on Terror* (New York: New York Review Books, 2004); Dylan Rodriguez, “(Non)Scenes of Captivity: The Common Sense of Punishment and Death,” *Radical History Review* 2006, no. 96 (October 1, 2006): 9–32, <https://doi.org/10.1215/01636545-2006-002>.



foreign and suspicious “terrorist others.”<sup>47</sup> While these racialized/gendered/sexualized dimensions contribute to social, psychological, and economic harm for individuals perceived to be Muslim, they also shape how Islamophobia manifests in media, political, legal, and transnational contexts. One “Gendered Islamophobia” framework created by Darakshan Raja of Justice for Muslims Collective, acknowledges and centers the interconnected “ways the state utilizes gendered forms of violence to oppress, monitor, punish, maim, and control Muslim bodies.”<sup>48</sup> This framework situates gendered Islamophobia at the “intersection of heteropatriarchy, institutionalized Islamophobia, and interlocking systems of oppression.”<sup>49</sup> And this framework acknowledges social constructions of gender binaries that harm Muslim women and girls and erase Muslim femmes, trans women, gender nonconforming and nonbinary individuals; the gendered portrayals of Muslim women as both “terrorists” and also “inherently oppressed”; the way Muslim women are depicted as “cultural representatives of Islam and Muslims and “their bodies as sites of control and domination”; and depictions of Muslim women as “lacking any agency” such that “violence against Muslim women and girls is often seen as normal and acceptable.”<sup>50</sup>

### Islamophobia at the Intersection of Anti-Black Racism

Islamophobia has various intersections with other forms of structural bigotry in the United States, namely anti-immigrant xenophobia and anti-Black racism. This manifests in multiple ways. As many Black Muslim scholars and activists have identified, the oppression and scholarship alike of those who reside at this particular intersection are often overlooked and erased, particularly within South Asian, Arab, and Middle Eastern American communities. Additionally, state violence, police brutality, targeted surveillance, immigration enforcement, and deportation have an outsized impact on Black Muslim communities, which also results in higher incidences of interpersonal hate violence. In “Communities on Fire,” data and analysis on incidents of hate violence during the first year of the Trump Administration showed that women wearing hijabs and Black Muslims were disproportionately the targets of the most violent hate crimes and incidents documented.<sup>51</sup>

Organizations like Muslim Anti-Racism Collaborative (“Muslim ARC”) identify “four groups who are marginalized in the discourse on Islam in North America” and seek to amplify their voices:

Black Muslims, recognizing the diverse experiences of the African Diaspora that includes descendants of victims of the trans-Atlantic slave trade in the Americas, Afro-Caribbean, Afro-Latinos, and African immigrants.

<sup>47</sup>Sahar F. Aziz, “From the Oppressed to the Terrorist: Muslim-American Women in the Crosshairs of Intersectionality,” *Hastings Race and Poverty Law Journal* 9, no. 2 (Winter 2012): 191-264

<sup>48</sup>Darakshan Raja, Sahar Pirzada, and Yazan Zahzah, “Partnership to End Gendered Islamophobia: Community Report,” *HEART, Justice for Muslims Collective*, and *Vigilant Love* (2020): 3.

<sup>49</sup>Raja, Pirzada, Zahzah, “End Gendered Islamophobia,” 4.

<sup>50</sup>Raja, Pirzada, Zahzah, “End Gendered Islamophobia”

<sup>51</sup>Radha, “Communities on Fire,” 4-5.

Latino Muslims, recognizing the diverse identities of people from Central and South America and Spanish-speaking former colonies.

Muslims who are Refugees, particularly from non-Arab countries such as Cham, Bosnian, Syrian, and Somali communities, who may not have access to the same resources as other groups.

Muslims from other underrepresented ethnic backgrounds in North American Muslim leadership, especially where those identities intersect with class identity.<sup>52</sup>

## Policy Recommendations

We recommend policy initiatives that impact both state institutions and private halls of power. While there are a range of initiatives for structural and educational reform implied within, we will focus on three prospective policy recommendations that can be initiated swiftly, and in turn, serve as foundational interventions to future proposals.

First, *Islamophobia trainings and workshops* led by experts. These trainings will seek to provide basic literacy to students, government employees, and corporate setting personnel—highlighting the anatomy and architecture of state-sponsored and private Islamophobia, notable policies and currents that perpetuate it, and action steps that can be implemented within institutions.

Second, *integrating anti-Islamophobia mandates* within non-Muslim organizational agendas. With the objective of making Islamophobia a primary racial justice concern, efforts should be made by experts and organizations focusing on Islamophobia to provide broad-based civil rights or social justice groups cogent resources and action steps that they can use to address Islamophobia in their own work.

Third, *integrate Islamophobia awareness more robustly in grassroots movements* pushing for abolition. And mainly, build coalitions with groups pushing for structural reform within realms of mass incarceration, community policing, and surveillance. With the War on Terror and its many fronts of surveillance being focal to both federal and local forms of policing, integrating the language and aims of Islamophobia more fully into the abolition discourses and movements is critical to undo them.

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<sup>52</sup>"About Page," *Muslim ARC*, <https://www.muslimarc.org/about> (last accessed April 13, 2022).