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# Muslim Women in US after 9/11: from the “unknown” to the “other”. The representation and stereotypes of Muslim American Women through a distorted and framed image

Mouna Ibrahim Osman

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**Muslim Women in US after 9/11: From the "unknown" to the  
"other"**

**The representation and stereotypes of Muslim American  
Women through a distorted and framed image**

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I  
AM  
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RIDZDESIGN

**Sallie Jones (Non-Muslim, USA)**

About 4 years ago, I met the kindest and warmhearted woman and her Muslim family so that was my introduction into what World Hijab Day (WHD) is. Ever since then, I have felt strongly about supporting and honoring her and her fellow sisters for their freedom of choice. Ever since, I have been educating myself about Islam and realized I was as ignorant as the news media had programed us to be when we saw hijab wearing women and thought they were suppressed and submissive. We take their acts that appear to be submissive when in fact they are a peaceful people and feel it is not their right to antagonize or incite conflict. Anyway, I forever wish peace for my friend Fatima and her family<sup>1</sup>.



**I WAS AS IGNORANT AS THE NEWS MEDIA HAD PROGRAMED US TO BE**

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<sup>1</sup> Sallie Jones, "I was as ignorant as the news media had programed us to be", February 25, 2016, at <http://worldhijabday.com/i-was-as-ignorant-as-the-news-media-had-programed-us-to-be/>. Visited on May 8, 2016.



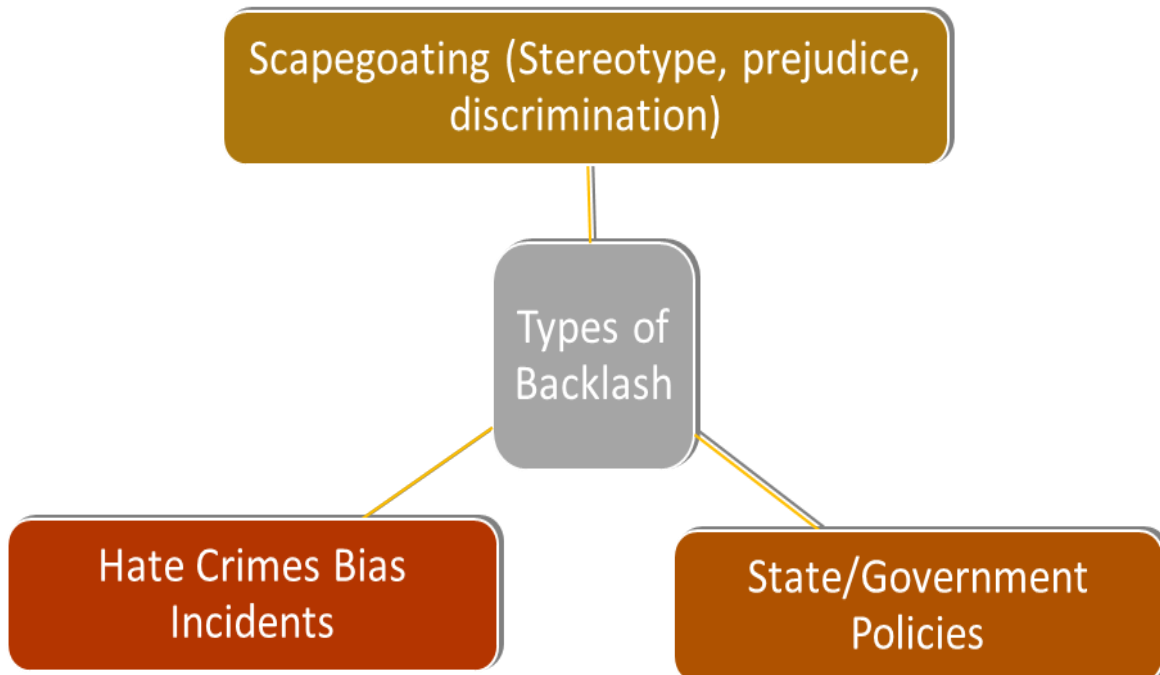


Figure 1



## Historical Orientation and Problematic/Abstract

Before analyzing the racial prejudices and the discrimination against Muslim American women, we must try to understand the origins of such prejudices, when they started and where they come from.

The origins of bigotry and discriminations against women can be traced back in European history at least to the middle of the 15<sup>th</sup> century, a period during which European women suffered under the control of men in religious undertakings, commonly called “witch-hunts”. From the time of the late Middle Ages in Europe, elderly women were imprisoned, tortured and killed, sadly used as scapegoats for the purpose of bringing together or unifying a faltering community in which they lived. Unfortunately, this grim period of history ended only in the mid-18<sup>th</sup> Century, after 300 years of intense periodic suffering.

Professor Anne Lewellyn Barstow has estimated in her essay, “Witch Craze,” that some 100,000 deaths and executions of women occurred in the 300-year period, between 1450 and 1750<sup>2</sup>. These figures demonstrate how ignorance and fear have been exploited by religious institutions in the past in order to maintain a form of social order and assert political power over the general population. Barstow, a historian and political activist, goes on to note that this extended period of the witch-hunt process served to hinder any further emancipation of women.

More than 80 percent of those accused (estimated to be around 200,000) and 85 percent of those executed (estimated at 100,000) were women. She concludes that the witch-hunt struck fear in the hearts of most women, which contributed to the breakdown of the women’s community<sup>3</sup>.

A similar practice of discrimination for religious reasons occurred in the American colonies during the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries, at the time of large migrations from Europe to the New World. The emergence of the Americans from a diversity of European communities finding themselves on foreign soil in the Amerindian homeland, and the new economy based on modern slave labor created stress and non-traditional relationships. It happened in such a

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<sup>2</sup> Anne Lewellyn Barstow, “Reviewed Work: *Witch craze: A New History of the European Witch Hunts*”. *Gender and Society*, Vol. 9, No. 4 (Aug. 1995), pp. 514-516. Published by: Sage Publications, Inc. Stable URL: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/189787> Page Count: 3. Visited on Mai 6, 2015 at

[http://www.jstor.org/stable/189787?seq=2#page\\_scan\\_tab\\_contents](http://www.jstor.org/stable/189787?seq=2#page_scan_tab_contents). Visited on June 14, 2015.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*



way that the establishment of a hostile atmosphere of danger was inevitable. The interactions of different populations resulted in a complex division, “Us” and the “Other,” paving the way to prejudices and *rapport de force* relationships of domination or and/ subordination. It marked the beginning of institutionalized racism against Amerindians and later African-Americans, which eventually led to gender discrimination, since Europeans had inherited this legacy from a long history of female subordination, which had resulted in intense abuse.

As we have mentioned, religious authorities<sup>4</sup> condoned discriminations against women in Europe, due to superstitions, which sought causes for such national suffering as famine, drought<sup>5</sup> or diseases; for this, women were often used as offerings to God. They were often viewed as “witches” in Europe, and in Africa as well. In Egypt, women are reported to have been deemed “useless” by religious authorities and were sometimes slaughtered and given as offerings to Egyptian Gods when the Nile River was low in the Pharaonic period, from 3200 B.C. Indeed the history of discrimination against women is long, and nearly universal.

Such contradictions in human behavior gave birth to Feminism. In societies around the world, women have risen up to demand empowerment and to stand up for one another’s human rights. This history of the horrific treatment of women has evolved into a modern type of discrimination, more subtle and more entrenched, where women, are no longer burned alive or beaten in public, but instead, made to suffer in silent fear and psychological isolation due to the successful manipulation of public opinion. Muslim American women who wear the veil have been one of the “beneficiaries” of new techniques to disempower women.

The majority of women in Europe or America share the common experience of having undergone social pressures and discriminations imposed by the male dominated order. The experience of being marginalized and assaulted either for religious motives or for political objectives is common to Muslim women living in the United States today.

Paradoxically, such pressures not only serve sometimes to isolate their victims through anxiety and fear, but in the end have had the effect of uniting Muslim women and of facilitating acts of solidarity between Muslim and Non-Muslim women.

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<sup>4</sup> George Fredrickson, “The Historical Origins and Development of Racism”, California, 2003; at [http://www.pbs.org/race/000\\_About/002\\_04-background-02-01.htm](http://www.pbs.org/race/000_About/002_04-background-02-01.htm). Visited on June 22, 2015.

<sup>5</sup> Stephanie Beswick, *Sudan's Blood Memory: The Legacy of War, Ethnicity, and Slavery in Early South Sudan*. Boston University African Studies Center, 2004 at <https://books.google.fr/books?id=r61i6BD0Vw0C&pg=PA119&dq=women+sacrificed+during+drought+time&hl=fr&sa=X&ei=RTKIVZydMoboUvqktAH&ved=0CCCQQ6AEwAA#v=onepage&q=women%20sacrificed%20during%20drought%20time&f=false>. Visited on June 15, 2015.

As we approach the focus of this research, we must bear in mind the existence of a certain limitation, i.e. that the actual number of Muslims living in the US is a matter of speculation for which there is no general agreement. This is because the *American Census Bureau* no longer collects information based on an individual's religious affiliation and thus we do not know how many individuals in America are actually practicing Islam.

Moreover, Noam Chomsky discusses in his book and documentary film, entitled "Manufacturing Consent," how we need to pay attention to the way the media operates and attempts to control public thinking. In the section, "Thought Control in a Democratic Society", Chomsky explains how marginalized and controlled the public actually is in this self-proclaimed "democratic society". He goes on to state that, "propaganda is to democracy what violence is to dictatorship<sup>6</sup>".

The current President of the United States of America, Barack H. Obama, proclaimed during a speech delivered in Cairo in 2009 that the Muslim Population in the US is "nearly seven million<sup>7</sup>", which is approximately 3% of the American population. This figure represents an increase of 2 % since 1950, because the Muslim American population at mid-century was a little less than 1 % of the total US population. However, the web site IslamiCity.com speculates that there exists a larger percentage and higher growth rate of the Muslim American population than is generally acknowledged:

U.S. Muslims will go from a tiny minority now, less than 1% of the nation, to 1.7%. That is a jump from 2.6 million people in 2010 to 6.2 million<sup>8</sup>.

Those two sets of information are not far from each other but the gap is not negligible. Although Muslims have been part of the US population for decades, they became the target of continual violence since 9/11. Historically, after the Second World War there was very little violence in the US directed against Muslims. Unfortunately, we cannot say the same about violence directed against women, which has a long history as mentioned earlier.

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<sup>6</sup> Noam Chomsky, "Manufacturing Consent", March 11<sup>th</sup>, 2011, at

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PQhEBCWMe44>. Visited on June 10, 2015.

<sup>7</sup> Barack Obama, "Obama's Speech in Cairo", The New York Times: delivered on June 4, 2009.

<http://www.nytimes.com/2009/06/04/us/politics/04obama.text.html?pagewanted=all>. Visited on June; 12 2015.

<sup>8</sup>Garrett Hubbard, "Number of U.S. Muslims to double. California", n.d., at

<http://www.islamicity.com/articles/Articles.asp?ref=UT1101-4451>. Visited on June 11 2015.

## Purpose

The purpose of this research is to describe and analyze the origins and the evolution of violence against Muslim American women since 9/11. The subject of “the veil” will be of course a central issue in this discussion, because this simple piece of textile has become a symbol used to associate Muslim Women with “supporters of terrorism.” Muslim women are often portrayed as “American haters” and as being “oppressed,” by the men in their families, and women who wear the veil have been frequently denied their human rights, and their civil rights as American citizens. This thesis will attempt to bring to light a subject that has been largely neglected by scholars: the historical “survival skills” of the female portion of our species and specifically those skills as they are demonstrated by Muslim women in the US today. How do these women survive in a country where the atmosphere is mostly hostile to them, where often they find no place welcoming them if they are wearing the hijab? This thesis will describe their journey from being “invisible” and “unknown” to becoming “the Other” or “the Enemy”. It also examines how the image of the Muslim woman is distorted in the interest of a small group of people. In 2007, John Pilger’s famous documentary film, *War on Democracy* showed the true goal of the United States government, which is “to control”<sup>9</sup>. Controlling ciphers and controlling the public opinion is to the advantage of the Plutocrats who rule America and unfortunately, it creates additional problems for Muslim women.

The Islamophobia sentiment is so high in the US today that it is often difficult for Muslim women to perform daily tasks. This research, then, will focus on the victims of racism/Islamophobia; by asking questions such as: who racializes Muslim women? Why? Who benefits from it? We will study the role of the American government, which some critics claim is ruled by Plutocrats or Kleptocrats or again by Oligarchs. How can we determine if these claims are true, and if they are, why didn’t the people in power stop the violence against Muslim women? Are they actually spending great amounts of money to destroy a peace loving community in America and if so, why?

Are these lawmakers the same people who manipulate public opinion? The reaction Americans had after 9/11 is understandable, a heinous crime was committed and should have been investigated to bring the guilty parties to justice, but it was not. A declaration of “war” instead of a “criminal investigation”, assured that widespread prejudice would be promoted.

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<sup>9</sup> John Pilger, “War on Democracy”, n.d., at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oeHze1h8k7o>. Visited on April 2, 2015.

Was this simply the result of immediate rush, or was it the consequence of historic prejudices against women and minorities, which have existed in America for a very long time?

## **Acknowledgement**

First, I would like to thank M. Francis Feeley, Professor of American Civilization at the University of Stendhal Grenoble-3 who served as the director of my research. I would like to thank him for the time he has spent with me looking at, correcting, re-correcting and searching the slightest details to better my work. I appreciate his unconditional and continuous support, assistance and advice from the first day till the end.

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Then I also owe thanks to some friends who diligently gave me tips and suggested some paths to follow. I will never forget their help and cheerful company.

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## General Introduction

September 11, 2001 was a day of grief not only for America (and for its numerous communities) but also for the entire world, because that day set the tone about who were the enemies. Following this horrific moment, thousands of lives were affected mentally and physically and still are, more than a decade later. During his second inaugural address, President George W. Bush stated that America's security is related to peace in the world, and particularly peace in the Middle East. According to his speech delivered at the Sagan Forum for Middle East Policy in 2008, in Washington, D.C. the President argued:

The Middle East is a fundamental region to the Security of America or the peace of the world and a free, peaceful Middle East will represent a source of promise, a home of opportunity, and a vital contributor to the prosperity of the world<sup>10</sup>.

Bush's reference to "a source of promise" and "a home of opportunity" was an allusion to the rich oil reserves in that region and the advantage that this wealth represents for American corporations. The President and his First Lady repeated that America had the mission of spreading democratic freedom in the world especially in the Middle East. The President again stated:

We are led, by events and common sense, to one conclusion: The survival of liberty in our land increasingly depends on the success of liberty in other lands. The best hope for peace in our world is the expansion of freedom in all the world<sup>11</sup>.

This statement alone offers clues about how the United State of America was ready to go to war against carefully chosen enemies, to justify the hundreds of billion dollars that are spent every year on military production as well as to defend US oil interests in the Middle East. In fact, US foreign policy underwent a very drastic change right after 9/11; it went from "multilateral diplomacy" to "unilateral militarism". This new approach began with the Iraq invasion in 2003. In the process of looking for enemies, the US government has suspended its direct rivalry with Russia and against communism to focus on what it labels "rogue states"

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<sup>10</sup>The White House, "Peace in the Middle East". December 5, 2008. <http://georgewbush-whitehouse.archives.gov/infocus/mideast/> or <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=veYgyBQGnrs>. Visited on February 13 2015.

<sup>11</sup> George Bush, "Second Inaugural Address". January 20, 2005. <http://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=4460172>. Visited on February 13 2015.

such as Iraq and North Korea. According to Jennifer Del Rosario-Malonzo professor at the University of Phillipines,

The bombings of US embassies in Kenya and Tanzania (August 1998), the missile tests by Iran (July 1998) and North Korea (August 1998), the NATO's air war in Kosovo (inaugurated on March 24, 1999), and the attacks on the World Trade Center and Pentagon (September 11, 2001) make US military buildup appear reasonable, and defense corporations are only too happy to produce more lethal weapons<sup>12</sup>.

America knows well how to handle those issues and Jennifer Del Rosario-Malonzo has observed that no matter the obstacles US government will seek a military solution. The 9/11 attacks occurred in a period when US foreign policy had its eye on the Middle East. America influence and Globalization or should I say hyper power expansion was at its highest level. According to historians such as Howard Zinn,

What angers them are the troops we have stationed in Saudi Arabia, the enormous economic and military support we give Israel, our maintenance of sanctions against Iraq, which have devastated the country and hurt so many people. They have made it very clear what troubles them<sup>13</sup>.

Professor Zinn goes on to say that, American policy makers did everything to gain the hatred of Osama bin Laden and his followers. America's destiny was cast the minute they showed interest in the oil. 9/11 was also the turning point in US foreign policy that led the country into the era they call "The War on Terror" forwarded by Bush and his administration. The event of 9/11 is the expression to qualify those unforgettable moments that dived America and the world into a dark era full of suspicions, hate, prejudices and grudge. It also widened the gap between the communities of America, thus dividing the country and weakening its democratic institutions, such as schools. Since the hijackers of the World Trade Center were Muslims, every individual with this feature was under suspicion, thus paving the way to the now commonly used word "Islamophobia". Since that day, Islam became the number one enemy for many Americans, and they commonly call Muslims "terrorists".

According to Anny Bakalian and Mehdi Bozorgmehr, the American government intentionally ignores these consequences on the Muslim minority. They have argued that US

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<sup>12</sup> Jennifer Del Rosario-Malonzo, "US Military-Industrial Complex: Profiting from War." [http://www.nadir.org/nadir/initiativ/agp/free/9-11/military\\_complex.htm](http://www.nadir.org/nadir/initiativ/agp/free/9-11/military_complex.htm). Visited on January 20 2015.

<sup>13</sup> Howard Zinn, *Terrorism and War*. New York: A Seven Stories Press, 2002. p13.



policy is to “disguise every islamophobic action as preventive and in the interest of the state”<sup>14</sup>. A very long search for the perfect scapegoats started after those events and Muslim women are the perfect ones with their hijab, because someone had to be held accountable.

According to a 2007 survey by the Pew Research Center, the Muslim Population of the US is between 2 and 7 million, dispatched all over the continent for more than 100 years. The Muslim population might double in number in the next decade due to a high rate of birth, immigration and fast conversion<sup>15</sup>. The Muslim Population worldwide is 1.6 billion and is expected to be 2.2 billion in 2030<sup>16</sup>. According to the Pew Research Center’s Forum on Religion & Public Life,

About two-thirds of the Muslims in the U.S. today (64.5%) are first-generation immigrants (foreign-born), while slightly more than a third (35.5%) were born in the U.S. By 2030, however, more than four-in-ten of the Muslims in the U.S. (44.9%) are expected to be native-born<sup>17</sup>.

Islam is one of the fastest growing religions in America and in the world, according to Pew research “Muslims number 1.6 billion, representing 23% of all people worldwide”<sup>18</sup>. Furthermore some academics such as Yvonne Yazbeck Haddad, Jane I. Smith and Kathleen M. Moore, who are well-respected scholars of Islam at the University of Georgetown said in their book *Muslim Women in America: The challenge of Islamic Identity Today*, that,

Muslims living in North America today comprise the most diverse population in the history of Islam. They are immigrants and native-born Americans representing most of the races and cultural groupings of the world. They speak a wide variety of languages and represent a

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<sup>14</sup> Anny Bakalian, Mehdi Bozorgmehr, *Backlash 9/11 Middle Eastern and Muslim Americans Respond*, Los Angeles, 2009. p15.

<sup>15</sup> The U.S. Department of State manages this site, “MUSLIMS IN AMERICA – A STATISTICAL PORTRAIT”. Chicago, 2007. <http://iraq.usembassy.gov/resources/information/current/american/statistical.html>. Visited on March 15 2015.

<sup>16</sup> Garrett Hubbard, “Number of U.S. Muslims to double”. California, May 22, 2007. <http://www.islamicity.com/articles/Articles.asp?ref=UT1101-4451>. Visited on March 5 2015.

<sup>17</sup> Pew Research Center Religion & Public Life, “The Future of the Global Muslim Population”. January 27 2011, at <http://www.pewforum.org/2011/01/27/the-future-of-the-global-muslim-population/>. Visited on January 25, 2015.

<sup>18</sup> Pew Research Center Religion & Public Life Muslims at <http://www.pewforum.org/2012/12/18/global-religious-landscape-muslim/>. Visited on June 16, 2015.

range of cultural, economic, educational, sectarian and ideological positions<sup>19</sup>.

Among the Muslim community, we have of course many women, who represent an important majority, but due to a lack of accurate survey, it is impossible to say how many they are. Because:

Currently, about 80 percent of Muslims live mostly in South Asia, Sub-Saharan Africa, and Central Asia. However, there is no official number of Muslims in the U.S., partly because the U.S. Census Bureau by law does not gather any information about religious affiliation and also because, unlike other religious groups, mosques do not have membership rolls that can be used as a proxy for population size<sup>20</sup>.

Muslim women in their traditional veil (hijab) were and still are the easiest recipient of the hatred that some have against those who perpetrated 9/11. After September 11, they became the central point of talk shows and rumors circulating inside American institutions. Determining 9/11's effect on Muslim women in the United States is not an easy thing to do, due to a lack of information, but it can be shown through patterns of actions affecting different age groups.

In the wake of 9/11, Muslim American Women were subjected to a series of prejudices and discriminations in the US, which increased sharply over the years. Studies were made about Muslim women in general, but the deep and the long-term consequences on them have in post-9/11 gone largely ignored and no study has been conducted on the survival skills they had to develop in order to defend themselves against the stigmatization they faced on a daily basis.

As I said previously, Muslim American Women are from different religious, ethnic and cultural backgrounds; many are highly educated and seem to have achieved the 'American Dream.' Nevertheless, in reality, many more of them are deprived of their fundamental rights as Americans and as human beings. I believe that the way they and their families are treated is simply not fair; I cannot imagine how it feels to be frightened to go shopping, and the violence against Muslim women is on the rise.

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<sup>19</sup>Yvonne Yazbeck, Jane I Smith and Kathleen M. Moore, *Muslim Women in America: The challenge of Islamic Identity today*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2006. p4.

<sup>20</sup> Selcuk R. Sirin, "Muslim, American, and Immigrant: The Story of Hyphenated Selves". New York, 2011. <http://www.s-r-a.org/announcements/online-newsletter/2011-06-16-muslim-american-and-immigrant-story-hyphenated-selves>. Visited on June 2, 2015.

The aim of this research is to explain the treatment that Muslim American Women have been subjected to, following the events of September 11, 2001 up to the present day. The consequences of prejudices, the stigmatization, and the violence that is both psychologically and physically detrimental to the well-being of the community and especially to Muslim women. We will describe how this minority is deeply rooted in US cultural history, dating back to the time of the African slave trade. Since the beginning of America's history, Muslims were present. I will attempt to explain why they have not always been treated as 'native sons and daughters or father and mother.'

This thesis will comprise two major parts subdivided into six chapters, each of which will have several sections. My part I is about the community of Muslim Women, which has been under threat and intimidation since 2001; I will point out how a simple fabric such as the veil became the center of all the hostilities between this peace loving community and many non-Muslim Americans including US government representatives.

I will also analyze the 9/11 event as the departure point for their descent into misery. In that same part, I am going to show how the Media has played a major role in the Muslim women's plight. I will explain how the first generation of Muslim immigrants after 9/11, fled their country due to oppression, military occupation and war, only to find themselves in the same situation in a country where they had thought they would be able to live peacefully. Then, I will compare this group of immigrant women to native-born African-American women.

I will go on to talk about media manipulation, the attempt to control public opinion to gain influence and support for US presence in the Middle East. I shall then continue by developing the idea of how much money is spent to achieve this support. I am of course looking for the "ethic of the major actors" those who are acting behind the curtain. Plutocrats in America control practically everything, so I will attempt to give names such as Pamela Geller author of "*Stop the Islamization of America*", Brigitte Gabriel author of "*They Hate Us*" and president of *Act for America!* Association, David Horowitz a conservative and president of David Horowitz Freedom Center. Horowitz even accused Muslim student associations of having connections with the terrorist of Al Qaeda, or more recently Donald J Trump the republican candidate for the US Presidency and many others who particularly believe that Islam and Muslims are the "Problem".

In part II of this presentation, I will describe Muslim women's struggle to overcome their misery; by networking and organizing associations, they have created a protective social

structure, which gives them the opportunity to share their experiences. After all the harassment they have suffered, we, of course, expect to see self-defense formation, but what form will this self-defense take? I will seek to explain how, after all the anguish they have faced which continues to this date, they have managed to stay calm, clear minded and optimistic.

We will explore the art as a loophole such as writing. Writing books and poetry became a way for Muslim women to express their feelings on the subject of prejudice. Words are powerful to convey messages either to a specific audience (Muslim women) or to a larger audience (Non- Muslim Americans).

We will then analyze the efficiency of the laws recently written to protect the Muslim women in US, and evaluate if these laws have been respected.

It is important to bear in mind that the more government officials say things through propaganda, (which are untrue) and the more these falsehoods air on national television, the more it starts to be believed as true by millions of American viewers. I will explore the dark side of the US government propaganda, and attempt to identify those who are ‘pulling the strings’ in order to manipulate the media and through it “the American public” and why? I will focus on the vested interests in the US media and the role played by the profit motivated person.

According to some observers, there are more terrorist from right wing extremist groups, such as Timothy McVeigh and Eric Rudolph, and recently Dylann Roof who shot nine people in a church, than from Muslim groups. I will describe how the Timothy McVeigh terrorism act was not that much mediatized, because there is no need in destroying non-Muslim terrorist, instead they will find solutions for his act such as mental illness. While a suspicious Muslim will undergo arbitrary investigations.

We will try to understand why the American public opinion does not blame the ‘home-grown” terrorists and terrorism, such as the acts of McVeigh, in contradiction within American mainstream society. How are Muslim terrorists perceived differently and why?

Finally, I shall compare the large amount of money spent to deliberately destroy a community (using propaganda, misrepresentation...) while such a sum of money could have been better used in areas that need it, such as the fight against diseases and poverty, or in reducing violence against Muslim women. Finally, I will conclude by suggesting evidence for the evolution of a new perspective toward Muslim women in America.

## **Part One**

The Community of Muslim Women under the Cauldron (2001-2015)



## Introduction Part One

*Do not let anyone to call you a minority  
if you are black or Hispanic or belong  
to some other ethnic group.  
You are not less than anybody else is<sup>21</sup>.  
- Gwendolyn Brooks*

America and Minorities have a long history of discrimination; many ethnic minorities were excluded: first the Amerindians, then the African Americans, the Hispanics, the Asians and most recently the Muslims or should I say anyone who appears to be Muslim or has a Middle Easterner sounding name. Anny Bakalian and Mehdi Bozorgmehr, the authors of the book, *Backlash 9/11 Middle Easterners' and Muslim Americans' Responses*, argue that:

Balbir Singh Sodhi was the first murder victim of the backlash because his traditional Sikh looks *dastaar* (turban) and *kesh* (unshorn hair) were confused with Osama Bin Laden's *kaffiyeh* (male headdress) and beard. Ironically, Sikhs are neither Arab nor Muslims<sup>22</sup>.

With a diverse population and a high rate of immigration, America has been called a "Melting Pot," especially for the Middle East population because of the war that literally destroyed their homeland and all their possessions. Muslims, particularly Women, were then destined to seek better opportunities in life. After the 9/11 event, many Americans have directed greater attention toward "Muslim Women." Books about Islam and Muslims started to interest non-Muslims because the majority of the American population know very little the subject. Some Americans wished to know who these so-called "enemy" is. Americans were encouraged to judge Muslims, based on how the Media portrayed them. The media often portrayed them as "evil" and "dangerous" to the freedom of the nation<sup>23</sup>. We must mention here the so-called "balance of power," which allows a powerful group of people (media/plutocrats) to manage and manipulate the public opinion in the United States. It is

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<sup>21</sup> Gwendolyn Brooks. <http://www.brainyquote.com/quotes/keywords/minority.html#omjw6srqHq2O22s.99>. Visited on January 9, 2015.

<sup>22</sup> Anny Bakalian, Mehdi Bozorgmehr. *Backlash 9/11: Middle Easterner and Muslim Americans Respond*. California: University of California Press. Berkeley and Los Angeles, 2009. p1.

<sup>23</sup> Driss Ridouani, "The Representation of Arabs and Muslims in Western Media", 2011 at <https://www.google.fr/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=web&cd=1&cad=rja&uact=8&ved=0ahUKEwjgnbHLirvMAhWJXBoKHWfMA6QQFggcMAA&url=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.raco.cat%2Findex.php%2FRuta%2Farticle%2Fdownload%2F243531%2F326280&usq=AFQjCNGGHbhsdEk2N1hQaHyyfKJGVCJ5Ng&bvm=bv.121070826,d.d2s>. Visited on May 2, 2016.

therefore important to understand how the Media paved the way to a continuously violent and disturbing atmosphere for the Muslims and especially Women. We need to remember that as said earlier Muslims came to the United States in order to seek freedom in every sense of the word, a freedom that their country could not provide, a freedom that seemed to be offered by the country known as “the land of the free,” land of success, of hopes and of dreams. The verbal abuse and physical discrimination were not the only types of prejudice suffered by Muslim women in the USA. Yvonne Haddad and her co- authors have explicitly argued in their book, *Muslim Women in America* that the challenge of Islamic identity today is:

In some cases, males who have done nothing wrong other than be born in a Muslim country such as Pakistan, Bangladesh or Yemen have been detained and deported, while the women of their families remain in the US often without the resources to cope. Other women have returned to their countries of origin because of loss of income when their husbands the breadwinners were detained<sup>24</sup>.

We can see how Muslim Women were at first seduced by this nation’s peaceful atmosphere and its many opportunities only to be rejected a few years later by the people and the system. The three firsts chapters of this report will follow a pattern, with a chronology of arrival and rejection. To begin with, in Chapter 1, we will describe the beginning of Muslim Women being targeted viciously by non-Muslims after September 11 2001. Our aim will be to analyze how they went from an “unknown” status to a more visible one, as they became the “Other”, the enemy. Eventually their human rights became restricted and they were routinely abused in American society.

We will also discuss in this chapter, the significance of the veil; a traditional Muslim symbol which has attracted much attention. We will analyze the reasons for this and investigate the strategies used to assault Muslim women’s identity. Here we will study three different views: a general Islamic view, a widely held Western view, and the view unique to many Muslim Women living in America.

Next, in this same chapter, we will describe the US government reaction, which evolved from passive acceptance of discrimination to a proactive attack on Muslim civilians

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<sup>24</sup> Yvonne Yazbeck, Jane I Smith and Kathleen M Moore. *Muslim Women in America: The challenge of Islamic Identity today*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2006. p15.

when hundreds even thousands of innocent women and children were mercilessly slaughtered in Iraq and Afghanistan in the name of US national security.

In Chapter 2, we will discuss “Media Involvement,” and who is behind the manipulation of American public opinion. We will see that, it is a very powerful group of plutocrats who contribute to the predicament of Muslim women living in America and who have been seeking to remove Muslims from the mainstream of American society. We will also, in this chapter, analyze the role of the media and explain how it has served to undermine a peace-loving community, the US Muslim women.

The US authorities have contributed in making the lives of Muslim women difficult: for instance at airports where officials capitulate to a few people who are afraid to sit next to a veiled woman, or when entire flights are cancelled just because passengers were afraid of taking it with a veiled woman on board. In addition, the exaggerated scrutiny at checkpoints, where humiliation, intimidation, harassment and verbal abuse has become common are encouraged by the authorities. In schools and on University campuses, as well, Muslim girls and adult women have experienced verbal bullying, and even physical violence including stabbings, rapes, and beatings... To conclude chapter two, we will see how because of the media involvement it became hard for Muslim American Women to appear in public places without being harassed.

Finally, the third chapter will compare two communities of women in two different periods of American history. Here we will show how the African American women were racially discriminated against and dehumanized in the 1950s. We will describe how IQ tests were used against African American women to justify treating them as less than human. In this description, we will use the work of UC Berkeley Professor of Ethnic Studies, Ronald Takaki, *Iron Cage, A History of 19th-Century Racism*, in which he explicitly and systematically exposes the long history of violence against African Americans and against African American women. The long history of segregation during which African Americans were denied every right including the right to vote. The so-called “Separate but Equal Doctrine”<sup>25</sup> was established to make sure that African Americans stayed where they “belonged”.

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<sup>25</sup> “Separate but Equal: The Law of the Land”, Segregated America, n.d at <http://americanhistory.si.edu/brown/history/1-segregated/separate-but-equal.html>. Visited on June 21, 2015.

# **Chapter 1: Marginalizing Muslim Women (minorities) in the USA after 9/11**

## **Introduction**

This first chapter will discuss the post 9/11 hate crimes targeting Muslim American Women; this work is aimed to display how far the prejudices and the crimes against Muslim Women in the US goes. These crimes according to Nicoletta Karam the author of the *9/11 Backlash: A Decade of U.S Hate Crimes Targeting Innocent*, constitute:

... bias attacks as “crimes that manifest evidences of prejudice based on race, religion, sexual orientation or ethnicity, linking where appropriate the crimes of murder, non-negligent manslaughter, forcible rape, aggravated or simple assault, intimidation, arson and destruction and damage or vandalism of property”<sup>26</sup> .

Throughout this chapter, we will point out at the different reasons why this community of women has been under a constant negative spotlight. The veil being one of the major reasons for this backlash, we will see how Muslim women handle two issues at the same time, the first one being the veil and the controversy around it. Moreover, the second one being the fact that they belong to this community and its population, so they cannot leave the American soil.

In addition, we will discuss also the stand the US government has adopted in front of this problem. The US government made itself naturally a police country and we hear its voice in many various situations, but in this case we will analyze how silent and passive the US government remained in front of what I call “religious or ethnic cleansing”.

Chapter one will set the tone of this entire thesis, it will analyze three points: first the process in which American Muslim women became the “enemy”. The second point being the question of the “veil”, and how everybody stands in this issue. We will see the point of view of Muslim women and the one of Westerners. Finally, in the third point, we will see how a government that should protect its people prefers to interfere in other countries foreign policies and decision-making, for instance Iraq and Afghanistan.

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<sup>26</sup> Karam Nicoletta, *The Backlash 9/11: A Decade of US hate crimes targeting the innocent*. California: A Beatitude Press Book. 2012. Chapter 2, p2.

## 1. A. Muslim Women as the “Other”

For more than a century, movies have dramatized myth making. Ever since the camera began to crank, the unkempt Arab has appeared as an uncivilized character, the cultural other, someone who appears and acts differently than the white Western protagonist, someone of a different race, class, gender or national origin. The diverse Islamic world is populated solely with bearded mullahs, shady sheikhs in their harems, bombers, backward Bedouin, belly dancers, harem maidens and obsequious domestics. Image-makers cover women in black from head to toe and have them follow several paces behind abusive sheikhs, their heads lowered, as mute, uneducated, unattractive, enslaved beings, solely attending men<sup>27</sup>.

The Western view on Muslims and Arabs in general is not a new tendency but it had been long lasting and deep-rooted in the West mentalities ever since the first contacts with Arabs and Muslims happened. Middle Ages, especially during the Crusade Wars around the 7<sup>th</sup> century and the Arabs expansion in the European continent until today, the West promotes almost the same stereotypes of Arabs and Muslims. Orientalism in Disney movies is another way to stereotype or even categorize Muslim women through cartoons. Aladdin presents the highly sexualized belly dancer, as it is one mode of representing Arab women.

The obedient and submissive Arab is a “good” Arab, but the one who decides to defend his family and his homeland is a “bad” Arab because he is refusing the supremacy and the domination of the white; thus the word the “enemy” the “other” because if you are not with them you are definitely against them. The West preserves this persisting and erroneous notion of Arabs and Muslims as aliens the “other” or rather the “enemy”, and according to a group of Americans, an enemy of democracy or freedom should be killed no matter what.

### 1. A.1) Public enemy N°1 (the hunt is on)

Minorities in the US today have been often regarded as outsiders, as not part of the nation and the Muslim Community is no exception. Since the horrific events of 9/11, Muslims

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<sup>27</sup> Driss Ridouani, “The Representation of Arabs and Muslims in Western Media”, 2011 at <https://www.google.fr/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=web&cd=1&cad=rja&uact=8&ved=0ahUKEwjgnbHLirvMAhWJXBoKHWfMA6QQFggcMAA&url=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.raco.cat%2Findex.php%2FRuta%2Farticle%2Fdownload%2F243531%2F326280&usq=AFQjCNGGHbhsdEk2N1hQaHyyfKJGVCJ5Ng&bvm=bv.121070826,d.d2s>. Visited on May 2, 2016.



all over the world have been labelled “terrorists”, “Anti-American” and they have been held responsible for America’s plight. In this first chapter, we will focus on how American Muslim Women have been affected by the 9/11 events.

Indeed, it has not been easy for Muslim American Women in general, as they have become the object of prejudices, discrimination, as well as physical harassment. Women, historically, have been assigned to domestic tasks and childbearing; they were not allowed to be independent and perform jobs other than the ones in their home. Some Muslim women were starting to get on their feet after hundreds of generations living subordinated to men when the September 11 phenomenon appeared. For instance, being more voiced through associations, writing books, denouncing openly injustice and discrimination.

After September 11, 2001, dreams of thousands of Muslim women’s living in the US were crushed because at that precise moment they feared their hope for a better life had just gone with the wind, or should we say with the blast. When the first generation of Muslims American left their countries for whatever reasons, they were full of dreams and full of optimistic projects for their children. They had seized the famous “American dream” up until the moment of this massacre. Immediately after the 9/11 attack, the assault began on those “responsible”, according to the Islamophobes, all Muslims had to pay a price for this crime. That was the beginning of the era called “Send Muslims Home”, and it has led to a discrimination in every corner of the US.

No more jobs, no more liberties and in a way no more home for many Muslims. American society in the 21st century is not an easy place to live if you are from a minority and especially if you are female, but the task is nearly impossible if on top of that you are labelled a “terrorist” or an “America hater” as in the case of Muslim American. Most Americans see and judge Muslim Women through their own culture and religion. According to Theresa Renee White and Jennifer Maria Hernandez

Scholars have noted the increasing construction of hate, fear, and misunderstanding, as well as increasing incidences of “Islamophobia” through the construction of Muslims as the other<sup>28</sup>.

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<sup>28</sup> Theresa Renee White, Jennifer Maria Hernandez, “ Journal of International Women’s Studies” Vol. 14, No. 3 July 2013 at <http://vc.bridgew.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1696&context=jiws> p 65. Visited on May 5, 2015.

Additionally, the reason why many white Americans hate Muslim American Women is that it is commonly believed that Muslim women are weak, subordinate to men and oppressed, not able to make decisions. According to Jack Dovidio, a social psychologist at Yale University, “Americans define other Americans based on the way they look”. This statement is brilliant and self-explanatory because it summarizes the treatment Muslim American Women underwent since the beginning. America will judge you by the clothes you wear and your religious affiliation, not by your intelligence or nor your contribution to the society thus the contradictions between what the US conveys and the reality. The size of US Muslim Women Population and even the size of US Muslim Population in general, is hard to determine due to a formal restrictions on polls. According to Tom W. Smith, and his work entitled “*The Muslim Population of the United States: The Methodology of Estimates*”:

Neither the Bureau of the Census in the Decennial Census or the Current Population Survey (CPS) nor the Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) in its statistics on immigrants, visitors, and naturalized citizens records religious affiliation. As a result, the only inferences about the Muslim population that can be drawn must rely on figures on national origin or language use and how these can be linked to religious affiliation. Such linkages are so uncertain that no reliable estimate of the Muslim population can be derived from such sources. However, census and INS figures on national origin can be used to assess the estimates from surveys<sup>29</sup>.

Thus, not having access to questions pertaining to religious applications, the precise number of Muslim Women in America being unknown it opens the field of manipulation on numbers and percentages. Based on the book by Barry Glassner, professor of sociology at the University of Southern California *the Culture of Fear* “9/11 was the event that defined the American society by fear”, and he continued, “America lives by fear today”. So the process that designates someone as the “other” is motivated by fear, being targeted nearly everywhere in your own country is tragic. For instance, Nicoletta Karam discusses in her book: *The 9/11 Backlash*, in September 14, 2001 at a Los Angeles café, how a Muslim woman eating her lunch with her friend was punched in the face when a Non- Muslim American sitting on the next table heard that she was an Arab. Another incident implies a Muslim woman who was

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<sup>29</sup> Tom W Smith, “Estimating the Muslim Population in the United States”, University of Chicago, n.d. at <http://www.ajc.org/site/apps/nlnet/content3.aspx?c=7oJILSPwFfJSG&b=8451903&ct=12481869&printmode=1> Visited on February 30, 2015.

assaulted by three men in “A La Miranda” parking lot in California; “they took off her veil, slapped her, bit her and even kicked her”<sup>30</sup>. Karam again reports in the same book:

A Muslim woman in Massachusetts also experienced backlash hate crimes. The *patriot Ledger* reported that an assailant at a subway station attacked a local Muslim woman soon after the terrorist strike. During the assault, the vigilante tugged on her headscarf, conveying the message that Muslims are not welcomed in the area<sup>31</sup>.

Many cases like those mentioned above are increasing and it is impossible to site them all. Soon after 9/11, a wild, senseless and unbelievable hunt was launched and it was made to kill or hurt as many Muslim women as possible. Muslim Women were safe nowhere: subways, parking lots, hotels, restaurants, café’s, schools and even home; in a short amount of time, they became the unwanted.

## **1. A.2) Human Right Restricted.**

A great man by the name of Nelson Mandela once said “to deny people their human rights is to challenge their very humanity”<sup>32</sup>. We believe that this statement is very relevant in describing what Muslim Women are dealing with on a daily basis since the turmoil of 9/11.

Muslim women in the US have been and continue to be deprived at every level; socially, politically, and professionally because of their religious affiliation, thus not respecting their Human Rights. Human rights are the rights and freedoms that every Human Being has at his/her birth, rights that can protect him or her against any fraudulent authority. Thus, the first article of the United Nations Universal Human Right Declaration gives all individuals the same rights whether you are white, black or from another ethnicity. The Latter states that:

All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights. They are endowed with reason and conscience and should act towards one another in a spirit of brotherhood<sup>33</sup>.

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<sup>30</sup> Richard Winton. “Suspected Hate Crimes Rise 11% in County”. Report: The Human Relations Commission attributes the surge to post-9/11 violence. Los Angeles: Los Angeles Times. September 10, 2002; at <http://articles.latimes.com/2002/sep/10/local/me-hate10> Visited on June 21, 2015.

<sup>31</sup> Nicoletta Karam. *The Backlash 9/11: A Decade of US hate crimes targeting the innocent*. California: A Beatitude Press Book. 2012. Chapter 4, p 13.

<sup>32</sup> Brainy Quote, “Human Rights Quotes”, n.d., at <http://www.brainyquote.com/quotes/quotes/n/nelsonmand447259.html#C176leOHWSipfpPA.99>. Visited on May 15, 2015.

Moreover, by not respecting or by not supporting such rights, you are going against basic Human values that could eventually lead to the downfall of the human species in general. In our very case, it hasten the exclusion of an entire community into the “oubliette”. Right after September 11, the Muslim Women community were not seen any more as Americans but as outcasts, devils and nobody was interested in reminding them of their Human Rights and Civil Rights; as this leads us to the second article of the Human Right Declaration which states that :

Everyone is entitled to all the rights and freedoms set forth in this Declaration, without distinction of any kind, such as race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status. Furthermore, no distinction shall be made based on the political, jurisdictional or international status of the country or territory to which a person belongs, whether it be independent, trust, non-self-governing or under any other limitation of sovereignty<sup>34</sup>.

A very important question can be raised at this point: *Are most Americans against the free exercise of any religion other than their own?*

We raised this question because throughout our research; we discovered that not all Americans were against the Islamic religion. According to Leila Ahmed, some non-Muslim women stand with Muslim women in their struggle for equality and justice.

The answer is complex, because we do not clearly know who is who. Therefore, this ambiguity is threatening the lives of hundreds of human beings whose only fault is to be Muslim. By denying them freedom and their rights they are reducing Muslims to a state of none humans. However, judgment based on race and religious affiliation can be legally contested. Human Rights Watch and the US government remains silent before the chaos of Muslim Women being harassed and diminished in neighborhoods and at work. Muslim women suffering rape, stabbing or beating as well as verbal abuse has led to hundreds of Women to hide in their homes, in constant fear. In fact, Muslim Women were not seen as active subjects but rather objects, according to many Non-Muslim Americans, Muslim American Women are believed to be the product of patriarchal training, always ruled by men.

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<sup>33</sup> “The Universal Declaration of Human Rights”, n.d., at <http://www.un.org/en/documents/udhr/>. Visited on June 2, 2015.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*

However, the often heard cliché which says, “Muslim Women are oppressed, victims of male domination and they are voiceless” is totally unfounded. Still it is not important enough to get the Human Right Watch attention. Unfortunately, the disasters do not stop there; it actually reached other continents such as Europe. Sadly, the Afghan and Iraqi wars resulted in thousands of lives taken away nearly every day in senseless confrontations. Nonetheless, the Human Right Watch gave a speech concerning 9/11:

Human Rights Watch once again expresses its deep sympathy for the victims of the September 11 attacks and their family members. Human Rights Watch has repeatedly expressed its outrage at such attacks on innocent civilians and believes those responsible should be held accountable and brought to justice before a court of law<sup>35</sup>.

It is natural that those responsible should be brought to justice, but we also support the fact that every human being has the right to better his life and by that, we mean better living conditions and opportunities for jobs without religious, cultural or ethnic distinctions. The question is *does Human Rights Watch show concern about Muslim American women condition in the US*. Well not that much. John F. Kennedy once said,

The rights of every man are diminished when the rights of one man are threatened<sup>36</sup>.

Great words but useless in times of war as in the present era. The war and its machinery seem to be more important than just saving lives. I do think that if verbal and physical abuse were reprimended regularly, and strongly as possible, the rate of violence in the US society would have been significantly reduced.

One expert has found that Muslim women who wear headscarves are more likely than those who do not to face discrimination: 69% of women who wore hijab reported at least one incident of discrimination compared to 29% of women who did not wear hijab<sup>37</sup>.

Another very crucial aspect of the Human Rights Restriction is what Fabienne Brion called in her book, *Féminité, minorité, islamité* ethnic and racial discrimination in hiring. No Muslim women is allowed to work and at the same time enjoy the right to wear the

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<sup>35</sup> “Human Rights After September 11”, n.d, at <http://www.hrw.org/legacy/campaigns/september11/>. Visited on June 1, 2015.

<sup>36</sup> John F Kennedy, n,d, at <http://www.goodreads.com/quotes/tag/human-rights>. Visited on May 16, 2015.

<sup>37</sup> “Discrimination against Muslim Women - Fact Sheet”. ACLU, n.d., at <https://www.aclu.org/discrimination-against-muslim-women-fact-sheet>. Visited on May 24, 2015.

headcovering/hijab. In this book, she studies the case of Muslim Moroccan Women who are hardly accepted in Belgium. Her theory is as follows; no private nor public sector allows Muslim women to have a job. The employers use as an argument the “principle of neutrality” in which they do not accept any kind of religious reminder that might offend clientele. In this case, not offending the “white/Non-Muslim” (westerners, European) client is more important and more respected than giving opportunities to Muslim Women.

Muslim women were not allowed to wear the hijab while working and this phenomenon got even worse with the fact that Muslim women were being fired if they refused to remove the veil. We have the case of 19 years old “Umme-Hani Khan” a Californian Muslim Women who was fired in 2010 by a retail company *Abercrombie & Fitch* in San Francisco, according to NBC News “she was told by the company that the fact of wearing a hijab is going against the company’s *dress code* and *Policy look*”<sup>38</sup>. She decided to sue the company, and after a long battle of three years she won the case and she was paid “\$71,000”<sup>39</sup> for damages. This kind of senseless repression towards veiled Muslim women in the US has as negative effect, myriad of unemployment among the Muslim Women community. Umme-Hani Khan said:

We are living in America; it is such a melting pot of diversity with so many different types of people. That is why I have taken this case so publicly, so that they realize what they did was wrong and what they continue to do is wrong<sup>40</sup>.

She also stated that:

My hope is that this case will lead to Abercrombie changing their practices ... in regards to religious accommodation. I do not want this to happen to any other person<sup>41</sup>.

Muslim women in US were also not allowed to publicly put on the veil, which is an “infringement” on their religious rights and freedom as human beings. The case of Umme-Hani Khan is not an isolated one; veiled Muslim women are denied basic things such as gas at gas stations as **it** was the case of Lafleur Mohamed a Muslim American Women who was

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<sup>38</sup> Sarah Petersen. “Abercrombie fired employee over hijab, Muslim woman wins religious battle” Published: Thursday, Sept. 12 2013 4:15 p.m. MDT <http://www.deseretnews.com/article/865586288/Abercrombie-fired-employee-over-hijab-Muslim-woman-wins-religious-battle.html?pg=all>. Visited on May 24, 2015.

<sup>39</sup> “Abercrombie & Fitch pays out \$71,000 to settle lawsuits over hijabs ” Associated Press in San Francisco. US news. <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2013/sep/23/abercrombie-fitch-lawsuits-hijabs-head-scarves>. Monday 23 September 2013. Visited on May 25, 2015.

<sup>40</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid.*

denied gas at a gas station in Boca Raton, Florida. After a while, the clerk reached for her phone and called 911, when Lafleur said that she would not take off her veil. Lafleur said she refused to take off her veil because the clerk was violating her religious rights. It is incredibly inhumane to deny a person his or her religion or any of his or her rights under the assumption that we do not share the person's religious affiliation. Lafleur Mohamed later said that she felt "humiliated". On the other hand, we have other women who are giving speeches on women's right, among them is Hilary Clinton who said, "Human rights are women's rights, and women's rights are human rights"<sup>42</sup>.

Muslim Women have to be seen or treated equally, as any other human being. The tragic shooting of Chapel Hill North Carolina<sup>43</sup> in 2015 witnessed the dangerous and murderous atmosphere against the US Muslims. This act of terrorism implied two Muslim American women and a young Muslim man who were killed in a senseless shooting, by a 46-year-old man named Craig Stephen Hick. In addition, reactions to the recent attacks on the satirical magazine "Charlie Hebdo" served as another example of violence provoked by discrimination. Sahar Aziz has observed that:

Muslim women wearing headscarves -- are particularly likely to bear the brunt of the backlash. Indeed, Muslim religious leaders report an uptick in complaints of anti-Muslim bias, predominantly by Muslim women<sup>44</sup>.

She went on to write:

Yet, as Muslim women face threats to their safety in the anti-Muslim backlash, one cannot help but notice the deafening silence of French feminists<sup>45</sup>.

Many Muslim Women agree with Aziz that based on all the discriminations experienced by women, feminists should be among the first ones to open the debates and the manifestations but QUIET is what dominates all. As American, the French are deaf to the plea of women with headscarves.

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<sup>42</sup> Hilary Clinton, n.d., at [http://www.brainyquote.com/quotes/keywords/human\\_rights.html#dpDweMV7zP9HARxJ.99](http://www.brainyquote.com/quotes/keywords/human_rights.html#dpDweMV7zP9HARxJ.99). Visited on May 31, 2015.

<sup>43</sup> Sophie Kleeman, "What We Know about the 3 Victims of the Chapel Hill Shooting", 2015 at <http://mic.com/articles/110428/these-are-the-3-victims-of-the-chapel-hill-shooting>. Visited on May 1, 2015.

<sup>44</sup> Sahar Aziz, "Women facing anti-Muslim backlash". CNN TV. January 26, 2015 at <http://edition.cnn.com/2015/01/25/tv/aziz-muslim-women/>. Visited on April 30, 2015.

<sup>45</sup> *Ibid.*



## 1. B. The Veil controversy

*The hijab = Hijab etymologically means, “cover”.*

- *Why do some westerners and Europeans consider the veil as something fearful and why do they ignore the background history of the veil?*
- *How does a simple tissue alter the view of the majority of the Americans?*

These simple questions require complete answers. In this part of my report, I will attempt to demystify the veil and explain why it is important for Muslim women to wear it. The hijab has been viewed as a “religious gender marker”<sup>46</sup> or an “ostentatious religious symbol”<sup>47</sup> or again a “stereotyped symbol of terror”<sup>48</sup>, very difficult and scary terms.

However, historically, the hijab is a sign of modesty and piety; it is also for the Muslim women a SIGN of their obedience to ALLAH. The hijab also called veil or headscarves in other cases is after 9/11 a “TABOU” or a subject of controversy in the USA and other societies such as France and Belgium. Regrettably, in my opinion many of western people do not really see the real meaning or the beauty of the hijab; instead, they find it as unacceptable for Muslim women to wear it as a distinctive religious reminder in public places. Ironically, westerners do accept the veil when it comes to the nuns of the Christian church. Nuns are from head to toe covered and they are called “pious” while a Muslim woman in US wearing a veil is called a “terrorist”, that is the result of unfair judgements.

Following the attack of 9/11, the attitude the westerners had towards the hijab got even worst, hijab is in the heart of practically every debate and talk shows, national TV and gathering places. American government officials and the media often portray the hijab as a sign of Muslim women’s oppression and victimization; they use that argument to win the public support for US foreign policy, in the Middle East. In order to do that, the highest authorities, in the US government do not hesitate to appeal at the sense of revenge of Americans by saying Muslims are those who slaughtered our fellow citizens. For the most

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<sup>46</sup> Sahar F Aziz, “TERRORIZING THE MUSLIM “VEIL””, June 2012, at [http://www.ispu.org/pdfs/ISPU\\_Brief\\_AzizTerrMuslimVeil\\_REVISED.pdf](http://www.ispu.org/pdfs/ISPU_Brief_AzizTerrMuslimVeil_REVISED.pdf). Visited on May 24, 2015.

<sup>47</sup> Sandro Contenta, News, Published on Tue Sep 10 2013. Quebec to ban ‘ostentatious’ religious symbols, at [http://www.thestar.com/news/canada/2013/09/10/quebecs\\_controversial\\_values\\_charter\\_to\\_be\\_released.html](http://www.thestar.com/news/canada/2013/09/10/quebecs_controversial_values_charter_to_be_released.html)

<sup>48</sup> Sahar F Aziz, The Muslim ‘Veil’ Post-9/11: Rethinking Women’s Rights and Leadership. Texas A&M School of Law 2012. Institute for Social Policy and Understanding Policy Brief, November 2012, at [http://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract\\_id=2194119](http://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=2194119). Visited on June 1, 2015.



part, Muslim women are neither forced nor harassed to wear the hijab. Some countries do force women to put on the veil such as Iran but other such as Djibouti or Yemen, Morocco, Egypt and many others do not force it upon the will of its women.

Wearing the veil is an attempt to resist prejudice; it is their choice, not a compulsion, and it is in a sense a challenge for Non-Muslims to not judge a book by its cover. Leila Ahmed, an Egyptian American writer on Islam and Islamic feminism, as well as being the first women's studies professor at Harvard Divinity School expressed this view in her book "*A Quiet Revolution*" when she wrote "the First Lady Laura Bush, [...], broadcast in a radio address presenting the issue of women in Afghanistan as one of integral importance to America security".

Civilized people throughout the world are speaking out in horror because not only our hearts break for the women and children of Afghanistan, but also because in Afghanistan we see the world the terrorist would like to impose on the rest of us... The fight against terrorism is also a fight for the right and dignity of women<sup>49</sup>.

This statement shows the deep concern the former US First Lady Laura Bush had for Afghan women and the lack of concern for her own people (US Muslim women). Muslim women are thus the addressee of violent verbal and physical attacks just because they wear the veil. For this purpose, a violence that is legally perpetrated by the highest agent of the American society in a way that will make allusion to the saving of Afghanistan women's life.

Furthermore, the hijab is a sign of religious freedom for Muslim women, it is part of their being/mode vivendi, unfortunately, at the same time hijab is a unique mark of distinction, for example at US airports. Muslim women are under severe pressure and long questionings about who they are, where they are going, where they are originally from or if they carry suspicious materials and many other things. According to Maria Hussain and based on her article entitled "Wearing Hijab in America" published by the University of Michigan.

This is an example of how we can go about quietly struggling against evil. Moreover, hijab is precisely one of the symbols of this struggle. It is a sign that says I believe in Allah and I believe in forbidding what is evil and encouraging what is good. It is an outward acknowledgement of an inner faith for which we are willing to

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<sup>49</sup> Leila Ahmed, *The Veil's Resurgence, from the Middle East to America: A Quiet Revolution*. Yale University Press. New Haven and London, June 5, 2012. p14.

sacrifice our egos and work hard for, in order to bring about positive social change<sup>50</sup>.

Wearing the hijab while facing harsh times is a way to maintain a strong cultural and religious bound and custom just like a uniform would do, “esprit de corps”, which most westerners do not understand. In a way, the hijab is the Muslim Women’s identity as America has a racially diverse population; it is their distinctive sign as for the Jews, it is the “kippah”. The sad part is that, Muslim American Women who wear the hijab as their expression of faith to show their love and submission to ALLAH their creator can be killed for doing so. US Muslim women agreed on the fact that the heat of this man-made hell is hotter than the heat caused by their long covering when asked if they are suffocating or suffering from heat under their hijab/veil. The difference between the submission to ALLAH and the submission to a man is strikingly different from the Muslim’s point of view. Through time, hijab in all its forms became a sign to differ Muslim women from the others, and Americans saw that as a reason to “single them out”.

### **1. B.1) The Islamic view vs. the Western view.**

Islam is very clear on the question of whether a Muslim Woman has the choice to cover or not? A Muslim Woman has to wear the veil in order to cover her body. This following passage of the holy Quran explicitly demands that women wear the veil to preserve their purity. This is what the Quran says:

Tell the believing women to lower their eyes, guard their private parts, and not display their charms except what is apparent outwardly, **and cover their bosoms with their veils** and **not to show their finery** except to their husbands or their fathers or fathers-in-law, their sons or step-sons, brothers, or their brothers' and sisters' sons, or their women attendants or captives, or male attendants who do not have any need (for women), or boys not yet aware of sex. They should not walk stamping their feet lest they make known what **they hide of their**

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<sup>50</sup> Maria Hussain, “Wearing Hijab in America”, March 12, 2009 at <https://mariahussain.wordpress.com/2009/03/12/wearing-hijab-in-america/>, Filed under Blogroll — mariahussain @ 6:27 pm. Visited on June 5, 2015.

**ornaments.** O believers, turn to God, every one of you, so that you may be successful<sup>51</sup>.

In Addition, we have the background culture that teaches young girls to cover after puberty to protect themselves from men's gaze and egregious intention. Islam has as principle to protect women from being hurt and soil. Muslim Feminist agree on the fact that the female body is appealing and beautiful for men, the hair has something to do with being aphrodisiac, so in order to prevent sexual arousal between to two person Allah prescribed the veil, a tissue that will cover women's private parts and beauty. A tissue that needs to be obligatory loose and long. Allah the creator prescribes it, so nobody will force you to put it on or take it off at least not in the 21<sup>st</sup> century; it is the woman's choice.

On the other hand, the western society made a personal view, which diverge from the Islamic one. Westerners believe that the veil is the fruit of more than hundred years of women's oppression and silence. Many countries have banned the veil; among them, France, which banned it in 2004 from the public schools and six years later the French authorities, banned the full-face hijab from any public location among which streets and walk places such as parks. In France, there are schools for Jews, Jews are allowed to wear a religious distinctive sign such as the "Kippah", while Muslim women are denied the right to wear the veil in public schools, a veiled woman is immediately noticed and harassed.

France was for sure the first European country that banned the full-face covering, but was soon followed by, the United Kingdom (where there is an ongoing debate until today), Belgium, Spain, Italy, Netherland, Russia, Germany and Switzerland (which banned at least the full face-covering veil from public walk places).

## **1. B.2) Muslim Women view**

After 9/11, Muslim American Women were confused, and a tiny group decided to take off the hijab to avoid any kind of abuse. Among them, Khataw a young Muslim woman from Texas explained that:

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<sup>51</sup> Sahar Amer, "Uncovering the Meaning of the Veil in Islam". University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. From Surat An-Nūr, verse 30-31, at [http://www.unc.edu/depts/europe/conferences/Veil2000/Veil-sa/veil\\_islam-amer.PDF](http://www.unc.edu/depts/europe/conferences/Veil2000/Veil-sa/veil_islam-amer.PDF) Visited on June 11, 2015.

She stops wearing it to protect herself and her family, she also asserted that her son was bullied because of his religion; she claims that the fact of taking it off transformed her from a shy and introverted person to an activist to educate people about Islam<sup>52</sup>.

They (those who took off the veil for their security), assert that to stop wearing the hijab, was a huge challenge for them, as they were feeling totally naked the first time “Heba El Zawahry” is among them, she said, “It is like I am walking around with my shirt off<sup>53</sup>”, and she continues by saying it does not define who they are as Muslims. Would it make a difference? YES, she said, but it will not change who we are and what we believe in.

Veiling is their way of resisting harassments and it symbolizes their freedom, their identity and a way to dress modestly. The majority keeps wearing it and or/ started wearing it after 9/11 because for them it is their way to show their spiritual awakening, among them Anna Raja a student at the University of Austin Texas who started to wear the veil after 9/11. Leila Ahmed reported Rajia’s view on the veil and she said:

It [wearing hijab] really made me more self-aware... as far as when I am in public I am representing Islam. In addition, that I need to do all that I can to really show people what Islam really is. Through that, people are more invited to ask me about it. It liberated her and helped her create a strong Muslim American identity on campus<sup>54</sup>.

Muslim women voices are sometimes expressed by the Muslim feminists who call for global days of solidarity, to show the world who the Muslim American women community (counting nearly one million individuals) are.

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<sup>52</sup> Leila Ahmed. *The veil’s resurgence, from the Middle East to America, a quiet revolution*. p207.

<sup>53</sup> *Lifting The Veil: Muslim Women Explain Their Choice*. APRIL 21, 2011 12:01 AM ET. <http://www.npr.org/2011/04/21/135523680/lifting-the-veil-muslim-women-explain-their-choice>. Visited on June 6, 2015.

<sup>54</sup> Leila Ahmed, *The veil’s Resurgence, from the Middle East to America: A quiet Revolution*. Yale University Press. New Haven and London, June 5, 2012. p208.

## 1. C US Government Passiveness VS Solidarity from Other Women

The US government remains quiet and unmoved in front of the event, waged by enraged Americans, that implies injustice towards Muslims women. In this part, we are going to demonstrate the government reluctance to admit the reality of the ordeal that the Muslim Women have to face every day, or the unwillingness of the latter to handle the problem seriously and in a radical manner. No severe repressions against the perpetrator of violence and of course, this kind of attitude “passiveness” has as a negative effect, to encourage the xenophobes to be worst.

The US government and its entire administration (in general) are aware of every single drama that occur in the center of every neighborhood, but helping Muslim Women would not be profitable. Instead, the former government saw an opening in the dreadful event of 9/11, in lieu of pacifying the atmosphere; the government campaigned against anyone who resemble a Muslim, thus making women who don the veil the easiest pray recognizable miles away, thus increasing the incidents. According to Anny Bakalian and Mehdi Bozorgmehr the authors of “*Backlash 9/11*”: Middle eastern and Muslim Americans Respond, they sited in their book that:

Hate crimes and bias incident spiked immediately. According to the organization south Asian American Leaders of tomorrow (SAALT 2001), 645 bias incidents were reported in metropolitan newspapers across the country in the week after 9/11<sup>55</sup>.

By doing such meaningless actions, the latter was fueling the era of unreasonable fear, which leads to unreasonable discrimination and hate. By not pacifying the atmosphere, and by allowing the media to depict the Muslim Women through such hypocritical manner, the government smartly managed to shape the public opinion into its favor. Shortly after slogans such as “All I need to know about Islam, I have learned from 9/11” appeared, the mind of Americans were mold into a state in which they were able to believe any prejudice they heard. Their critical mind was turned off for the profit of a handful of vested interest. This group had an interest in the negative portrayal of Islam and Muslim women’s community. Why?

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<sup>55</sup> Anny Bakalian, Mehdi Bozorgmehr. *Backlash 9/11: Middle Eastener and Muslim Americans Respond*. California: University of California Press. Berkeley and Los Angeles, 2009. p1.

Because they need scapegoats, distraction and a reason for their actions. Actions that imply their foreign policy and industry of armament.

These actions led to a gloomy representation of an entire community that counts at least six million people. Those six million Muslim Americans are the bridge to the Middle East resources. Moreover, in order to get those resources without any suspicion it needed to appear as a self-defense strategy or as a counterattack.

For instance, if we try to compare the Vietnam War to the war in the Middle East, Americans were not in favor of the Vietnam War and the US soldiers were called unfavorable names such as “baby killers” while on the other hand the US soldiers from Afghanistan and Iraq are rewarded and hold the titles of “War heroes”. Simply because America supports the mass killing of Muslim Women and Children in a way of revenge against vicious attack by a few terrorists.

However, not all the Americans are manipulated, because those not manipulated are those with a critical mind and there is a small minority, which often comprise women, who are dedicated to assist those Muslim women who are subjected to constant harassment. This handful of brave women from many different communities came up with the idea of “associations” through which they could reach out to Muslim women.

Among those associations; we have “the headscarf day” or “International scarves for solidarity”, associations in which Muslim and Non-Muslim women are brought together for the acceptance of the veil, to ask questions about it and to counter false stereotypes, to stop categorizing women and to try the veil for the Non-Muslims. There are also according to Leila Ahmed the author of “*A Quiet Revolution*”:

Actions by women and feminists in support of women in hijab from “headscarf days” to offers of escorts and shopping services, and the holding of candlelight vigils in support of Muslim women – occurred in many communities across the nation<sup>56</sup>.

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<sup>56</sup> Leila Ahmed, *The veil's Resurgence, from the Middle East to America: A quiet Revolution*. Yale University Press. New Haven and London, June 5, 2012, p 205.



Nevertheless, this is not the only type of support the Muslim Women get from Non-Muslim women, as a matter of fact again Ahmed reported in the same book that:

After the Islamic center in San Diego was attacked, for instance it received “bouquets of flowers and cards of support and sympathy from members of other faith groups – especially after reports of Muslim Women being afraid to leave home.” .... One woman shopping with her two children reported that the manager gave her children little gifts of pencils and paper “to show support...”<sup>57</sup>.

Other forms of solidarity are provided by young non-Muslim students who converted to Islam just to challenge the haters, the case of Andrea Useem is one among many. Andrea, a Euro-American student from Harvard University, converted to show that Islam is not the danger<sup>58</sup>. Ella Singer a staff member on the campus of Wayne State University is another living prove of solidarity and support towards a wrongly accused Muslim Women community. She took up the veil/hijab not because she wanted to be a Muslim but because, in her words: “I am wearing it because I understand how it marks you as an object for someone else’s hatred”...<sup>59</sup>

### 1. C.1) The Headscarf for a Day.

The “Headscarf Day” or the “World Hijab Day” is a worldwide day in which Non-Muslim or Non-hijabi women wear the hijab for a day to see it from another angle or point of view and to experience what the veiled women go through on daily basis. This day saw the

<sup>57</sup> *Ibid*, p 201.

<sup>58</sup> *Ibid*, p 202.

<sup>59</sup> *Ibid*, p 206.

light in the hands of a young Muslim American Woman from Bangladesh by the name of Nazma Khan, who grew up in New York City. Khan arrived in the US at the age of **11 years old** with her family of six. Her story is amazing; with barely 10 dollars, her parents came to America in order to improve their living conditions.

After a while Khan was sent to school; she says that she knew no English word, she was shy and was the only Muslim girl in the entire school and she soon encountered quandaries. She says that she was called names such as “ninjas” or “batman”, she was then beaten and her classmates used to spit on her. She claims that she never imagined that a simple fabric like the “hijab” could cause such predicaments. She soon afterwards added that her biggest fear was not her classmates but how her English teacher used to make fun of the way she dresses, “He crushed down my self-esteem,”<sup>60</sup> she said. Her ordeal was not done yet, when she created the “World Hijab Day” as a vehicle to Muslim women’s voice and will; it was her way to bring together the women of two communities with a long history of prejudices and discriminations.

The aim of this day is to alter the view that defines the veil/hijab as a sign of oppression, as well as to promote the inner humane attribute rather than the outer ones. She has decided to campaign against any kind of physical and verbal abuses linked to the veil to at least win the support of non-Muslim and non-veiled women to stop the violence upon those who wear the veil. “Scared” and “helpless” are her words to describe her high school days where groups of boys and girls used to wait her outside the gate either to take off her veil or to physically harass her. “Nightmare” is the word she used to portray her days after 9/11 as her fellow American citizens while calling her “terrorist” or “Osama ben laden”<sup>61</sup> chased her on the streets. The World Hijab Day primarily exists to collect Muslim women’s experiences with the veil and provide answers or even psychological support as Muslim women share their stories on social media such as Facebook to lessen their sufferance and plight. It is their way to overcome and counteract prejudices in modern societies.

Preposterous stories which are not supposed to exist, among them the stories of young girls who are afraid to go to school or the amusement park, because of the statements they will get from their friends, stories that involve mothers who are not able to provide any kind of answers to their daughters, when back from school in a horrible condition, crying and asking why her friends and her teachers laugh at her face. Stories that describe how a Muslim

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<sup>60</sup> World Hijab Day at <http://radtalks.com/world-hijab-day/> . Rad Talks | On 19, Jan 2014. Filmed on 2013. Visited on June 6, 2015.

<sup>61</sup> Nazma Khan Profile, “On Islam”, 2013 at <http://www.onislam.net/english/culture-and-entertainment/media/469131-nazma-khan-profile.html>. Visited on June 6, 2015.



woman was denied an unopened can of diet coke in an airplane when asked what to drink<sup>62</sup>. Stories of pregnant Muslim Woman beaten to the state of coma, trauma or miscarriage<sup>63</sup>.

Stories of teenage Muslim Women raped by the US soldiers in Iraq<sup>64</sup> and stabbed just due to the fact they don the veil. Stories that tell the daily lives of Muslim students denied access to chemistry studies under the assumption that they could manufacture bombs out of what they are<sup>65</sup> taught.

Again stories in which Muslim women are denied the right to have a job or fired just because of their religious garb<sup>66</sup>. Stories that altered the lives of young women to the point of self-deterioration and low self-esteem<sup>67</sup>. Stories, which seemed to affect only the victims, while the Muslim women community is looking for an effective rejoinder, those who hold the power make promises to reduce violence, but no action has been undertaken and if some actions has been launched, they were not sufficient.

Hence, she (The Muslim woman) faces gender, race, and religious discrimination in ways that a Muslim man, a White woman, or another racial minority does not face<sup>68</sup>.

## 1. C.2) The US federal government contradiction

The fact the US federal government is doing nothing before the massacre and the plight of a community, which count more than a million person, can be seen as an “ethnic cleansing”. Not only were Muslim women in US intentionally deemed to suffer at the hands

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<sup>62</sup> Elizabeth Chuck, “Airline Apologizes After Muslim Chaplain Denied Unopened Can of Soda”. NBCnews, June 3 2015 at <http://www.nbcnews.com/news/us-news/airline-apologizes-after-muslim-chaplain-denied-diet-coke-n369246>. Visited on June 13, 2015.

Steven Erlanger, “Muslim Woman Suffers Miscarriage after Attack in France”. NBCnews. World briefing Europe, June 18, 2013 at <http://www.nytimes.com/2013/06/19/world/europe/muslim-woman-suffers-miscarriage-after-attack-in-france.html>. Visited on June 20, 2015.

<sup>63</sup> Leila Ahmed, *The Veil's Resurgence, from the Middle East to America: A Quiet Revolution*. Yale University Press. New Haven and London, June 5, 2012. p205

<sup>64</sup> “Iraqi Muslim Woman Raped by U.S. Soldiers”? n,d at [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=S1nIxy\\_\\_atM](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=S1nIxy__atM) Visited on June 13, 2015.

<sup>65</sup> “British universities deny admission to MUSLIM students in warfare courses?” The siasat daily, 31 March 2015 at <http://www.siasat.com/news/british-universities-deny-admission-muslim-students-warfare-courses-739273/>. Visited on April 12, 2015.

<sup>66</sup> Adam Liptak, “Muslim Woman Denied Job over Head Scarf Wins in Supreme Court”. The New York Times, June 1, 2015 at [http://www.nytimes.com/2015/06/02/us/supreme-court-rules-in-samantha-elaufer-abercrombie-fitch-case.html?\\_r=0](http://www.nytimes.com/2015/06/02/us/supreme-court-rules-in-samantha-elaufer-abercrombie-fitch-case.html?_r=0) . Visited on June 13, 2015.

<sup>67</sup> Sahar Aziz, “The Muslim “Veil” Post-9/11: Rethinking Women’s Rights and Leadership”. A joint publication from the Institute for Social Policy and Understanding. November 2012, and the British Council [http://www.ispu.org/pdfs/ISPU\\_Brief\\_AzizTerrMuslimVeil\\_1126\\_\(1\).pdf](http://www.ispu.org/pdfs/ISPU_Brief_AzizTerrMuslimVeil_1126_(1).pdf). Visited on March 15, 2015.

<sup>68</sup> *Ibid*.

of their country but also on top of it, they were denied assistance. The last ten years the government came up with the creation of associations with sophisticated names to provide help and assistance to the US Muslims, associations such as *Hate Crimes Prosecution, Hate Crime Tracking and Hate Crimes Investigation Support*<sup>69</sup>. However, there was nothing done or if done it is not enough according to the victims. Most of the accusations made by the victims end up not being solved due to the lack of evidences and witnesses.

There are no controls made near Muslims neighborhood to daunt the perpetrator of arsons and felonies, nor heavy sanctions to discourage all the hate and violence towards Muslims and Muslim women. Again, no sanctions against companies that refuse to hire veiled Muslim women and if there are sanctions, it is a long battle against powerful lobbies, which last for three to five years; it is expensive, time consuming, and tends to discourage the majority of the victims. Moreover, the US government pretends to help the Muslim community more than the American Average.

Barack Obama during a Speech in 2009 to the Muslim World from Cairo Egypt agreed that his people are blinded by the terrific attacks of 9/11. He also stated that Islam was always part of America and that the:

American Muslims enjoy incomes and educational level that are higher than the American average. Moreover, freedom in America is indivisible from the freedom to practice one's religion that is why there is a mosque in every state of our union and over 1200 mosques within our borders. That is why the United States of America has gone to court to protect the right of women and the girls to wear the hijab and to punish those who will deny it. So let there be no doubt, Islam is part of America<sup>70</sup>.

On the other side, Bryan Fischer, a former director of the American Family Association wants one Mosque shut down for every American killed by Muslim terrorists<sup>71</sup>, *why would they want to punish the peaceful majority for the insane actions of the few?*

The Islamophobes network, organize days such as, "Burn the Koran day" launched by a Christian pastor by the name of Terry Jones, also president of a political group called

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<sup>69</sup> See appendix 1

<sup>70</sup> "Barack Obama Speech to the Muslim World from Cairo Egypt" 2009, at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1cVxEmhCQas>. Visited on June 2, 2015.

<sup>71</sup> "RWW News: Bryan Fischer Wants One Mosque Shut down for Every American Killed by Muslim Terrorists" at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eLPenkarH3I>. Visited on June 9, 2015.

“Stand up America Now”, he is nationally and internationally known for initiating riots, for instance in Dearborn, Michigan, he spread the anti-Muslim slogan of burning 2996 Holy books, one for each victim of September 11, 2001. He was arrested in the middle of his work.

In addition, according to Alan Godlas a professor of religion at the University of Georgia:

Muslims American often get the kind of treatment once reserved for blacks and Jews, dehumanized groups that also were the victims of racial and ethnic prejudice and violence<sup>72</sup>.

In my opinion, those declarations contradict the speech of President Obama. In the Aftermath of 9/11, as everyone knew right away who to blame for the tragedy, Laura Bush decided to deliver a speech to give more support to her government position. Her way was through the weakest link “women” demeaned by patriarchal societies. She even wrote a book with her husband the former President George W Bush, titled “We are Afghan Women”.



The object of her criticism is to support the Afghan women who according to her lack health, education, freedom and security, while women in her country especially Muslim women are in the same condition but it is a subtle way compared to the Afghan women. Nevertheless, she said this:

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<sup>72</sup> Lee Shearer, “Muslims face dehumanizing prejudice in U.S., scholar says”. Saturday, October 19, 2013 - 10:17pm at <http://onlineathens.com/uga/2013-10-19/muslims-face-dehumanizing-prejudice-us-scholar-says>. Visited on December 31, 2014.

Good morning. I am Laura Bush. Moreover, I am delivering this week's radio address to kick off a worldwide effort to focus on the brutality against women and children by the Al Qaeda terrorist network and the regime it supports in Afghanistan, the Taliban.

That regime is now in retreat across much of the country, and the people of Afghanistan, especially women, are rejoicing. Afghan women know through hard experience what the rest of the world is discovering: The brutal oppression of women is a central goal of the terrorists.

Long before the current war began, the Taliban and its terrorist allies were making the lives of children and women in Afghanistan miserable. Seventy percent of the Afghan people are malnourished. One in every four children will not live past the age of five because health care is not available. Women have been denied access to doctors when they are sick.

Life under the Taliban is so hard and repressive, even small displays of joy are outlawed. Children are not allowed to fly kites. Their mothers face beatings for laughing out loud. Women cannot work outside the home or even leave their homes by themselves.

The severe repression and brutality against women in Afghanistan is not a matter of legitimate religious practice. Muslims around the world have condemned the brutal degradation of women and children by the Taliban regime. The poverty, poor health and illiteracy that the terrorists and the Taliban have imposed on women in Afghanistan do not conform with the treatment of women in most of the Islamic world, where women make important contributions in their societies.

Only the terrorists and the Taliban forbid education to women. Only the terrorists and the Taliban threaten to pull out women's fingernails for wearing nail polish.

The plight of the women and children in Afghanistan is a matter of deliberate human cruelty carried out by those who seek to intimidate and control.

Civilized people throughout the world are speaking out in horror, not only because our hearts break for the women and children in

Afghanistan but also because, in Afghanistan, we see the world the terrorists would like to impose on the rest of us.

All of us have an obligation to speak out. We may come from different backgrounds and faiths, but parents the world over love their children. We respect our mothers, our sisters and daughters.

Fighting brutality against women and children is not the expression of a specific culture; it is the acceptance of our common humanity, a commitment shared by people of good will on every continent.

Because of our recent military gains, in much of Afghanistan women are no longer imprisoned in their homes. They can listen to music and teach their daughters without fear of punishment.

Yet, the terrorists who helped rule that country now plot and plan in many countries, and they must be stopped. The fight against terrorism is also a fight for the rights and dignity of women.

In America, next week brings Thanksgiving. After the events of the last few months, we will be holding our families even closer. And we will be especially thankful for all of the blessings of American life.

I hope Americans will join our family in working to ensure that dignity and opportunity will be secured for all the women and children of Afghanistan. Have a wonderful holiday, and thank you for listening<sup>73</sup>.

Laura Bush's speech is very important and at the same time full of false statements which contradict her view. In the second, paragraph of this speech, the former First Lady stated that "Afghan women know through hard experience what the rest of the world is discovering: The brutal oppression of women is a central goal of the terrorists". In fact, the case of Muslim American women is quite similar because the Muslim women in US have experienced hard times after 9/11. Which brings the Muslim American women at the same level of plight as the Afghan women. What is contradictory in this speech is that Laura Bush forgot to mention that the US soldiers are indeed partly responsible of Afghans women's plight.

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<sup>73</sup> Laura Bush. "Laura Bush on Taliban Oppression of Women"; Saturday, Nov. 17, 2001. [http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-srv/nation/specials/attacked/transcripts/laurabushtext\\_111701.html](http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-srv/nation/specials/attacked/transcripts/laurabushtext_111701.html). Visited on June 8, 2015.

In the third paragraph, Laura Bush says, “Women have been denied access to doctors when they're sick”. Ironically, Muslim American women are denied access to jobs, but it does not seem to bother Laura Bush. Bringing forward the case of Afghan women is noble but before considering Afghan women, it is important to note the case of your own people and in this case, Muslim American women.

Again, the fourth paragraph says, “Life under the Taliban is so hard and repressive, even small displays of joy are outlawed. Children are not allowed to fly kites. Their mothers face beatings for laughing out loud. Women cannot work outside the home or even leave their homes by themselves”. Similarly, life under the American system and atmosphere was and still is hard and repressive for Muslim women. Muslim American women cannot safely go beyond their house gate; some of them are even harassed in their homes. They are also the recipient of beatings and humiliations.

This strong and powerful speech delivered to “help”, according to Laura Bush and her husband’s administration, the Afghanistan women had the opposite effect. Indeed the insensate wars launched to establish freedom and democracy and eradicate terrorism were only meant to kill innocent civilians among them women and children. Civilians who according to lieutenant colonel Dave Lapan at the Pentagon who said in an interview about civilians “If civilians are killed it was because they were in the vicinity of a military target”<sup>74</sup>. Human beings exclusively considered as “collateral damages” when on war while the First Lady gives an emotional and very humane speech about how women’s right are neither respected nor protected by the Taliban. The US kills innocent women and children as well as the Taliban.

The First Lady’s speech is a paradox and self-contradictory because she clearly stated that the Taliban and the Afghan regime are those oppressing the women, while in fact since the US military launched the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq thousands of women and children lives were mercilessly taken in witless drone attacks. According to this article, the number of women killed in Afghanistan by the US army is on the rise:

The present war in Afghanistan, now nearly 12 years old, has affected the lives of millions of women. Many have been victimized; others have played the roles of soldiers, insurgents, politicians, caregivers, and much more. NATO nations have sent thousands of female troops into the conflict, assigned to combat teams as well as support

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<sup>74</sup> Howard Zinn. *Terrorism and War*. New York: A Seven Stories Press, 2002. p91

positions. And the women of Afghanistan have been caught in attacks from all sides -- restricted by conservative laws, traumatized by bombings, and victimized at home. According to the UN, the rate of violence against Afghan women is on the rise, even as the number of civilian casualties have been dropping. As western nations begin their drawdown, training and literacy programs are ramping up, in the hopes for a stronger role for the women of Afghanistan after 2014<sup>75</sup>.

The Bush administration's contradiction is that the government holds a passive approach when it comes to Muslim women living in America by doing nothing to save them, because it is not profitable and necessary, while trying to help Afghan women by killing them. Nevertheless, dehumanizing Muslim women is good for the business. Because finding scapegoat divert the attention for the real perpetrators.

Books such as *Stop the Islamization of America* by Pamela Geller, *Because they hate us* and *They Must be Stopped* by Brigitte Gabriel or *Terrorism in America* by Kevin Borgeson and Robin Valeri, books that captivate the mind and heart of Americans are more fruitful in order to earn the blind trust of Non-Muslim American People. Through a pattern of wrong and well thought plans, which resulted in the destruction of countries (Afghanistan, Iraq) but also women's sufferance in both countries as well as America, (thus that is the second positions it plays, being "active" and relentless).

*How one pretends saving the lives of the women of a foreign country while ignoring the endangered lives of its own people?*

## **Conclusion Chapter One**

To give a last word about this chapter, we must stop first above the long journey Muslim American women have undertaken from a status of "unknown" individuals to a more visible one as the "other". Thus restricting their human rights especially at social and professional levels. In addition, we must bear in mind the role of the veil in this entire mechanic. Along with fabricated images ascribed to Arabs clothes, the Muslim women's cloth with which they cover their heads becomes the target of contempt in Western societies.

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<sup>75</sup> Alan Taylor, "The Women of the Afghanistan War", Sep 4, 2013, at <http://www.theatlantic.com/photo/2013/09/the-women-of-the-afghanistan-war/100585/>. Visited on April 23, 2015.

Sexualizing Muslim women in movies, dehumanizing them because of the veil, hence, the veil is reduced to the level of a mask worn by evil people such as the terrorists in order not to be recognized. In this way, the Islamic garb known as the veil and scarf are divested from their religious and cultural symbolism of chastity. Hidden behind their coverings, Muslim women are thus equal to terrorists and evil characters. Muslim women in their religious garb, the “veil” do not only attract the attention of other women and foreigners but they also raise doubts and suspicions about their identity.

In this same chapter, the question of whether or not the US federal government is behind the misery of Muslim women is raised. We are sure that the US government does not always interfere in issues concerning women and their veil. Fortunately, Muslim American women receive other types of support coming from women of other faiths.



## **Chapter 2: A Dual Issue: The Media Involvement and the Plutocrats’ Manipulation: The Treatment in Public Places**

### **Introduction**

In this chapter, we will analyze the media involvement around Islamic issues, in America and we will see how the US media is implicated. Media in general has the power to either manipulate opinion or hide the truth in some cases. For instance, if the US media correctly reported the massacre in both the war in Afghanistan and Iraq, maybe Americans would have a different view about Islam and Muslims in general.

The U.S. media today is frequently known as the Fourth Estate, an appellation that suggests the press shares equal stature with the other branches of government created by the Constitution. The press or "Fourth Estate" plays a vital role as a guardian of U.S. democracy. The First Amendment guarantees that role to the U.S. Constitution, adopted in 1789, stipulating that Congress not enact any laws abridging freedom of the press<sup>76</sup>.

We will also examine how a powerful group of individuals in the US, target Americans from minorities, through the media by declaring a psychological warfare, on Muslim Americans in general and especially Muslim American women. Manipulating public opinion creates a general hate sentiment against a mainly peaceful community. This sentiments engenders physical violence that sometimes result in sever damages both physical and psychological.

This chapter will also examine who is pulling the string behind the curtain, *who manipulates the media and why? What is behind that manipulation? Why the ruling class does promote Islamophobia? Is it a symptom or a cause?* History has shown that manipulations can occur anytime for financial and power interest. Every period has its group of powerful lobbies that manipulates the public. In this thesis, the group that will be analyzed is the “AIPAC” an Israeli lobby that has its hand on everything. One might see this as a way to make money but it also at the same time alters the lives of thousands of individuals.

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<sup>76</sup> The Media in the United States, n,d, at <http://usa.usembassy.de/media.htm>. Visited on May 1, 2016.

## **2. A. Lobbyist Manipulation of the Media (for power & profits)**

The media is the most powerful entity on earth. They have the power to make the innocent guilty and the guilty innocent, and that is power. Because they control the mind of the masses<sup>77</sup>.

The American lobbyist understood the power that the mainstream media had on the public's mind and heart. Thus, creating a psychological warfare to justify many things and in this case the anti-Muslim propaganda, which was used to justify the means of their actions, in other words to justify the billions of dollars used in the industry of armament and the US presence in the Middle East or at least anything that has to do with the Middle East.

According to Malcolm Coxall, a management consultant and systems analyst as well as the author of *Human Manipulation a Handbook*, "A new, efficient modus of control has evolved to herd and manage the human population".

Today, the Israeli lobby (AIPAC) run the vast majority of US television networks, the printed press, the Hollywood movie industry, the book publishing industry, and the recording industry. Most of these industries are bundled into huge media conglomerates run by the following seven individuals<sup>78</sup>:

This group of powerful American lobbyist together control: ABC, NBC, CBS, the Turner Broadcasting System, CNN, MTV, Universal Studios, MCA Records, Geffen Records, DGC Records, GRP Records, Rising Tide Records, Curb/Universal Records, and Interscope Records<sup>79</sup>.

### **2. A.1) Governmental strategy (Winning Public Opinion)**

The Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary defines the word media as, "the main means of mass communication (broadcasting, publishing, and the Internet) regarded collectively"<sup>80</sup>. The media corporation in the US played in the past and still plays a huge role

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<sup>77</sup> Malcolm X, "The Media...." February 27, 2015, at <http://www.warriorslave.com/tag/media/>. Visited on December 23, 2015.

<sup>78</sup> John Whitley, "Seven Jewish Americans control most US Media", n.d., at <http://www.rense.com/general44/sevenjewishamericans.htm>. Visited on December 23, 2015.

<sup>79</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>80</sup> Oxford University Press, 2016 at <http://www.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/english/media>. Visited on January 19, 2016.

in the negative portrayal of Muslim Women in the aftermath of 9/11. Minutes after the horrific attacks, the US media immediately pointed out that the terrorists are middle easterners, this immediate observation was well planned in order to have scapegoats. Thus, Americans knew who to avoid and who to make guilty. *How did they knew, it was the Middle Easterners? Were they too fast in creating this collective paranoia?*

The exact same thing happened during the Oklahoma City bombing on April 1995; the evidence later on proved that a non-Muslim American named Timothy McVeigh was behind the massacre, but if we go back to the moment of the massacre, the media first assumed that this terrorist act was a Muslim conspiracy. This type of assumption is common from the majority of Americans, but in the Muslim community, it creates feelings of rejection based on misrepresentations, and this leads to issues. For instance, a pregnant Muslim woman during the bombing was too scared to go to the hospital because people were throwing stones at her house, so she could not seek help, and this lead to a miscarriage<sup>81</sup>. Another story revolves around a Muslim teacher and her student; they were just leaving a building when a man threw a bag full of beverage cans at them shouting: “Here's a bomb for you lady”<sup>82</sup>.

The media’s job was clear and accurate; they had to instigate fear into the populations mind and heart in order to generate negative reactions, reactions that would lead to preventive measures by the government. For instances, measures such as, racial profiling in airports, security materials that would cost billions of dollars, in the name of national security. Americans are of course willing to pay what is necessary for their children’s security as well as their own.

The most attacked group of individuals during this campaign, were and, still are the Muslim women. This tendency of misrepresenting Muslim women has skyrocketed since September 2001. They face a dual problem of discrimination, women, first received an unfair representation in the media compared to men; and second, as Muslims, who are represented as suicidal fanatics in the media.

The Muslim women in the US are portrayed as voiceless, always the victims of their male counterpart, oppressed and submissive. They are portrayed as a social burden; and the media focuses on this image, which they tend to overload with false views and assumptions rather than focusing on their inner human qualities. Strong words are often used, like

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<sup>81</sup> Penny Bender Fuchs, “Jumping to Conclusions in Oklahoma City?”, June 1995, at <http://ajrarchive.org/Article.asp?id=1980>. Visited on November 13, 2015.

<sup>82</sup> *Ibid.*

*fundamentalists, extremists and terrorists'* words that serve to frighten the public. Too often, the US media have chosen to manipulate the reality. The US population is then given the agenda of what to think about. As Noam Chomsky once observed:

The smart way to keep people passive and obedient is to strictly limits the spectrum of acceptable opinion, but allow very lively debate within that spectrum<sup>83</sup>.

Hamzi Moghrabi, chairperson of the American-Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee (AAADC), has blamed the media for fiercely attacking the Muslim community in the US right after the bombing. He cites several examples; for instance, in Brooklyn, Arab American shopkeepers received death threats. Windows in mosques across the country were broken.

Arab groups are particularly angry at CNN, which identified four innocent Arab Americans in connection with the bombing, and with CBS, mostly for having interviewed a journalist who has claimed to be an expert on Islamic terrorism by the name of Steven Emerson. He was asked by PBS to produce the documentary, "Jihad in America"<sup>84</sup>.

Initial reporting by the US media did not tar the entire Muslim community, Emerson asserted. "Were there despicable outbreaks of harassment?" He answered, yes, but went on to claim that, "all Muslims were blamed is an absolute canard, and the charge of racism against Muslims is a canard designed to justify radical Islamic activities in this country"<sup>85</sup>. "Shockingly, authorities like Emerson tend to ignore signs of many prejudices against the Muslim communities in the US.

*Did the US media officials jump to conclusion too fast, in those two case?*

The answer to this question is unfortunately, YES, and by rushing to judgement it altered the life of thousands of peace loving people, who were themselves direct victims of terrorists.

Adding insult to injury is very common, some people are using these tragedies as political opportunities to win election. Such as the case of Donald J. Trump.

According to Donald Trump, the Muslim community holds "deep seeded hatred" for the Americans, which is why he promised to launch a policy of registering all Muslims, a

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<sup>83</sup> Pinterest, n.d, at <https://in.pinterest.com/pin/475903885602943154/>. Visited on January 5, 2016.

<sup>84</sup> Penny Bender Fuchs, "Jumping to Conclusions in Oklahoma City?", June 1995, at <http://ajrarchive.org/Article.asp?id=1980>. Visited on November 13, 2015.

<sup>85</sup> *Ibid.*

system of tracking them down and finally a program of deportation. He also shared the idea of going in the mosques to track them down and even closing mosques down. He talked about creating a database where he will collect information on a community that numbers around a million people. He also proposed that all Muslims should carry an ID, and continued by saying that he would prevent Muslims from entering the country. The scariest part however, is not; his Nazi like-speech but the fact that one to two million Americans identify themselves in Trumps views. Trump should keep in mind that the problem is not all Muslims but rather the ideology some are indoctrinated with. Americans should fight this ideology and not the Muslim religion. Trumps calling for Muslims to be banned contradicts the “Melting Pot” ideology of America.

The American media corporation has been involved in shaping the public opinion since the earliest years. The most powerful lobby that manipulates the media is called FCC (Federal Communications Commission), controlled by the Israeli lobby,

The Israel lobby is one of the most powerful and pervasive special interest groups in the United States. It consists of a multitude of powerful institutions and individuals that work to influence Congress, the president, academia, the media, religious institutions, and American public opinion on behalf of Israel<sup>86</sup>.

**MEMRI:** The Middle East Media Research Institute is an organization founded in the US in 1998. Its stated objective is to “inform the debate over US foreign policy in the Middle East.” However, MEMRI is a shadowy organization that does not disclose names of staff members nor office locations. Analysts have commented that MEMRI appears to function as a propaganda organization that circulates biased translations in order to portray Arabs in the most negative possible light. One of the organization’s founders worked as an Israeli military intelligence officer. MEMRI has full non-profit status in the US and receives donations and grants amounting to \$4,872,208 annually<sup>87</sup>.

**Haim Saban**, multimedia mogul whose net worth is over \$3 billion dollars, has said, “I’m a one-issue guy and my issue is Israel.” In 2010, he told *New Yorker magazine* that his greatest concern is to

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<sup>86</sup> Alison Weir, “Introduction to the Israel Lobby”, August 2014, at [http://www.ifamericansknew.org/us\\_ints/introlobby.html](http://www.ifamericansknew.org/us_ints/introlobby.html). Visited on December 5, 2015.

<sup>87</sup> *Ibid.*

protect Israel by strengthening the United States-Israel relationship. Saban has bluntly outlined his formula for gaining influence in American politics: donate to political parties, establish think tanks, and control media outlets. He tried to buy Time and Newsweek magazines, and has made repeated bids for the Los Angeles Times because he considers the paper to be pro-Palestinian. He donated \$9 million to Democrats in the 2002 election cycle alone<sup>88</sup>.

## **2. A.2) Media Promotion of Intolerance & Hate (Theory and Strategy of the Media)**

Edward Said a Palestinian-American, professor of English; once noted that the West promotes a deep-rooted hatred for Islam,

The term Islam as it is used today seems to mean one simple thing, but in fact is part fiction, part ideological label, part minimal designation of a religion called Islam. Today Islam is peculiarly traumatic news in the West. During the past few years, especially since events in Iran caught European and American attention so strongly, the media have therefore covered Islam: they have portrayed it, characterized it, analyzed it, given instant courses on it, and consequently they have made it known. But this coverage is misleadingly full, and a great deal in this energetic coverage is based on far from objective material. In many instances, Islam has licensed not only patent inaccuracy, but also expressions of unrestrained ethnocentrism, cultural, and even racial hatred, deep yet paradoxically free-floating hostility (Agha 2)<sup>89</sup>.

Edward Said is a Palestinian literary theoretician, professor of, history and comparative literature at Columbia University, and a public intellectual and founder of post-colonial studies. Said analyzed for years how the west manipulates images and information in order to create a general paranoia and hysteria. The latter leading to fear and rejection in a same population.

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<sup>88</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>89</sup> Driss Ridouani, "The Representation of Arabs and Muslims in Western Media", 2001 at <https://www.google.fr/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=web&cd=1&cad=rja&uact=8&ved=0ahUKEwjgnbHLirvMAhWJXBoKHwfMA6QQFggcMAA&url=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.raco.cat%2Findex.php%2FRuta%2Farticle%2Fdownload%2F243531%2F326280&usq=AFQjCNGGHbhsdEk2N1hQaHyyfKJGVCJ5Ng&bvm=bv.121070826,d.d2s>. Visited on May 2, 2016.

The amount of time mainstream media spends covering isolated events of violence perpetrated by Muslims is insane<sup>90</sup>.

The propaganda is the wheel by which the government steers the bus of a nation<sup>91</sup>; the western media draw the image that Islam is the world's burden and tumor, so much that they are blinded by their rage toward Muslims, and they see terror everywhere. Images of Muslim fanatics all over the world who are burning the American flag are shown repeatedly, beheadings are shown, stonings are displayed, bombings as well.

The problem, of course, is that this is not remotely representative of the Islamic population of the world. Are there Muslims who employ terrorism? Of course. Are there Christians who employ terrorism? Of course. There are even Buddhists who employ terrorism<sup>92</sup>.

What they do not show is the peaceful, good side of Islam. The lives of millions of Muslims around the world, who cultivate peace and acceptance, like the image of a Palestinian grandmother eating with an Israeli grandmother recently posted on Facebook. Actually, there is no commercial interest in showing such solidarity, as war and fear are more profitable than peace.

*Are there beheadings?* Well yes, but it happens under terrible circumstances, and Muslims all around the world oppose this violence. According to “the Young Turks” a group of critics, there are some Christian fundamentalist in Uganda that beheads gay couples. That fact is not widely published in the news.

The US media has great influence; over the public, and by promoting intolerance between religions and between communities, it can participate in a way to eradicate an entire community, in other words, “ethnic cleansing”. *Why can't they with such power promote tolerance and acceptance? One can ask: how do they promote intolerance and hate?*

By focusing almost exclusively on violent images like the 9/11 building collapsing, a propaganda is produced, it promotes intolerance. Few media promote the peaceful side of Islam and portray the millions of Muslims who have lived in peace in the US for decades.

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<sup>90</sup> Mohamed Ghilan, “How the US media is promoting Islamophobia”, 7 December 2015, at <http://www.middleeasteye.net/columns/how-us-media-promoting-islamophobia-424901235>. Visited on February 2, 2016.

<sup>91</sup> Justin King, “Propaganda and Islam: What you're not Being Told”, n.d., at <http://theantimedia.org/propaganda-and-islam-what-youre-not-being-told/>. Visited on February 8, 2016.

<sup>92</sup> *Ibid.*

Most mainstream tend to demonize the entire religion. This attitude can be compared with events during the rise of European fascism. According to one human right agency,

The European Union continues to witness challenges to its core principles and values, through violence motivated by hate and intolerance, through terrorist attacks against soft targets such as the media and cultural or religious facilities, and through the discrimination and exclusion of those regarded as ‘different’ because of what they believe in or where they come from<sup>93</sup>.

The Australian documentary filmmaker, John Pilger has observed:

The information age is actually a media age. We have war by media; censorship by media; demonology by media; retribution by media; diversion by media - a surreal assembly line of obedient clichés and false assumptions<sup>94</sup>.

Muslims in the entertainment media are portrayed as insurgent and as the lowest form of human. If the storyline involves a Muslim who apparently hates the West, the producers portray him or her as a very irrational individuals or one who can barely speaks their language.

Muslim American women and men are according to some non-Americans “sleepers” and at the heart of an eventual terrorist plot against the United States. The Muslim American community stands firmly beside their fellow Americans in denouncing and resisting all forms of terrorism and fanatic attitude.

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<sup>93</sup> European Union Agency for Fundamental Right, “Promoting respect and diversity - Combating intolerance and hate”, September 2015, at <http://fra.europa.eu/en/publication/2015/promoting-respect-and-diversity-combating-intolerance-and-hate>. Visited on January 15, 2016.

<sup>94</sup> John Pilger, “War by media and the triumph of propaganda”, 5 December 2014, at <http://johnpilger.com/articles/war-by-media-and-the-triumph-of-propaganda>. Visited on February 8, 2016.



## **2. B. Treatment in Public Places (Bullying)**

Bullying in public places is becoming more and more frequent in the United States of America. Shopping malls, schools, work places, Swimming pools, bakeries, amusement parks etc... many places are not welcoming Muslim women. Since September 11, living in the US is becoming harder each day, due to the heinous atmosphere engendered by 9/11.

Many could not bear the pressure of such environment and had decided to leave the country, their own country. Others have chosen to avoid anything that will put them in jeopardy, “the veil”. Finally, others are committed to eradicate all discrimination in the public places.

### **2. B.1) Islamophobic discourse on Muslim Women: In Public Schools/Workplaces**

Personal and professional lives intersect often with our religion. While the free exercise of religion is enshrined in the American Constitution, the practice of one’s religion in the everyday life evokes consternation when it overlaps with work. In many cases, either in public or private sectors religion in the “work sphere often leads to litigation”.

Wearing a hijab, or headscarf, is for many Muslim females a visible expression of their faith, piety or modesty, and represents a tangible manifestation of their religious identity. Employers often do not see headscarves in the same light, and relying on uniform dress codes, their desire to maintain their corporate image, or the nebulous concept of “customer preference,” have over the years objected to the wearing of traditional Islamic head coverings at work<sup>95</sup>.

Propaganda makes us believe that, Muslim women more than other women are subjected to domestic violence at the hands of their husbands; but the truth is that violence against Muslim women occurs in different arenas. Today in the US, Muslim women, are subjected to unfair treatment in public places by enraged, bigoted strangers. Easy targets because of their gender and their headscarf, Muslim American Women are more and more isolated from public places.

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<sup>95</sup> Robert I Gosseen, “Accommodating Islam in the Workplace: A Work in Progress”, n.d., at <http://www.primerus.com/business-law-articles/accommodating-islam-in-the-workplace-a-work-in-progress-332011.htm>. Visited on February 8, 2016.

Muslim women are subjected to harassment in places such as in bakeries, malls, and pizzerias, the metro and in buses and planes. Muslim women and girls have been denied the right to enter public buildings such as shopping malls like it occurred in New Orleans, where:

CAIR said the 54-year-old woman and her daughter-in-law were leaving the food court of the Oakwood Mall in the New Orleans suburb of Gretna, La., on February 22, 2008 when a security guard approached them and allegedly told the older woman that she had two options: remove her headscarf or leave the mall. (The woman's daughter-in-law was not wearing a headscarf.) The guard did not offer an explanation for his demand. During the long walk out of the mall, the guard reportedly followed the women and even called for backup. The daughter-in-law told CAIR that the two women felt "humiliated" by the stares of other shoppers as the guard followed them out of the mall. When two more guards came to the scene, they did not offer assistance to the women, but they did confirm the reason for the first guard's ejection order. The family, all of whom are American citizens of Palestinian heritage, has retained an attorney and is exploring their legal options<sup>96</sup>.

Not only shopping malls but swimming pools also became a center where Muslim women are not allowed. The reason is that being chaste; they require private space where no male has access to and where they can easily remove their veil and change clothes. Thus, Muslim women have been denied access to public swimming pools because nobody feels safe swimming next to a veil woman,

The City of Omaha and the American Civil Liberties Union of Nebraska announced today that they have reached a settlement in the lawsuit *Lubna Hussein v. City of Omaha*. The lawsuit was filed in June 2004 on behalf of a Muslim woman who was not allowed to enter a public swimming pool last summer due to her religious clothing. The city policies in place at the time of the lawsuit did not permit anyone to enter a swimming pool unless they were wearing a bathing suit. Lubna Hussein came to the pool with her small daughters to watch them swim and did not intend to swim herself. Ms. Hussein

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<sup>96</sup> MusliminSuffer, "CAIR: Muslim Ejected from Louisiana Mall over Hijab", March 5, 2008, at <https://musliminsuffer.wordpress.com/2008/page/69/>. Visited on December 12, 2015.

observes Muslim dress requirements for women by wearing modest clothing and a headscarf to cover her hair<sup>97</sup>.

Other cases have been noticed in amusement parks, where Muslim women will not enter unless male guards search them or unless they agree to remove their veil, which they wear for religious reasons not for practicality. Recently, Domino's pizza discriminated against a Muslim American client by the name of Hakima Bennadi. This woman was carrying her two-year old baby and was pregnant, when she ordered a vegetarian pizza. After waiting a certain amount of time she received it, she went back home opened it and noticed it was missing ingredients, crust, dough, it was a pizza for "dogs" as she called it. When she went back to ask what was wrong nobody dared to talk to her, they stared at her, ignored her, laughed at her, with her poor accent, she then left and she locked herself in her house. This is the theory of "residential enclaves as safety zone".

Minutes later, the police rang at her door, and started to question her. The most shocking question was have you threatened to blow them up. She was lost, alone, pregnant and with her two year old baby. Nevertheless, this did not prevent the police officers from handcuffing the woman, and they took her to the police station where they removed her veil, took photos of her naked head and put it on the internet. They locked her up for nearly 2 days, only feeding her with non-halal food such as ham sandwiches<sup>98</sup>. This intimidation and false allegations by the authorities is flagrant, discrimination based on religious affiliation, and in the US Constitution, it is punishable by law, but no one is doing anything.

Hakima Bennadi's life is nearly destroyed with a terrorist label on her curriculum vitae she will never get a job. After that, the Muslim organization by the name of CAIR sent some private investigators it has been noticed that this woman never threatened anybody, that she was misjudged for nothing. Incidents like this one are not isolated, jailed Muslim women are denied halal meat in Miami correction centers. They have been served meals, which is not in accordance with their religious beliefs<sup>99</sup>. Islam forbids pork and alcohol, or food containing alcohol. Requiring halal meals is in their constitutional rights as American citizens. More

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<sup>97</sup> American Civil Liberties Union, "City of Omaha and ACLU of Nebraska announce settlement in lawsuit over Muslim Woman barred from public pool", February 18, 2005, at <https://www.aclu.org/news/city-omaha-and-aclu-nebraska-announce-settlement-lawsuit-over-muslim-woman-barred-public-pool>. Visited on November 15, 2015.

<sup>98</sup> CAIR Florida, "CAIR Florida Files Suit against Domino's Pizza for Discrimination of Muslim Woman", April 22, 2015 at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ltUSIoi6bR0>. Visited on January 1, 2016.

<sup>99</sup> CAIR Florida, "Muslim inmates in Miami-Dade County denied Halal meals", June 25, 2015 at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ui6Trv3kzvs> Visited on January 26, 2016.

recently at Donald Trump rally, a veiled Muslim woman was yelled at and she was asked to leave the rally just because she was Muslim and was wearing a veil.

These incidents do not end there on the contrary; young girls at school ostracized by their classmates this result in the fear to go to school. Muslim girls who wear headscarves, or whose mothers or relatives wear headscarves, have been discriminated against, harassed and assaulted. Muslim students also have been denied the right to wear hijab at school and have been prevented from engaging in school activities, especially athletic events. That was the case of Jana Elhifny:

A Nevada school district agreed to pay \$400,000 to a Muslim girl and her friend over allegations that other students threatened to kill her in the stairwell for wearing a religious headscarf and the staff did nothing to stop it.

The Washoe County School District in the Reno area will give Egyptian former student Jana Elhifny \$350,000 and her non-Muslim friend and supporter Stephanie Hart \$50,000 as part of the civil settlement<sup>100</sup>.

This young girl and her family migrated from Egypt in 2003, and the girl was enrolled at North Valley High School. Her attorney Robert Cox said that she did not finish the year after she told teachers and administrators that someone had threatened to kill her in the school because of her Muslim hijab or headscarf. Another case is the one in Austin, Texas on Dec. 6, 2015 where:

Two American-born, hijab-wearing Muslim women, Leilah Abdennabi and Sirat Al-Nahi, were harassed by another patron at the University of Texas at Austin-area location of Kerbey Lane, a popular local diner chain. The customer told the women they should “go back to Saudi Arabia” and repeatedly asked if they had guns. Abdennabi’s account of the harassment went viral on Facebook, and Kerbey Lane CEO Mason Ayer quickly apologized for the inaction of the restaurant’s staff, including the manager who refused to help the

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<sup>100</sup> FoxNews.com, “Muslim Girl Gets \$400G from Nevada School District in Head Scarf Bully Case”, April 08, 2009, at <http://www.foxnews.com/story/2009/04/08/muslim-girl-gets-400g-from-nevada-school-district-in-head-scarf-bully-case.html>. Visited on December 31, 2015.

women. Ayer told The Austin Chronicle: “It makes me sick to my stomach,” and promised better training for all employees<sup>101</sup>.

Around the same time another incident occurred, this time it went from verbal abuse to physical assault,

New York City, New York Inside Edition reported last week on a Nov. 19 incident in which sixth graders at P.S. 89, a middle school in the Bronx, assaulted a Muslim student, severely beating her as they tore at her hijab and repeatedly called her “ISIS.” Police responded to a 911 call but never filed a report. The boys involved will reportedly face a disciplinary hearing at the school<sup>102</sup>.

The perpetrator of this violence only got disciplinary hearings while he has beaten to death a young woman, if we recall the way Muslim women are treated at airports just for wearing a veil, it is far more reprehensive than what those young men got. Accommodating Islam in the workplace in another thing as hundreds of cases were filed in the courts. One of them is the case of Webb vs. the city of Philadelphia; Kimberlie Webb is a young Muslim woman who was denied the right to wear a religious garb with her police uniform, as in this case the garb was a veil. The Philadelphia police department refuse to let her wear a veil because it was against the dress code policy, which requires no religious garb in the police department.

The police department denied Webb’s request, stating that Webb’s wearing the khimar (veil) would violate a department’s dress code directive that does not authorize the wearing of any religious symbols or clothing as part of the uniform<sup>103</sup>.

She refused to remove the veil when asked to, and she was sent back home three successive days for not accepting to take it off. Finally, she came to work in the regular uniform, but was yet accused and charged with insubordination and carelessness of duty and responsibility and for disobeying her commanding officer’s orders. The police board of

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<sup>101</sup> Kit O’Connell, “Spike in Anti-Muslim Hate Crimes Reflects America’s ‘Tremendous’ Bigotry Problem”, December 14, 2015, at <http://www.mintpressnews.com/spike-in-islamophobic-harassment-reflects-americas-tremendous-bigotry-problem/212019/>. Visited on February 8, 2015.

<sup>102</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>103</sup> Jeremy Gray, Zuber Lawler & Del Duca, “Webb v. City of Philadelphia: No Religious Discrimination If Accommodation Causes an Undue Burden”, June 22, 2009, at [http://www.lawupdates.com/commentary/iwebb\\_v.\\_city\\_of\\_philadelphia\\_i\\_no\\_religious\\_discrimination\\_if\\_accommodatio/](http://www.lawupdates.com/commentary/iwebb_v._city_of_philadelphia_i_no_religious_discrimination_if_accommodatio/). Visited on February 8, 2016.

inquiry found her guilty and she was suspended for 13 days. She then filed a suit<sup>104</sup>. “The district court; found that the city’s policy “reflects the fact that the police force is a paramilitary organization in which personal preferences must be subordinated to the overall policing mission which requires the utmost cooperation among all officers<sup>105</sup>.”

Another example dates back to April 13, 2006 and it is the case of the “Jiffy Lube store in Virginia, where a Muslim woman was not able to wear her veil due to the “no hat” policy of the store. After a long trial and with the help of CAIR organization she was allowed to go back to work and she received apologies from the company for not respecting her constitutional right<sup>106</sup>.” “Less than a year after 9/11 the EEOC *U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission*, brought an action against American Airlines, alleging that the airlines maintained a policy of refusing to hire Muslim women who wore hijabs as passenger service agents<sup>107</sup>.”

*Kaze Japanese Steakhouse & Sushi Bar* in Garner is known for discriminating against a Muslim woman employee by refusing to let her wear a religious garb and firing her because of her religious affiliation, the *U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission* (EEOC) charged in a lawsuit. The response given by Kaze’s owners is that Kaze is a traditional Japanese steakhouse where food is prepared at the customer’s table, before the customer’s eyes. This reminds me of my own experience with discrimination, where I was told to take off my veil because I was not allowed to serve customers when wearing it.

“The complaint alleges that in November of 2008, Jordan Hewitt, the plaintiff who worked as a server at Kaze for many years, was fired when she informed her superior (Kaze’s owner) that she had converted to Islam and needed to wear a headscarf in the practice of her religious beliefs. According to the complaint, Kaze’s owner informed Hewitt that she could not wear a hijab and work for Kaze at the same time<sup>108</sup>.” He gave her the choice for either to

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<sup>104</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>105</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>106</sup> Course Hero, « The cello instructor reportedly asked mocking », 2007, at <https://www.coursehero.com/file/p3vq0mg/The-cello-instructor-reportedly-asked-mocking-questions-such-as-asking-her-why/>. Visited on November 13, 2015.

<sup>107</sup> Robert I Gosseen, “Accommodating Islam in the Workplace: A Work in Progress”, n.d., at <http://www.primerus.com/business-law-articles/accommodating-islam-in-the-workplace-a-work-in-progress-332011.htm>. Visited on February 8, 2016.

<sup>108</sup> U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, “Kaze Japanese Steakhouse & Sushi Bar Sued by EEOC for Religious Discrimination”, July 9, 2010, at <http://www.eeoc.gov/eeoc/newsroom/release/9-7-10.cfm>. Visited on December 7, 2015.

wear the veil or to work for Kaze restaurant, which is against the law, according to the US Constitution.

Violence against Muslim Women in the US skyrocket so much that many decided to ignore the attacks. Due to fear of repercussion and the fact that law enforcement officers do not punish those who do not respect the law and the plaintiff lost time and money. Another reason is the whole process, where Muslim women have to take off their veils for photos in the court file.

According to Sahar Aziz Associate Professor, Texas A&M University School of Law; in 2010:

A Staten Island woman and her toddler were attacked by a pedestrian who punched her in the face, pulled on her scarf, asked her why she was in America, and called all Muslims and Arabs terrorists. One week later in Seattle, Wash., two American citizens of Somali descent were physically attacked at a gas station. The female assailant called them suicide bombers, terrorists and told them to go back to their country. She then slammed the door on the leg of one of the women, kicked her and pulled off her headscarf. After the attack, one victim was afraid to leave her house because her Muslim headscarf could invite further violence<sup>109</sup>.

Following these attacks upon Muslim women, new ones occurred always targeting veiled Muslim women, violence against them is like a phenomenon that everybody has to try,

A month after the Staten Island attack, a Muslim woman wearing the headscarf in Columbus, Ohio was stalked, verbally harassed and then pepper-sprayed by a man shouting religious and ethnic slurs such as, "Tell all of your Muslims that this is not your country," "Go back to wherever you came from" and threatening, "I will kill you." That same week, on Dec. 23, 2010, a man in Twin Falls, Idaho, physically harassed a head scarved Muslim woman and her two children<sup>110</sup>.

A few weeks later, a woman who converted to Islam received threats and intimidation by a neighbor. The reported verbal threats included, "I'm going to kill you" and "I'm going to shoot your dog and [rape

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<sup>109</sup> Sahar Aziz, "Time to Address Violence against Muslim Women", Jan 02, 2012, at [http://www.huffingtonpost.com/sahar-aziz/violence-again-muslim-women\\_b\\_1072529.html](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/sahar-aziz/violence-again-muslim-women_b_1072529.html). Visited on February 9, 2016.

<sup>110</sup> *Ibid.*

you] while you pray with your head on the ground." The neighbor physically intimidated the Muslim woman by shoving her against a wall, monitoring her with binoculars and attempting to unlawfully enter her apartment -- common acts of intimidation against women living alone<sup>111</sup>.

Regrettably, cases like these are just a few of hundreds even thousands that occur each year, where Muslim American women, in particular those with headscarf, are victims of violence by some Americans determined to violently force Muslim Americans out from the country. Such violent acts make the daily living of Muslim American Women a misery, where they consistently have to fight for both mental and physical survival as well as for social acceptance.

## **2. B.2) In Airports & On board Planes**

Bigotry and discrimination at airports is not an unusual experience for Muslims. People are more frightened in airplanes, as they can easily recall the 9/11 events. Thus, we assist to the burst of unfair treatment towards Muslim Americans such as Muslim denied access to planes, Muslim women who are asked to remove their veil in public just for humiliation and rejection. The paranoia is so high that even non-Muslims pay the price.

A growing number of Muslims, Sikhs, and people of Middle Eastern descent are reporting incidents of racial and religious profiling while trying to board planes, sparking concerns that rising anti-Islam sentiment is triggering a new wave of discrimination at airports<sup>112</sup>.

This attitude of questioning Muslims for a long time, by intimidating them and by humiliating them in public is worrying us because it is becoming more and more usual in the eyes of the authorities and the public. This is racial profiling which in other circumstances would have been fought against with rage, but since it concerns Muslim American citizens, no one dares to react. Bearded men, veiled women, people who have Muslim sounding names all are discriminated against.

Samar Kaukab, a 22-year-old Ohio State University student, who is an American citizen of Pakistani descent, charges in her lawsuit that an

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<sup>111</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>112</sup> Jack Jenkins, "Anti-Muslim Profiling At Airports Goes Beyond The TSA", JAN 20, 2016, at <http://thinkprogress.org/justice/2016/01/20/3741077/airport-profiling-islamophobia/>. Visited on December 22, 2015.



Illinois National Guardsman and three security personnel subjected her to a degrading, unnecessary and illegal search<sup>113</sup>.

In November, four passengers of Middle Eastern descent were removed from a Spirit Airlines flight for “suspicious activity” — a claim that revolved around one of the passengers viewing a news report on his phone. Later that month, two Palestinian-Americans were barred from boarding a plane in Philadelphia when a fellow passenger complained the pair made her uncomfortable because they were conversing in Arabic. Moreover, in December, Sikh American activist and regular MSNBC contributor Valarie Kaur was asked to show her breast pump to fellow passengers on a Delta Airlines flight to “prove” she wasn’t a terrorist<sup>114</sup>.

Many incidents on board have been declared and denounced by the victims such as denying to a Muslim woman an unopened can of soda, just under the assumption she will use it as a bomb to destroy the airplane<sup>115</sup>. This phenomenon was so frequent that victims of racial profiling at airports have decided to create a T-shirt with a slogan that says: “My name causes national security alerts. What does yours do?” or again another one, which says: “We are the new blacks”<sup>116</sup>.

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<sup>113</sup> Lawrence Porter, “Muslim woman strip-searched at Chicago’s O’Hare airport”, 21 January 2002, at <https://www.wsws.org/en/articles/2002/01/chic-j21.html>. Visited on September 2, 2015.

<sup>114</sup> Jack Jenkins, “Anti-Muslim Profiling At Airports Goes Beyond The TSA”, JAN 20, 2016, at <http://thinkprogress.org/justice/2016/01/20/3741077/airport-profiling-islamophobia/>. Visited on November 8, 2015.

<sup>115</sup> Nick Visser, “Crew Member Who Refused Muslim Woman Unopened Soda Won’t Fly With United Again”, Jun 03, 2015, at [http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2015/06/03/united-tahera-ahmad\\_n\\_7504908.html](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2015/06/03/united-tahera-ahmad_n_7504908.html). Visited on May 1, 2016.

<sup>116</sup> Anny Bakalian, Mehdi Bozorgmehr, *Backlash 9/11: Middle Eastener and Muslim Americans Respond*. California: University of California Press. Berkeley and Los Angeles, 2009. p142.

## **2. C. Anti-Muslim Organizations and Their Federation (The Islamophobia Network)**

Anti-Muslim hate groups are a relatively new phenomenon in the United States, most of them appearing in the aftermath of the World Trade Center terrorist attacks on Sept. 11, 2001. Earlier anti-Muslim groups tended to be religious in orientation and disputed Islam's status as a respectable religion<sup>117</sup>.

Anti-Muslim groups manifest excessive ongoing hate and hostility toward Muslims American, which is growing years after years. The anti-Muslim organizations in the US portray Islam and Muslims as fundamentally against all American values and principles. US Muslims are portrayed as irrational enemies, ignorant, intolerant and mostly violent, and their faith is frequently depicted as barbaric teachings (when compared to other faiths), which threatens American way of life.

These same hate groups typically hold false and unfounded views as regarding the danger to American institutions and society in general posed by its Muslim American community. Anti-Muslim hate groups advance the idea that Muslims are in a process of overturning or subverting the American law and western culture overall by imposing on Americans, the Sharia law.

Anti-Muslim hate groups again widely defame Islam, which they tend to treat as bad and evil religion, which promotes hate. These same groups generally hold the idea that Islam has no principle, no values, values that can be adaptable with other cultures and other religions. They also advocate the fact that Islam and the West would never coexist in peace and harmony, a statement that is mainly unfounded.

The protests are the latest in a series of anti-Muslim actions that have occurred outside mosques in recent months, part of what some advocates for religious freedom cite as a growing wave of

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<sup>117</sup> Southern Poverty Law Center, "ANTI-MUSLIM", n.d., at <https://www.splcenter.org/fighting-hate/extremist-files/ideology/anti-muslim>. Visited on December 30, 2015.

Islamophobic speech and violence in America. In response, some interfaith groups are planning counter protests<sup>118</sup>.

We should remind the leaders of anti-Islam groups that in many countries, Muslims have managed to peacefully coexist with non-Muslims for more than decades, so *why should the contrary happen?* What is ironic here is that Muslims also are afraid of Muslim terrorists.

Muslim women are among the most devaluated group of humans on American sole. In order to achieve their insane goals of freeing America from its Muslim communities, it has been shown that a small group of powerful donors finances many anti-Muslim organizations that are aimed to destroy at any cost the Muslim American communities.

They provide critical funding to a clutch of right-wing think tanks and misinformation experts who peddle hate and fear of Muslims and Islam—in the form of books, reports, websites, blogs, and carefully crafted talking points, which dedicated anti-Islam grassroots organizations and some right-wing religious groups use as propaganda for their constituency. These foundations and wealthy donors also provide direct funding to anti-Islam grassroots groups<sup>119</sup>.

According to the same article, seven donors provide support and financial assistance to small but very vocal groups of Islamophobic organizations such as *Act for America*. The following list include these seven top contributors,

- Donors Capital Fund
- Richard Mellon Scaife foundations
- Lynde and Harry Bradley Foundation
- Newton D. & Rochelle F. Becker foundations and charitable trust
- Russell Berrie Foundation
- Anchorage Charitable Fund and William Rosenwald Family Fund
- Fairbrook Foundation

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<sup>118</sup> Kit O'Connell, "Anti-Islam Hate Group Calls For Rallies Outside Mosques Nationwide On Oct. 9 and 10", October 9, 2015, at <http://www.mintpressnews.com/anti-islam-hate-group-calls-for-rallies-outside-mosques-nationwide-on-oct-9-and-10/210207/>. Visited on January 16, 2016.

<sup>119</sup> Wajahat Ali, Eli Clifton, Matthew Duss, Lee Fang, Scott Keyes, Faiz Shakir, "Chapter 1 Donors to the Islamophobia network", August 26, 2011, at [https://cdn.americanprogress.org/wp-content/uploads/issues/2011/08/pdf/islamophobia\\_chapter1.pdf](https://cdn.americanprogress.org/wp-content/uploads/issues/2011/08/pdf/islamophobia_chapter1.pdf). Visited on November 16, 2015.

These are the donors, who are ready to invest much of their fortune into what they call a “noble cause”, which is to attack terrorism at its core, inside the Muslim American community, and by the way innocent Muslims mainly women and children are targeted during this process. The same donors hold forums where Muslims are not welcomed, and the donors discuss around the idea that Muslims and Islam are America’s major problem.

### **Donations between 2001 & 2009**

**The top seven funders of Islamophobia**

A list of the seven largest donors to think tanks and organizations in the United States identified by the Center for American Progress as anti-Islam and anti-Muslim

	Investigative Project on Terrorism	CTSERF	Middle East Forum	CSP
Donors Capital Fund	\$400,000		\$2,300,000	
Richard Mellon Scaife foundations		\$1,575,000		\$2,900,000
Lynde and Harry Bradley Foundation			\$305,000	\$815,000
Newton D. & Rochelle F. Becker foundations and charitable trust	\$25,000	\$200,000	\$355,000	\$405,000
Russell Berrie Foundation	\$100,000	\$2,736,000	\$273,016.22	
Anchorage Charitable Foundation and William Rosenwald Family Fund	\$10,000	\$15,000	\$2,320,229.33	\$437,000
Fairbrook Foundation	\$25,000		\$410,000	\$66,700
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$560,000</b>	<b>\$4,526,000</b>	<b>\$5,963,246</b>	<b>\$4,623,700</b>

Source: CAP research based on the seven foundations' Form 990s files with the U.S. Internal Revenue Service from 2001 to 2009.

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*In this list CTSERF and CSP, stand for The Counterterrorism & Security Education and Research Foundation (CTSERF) and Center for Security Policy (CSP)*

In addition to the above list, the Russell Berrie Foundation contributed \$3,109,016 between 2001 and 2009 to organizations aimed in anti-Muslim work profiled. The Donors to the Islamophobia network gave money to, Counterterrorism & Security Education and Research Foundation, receiving \$2,736,000; the Investigative Project on Terrorism (\$100,000); and the Middle East Forum (\$273,016.22)<sup>121</sup>.

<sup>120</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>121</sup> *Ibid.*

Again, between 2001 and 2008, another foundation donated to anti-Muslim organizations. This foundation is, the Anchorage Charitable Fund and William Rosenwald Family Fund, which contributed to give \$2,818,229 to Islamophobic organizations. Among the donations, \$2,320,229.33 went to the Middle East Forum; \$437,000 went to the Center for Security Policy; \$25,000 went to the Clarion Fund; \$15,000 went to the Counterterrorism & Security Education and Research Foundation; \$11,000 went to the David Horowitz Freedom Center; and \$10,000 were used to the Investigative Project on Terrorism<sup>122</sup>.

The Rosenwald Family Fund also contributed to the American Islamic Forum for Democracy, one of the biggest think tanks profiled in this report because the head of it, Zuhdi Jasser, is often tapped by the Islamophobe network as a validator of their views on Islam and Muslims in America<sup>123</sup>.

## **2. C.1) The Case of Brigitte Gabriel**

Brigitte Gabriel is a conservative American journalist; her name is reminded for being one of the extreme anti-Islamic activist in the country. Gabriel is the founder of two non-profit political organizations, the American *Congress for Truth* and *ACT! For America*, the second one being an organization that literally tracks down Muslims in America.

ACT! For America now claims that its only concern is ‘radical’ Islam.

However, that is not what a history of its founder suggests<sup>124</sup>.

Born in a Christian family she often recalls the Lebanese civil war where, according to her, Muslim militants destroyed her house and she ended up being injured. She openly supports Israel and the Israeli lobby in America.

During an interview, she recalls the massacre of thousands of Christian Lebanese by Muslims that occurred in 1975. In the same speech, she says she had to live in a bomb shelter, where she was eating grass to survive and crawl to avoid the Muslim snipers. After her mother’s injury, a group of Israeli fighters saved her mother’s life. During that period, she was, happily surprised by the humanity and sympathy as well as the compassion of the Israeli

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<sup>122</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>123</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>124</sup> Ryan Lenz, “Acting Out”, n.d., at <https://www.splcenter.org/fighting-hate/intelligence-report/2015/acting-out>. Visited on January 1, 2016.

people in contrast, she says of the Barbary of Muslims. She said that during her childhood she saw much propaganda in which Muslims demonized the Jewish population.

The experience at the hospital altered her view about Muslims and the Israeli people. She started to question what she was taught during her childhood and began to visualize repeatedly how Israelis were healing Muslims and Jews in the hospital in the same way. In a word, she blames nearly one and a half billion Muslims for her painful childhood and her mother's injury. In her opinion,

The only language Arabs understand and respect is strength. Israel needs to get back its image of being a strong fighter instead of an appeaser<sup>125</sup>.

When asked about 9/11, she engages in a monologue that is anti-Islamic. Gabriel believes that Islam and all Muslims embody America's problem. She does not conform to any politically correct dogma or speech, but explicitly lays out her own Islamophobe thinking in her book: *Because They Hate Us* about 9/11, she writes in this book:

It reminded me that the entire world is threatened by the same radical Islamic theology that succeeded in annihilating the 'infidels' in Lebanon<sup>126</sup>.

Brigitte Gabriel and her virulent attack toward the Muslim American is not an isolate case. On the contrary, she with many others such as Pamela Geller president of Stop the Islamization of America organization, this woman advocates for America without Muslims.

## 2. C.2) 'Act for America'

Brigitte Gabriel founded the organization, Act for America in 2007. According to its leaders, it was created to help Americans understand the core of their society's problem, which is Islam and the Muslims. For Brigitte Gabriel

... It seems clear, the problem is not "radical" Islam the problem is Islam itself<sup>127</sup>.

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<sup>125</sup> Deena Yellin, "An Inside Ally", 06/25/2009, at <http://www.jpost.com/Magazine/Features/An-inside-ally>. Visited on December 17, 2015.

<sup>126</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>127</sup> *Ibid.*

Making her contribution to the demonizing of Muslim communities in America is for her, a way to help her country. Brigitte Gabriel told an audience in 2014 during a conference on the Benghazi attack, that the radical Muslims are between 15 to 25% of the Muslim populations. She continued by advancing the argument that this number equals 300 million radical Muslims throughout the world who are dedicated to the destroying of western civilization. Moreover, when asked about the peaceful majority she replied that the peaceful majority is “irrelevant”. She compared the Jews, the Russians to the Muslims saying that the majority of Germans were peaceful and yet the Nazis managed to kill 60 million among which 6 million were Jews. She continued on saying that most Russians were peaceful yet they managed to kill 20 million people, so the peaceful majority are irrelevant<sup>128</sup>.

Gabriel, who is closely aligned with the American political right on many fronts, has repeatedly made statements that conflate all Muslims with terrorists. (“Islamic terrorists ... are really just very devout followers of Muhammad,” she wrote in 2006. “They are following his example and doing exactly what the Koran teaches and their mullahs exhort them to do.”) She angered a Jewish audience in a 2004 speech in which she reportedly referred to Arabs as “barbarians,” prompting a public apology from her hosts. *The New York Times Magazine* has described her as a “radical Islamophobe,” and even a publicist for one of her books cheerfully called her views “extreme<sup>129</sup>.”

On the front page of their web sites, they promote peace, and national security saying,

ACT for America is the nation's largest non-profit, non-partisan, grassroots organization devoted to promoting national security and defeating terrorism. ACT for America has 280,000 members organized in more than 890 chapters nationwide and 11 countries worldwide<sup>130</sup>.

Brigitte Gabriel condemns all Muslims when she declares that all Muslims are terrorists if they believe in the teachings of the Quran. This includes nearly all Muslims, in other words about 1.5 billion people,

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<sup>128</sup> Tim Brown, "Brigitte Gabriel to Muslim Woman Who claims Majority of Muslims are Portrayed Badly: The Peaceful Majority are Irrelevant" December 20, 2014, at <http://freedomoutpost.com/2014/12/brigitte-gabriel-muslim-woman-claims-majority-muslims-portrayed-badly-peaceful-majority-irrelevant/>. Visited on December 17, 2015.

<sup>129</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>130</sup> ACT For America Content, LLC. n.d., at <http://www.actforamerica.org/>. Visited on November 30, 2015.

Every practicing Muslim who believes in the teaching of the Quran cannot be a loyal citizen to the United States of America<sup>131</sup>.

Act! For America became through time one of the most controversial torch holders for groups and associations that promotes intolerance towards Muslims. It finds supports in both the Christian orthodox community and the Israeli lobby.

Gabriel offered a positively dystopian vision of America, warning that the country is so weakened right now and falling apart in every direction from every side and from within and from without, all thanks to President Obama<sup>132</sup>.

Often, they organize colloquiums with Republican representatives, such as Peter. T King from New York; and they usually appear on conservative talk shows such as Sean Hannity's program. Peter. T King the former chairman of the House Committee on Homeland Security claimed that,

No American Muslim leaders are cooperating in the war on terror, and that 80-85 percent of mosques in this country are controlled by Islamic fundamentalists .... This is an enemy living amongst us<sup>133</sup>.

Ironically, thousands of Muslim scholars in America and around the world condemned the tragic event of 9/11. However, the condemnations received little attention. What is interesting again to notice is how hate and violence are voiced in loud and visible ways compared to the voices of peace and tolerance.

Powerful donors finance the public transmission of this former view to promote and increase Islamophobic sentiments among Americans. Indeed, *Act! For America* received a total amount of \$50,000<sup>134</sup>, and among the generous donors, was the Becker Foundation, Becker Family Foundation, and Becker Trust. Between 2001 and 2009, they contributed more than \$1,136,000 to Islamophobic organizations, in order to weaken the Muslim American community.

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<sup>131</sup> ACT! For America. n.d., at <https://islamophobicnetwork.com/echo-chamber/act-for-america>. Visited on January 7, 2016.

<sup>132</sup> Brian Tashman, "Brigitte Gabriel: 'America Will Not Survive If Hillary Wins'", 1/7/2016 at <http://www.rightwingwatch.org/content/brigitte-gabriel-america-will-not-survive-if-hillary-wins>. Visited on January 20, 2016.

<sup>133</sup> WND, "CONGRESSMAN: MUSLIMS 'ENEMY AMONGST US'", 02/13/2004 at <http://www.wnd.com/2004/02/23257/>. Visited on November 9, 2015.

<sup>134</sup> Wajahat Ali, Eli Clifton, Matthew Duss, Lee Fang, Scott Keyes, Faiz Shakir, "Chapter 1 Donors to the Islamophobia network", August 26, 2011, at [https://cdn.americanprogress.org/wp-content/uploads/issues/2011/08/pdf/islamophobia\\_chapter1.pdf](https://cdn.americanprogress.org/wp-content/uploads/issues/2011/08/pdf/islamophobia_chapter1.pdf). Visited on November 16, 2015.



## 2. C.3) Right Wing Extremists & Timothy McVeigh

Since the horrific attacks of 9/11, more white supremacist have committed mass killings than Muslim American according to critics,

Since Sept. 11, 2001, nearly twice as many people have been killed by white supremacists, anti-government fanatics and other non-Muslim extremists than by radical Muslims: <sup>48</sup> have been killed by extremists who are not Muslim, including the recent mass killing in Charleston, S.C., compared with 26 by self-proclaimed jihadists, according to a count by New America, a Washington research center. Non-Muslim extremists have carried out 19 such attacks since Sept. 11, according to the latest count, compiled by David Sterman, a New America program associate, and overseen by Peter Bergen, a terrorism expert. By comparison, seven lethal attacks by Islamic militants have taken place in the same period<sup>135</sup>.

Here is the list of white supremacist killings:

- Virginia tech shooting 2007: 32 killed
- Newtown shooting 2012: 27 killed
- Aurora shooting 2012: 12 killed
- Navy Yard shooting 2013: 12 killed
- Charleston shooting 2015: 9 killed

Two American scholars Professor Charles Kurzman and Duke Professor David Schanzer, who spent many years analyzing all types of homegrown terrorism, have come up with a significant statement, which suggests that you are more than seven times as likely to be killed by a Right-Wing extremist than by Muslim terrorists. In that same article, they say,

Though terrorism perpetrated by Muslims receives a disproportionate amount of attention from politicians and reporters, the reality is that right-wing extremists pose a much greater threat to people in the United States than terrorists connected to ISIS or similar organizations do. As UNC Professor Charles Kurzman and Duke Professor David Schanzer explained last June in the New York Times, Islam-inspired terror attacks “accounted for 50 fatalities over the past 13 and a half

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<sup>135</sup> *Ibid.*

years.” Meanwhile, “right-wing extremists averaged 337 attacks per year in the decade after 9/11, causing a total of 254 fatalities<sup>136</sup>.”



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These two statements prove how much the white supremacist movement is more violent than the Muslims community is, yet no one dares openly criticize the supremacists. Instead, whenever an attack is committed the first suspects are the Muslims. Timothy McVeigh’s crimes were first mistaken for those of a Muslim. An argument that works often to explain their actions is the fact all white extremists suffer from mental illness or that they

<sup>136</sup> Ian Millhiser, “You Are More Than 7 Times As Likely To Be Killed By A Right-Wing Extremist than By Muslim Terrorists”, NOVEMBER 30, 2015, AT [HTTP://THINKPROGRESS.ORG/JUSTICE/2015/11/30/3725562/YOU-ARE-MORE-THAN-7-TIMES-AS-LIKELY-TO-BE-KILLED-BY-A-RIGHT-WING-EXTEMIST-THAN-BY-MUSLIM-TERRORISTS/](http://thinkprogress.org/justice/2015/11/30/3725562/you-are-more-than-7-times-as-likely-to-be-killed-by-a-right-wing-extemist-than-by-muslim-terrorists/). VISITED ON FEBRUARY 8, 2016.

<sup>137</sup> “White Americans Are the Biggest Terror Threat in the U.S.: Study”, June 25, 2015, at <http://www.buyblackallyearlong.com/white-americans-are-the-biggest-terror-threat-in-the-u-s-study/>. Visited on January 16, 2016.

have been abused during their childhood. They are not labelled “terrorist” nor “American haters”.

John G. Horgan, who studies terrorism at the University of Massachusetts, Lowell, writes that, “There’s an acceptance now of the idea that the threat from jihadi terrorism in the United States has been overblown<sup>138</sup>,” Dr. Horgan again said “And there’s a belief that the threat of right-wing, antigovernment violence has been underestimated<sup>139</sup>.”

We are not trying to justify the “Muslim terrorist”, but we believe that every terrorist should receive the same judgement. During slavery, when the KKK killed, tortured and deported African-Americans no one said that all the whites are extremists, the hate sentiments were directed to that specific group. *So why is it not the same for Muslims? Why are Muslim women and children, also labelled terrorists or terrorist sympathizers?*

Accusing and misrepresenting a community that is already under pressure can be profitable. This misrepresentation frightens the majority of Americans, and they become easy to manipulate. By unfairly representing the victims of terrorism, “they” tend to instill a certain amount of paranoia in many Americans. According to Emory University, neuroeconomics professor Gregory Berns.

Fear [...] may be impairing our decision-making ability and making us risk averse<sup>140</sup>.

When a person is scared, he or she is easy to manipulate, this has been scientifically proven. However, the Plutocrats’ manipulation does not end there; the other reason to provoke fear in Americans is to offer answer, to their invasion of the Middle East. The FBI considers a black murderer as a “thug”, a Muslim murderer as a “terrorist” and a White murderer as “mentally ill”<sup>141</sup>. In addition, a more horrifying thing is that the FBI will not call the Charleston shooting of 2015 that occurred in a church a terrorist act. James Comey the FBI director said, “I would not call it like that because of the way we define terrorism under the law... and again based on what I know so far, I do not see it as a political act”.

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<sup>138</sup> Shane Scott, “Homegrown Extremists Tied to Deadlier Toll than Jihadists in U.S. Since 9/11”, JUNE 24, 2015, at [http://www.nytimes.com/2015/06/25/us/tally-of-attacks-in-us-challenges-perceptions-of-top-terror-threat.html?\\_r=0](http://www.nytimes.com/2015/06/25/us/tally-of-attacks-in-us-challenges-perceptions-of-top-terror-threat.html?_r=0). Visited on February 8, 2016.

<sup>139</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>140</sup> STEVE TOBAK, “IS FEAR AFFECTING YOUR DECISION-MAKING?” APR 22, 2009, at <http://www.cbsnews.com/news/is-fear-affecting-your-decision-making/>. Visited on January 5, 2015.

<sup>141</sup> Anthea Butler, “Charleston shooting: Black and Muslim killers are 'terrorists' and 'thugs'. Why are white shooters called 'mentally ill'?”, Friday 19 June 2015 at <http://www.independent.co.uk/voices/comment/charleston-shooting-black-and-muslim-killers-are-terrorists-and-thugs-why-are-white-shooters-called-10330714.html>. Visited on December 12, 2015.

Another aspect that worries us is that the Homeland Security Agency used to have a whole team to track down white supremacists, but it has been dismantled due to the Republican Party pressure. At the same time, Homeland Security employs 40 and more people to analyze Islamic terrorism. Some of them are even good Arabic speakers, they go into mosques and play the friendship card in order to spy on the Muslims in the mosques but it is generally a failure. Because all Muslims are not terrorists and mosques are mainly full of innocent and pious people. Therefore, this approach of spying on Muslims is a failure.

## **Conclusion Chapter Two**

Chapter two is a very important one because it is a whistle-blower of who is behind the misery of Muslim American women. Fear over a Faith, is the message of this chapter, where the perception is driven by fear and the media puts a label on it by saying the fearful thing is Islam and Muslims. This chapter also gave me the convenience to learn about those who pull the strings behind the curtain, the masterminds, the investors, the beneficiaries.

Fear brings on anger; anger brings on suffering, hate and violence. This chapter is an opportunity for us to come to the point that Americans are guided by the media and by the politicians. Moreover, those two entities polarize America, and in addition, Islam and Muslims were chosen as scapegoats. *Do headlines cause hate?* Well it is evident the media with the help of some politicians and lobbies are behind the misrepresentation of this community especially Muslim women.

Views are reinforced by what people see on TV, and the real issue is the lack of education and understanding of the Islamic faith. Media talk about Islam and Muslims in a context of war and terrorism, thus media plays a role in how people perceive Muslims.

The dual issue that Muslim women in the US have to deal with, and which is explained in this chapter is, first how the US media distort the image of Muslim women by speculated false allegations and the second one is how Muslim women in the US are treated in public places. Therefore, they have to deal with double issues, which makes their lives sometimes a misery.

## Chapter 3: Comparative Historical Perspective

### Introduction

In this chapter, we will describe briefly the history of prejudice in the United States, particularly prejudice shown against ethnic and religious minorities as well as women. Discrimination against minorities and women is not a matter of Individual choice but rather the result of a collective social change. In this part, we will demonstrate how the changing environment has altered people's views toward the less advantaged.

It is important to bear in mind that prejudice and discrimination can be extended to all religious groups and gender. For instance Donald Trump, a controversial Republican Party candidate; made a shocking statement on March 30, 2016, when he proclaimed that, women having an abortion "should be punished<sup>142</sup>," for doing so. It is hard to believe that in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, an American political candidate make such a statement, and can still describe himself as a "pro-life" candidate. *How can you explain this type of reasoning from the US political candidates?* Alternatively, maybe the future president of the free world.

We will try to give contemporary examples about cases on religious prejudices, in France; that is the case of the French women's rights minister Laurence Rossignol who said, "Les femmes qui choisissent de porter le voile" sont comme les "nègres américains qui étaient pour l'esclavage<sup>143</sup>".

The controversial aspect of all this is the fact that the same minister (Laurence Rossignol) had participated at the foundation of "SOS racism" in 1984, to protect victims of racism. She serves as a living proof of a person whose mind has been altered by the changing environment and new political conditions that did not exist previously.

Anti-Irish sentiment or Hibernophobia is another example of ethnic and religious discrimination. American Irish found themselves rejected in Protestant America because of their Roman Catholic beliefs, which resulted in another type of "witch hunt". From this, we

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<sup>142</sup> David Smith , Molly Redden, "Donald Trump's abortion remarks provoke biggest crisis of his campaign", April 1, 2016 at <http://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2016/mar/31/donald-trump-abortion-remarks-biggest-campaign-crisis>. Visited on April 5, 2016.

<sup>143</sup> Laurence Rossignol, Quand Laurence Rossignol compare les femmes voilées aux "nègres américains qui étaient pour l'esclavage", March 30, 2016 at <http://www.metronews.fr/info/quand-laurence-rossignol-compare-les-femmes-voilees-aux-negres-americains-qui-etaient-pour-l-esclavage/mpcD!NR039AuRc8dzY/>. Visited on May 1, 2016.

Translation: "Muslim women who wear veils is like "Negroes who were in favor of slavery", at <http://edition.cnn.com/2016/03/31/europe/french-minister-veils-racism-row/index.html>.

see that not only Muslim American have been targeted, but that they are a chapter in a long history of bigoted violence.

### 3. A. Victims of Hate Crimes: Minorities are targeted

In this first section, we will compare and contrast the different forms discrimination against minorities has taken in US history. We will see a long tradition of ethnic discrimination in the US, not only against Muslim American, but also against people of Japanese, Hispanics and African-American ancestry. Today's violence against Muslim American is only the latest episode in a violent history of similar acts of bigotry.

For many American historians the post 9/11 situation is seen as a *déjà vu*. According to Anny Bakalian and Mehdi Bozorgmehr, the US made itself the world police by interfering in others' foreign policies,

On several occasions, the US government has targeted immigrant and ethnic populations who originated from the country with which the United States was either at war or in a warlike situation. The Japanese internment during World War II stands out as the most egregious case. Others include the mandatory registration and detention of Germans immigrants and citizens during World War I; the harassment and deportation of communist sympathizers after Palmer raids; the witch-hunt against suspected Communist Party members during McCarthyism; and the mandatory registration and threatened deportation of Iranian students in the United States during the hostage crisis in 1979-81<sup>144</sup>.

The victims of hate crimes throughout history are often women or minorities of foreign ancestry. Victims of hate crimes in the US have been targeted because of their differences, sometimes due to their sexual orientation, or their race, religion or disabilities.

There were 784 active hate groups in the United States in 2014, according to the Southern Poverty Law Center<sup>145</sup>.

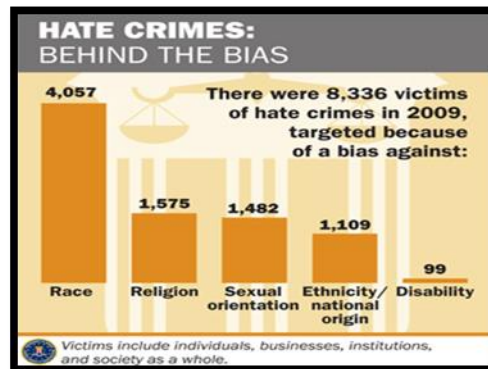
In 2010, according to FBI statistics, the victims of hate crimes in the US are classified as follows,

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<sup>144</sup> Anny Bakalian, Mehdi Bozorgmehr, *Backlash 9/11 Middle Eastern and Muslim Americans Respond*, Los Angeles, 2009. p33.

<sup>145</sup> Mike Bruner, Monica Alba and Bill Dedman, "Hate Crime in America, By the Numbers", June 18, 2015, at [HTTP://WWW.NBCNEWS.COM/STORYLINE/JEWISH-CENTER-SHOOTINGS/SNAPSHOT-HATE-CRIME-AMERICA-NUMBERS-N81521](http://www.nbcnews.com/storyline/jewish-center-shootings/snapshot-hate-crime-america-numbers-n81521). Visited on February 9, 2016.

- 61.1 percent of all hate crimes were committed against persons, while 38.1 percent were crimes against property.
- Of the 4,057 victims of racial bias, 71.5 percent were victims because of an offender's prejudice against blacks.
- Of the 1,575 victims of anti-religious, hate crimes, 71.9 percent were victims because of an offender's anti-Jewish bias<sup>146</sup>.



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More people from minority groups pay the price of unfair treatment. This has been the case of millions of African-American for almost two centuries. Hispanics also have been victimized in the US since the early years of history. According to FBI reports,

Three men were indicted in New Mexico for assaulting a disabled Navajo man; one individual was sentenced for putting a hangman's noose on the house of a Honduran immigrant in Louisiana; and another man was sentenced for burning a predominately African-American church in Massachusetts<sup>148</sup>.

Women are also victims of hate crimes; they are assaulted more often than males because they are easier targets. A gender-based hate crime is a crime that is committed because of the defendant's bias against or hatred of another group<sup>149</sup>. Crimes based on gender can take many different forms, such as vandalism or physical assault. Some would argue that crimes primarily committed against women, like rape, sexual assault, and domestic violence, are due to gender differences.

<sup>146</sup> The FBI, "Latest Hate Crime Statistics", November 22, 2010, at [https://www.fbi.gov/news/stories/2010/november/hate\\_112210](https://www.fbi.gov/news/stories/2010/november/hate_112210). Visited on December 8, 2015.

<sup>147</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>148</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>149</sup> Ave Mince-Didier, "Hate Crimes against Women », n.d., at <http://www.criminaldefenselawyer.com/resources/hate-crimes-against-women.htm>. Visited on February 9, 2016.



Sadly, not only in America but also in other parts of the world minorities, especially Muslim women are constant targets for some people who carry deep hatred. Muslim women living in the UK have, according to one article “suffered more than one hundred racial attacks since the terrorist atrocities in Paris”<sup>150</sup>.

A document that emanates from the UK’s Government working group on anti-Muslim crime and hatred shows an incontestable increase in Islamophobic hate crimes of “more than 300 per cent<sup>151</sup>” in the weeks following the November 2015 killings in Paris.

After a close look at the situation, the researchers concluded that the victims targeted were Muslims, girls and women aged from 14 to 45<sup>152</sup> wearing traditional religious garb, while the offenders were for the most part Caucasian males from 15 to 35<sup>153</sup>.

African-American women have also suffered from inequality and unfair judgement, and, they organized to fight back during the civil rights movement for equality and rights in the 1960’s. However, Muslim women have taken a different approach.

### **3. A.1) Women as Pillars of Communities**

*Women's natural role is to  
be a pillar of the family<sup>154</sup>.*

*Olivier Wright*

They are seen as vital for the domestic task and the family. In this section, we will highlight the importance of women in both contemporary and patriarchal societies. At the same time, we will analyze women in public sphere and we will try to break the idea that says women have to be confined at home.

We will show how even if they stay at home, women of any religious or ethnic background are able to hold together families and households. Even for that role, they should be recognized as important as men.

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<sup>150</sup> Oliver Wright, “Paris attacks: Women targeted as hate crime against British Muslims soars following terrorist atrocity”, 22 November 2015, at <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/paris-attacks-british-muslims-face-300-spike-in-racial-attacks-in-week-following-terror-a6744376.html>. Visited on February 9, 2016.

<sup>151</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>152</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>153</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>154</sup> Grace Kelly, “Brain quotes”, n.d., at <http://www.brainyquote.com/quotes/keywords/pillar.html#UgJZ5dysW2v08ysr.99>. Visited on February 9, 2016.

What are the gender roles?

Gender role can be defined as a set of social values that determines how men and women should behave in a specific way. The roles of men and women are expected to follow a set of social and cultural norms<sup>155</sup>.

Historically, women have been seen by many, as representing a social “burden”. Undervalued, they were often unrecognized for important roles they performed in society. Women around the world were usually confined to private, secluded places, such as in their homes, they were usually acknowledge for the domestic work or judged as sex symbols.

Patriarchal society established the custom of women not taking part of active daily life. They were not allowed to make decisions or to give their opinions on anything. They were often forced to marry at a young age; they were usually under the male’s control. There were few or no laws protecting them, and no ear to hear their plea.

Reality today is different. Women nowadays are more involved in public life. They have legal rights that protect them, but many still face unfair treatment in some areas, such as lower salaries than men in general. Nevertheless, their situation compared to a hundred years ago has dramatically improved at least in the more developed countries. They have generally shown a keen interest in anti-war activities. Randy Hoffman, current Historical Society President at the Cibola County in New Mexico reported recently,

They are one-half of the human race. Women are the pillars of our community they care for their families, maintain their homes, hold leadership roles in government as elected officials, support school activities, promote continuous improvements in healthcare facilities and services, contribute to economic development as business owners or by working in their husband’s business, and are active in events that benefit the entire community<sup>156</sup>.

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<sup>155</sup> Gender Role, “Muslim Women within American Society”, n.d., at <http://muslimwomeninus.weebly.com/gender-roles.html>. Visited on February 9, 2016.

<sup>156</sup> Rosanne Boyett, “Female Pillars of Our Community”, August 24, 2012, at [http://www.cibolabeacon.com/cibola\\_living/female-pillars-of-our-community/article\\_ca07db80-ed97-11e1-b46e-0019bb2963f4.html](http://www.cibolabeacon.com/cibola_living/female-pillars-of-our-community/article_ca07db80-ed97-11e1-b46e-0019bb2963f4.html). Visited on February 9, 2016.

"Women are the pillars of societies," said the Haitian American author Edwidge Danticat about the importance of Haitian women in their society. Despite, the dramatic events in Haiti, women have done a tremendous job of rebuilding their society through collective actions, their strength and resilience has not wavered nor has the dream of enhancing their quality of life diminished.

The *Washington Post* reported in 2015 that, "Armenian women are an unshakeable pillar of the economy and society but they face challenges"<sup>157</sup>.

Muslim American Women are more involved in their society. According to *The Washington Times*, 59 percent of Muslim American women work, a greater percentage than women of other faiths<sup>158</sup>. Tradition wise, women are supposed to be homebodies, and take care of their families. Despite the fact that women in general, are not acknowledged for their values, they tend to improve their communities through social actions and programs. There are organizations and programs all over America and the world that helps Muslim women to be more active in their communities. These programs were launched to help empower women and help them voice their opinions, to change positively their surroundings. One of these programs is called "WISE",

The Women's Islamic Initiative in Spirituality and Equality (WISE) is a global program, social network and grassroots social justice movement led by Muslim women. WISE is empowering Muslim women to fully participate in their communities and nations and amplifying their collective voices. Muslim women have enjoyed a rich legacy of excellence in their roles as leaders, professionals, caregivers and activists, and Islamic history is an impressive record of their remarkable contributions as teachers and scholars of sacred text and law. WISE represents an authoritative Muslim women's movement to reclaim this legacy<sup>159</sup>.

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<sup>157</sup> Laura E Bailey, "Women – Pillars of Armenia's economy and society", March 8, 2015, at <http://www.worldbank.org/en/news/opinion/2015/03/08/women---pillars-of-armenias-economy-and-society>. Visited on November 26, 2015.

<sup>158</sup> Gender Role, "Muslim Women within American Society", n.d., at <http://muslimwomeninus.weebly.com/gender-roles.html>. Visited on February 9, 2016.

<sup>159</sup> Wise, "About WISE", n.d., at <http://www.wisemuslimwomen.org/about/>. Visited on February 5, 2015.

### **3. B. Brief History of the Feminist Movement in the US & Its Relevance to Muslim Women**

The Feminist Movement in the US has served to help Muslim American Women in many ways. This movement taught Muslim women to be as strong and to respond in a nonviolent manner whenever possible. In this section, we will describe how relevant the feminist movement has been to millions of Muslim women.

The feminist movement in the US represents a long history of struggle for equality and human rights. During the period of the 1960's, ideologies that define women of all races began to see the light of the day, ideologies concerning political equality, economic, cultural, and social rights for women.

Although many of the accomplishments and contributions of women have been lost from the history books, women have played a vital role in the course of human civilization. From raising families to leading armies, women have made untold contributions to history<sup>160</sup>.

#### **3. B.1) The New Activist for Women's Right**

In many Muslim majority countries, women have already attained considerable achievements, both socially and professionally.

Women have had the right to vote in many Muslim countries for more than half a century among those countries, Turkey in 1930, Pakistan in 1947, Indonesia in 1947, Iraq and Syria in 1948, Egypt in 1956, Afghanistan in 1963 and many others<sup>161</sup>.

Young and brave women have chosen to reject discrimination in their country and in their own way. They have chosen to stand against violence and among those women; some of them are students or civil servant others are mothers.

The story of gender or race and America is a brutally simple one. It is written on the flesh of African-American women and Muslim American women. One might ask, *what is it like to inhabit a Muslim woman's body? Or in general a woman's body?*

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<sup>160</sup> Women's History, n.d, <http://www.history.com/topics/womens-history>. Visited on February 25, 2016.

<sup>161</sup> Leila Ahmed, *The Veil's Resurgence, from the Middle East to America: A Quiet Revolution*. Yale University Press. New Haven and London, June 5, 2012. p306

The early feminist movement inspires Muslim women, and they tend to reject some teachings promoted by some misguided Muslim leaders. Among these brave Muslim women, there is Leila Ahmed, an Egyptian American professor of women's studies, who throughout her life has fought for equality and rights for Muslim women.

### **3. C. Clash of Cultures (American and Muslim cultures)**

In the United States of America, there is a large variety of ethnic groups, which coexisted for centuries. Each ethnic group brings along its identity; by identity, we are referring to culture, religion and tradition.

*How does this cohabitation work? Is America dislocating from the inside? Will this coexistence work for the future?* One would say that the clash of cultures and civilization is the reason why minorities are rejected in the US.

#### **3. C.1) Identity Politics & the Politics of Racism: Reasons for the Backlash against Minorities**

Many Muslims feel that their tradition is violated by the Western cultures; some Muslims believe that Americans are seeking to impose their ideology upon them. This general feeling predated the Bush administration but according to some scholars, it has intensified after the Iraq war.

The basic problem of disagreement in America with Americans still largely exists. Some Muslim countries continue to have a negative view of the US and perceive the US as a country that wants to dominate the Muslim world, to undermine Islam and to impose its Western culture. Americans are also having negative views about the Middle East and its population in general, otherwise some of them would not have approved Bush's invasion.

Some have speculated that roots of Muslim anger at America lies in "a clash of civilizations" between Islam and the West, and that Muslims are simply opposed to the values of democracy, pluralism and human rights that most Americans hold dear to them.

The underlying problem for the West is not Islamic fundamentalism. It is Islam, a different civilization whose people are convinced of the superiority of their culture and are obsessed with the inferiority of their power. The problem for Islam is not the CIA or the U.S. Department of Defense. It is the West, a different civilization whose people are convinced of the universality of their culture and believe

that their superior, if declining, power imposes on them the obligation to extend that culture throughout the world<sup>162</sup>.

Both of these two cultures or civilizations, the western culture and the Islamic culture accuse one another of destruction and violence. They also accuse each other of imposing their own ideologies and values upon the other. The two parties throughout time have created an unbearable atmosphere for their people, thus creating violence and backlashes on a daily basis.

*What are the reasons for the backlash against minorities?*

According to Michael Mann's provocative book, *The Dark Side of Democracy: Explaining Ethnic Cleansing* (2005), "democracy has always carried with it the possibility that the majority might tyrannize minorities, and this possibility carries more ominous consequences in certain types of multiethnic environments<sup>163</sup>".

Because some US officials believe that, the Middle East is a nest of terrorists and of terrorism, since the assumed 9/11 mastermind was Bin Laden, born in Yemen, and having a Saudi nationality, Arabs and Muslims in the United States have become the target of revenge.

### **Conclusion Chapter Three**

During the process of writing this chapter, we have learned the background history of who the victims of hate crimes were. It is interesting to know that all victims have something in common; they are sons or daughters of immigrants. Despite the fact laws do exist to provide needed security, haters and racist manage to pick at them anyways.

Even though we are in the 21<sup>th</sup> century, patriarchal mentalities are making the way back into modern societies. One will say that nowadays women are emancipated, they have great jobs and they are entrusted with huge responsibilities like their male counterparts. Unfortunately, that is the tip of the ice; women today are diminished, according to Donald Trump they should be punished if they have abortions. It is especially hard if you are Muslim women. This chapter gave us the opportunity to express our concern about androcracy coming back.

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<sup>162</sup> Robert W Merry, "The West and Islam", November 16, 2015, at <http://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2015/nov/16/robert-merry-clash-between-west-and-islam/>. Visited on March 20, 2016.

<sup>163</sup> Anny Bakalian, Mehdi Bozorgmehr, *Backlash 9/11 Middle Eastern and Muslim Americans Respond*, Los Angeles, 2009. p46

Through this chapter, we also managed to pay tribute to the feminist movement, which gave back women at a certain moment their true status of equal to men as human beings.

Moreover, we gave the possible reason of the rejection women face; it might be a “clash of civilization”. Due to the cupidity of men in general and due to their mentality of superiority innocent women are paying the price. *What if we created a World, where, women were given the same options and rights as men have been given for centuries?*



## **Conclusion Part One**

To conclude this part, September 11 is the departure point of all the misery done to Muslim women. Again, part I regroups all the answers of why, what and who caused the dangerous atmosphere for the Muslim women. This part also analyzes how Muslim women became public enemy N°1.

The veil being a religious garb, it gave the opportunity to a group of powerful people to exploit the subject. Companies and organizations have forbidden the veil for Muslim women during work time pretexting a dress code policy. In addition, using this issue they (anti-Muslim groups) have managed to forbid halal food and religious garbs in work places, thus restricting Muslim women's rights in the US.

Many organizations are even fighting to preserve these restrictions by any means, among those organizations there is "Act for America!" the most virulent organization counting nearly 300 000 members. This organization describes itself as the largest and only grassroots organization dedicated to national security and defeating terrorism. Act for American stand behind their aim, which is to educate citizens. However, in reality they aim at tracking down Muslims and help the congress to pass new laws against Muslim women.

This part also regroup stories of victims, stories not reported neither in newspapers nor in books and even not on the news. Stories and cases forgotten because they do not worst to be studied. Stories that involve injuries, deaths and even lynching that is the case of a Muslim American woman of Iraqi origin who was lynched inside her house, on her body there was a note saying "go back home". In addition, this part also discusses comparison between women of other origins such as African American origin. It is interesting to know that women of different periods went through the same struggle for rights and equality.

Moreover, this first part addresses the reason why west and Islam might not work; some scholars agree that it is due to the clash of civilization and cultures. That is the main reason because each civilization or culture assumes that the other wants to impose its ideology upon the other.

**Part two:**

Fighting For Survival and the Rule of Law

## Introduction Part Two

*It is not the strongest or the most intelligent who will survive but those who can best manage change<sup>164</sup>.*

*Leon C Megginson*

Laws in a democratic society are there to protect everybody without distinction of race, color, gender or religion. Laws are the shield of the society in order to protect the individuals of that society, but that is not the case for millions of Muslim women living in the US. Laws exist, such as the first and the fourteenth amendment, that promotes the respect of the veiled Muslim women but they are not applied in cases that requires them.

It is not only the case of Muslim women in the US; other minorities also suffered from a lack of respect for their rights. That is the case of African American, who are the recipient of constant killings; the past years have been a dark period for that community,

In the wake of the announcement that Ferguson police officer Darren Wilson would not be indicted for shooting and killing Mike Brown, protestors across the country took to the streets in mass acts of civil disobedience, and in some cases, property damage<sup>165</sup>.

Not only, they do not apply the law when needed, but also when an officer violates the law, he or she is often not even reprimended. America's system is slowly turning into a system of violence and hate, it is important that US authorities respect the legal process and the rule of law.

We were not meant to survive in isolation and discrimination. We can learn many skills from one another. Learning from a diverse population is the best way to survive. Learning to communicate is indispensable in a crisis, after an attack, the first requirement is to communicate. The fact of being isolated and rejected by your peers diminishes protection.

In the face of law prejudice, the community of Muslim women formed a strong network, with a diversity of connections, which saved them.

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<sup>164</sup> Leon C Megginson. "Quotes About Survival Of The Fittest", n,d at <http://www.goodreads.com/quotes/tag/survival-of-the-fittest>. Visited on April 10, 2016.

<sup>165</sup> Max Read. "Why Should Anyone "Respect" the Law?" April 12, 2014 at <http://gawker.com/why-should-anyone-respect-the-law-1666634274>. Visited on April 10, 2016.

This second part will have three chapters: chapter four, five and six. In Chapter Four, we will explain the American Laws, that should protect Muslim women from racial prejudice and from racial profiling. We will show the consequences of the non-application of these laws. In addition, in the same chapter, we will examine how Muslim scholars stand in this situation. *Do they condemn the terrorist's action? Do they encourage it? What is their position in the process of fighting against discrimination?*

Chapter Five provides a description of the Muslim American women's Network; because of the pervasive violence around them, Muslim women needed to stay in touch with each other. They needed to express their worries and sentiments with one another, and that is what they are doing through a strong and vast informal network. It is commonly thought that women, overall, have better communication skills than men<sup>166</sup>. We will discuss also in chapter five how Muslim American women are actively seeking to create a more optimistic future for themselves, for their children and ultimately for American society.

Finally, Chapter Six is about getting equality at every level, by any means. Social equality, political equality, professional equality, financial equality etc... In order to accomplish this, Muslim women have expressed their need of equality through their social activities, such as writing novels and essays, as well as poetry, and painting, photography and sports activities. Chapter Six will conclude with the observation of what is called the appearance of "natural born leaders" which is in fact a rebirth of the Muslim women's community in the US, which indeed is an arduous task, but nevertheless energized by much hope and optimism.

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<sup>166</sup> Dr. Jon Warner., "Are Women Better Communicators than Men?" June 14, 2013 at <http://blog.readytomanage.com/are-women-better-communicators-than-men/>. Visited on May 2, 2016.

## Chapter 4: The American Constitution or Law VS Muslim Condemnations

### Introduction

In this chapter, we will determine how US laws secure the Muslim women's community; and how the Muslim community confront terrorism. *Are Muslim women terrorist sympathizers like some Americans say? On the other hand, do Muslim authorities effectively condemn the mass killings of westerners?*

This chapter aims at describing how a powerful state (USA) with plethora of laws cannot always provide security for millions of Muslims. Behaving against the Law is not constitutional, but it seems to shock fewer and fewer people.

Our aim is to compare the ineffectiveness of laws for Muslim women in America and the powerful, loud and clear condemnations of Muslim scholars. *Why do Muslims in general have to prove they have nothing to do with terrorists?* While nobody is penalizing Donald Trump for being negative against entire communities and for his racist statements.

We are not denying the fact that from time to time, with the help of organizations, Muslim American Women are protected, but it is rare and it is after a long and distressing struggle. On the other hand, what is incredible is that companies that do fire Muslim women hide behind policies such as dress code policy, no hat policy, policy to cancel Muslim prayer breaks, no halal food policy in some schools and many other. This is an ongoing psychological war to destroy Muslims, the majority of the employees have to obey the rules otherwise they will be fired while they are the breadwinners of entire families. Even in France, a school slogan recently reported declares: "Pork or Nothing" inside the cafeteria.

When Aïcha Tabbakhe, a French nurse, went to fill out the forms for her children's school dinners in her small town outside Paris, she was puzzled. The box she would usually tick to say that her Muslim children did not eat pork was not there. "Confused, I called the town hall and I was bluntly told: 'From now on, that's the way it is,'" she said. "Pork or nothing<sup>167</sup>."

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<sup>167</sup> Angelique Chrisafis. "Pork or nothing: how school dinners are dividing France", October 13, 2015, at <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2015/oct/13/pork-school-dinners-france-secularism-children-religious-intolerance>. Visited on April 13, 2016.

#### 4. A. The Hate Crime Legislations

What are hate crime laws?

State hate crime laws impose tougher penalties on criminals who target their victims because of the victim's race, religion, ethnicity, sexual orientation, gender, gender identity, or disability. Therefore, if a criminal assaults a person because that person is Jewish, the crime would likely be a hate crime<sup>168</sup>.

Whenever a prejudice-motivated crime is committed against an individual issued from a minority, the victim's entire community is left feeling victimized, vulnerable, fearful, isolated, and unprotected by the law of their countries. Such crimes can also lead to important reprisals and a dangerous spiral of escalating inter group tension and violence. Thus, the impact of the crime is far greater than the already terrible impact on the isolated individual.

Hate crime legislation has never been about punishing people for their beliefs or speech. Rather, it is about punishing people for their criminal actions. The Supreme Court unanimously upheld Wisconsin's hate crimes law (which is based on Anti-Discrimination League's model statute) in 1993 because the law clearly did not criminalize hate speech, which is constitutionally protected<sup>169</sup>.

When we mention hate crime legislation in the US, two sad cases comes to mind; the one of Matthew Shepard a 21 years old white young man who was beaten, tortured and killed by two other men in 1998, for his sexual orientation. As well as James Byrd Jr. an African American, killed by three white supremacist from Texas in 1998 at 49 years old.

After those tragic incidents, the event became an American Act of Congress, passed on October 22, 2009, and signed into law by President Barack Obama on October 28, 2009. Conceived as a response to the murders of Matthew Shepard and James Byrd Jr., the measure expands the 1969 United States federal hate-crime law to include crimes motivated by a victim's perceived gender, sexual orientation, gender identity, or disability.

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<sup>168</sup> An Introduction to Hate Crime Laws. n.d, at <http://www.adl.org/assets/pdf/combating-hate/Introduction-to-Hate-Crime-Laws.pdf>. Visited on April 13, 2016.

<sup>169</sup> *Ibid.*

*What would happen if a law was created as soon as a Muslim woman was killed or even harassed in the US ground? Because a law was created after the assassination of two, white males in 1998, why not the same for Muslim women?*

#### **4. A.1) Laws which Protect Muslim Women (the First and Fourteenth Amendments)**

Muslim women should be free to express their religious beliefs including choosing whether or not to wear headcovering free from discrimination and prejudice<sup>170</sup>.

Hate crime laws in the United States protect against crimes motivated by enmity. The First and Fourteenth Amendments of the U.S. Constitution forbids both the federal and state governments of making laws and rules that disallow Muslim women from wearing hijab and it forbids the US officials from discriminating against women who wear the head coverings:

##### Amendment I

Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press; or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the Government for a redress of grievances<sup>171</sup>.

##### Amendment XIV

All persons born or naturalized in the United States, and subject to the jurisdiction thereof, are citizens of the United States and of the State wherein they reside. No State shall make or enforce any law, which shall abridge the privileges or immunities of citizens of the United States; nor shall any State deprive any person of life, liberty, or property, without due process of law; nor deny to any person within its jurisdiction the equal protection of the laws.

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<sup>170</sup> American Civil Liberties Union. "DISCRIMINATION AGAINST MUSLIM WOMEN - FACT SHEET", n.d, at <https://www.aclu.org/discrimination-against-muslim-women-fact-sheet#20>. Visited on March 15, 2016.

<sup>171</sup> American Civil Liberties Union of South Dakota. n.d, at <http://www.aclusd.org/us-constitution-first-and-fourteenth-amendments.html>. Visited on March 30, 2016.

Other laws protect Muslim American women who wear the hijab. These laws are meant to guarantee the Muslim American community of their immunity, freedom and choices, and it reminds them of their American citizenship.

*The Religious Freedom Restoration Act* (RFRA) provides additional protection at the federal level by barring the federal government and its officials from restricting women's ability to practice hijab (either specifically or through generally applicable rules); unless the government can demonstrate that, its action was the "least restrictive means" for achieving a "compelling governmental interest." Although RFRA does not apply to state governments, many states have adopted their own "mini-RFRAs" or interpreted their state constitutions to provide the same heightened protections<sup>172</sup>.

*The Religious Land Use and Institutionalized Persons Act* (RLUIPA) is another set of laws that bars government officials from restricting women's ability to practice their religion freely as well as wearing the Islamic headscarf when they are in any institution or administration.

One civil rights law, known under the name *Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964*, prohibits an employer from firing or refusing to hire, a woman because of her religious belief. The Title VII prohibits employment discrimination based on race, color, religion, sex and national origin.

One more law that protects Muslim women is *The Equal Employment Opportunity Commission* (EEOC) this law specifically states that refusing to hire someone because of a concern that customers or colleagues may be "uncomfortable" with his or her religion or hijab is illegal. The Supreme Court also recently affirmed the rights of job applicants who require a religious accommodation, ruling in favor of a worker who wears a headscarf that would go against Abercrombie & Fitch's "Look Policy."

In law enforcement contexts: Muslim women have been denied the right to wear a headscarf while in jail and courthouse detention, while visiting family members in correctional institutions, while accompanying family members to court, and even while working in correctional institutions. Women also have been harassed by police

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<sup>172</sup> *Ibid.*



officers for wearing headscarves, both when being arrested and when they have called the police for help<sup>173</sup>.

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<sup>173</sup> *Ibid*

#### 4. B. Muslim Scholars' Condemnation

The undersigned, leaders of Islamic movements, are horrified by the events of Tuesday 11 September 2001 in the United States, which resulted in massive killing, destruction and attack on innocent lives. We express our deepest sympathies and sorrow. We condemn, in the strongest terms, the incidents, which are against all human and Islamic norms. This is grounded in the Noble Laws of Islam, which forbid all forms of attacks on innocents. God Almighty says in the Holy Qur'an: 'No bearer of burdens can bear the burden of another' (Surah al-Isra 17:15)<sup>174</sup>.

One might say, so why the Muslim community does not protest against the terrorists actions. Actually, Muslim authorities condemn every attack done under their name. Muslims worldwide strongly condemned the terrorist attacks by the Islamic State that killed at least 127 people in Paris.

Shuja Shafi, the secretary general of the Muslim Council of Britain, a council that regroups more than 500 organizations including mosques, schools and charities, described the killings as "horrific and abhorrent." Shuja Shafi in a statement said:

My thoughts and prayers for the families of those killed and injured and for the people of France, our neighbours<sup>175</sup>.

Other condemnations include the one of Tariq Ramadan a professor of Islamic Studies at Oxford University in England and president of the European Muslim Network think tank, he said in a statement:

Absolute and immediate condemnation. They shouted, we are told, 'Allah Akbar' (God [is] the greatest) to support and justify their inhuman actions<sup>176</sup>.

Fateh Kimouche, founder of the prominent French Muslim blog Al Kanz, forwarded something important and he said:

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<sup>174</sup> Charles Kurzman, "Islamic Statements against Terrorism", September 14, 2001, (via archive.org). at <http://kurzman.unc.edu/islamic-statements-against-terrorism/>. Visited on January 25, 2015.

<sup>175</sup> Jane Onyanga-Omara, Muslims strongly condemn Paris terror attacks, USA TODAY 10:42 a.m. EST November 14, 2015 at <http://www.usatoday.com/story/news/world/2015/11/14/muslims-strongly-condemn-paris-attacks/75772102/>. Visited on January 27, 2016.

<sup>176</sup> *Ibid.*

It was important for the whole country to put up a united front against terrorists. Nevertheless, he also expressed concern about a backlash against Muslims following this atrocious act<sup>177</sup>.

Kimouche said that:

Muslims suffer a double punishment: massively victims in the Middle East and around the world," as well as being the targets of Islamophobia. "The Muslim community is in mourning like the rest of the French, but also in the anxiety of retaliation," he said<sup>178</sup>.

Yahya Adel Ibrahim, an Islamic teacher and imam in Perth, Australia, said in a Facebook post:

This criminal barbarity is Godlessness. Terrorism has no faith and cannot be condoned by any means, rationale or ideology. We must commit to each other to defeat it. Godless cowards attack unarmed, randomly selected, innocent people. Terrorists are Sinful, immoral, barbaric criminals. My thoughts and prayers are with the innocent victims, their families and communities<sup>179</sup>.

There are thousands of additional condemnations but this brave action undertaken by Muslims at the risk of their own lives is not getting the attention of anti-Muslim hate groups.

This is not the first time; Muslim leaders have joined to condemn the Islamic State. The chairman of the Central Council of Muslims in Germany, Aiman Mazyek, for instance, told the Muslim nations that they should speak out against the "terrorist and murderers" who fight for the Islamic State and who have dragged Islam "through the mud."

Not all the condemnations can be cited here but an important one is the Washington open letter, a letter in which Muslim American Scholars condemn Islamic States for the atrocities they have committed in the name of their religion,

WASHINGTON (RNS) More than 120 Muslim scholars from around the world joined an open letter to the "fighters and followers" of the

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<sup>177</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>178</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>179</sup> *Ibid.*

Islamic State, denouncing them as un-Islamic by using the most Islamic of terms<sup>180</sup>.

Other Muslim scholars among them, Shaykh Yusuf Qaradawi, Qatar; Tariq Bishri, Egypt; Muhammad S. Awwa, Egypt; Fahmi Huwaydi, Egypt; Haytham Khayyat, Syria; Shaykh Taha Jabir al-Alwani, U.S in a letter address to the United States said,

All Muslims ought to be united against all those who terrorize the innocents, and those who permit the killing of non-combatants without a justifiable reason. Islam has declared the spilling of blood and the destruction of property as absolute prohibitions until the Day of Judgment. ... [It is] necessary to apprehend the true perpetrators of these crimes, as well as those who aid and abet them through incitement, financing or other support. They must be brought to justice in an impartial court of law and [punished] appropriately. ... [It is] a duty of Muslims to participate in this effort with all possible means<sup>181</sup>.

## **Conclusion Chapter Four**

Chapter four is a very delicate one, because it deals with a sensitive subject, “the laws” that protect Muslim American women. Additionally, we were able to identify which law does what, and if they are really applied. Muslim women have to face a double issue, the first one is the discrimination they are subjected to, and the second one is the perpetrators of these discriminations who are not always, held accountable.

Sometimes laws are ignored because, according to the officials of the law enforcement, there is a lack of evidence to apprehend those who committed the injustice, but sometimes a bruised body is a major evidence. At the same time, this chapter correlate and contrast two sides, the US laws and the Muslims scholars who condemn every atrocities done in the name of Islam and Muslims. What is intriguing is that nobody ask all the Christian community to take a stand and condemn, when a Christian terrorist kill, for instance the

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<sup>180</sup> Lauren Markoe, “Muslim Scholars Release Open Letter to Islamic State Meticulously Blasting Its Ideology”, Sep 25, 2014 at [http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2014/09/24/muslim-scholars-islamic-state\\_n\\_5878038.html](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2014/09/24/muslim-scholars-islamic-state_n_5878038.html). Visited on March 22, 2016.

<sup>181</sup> Charles Kurzman, “Islamic Statements against Terrorism”, September 27, 2001, (via archive.org) at <http://kurzman.unc.edu/islamic-statements-against-terrorism/>. Visited on January 25, 2015.

Charleston shooting which occurred inside a church. Zero condemnations were made, and on top of it, nobody asked for one.

## Chapter 5: The Muslim Women's Network

### Introduction

The aim of this chapter is to show that Muslim women in America have a strong network through which they communicate and help each other. This chapter will use examples of contemporary associations and organizations in the US, organizations that despite the violence and threat they often receive, continue to fight and improve Muslim women's conditions.

These organizations also have the role of a reminder, reinforcing Muslim American women's rights, and they at the same time provide protection against any type of abuse. They also aim at creating a society where Muslim women can have an effective voice and the opportunity to exercise their rights and contribute to an equal society.

Furthermore, the Muslim women network have the objective of gathering evidence about the experiences of Muslim women and girls on key issues affecting them and use the information to improve their rights through advocacy and campaigning.

There is a growing women's rights movement in many Muslim-majority societies as in non-muslim societies today. From Pakistan to North Africa and America, each country has a network of activists, writers and academics struggling to bring women's rights to their countries and overthrow centuries of patriarchal oppression and thinking. Networking on the internet and on social media enables them to stay in contact with each other and share stories, making the movement a transnational one.

There are many groups in America that seek to improve Muslim women's condition, among them the NACMW organization:

*The North American Council for Muslim Women (NACMW)* is a non-profit organization devoted to enriching the knowledge of Muslims about women in Islam and society. Founded in February 1992 by 150 multi-ethnic Muslim women of all ages, NACMW carries out its work in the categories of education, legislation, advocacy and policy<sup>182</sup>.

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<sup>182</sup> North American Council for Muslim Women, 2005, at <http://pluralism.org/profile/north-american-council-for-muslim-women/>. Visited on March 30, 2016.

Another organization that supports Muslim American women is ICNA. The *Islamic Circle of North America* was a response to the growing need for a supportive Muslim community in North America. The organization initially focused on educating its growing membership about Islam, the goal being to adhere to Islamic values amongst a religiously diverse community. Other organizations are:

- The **FATIMA** Women's Network has improved the ability of Muslim women's groups to network and contribute to the development of policy. Using the skills acquired from undergoing training on funding, financial management and policy development they have been involved in helping to improve facilities at local schools<sup>183</sup>.
- The **Shaah iyo Sheeko** Women's Group has addressed the isolation that women were feeling and given them confidence to participate in elections, become school governors and volunteer in schools. It has provided them with a voice and equipped them with the skills and knowledge to confidently engage in community life<sup>184</sup>.
- Over 10 years, the **An-Nisa** Slough Women's Group has grown from an organization of 20 volunteers to a membership of 600. The group has built links with the local council and other statutory bodies and service providers to ensure the needs of Muslim women in Slough are met and to advice on a range of community issues including preventing violent extremism<sup>185</sup>.

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<sup>183</sup> EMPOWERING MUSLIM WOMEN: CASE STUDIES, 2005, at [http://dera.ioe.ac.uk/7422/7/669801\\_Redacted.pdf](http://dera.ioe.ac.uk/7422/7/669801_Redacted.pdf). Visited n April 9, 2016.

<sup>184</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>185</sup> *Ibid.*

## **5. A. Muslim Organizations**

The US Council of Muslim Organizations (USCMO), a coalition of leading national and local Muslim organizations, strongly condemns the heinous terror attacks that took place early this morning in Brussels, Belgium and left at least 30 innocent people dead and many more injured. Similar terror attacks took place most recently in Turkey and Mali and claimed the lives of tens of innocent people<sup>186</sup>.

USCMO (US council of Muslim Organizations) is completely and truly saddened by these terrible attacks generally against the West and stands firmly in its condemnation of all attacks on the sacredness of human beings life taking place anywhere in the world, regardless of the offender, targets (the country), or reasons.

The US Council of Muslim Organizations stands strongly in solidarity with the victims of terrorism such as the people of Belgium, Turkey, France, US and Mali and sends condolences to the victims' families.

We urge the world to come together in peace and solidarity during this difficult time and rise above the hate and violence the perpetrators wish to spread<sup>187</sup>.

### **5. A.1) Council on American–Islamic Relations (CAIR)**

Because of their visibility, Middle Eastener and Muslim American organizations were frequently the targets of hate crimes. An unknown white arsonist destroyed the storefront center of the Arab American Action Network in Chicago after 9/11. Innumerable death threats and hate speeches were sent by phone or e-mail to the leaders of several prominent organizations.

The *Council on American-Islamic Relations* (CAIR) was created as an organization that challenges and eradicate stereotypes about Islam and Muslims. This organization is based in Washington, and it is an Islamic advocacy group and an organization dedicated to provide a true Islamic perspective on issues of importance to the American public.

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<sup>186</sup> US Council of Muslim Organizations, n,d at <http://www.uscmo.org/>. Visited on April 13, 2016.

<sup>187</sup> *Ibid.*



CAIR's vision is to be a leading organization for justice, rights and mutual understanding between the religious parties in the US. CAIR's mission is to enhance understanding of Islam and Muslim, to encourage dialogue among the different concerned groups, to protect the Muslims civil liberties, to empower Muslim Americans, and to build coalitions that promote justice and mutual understanding between Muslim Americans and Non-Muslim Americans.

Since being established in 1994, CAIR has a successful track record in its defense of civil liberties, acceptance and tolerance. It is frequently seen as a "go-to" organization when bias is directed against Muslim individuals or institutions such as mosques.

Its status as the most frequently referred to organization for Muslim American women makes it at the center of every talk among Muslims. This organization provides a new and less violent perspective on Islam and Muslims of the United States. CAIR organization managed to find a common ground for both the Muslim American community and the American public opinion,

In addition to attacks on individuals, Islamic institutions are frequent targets of Islamophobic hatred. Since 1994, CAIR has detailed at least 64 acts of destruction and desecration of Islamic places of worship including shootings, vandalism, arson, and bombings<sup>188</sup>.

Like the rest of the mainstream Muslim American community, CAIR believes it is both their civic and religious duty to work with law enforcement to protect their nation. Therefore, CAIR works closely with the law enforcement in America, by providing information on any suspicious activities or individuals that they may have noticed.

According to Frederick Schauer, profiling generalizes, and stigmatizes an entire category of people while ignoring the context.

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<sup>188</sup> CAIR. n.d, at <http://www.cair.com/about-us/cair-who-we-are.html#Introduction>. Visited on March 25, 2016.

## **5. B. Over a Dark Decade**

Muslim American women evolved from a dark era to a more optimistic environment of independence and freedom. They also went from subordination/ obedience to independence and freedom. Contemporary education played a big part in their awakening, because education opens the doors of intellectual circle, a circle that requires a critical mind as well as an original thought.

In this section we will describe the positive attitudes Muslim American Women have adopted in order to overcome traditional bondage. Sensitive issues that demands humanity, inner peace and the respect of the other; because if everybody reacts in a negative way, nobody will survive. We will argue that historically women have performed an important social role in their ability to communicate, share and develop bonds of trust with the other person.

Their capacity for empathy has provided society with essential cohesiveness, without which the very survival of humanity would be thrown into questions. This has sometimes been called “soft power”.

### **5. B.1) Muslim Women on ‘Their Way Up’: Their “FIGHT” for Rights (self-empowerment) through Art**

Muslim women in the US include highly educated Americans; they are lawyers, physicians, shareholders, owners, executive directors, etc., they have been able to earn the respect of their peers through hard work. Their struggle is not an easy one; on the contrary, it is hard, exhausting and scary physically and psychologically.

To self-empower themselves, Muslim American women sometimes draw their courage from sports activities and from art, such as writing, poetry and music playing. Art in a sense became a necessity in a society of violence, where cruelty seems sometimes too constant. This experience was reflected in the words of one American:

As a Muslim woman walking down the street, you feel so insecure and you carry this burden of anxiety, constantly being cautious and aware<sup>189</sup>.

Rana Abdelhamid is a young Muslim woman who grew up on the streets of Astoria, New York; she was once attacked for wearing a hijab. Now she is teaching other young women how to protect themselves. It was a terrifying moment that would haunt her yet also inspires her to fight back against any type of physical and psychological violence. She argues that Muslim women should be judged for what they are not for what they are wearing.

The following year, in need of a way to talk about incidents like these and the cultural climate of where they are born in, she decided to form a workshop that grew into the association of *Women's Initiative for Self-Empowerment* (WISE). The aim of this organization was to give Muslim and Jewish women throughout the United States and Europe a forum to discuss the marginalization they have experienced and to provide them the tools to succeed in the face of it, WISE offers a summer program, a fellowship, workshops, and mentorship to train young women in self-defense, leadership, and entrepreneurship.

In a country where anti-Islamic sentiment is on the rise, it is important to remember that Muslims are often the ones living in fear. Abdelhamid's efforts to minimize these fears by giving women the ability to protect themselves and achieve the lives they want are commendable, but we should not lose sight of the goal to create a world where nobody needs martial arts training to defend themselves, regardless of their religion, gender, or ethnicity or what they are wearing. This is going to keep happening until we run out of business, Abdelhamid said — "which is what we want<sup>190</sup>.

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<sup>189</sup> Kristina Rodulfo, "Young Muslim American Women are fighting stereotypes with self-defense", January 13, 2016 at [HTTP://WWW.ELLE.COM/CULTURE/CAREER-POLITICS/A33217/MUSLIM-AMERICAN-WOMEN-SELF-DEFENSE-CLASS/](http://www.elle.com/culture/career-politics/a33217/muslim-american-women-self-defense-class/). VISITED ON APRIL 9, 2016.

<sup>183</sup> Suzannah Weiss, "Rana Abdelhamid's Women's Initiative for Self-Empowerment Teaches Self-Defense While Combatting Islamophobia", n.d., at <http://www.bustle.com/articles/133054-rana-abdelhamids-womens-initiative-for-self-empowerment-teaches-self-defense-while-combatting-islamophobia>. Visited on April 9, 2016.

Some women found relief in taking classes of self-defense, while others found peace in artistic activities. The arts can be used to convey messages in powerful and innovative ways. Drama workshops and musical performances are effective tools in conveying messages to wide audiences as well as being a means of self-expression, identity exploration and giving the artists a voice. Arts and culture are used to challenge sensitive issues in a positive and peaceful manner, using stories to address issues around prejudice and racial intolerance, for example.

Art gave Muslim women the ability to express themselves. Thanks to art, Muslim women are more dynamic, breaking down many barriers as there is no right or wrong way to express yourself as artist. Getting involved in arts and culture thus promote self-expression, building a strong sense of confidence and identity. Sporting activities can bring together communities and people across all age groups, creating positive contacts, which break down stereotypes.

The Ulfah Collective is the first practicing Muslim female band and is one of Ulfah Arts' most high profile projects. The group performs universal themes in Nasheeds (Islamic songs), gospel, hymns and rap. Its notable achievements to date include performing live at the Edinburgh International Festival of Middle Eastern Spirituality and Peace 2006 and sharing a stage with Robin Gibb of the Bee Gees at Wembley Arena. Since its inception, Ulfah Arts has supported and developed over 200 artists, 80 per cent of which are Muslim women. It has engaged an audience of over 30,000 and involved over 200 people in its projects, again the majority of whom have been Muslim women of all ages. Ulfah Arts continues to pioneer opportunities for Muslim women to perform and explore their artistic talents in an environment that does not compromise their cultural or religious values. The women are provided with the necessary skills and training in a nurturing environment that builds their artistic and performance confidence<sup>191</sup>.

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<sup>191</sup> EMPOWERING MUSLIM WOMEN: CASE STUDIES, 2005, at [http://dera.ioe.ac.uk/7422/7/669801\\_Redacted.pdf](http://dera.ioe.ac.uk/7422/7/669801_Redacted.pdf). Visited n April 9, 2016.

## **Conclusion Chapter Five**

To complete chapter five, we must understand how the Muslim women's Network functions. Communication is a key in this type of circumstances, and Muslim women understood that principle. Instead of losing hope and determination, they spread their stories on the social media getting the attention of more people.

Communication is a strong bond that helps women to share experiences, this has the ability to connect and spread sisterhood. Once a year they organize a meeting where they meet face to face and exchange information. Through this bond are born many organizations that are known on both the national and international scale. These organizations help Muslim women who suffer from discrimination and injustice to take their cases to court. These organizations such as CAIR provide lawyers, security, and formation for the younger generation.

This chapter also deals with analyzing their long way up; I will not say up to a complete acceptance but to a better environment, indeed still a dangerous environment but better than 10 years ago.

## Chapter 6: Muslim Women Struggle for Equality

### Introduction

In this chapter, we will describe the struggle Muslim American women had to face on a daily basis, in their campaign for greater equality.

Women in the United States were fighting for their own rights at the same time as Muslim women were in other parts of the world, and Muslim American women have been working hard to win new rights and achieve equal footing with men.

Despite all the positive progress that has been made through the years, however many of these women still face opposition from the societies in which they live. Yet they remain undeterred and continue to campaign for the basic freedoms that many of their peers take for granted. Muslim women argue that human rights are universal rights and that exposing the subjugation of Muslim women is fighting oppression, not an attack on Islamic culture.

The media driven view of Islam in the Western world is often full of stereotypes, false information, and misunderstandings of the religion and what its practitioners believe in. One of the most prevalent views is that all Muslim women are oppressed, and that the veil is a symbol of this oppression.

While it is true that in early literature on Islam, women's voices were missing and underrepresented, they were not as invisible as is often thought. There have been major movements led by Muslim women for the emancipation of all women, and when compared to women's struggles for rights in the United States, the struggle of Muslim women becomes more familiar.

Their fight is of course on all fronts: social, economic, professional, educational, domestic and judicial. Recently Muslim American women had to fight for the right to open the first female only mosque in the US<sup>192</sup>. This event took place in Los Angeles, two Muslim women initiated the campaign one of them is a comedy writer called Hasna Maznavi, and the other is a lawyer by the name of Sana Muttalib. The reason behind this campaign of opening the first mosque only for Muslim women is a response to the various ways women are made to feel uncomfortable and unwanted in many mosques. This discrimination goes from separate and subpar entrances to the lack of leadership roles available and inaccessible to them.

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<sup>192</sup> Miriam Krule, "American Muslim Women Open First Female-Only Mosque in the U.S.", Jan. 30, 2015 at [http://www.slate.com/blogs/xx\\_factor/2015/02/02/women\\_s\\_mosque\\_of\\_america\\_first\\_female\\_only\\_mosque\\_in\\_u\\_s\\_opens\\_in\\_l\\_a.html](http://www.slate.com/blogs/xx_factor/2015/02/02/women_s_mosque_of_america_first_female_only_mosque_in_u_s_opens_in_l_a.html). Visited on April 9, 2016.

As Hasna Maznavi and Sana Muttalib told the *Huffington Post*, “the space will allow for female speakers or *khateeba* (the feminine version of *khateeb*, the person who delivers the Friday sermon)<sup>193</sup>”, the aim of this mosque entirely dedicated for women is also to address women’s issues from a female perspective without these women feeling threatened or watched or uncomfortable.

In addition to that, in all mosques, according to Hasna and Sana “women do not often get a chance to access the male imam for questions or discussions after prayer, because he is in the men’s section and is inaccessible until a later time<sup>194</sup>.” By creating such a space for conversation after services, they are hoping to facilitate a meaningful, helpful and hopeful conversation that will address women’s concerns and issues on all level.

Before that, American mosques were not particularly welcoming to women for two reasons. First, women are considered a distraction for men’s prayers and piety. A Hadeeth says that women should protect themselves from the men’s gaze:

Do not prevent the female servants of Allah from the masjids of Allah, but have them go out without wearing fragrance...even though their houses are better for them<sup>195</sup>.

Muslim women had to pray at home and were not supposed to pray in the public sphere. This type of rhetoric reminds us of the military industry that refused to hire women among its staff:

...the Army, guided by Congress and responding to various societal norms over time, have either prohibited or severely limited service by a wide variety of social and ethnic groups. African-Americans, Hispanic-Americans, Asian-Americans, women and homosexuals have at various times been banned from service, allowed in only in small numbers, or allowed in only under special conditions<sup>196</sup>.

American women were confined especially around 1775-1900. During that period, the Army did not permit at all, women to serve in uniform. Initially they were camp followers

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<sup>193</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>194</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>195</sup> Sadaf Farooqi, “Homely Homemaking Homebodies? Why the Quran Commands Muslim Women: “Stay in Your Homes”, June 30, 2010 at <http://muslimmatters.org/2010/06/30/homely-homemaking-homebodies-why-the-quran-commands-muslim-women-stay-in-your-homes/>. Visited on April 30, 2016.

<sup>196</sup> “The Army and Diversity”, n,d at <http://www.history.army.mil/html/faq/diversity.html>. Visited on April 30, 2016.

who were just there to take care of the domestic tasks such as cooking, sewing, nursing, and laundering for soldiers, what we call “ignoble tasks” compared to the task men had to assume.

## **6. A. Traditional Muslim Women’s Skills VS Survival Skills after 9/11**

Throughout history, women have exhibited the ability to develop survival skills; skills that facilitate communication instead of isolation. Survival skills are not new for the women, and during both World War I and World War II, when men were killing one another, women had to feed their families, they had to go into the fields to grow food.

This part aims at comparing how traditional Muslim Women obedient by training, have evolved in America to adopt the contemporary thinking of American Women and their traditional survival skills, which makes them more adapted to new modes of living.

### **6. A.1) Patriarchal Role of Women**

Generally, western religions have a patriarchal view of the relationship between the genders. The relationship between Adam and Eve symbolizes how many religions view women<sup>197</sup>.

Traditional Muslim women like many women of other religions, are receptive to patriarchal thinking. For instance, if they are told that women do not need to go to school and that, their only interest should be their husband and their children; it is usually sure that they will obey.

While on the other hand, a contemporary Muslim American Women will most likely not accept such thinking; she will try by all means to escape such an environment and develop her critical mind. According to the Film “Valentinos Ghost, Why We (USA) Hate Arabs”, those depicted as “good Arabs” are the obedient Muslims.

According to western theory, Arabs with critical minds are “bad Arabs” thus “they are the unwanted” and they should be killed. On the other hand, those who obey orders, and accept the supremacy of white men are the “good Arabs” and they should be not killed, because they might be useful.

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<sup>197</sup> “Islamic feminism”: compromise or challenge to feminism? 2003, at <http://www.portmir.org.uk/assets/women/islamic-feminism--a-compromise-or-challenge-to-feminism--davishpour.pdf>. Visited on April 9, 2016.



Dr. Jack G. Shaheen is professor emeritus of Mass Communications at Southern Illinois University at Edwardsville, and also a writer and lecturer specializing in addressing racial and ethnic stereotypes. In his book, *How Hollywood Vilifies a People*, he noted that over 1000 movies have depicted Arabs as devil and terrorist. He further observed that the movies are ranked from cartoons such as Walt Disney's "Aladdin" to historic and war dramas.

In those movies, women are often portrayed as sex symbols for male fantasies, as in the idealization of their bodies, in the belly dance. That was the image of women during patriarchal era, "patriarchal women". Women living nowadays are stronger and more capable, and each day they use their survival skills to improve their role and image in society.

Over time and in response to harassment women have built a set of survival skills. We can compare Muslim American Women to soldiers who must adapt to any type of situation. They often had to do this without the help of men to achieve their aim.

While on the other hand, women from patriarchal societies were under close "the guardianship" of either their father, brother or husband and no opportunity to notice the constraints on their lives.

### **6. A.2) The Younger Generation**

The "younger generation" the 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> generation, are those Muslim women who were born and raised in the US. This generation is the more active one, with projects and program such as the WISE program (above-mentioned), thanks to the fact the young generation is connected to the outside world and the actuality. Through programs, they gathered information and experiences and turned those into solutions.

Thanks to their educational background, this generation is able to make decisions, take cases to the court, and fight for legal and human rights. Many of them have earned degrees in higher education. They have developed skills and critical thinking; they are also able to handle difficult situations that arise in their communities, particularly around religious beliefs.

Muslim girls are academically outperforming their male counterparts for the first time, researchers have found<sup>198</sup>.

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<sup>198</sup> Jamie Doward, "Young Muslim women take lead over men in race for degrees", 2 April 2016, at <http://www.theguardian.com/education/2016/apr/02/muslim-women-men-degrees-jobs-market-british-universities>. Visited on April 9, 2016.

Scholars have made a conclusion, by working with a sample of students. Moreover, they have noticed that Muslim women are more advanced in terms of education compared to men. This is the reason why, in my opinion, Muslim women are better communicators and unifiers especially in our case of post 9/11 and that is why they are the first in line to struggle for social acceptance.

Dr Nabil Khattab of the Doha Institute for Graduate Studies in Qatar, and Professor Tariq Modood of the University of Bristol, found that 25% of Muslim women aged 21-24 now have degrees, compared with 22% of Muslim men of the same age<sup>199</sup>.

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<sup>199</sup> *Ibid.*

## 6. B. Natural Born Leaders & Linda Sarsour

Some people seem to have from the very first moment, the ability to be leaders, to control crowds, the ability to make critical decisions and fight until the end, for their rights and the rights of the community to which they belong. Young, educated and brave women have made huge changes around them, and their communities have benefitted. Such women are often threatened, because they represent strong resistance against the Anti-Muslim bigots. However, they seem to not consider the obstacles.

Linda Sarsour is among this type of women, she is from Palestinian decent; and was born and raised in Brooklyn, New York. Linda Sarsour is known to be a working person, community activist and most importantly a mother of three. She is very ambitious, bold, outspoken and independent. Linda shatters all stereotypes against Muslim American women, and has fought many types of prejudice, concerning religious affiliation and origins, while at the same time; she treasures her religious and ethnic heritage.

Additionally, she is the National Advocacy Director for *National Network for Arab American Communities* (NNAAC) and she at the same time serves as the Director of the *Arab American Association* of New York, which is a social service agency serving the Arab community in New York City.

The National Network for Arab American Communities (NNAAC), a project of ACCESS, is a national consortium of independent Arab American community-based organizations. The Network's primary mission is to build the capacity of Arab American nonprofit organizations that focus on the needs and issues affecting their local community while collectively addressing those issues nationally<sup>200</sup>.

Linda was honored in 2011 by the White House as a "champion of change", and received the 2010 Brooklyn "Do-Gooder Award" from the Brooklyn Community Foundation and was honored as one of the "Extraordinary Women" by the Brooklyn District Attorney. She was and still is a leading figure in the Arab/Muslim community of Brooklyn New York.

Linda Sarsour is also a board member of the New York *Immigration Coalition*, a coalition of over 200 nonprofit agencies serving the diverse immigrant communities of New

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<sup>200</sup> The National Network for Arab American Communities (NNAAC), n.d, at <http://www.nnaac.org/about>. Visited on April 10, 2016.

York State; she was a helping immigrant for their social insertion. PBS, Yahoo News and many others, has profiled her as an “Important Figure.”

She has been featured in local, national, and international media speaking on topics such as Muslim women’s issues in America, Islam and its relevance to women, domestic policy and political discussions on the Middle East conflict. Linda has a very strong character and her strengths are in the areas of civil rights defense in the context of national security. She is also often invited in talk shows such as the Steve Harvey show, or Fox News to discuss issues about Muslim women and Islam in general.

Linda Sarsour is not the only figure who stand by her ideals and ideas, another young woman caught our attention; her name is Saba Ahmed from a Palestinian decent. She is currently pursuing her Master of Law in intellectual property at American University. She stands by a statement, which is “Yes I am Muslim, and I am Republican.” She is a 26 years old Muslim American woman from Beaverton in Washington County, in the U.S. state of Oregon.

## **Conclusion Chapter Six**

In this chapter, we have seen how Muslim American women have worked to raise awareness about political inequalities through artistic activities such as poetry readings and sports events. This creative response on the part of these victims of inequality serve as a model for other Americans.

This chapter analyzed two different types of Muslim women, the traditional and the modern one. As we have seen, the traditional Muslim woman was more likely to be obedient and submissive because they were not educated and were trained to focus only on domestic tasks, while the modern Muslim woman has developed the ability of critical thinking and can stand up to her aggressors. Chapter Six is also about younger Muslim females who, thanks to their perseverance, have achieved a more open atmosphere in their communities.

## **Conclusion Part Two**

The second part of this thesis concerns the long struggle Muslim American Women are trying to overcome. This struggle is far from being over; prejudices, bigotry and discrimination continue to occupy the daily lives of many Muslim women.

We have also described in this part the numerous associations (like AL-NISA, or WISE) that Muslim American women created in order to better assess the disturbing experiences many had to face, and some still do. These associations provided for these women a secure environment of self-help, in which they could talk without being ashamed or frightened.

Associations such as these that saved many women from depression, because when they face discrimination everywhere, some of them became depressed and obsessed with suicidal thoughts or thoughts of leaving their homes and families.

The aim of these organizations was to protect women from any type of abuse. In the second part of this thesis, we also examined the laws that protect Muslim American Women especially those who are wearing the “veil”. Our aim through this second part was to compare the instances that protect Muslim American Women from inner violence.

To achieve that goal, we compared two experiences that at first seem to be similar: one being the application of US laws that protect the rights of Muslim women, and the second being, how the Muslim American community has condemned every terrorist activity against the west. The American justice system does provide from time to time important protections, but the application of these laws are often done with much negligence, for instance when Muslim women are interrogated after being victimized, they are often asked to remove their head coverings while the perpetrators experience no discomfort. Then their pictures are taken and then spread all over the internet. That is the reason why Muslim women do not want to go to the law enforcement when they are victims of prejudice, because they very often receive another type of prejudice at the hands of law enforcement officers.

On the one hand, when a western country is under the fire of terrorism, Muslim scholars or authorities immediately condemned the barbaric incidents. If we compare the status these two instances (US authorities/ law enforcement and the Muslim Scholar condemnations), it is sure that the American authorities are more powerful than simple scholars and professors.

In addition, in this second part we have tried to analyze what types of skills Muslim American women have adopted to protect themselves from attacks. We have called this “survival skills”; it is like a second instinct that comes to life when one feels threatened. We took contemporary examples of Young American Women who are veiled and who succeeded in their careers. Throughout this part, we explored a network of strong women who believe in their ideals and have faith in their communities. Finally, we examined the lives of two women who successfully changed their surroundings, their communities, and hopefully will influence the entire American nation.

## General Conclusion

The purpose of this thesis was to raise awareness about the conditions in which Muslim American Women live. Conditions that could be seen as being against the principles of humanity, against femininity as well as against formal American principles of freedom and justice, as expressed in the US Constitution. Our goal has been simply to show that in the US, there exists a community that lives under the constant violence perpetrated by a large group of people, blinded by hatred and fear who direct their loathing against a peace loving community.

Muslim American women comprise a community of millions of influential individuals who after the fateful day of 9/11 have been discriminated against at every level. This thesis focused on a specific group in a larger context of social discrimination; and emphasized how a single symbol (the veil) became a sign of evil, to be attacked by some and at the same time a sign of pride to be defended by others.

This fatidic date of 9, 11<sup>th</sup> 2001 has generated virulent and heinous waves of crime, and has caused the death of Muslim American Women, as, for instance, is captured in this report from one Southern Californian newspaper:

a woman from Iraq who was found beaten, lying in a pool of blood in her in El Cajon, California, home next to a note saying "go back to your country," has died and police are investigating her death as a possible a hate crime<sup>201</sup>.

The result has been death, injury, and exile. From this limited research, I cannot pretend to be a representative of the Muslim women of America, but I believe that these women and their families should receive recognition and more security to help them in their daily struggle to bring democracy and sane dialogue back to American society.

In this thesis, we have pointed out the principal actors who support the agenda of Muslim American women against Anti-Muslim organizations and Anti-Muslim figures such as Brigitte Gabriel and Frank Galler who have spent millions of dollars to fund their hate campaign against Muslims. In addition, other prominent voices promote Islamophobia, such as the US mainstream media that promotes almost constantly a distorted image of Muslims

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<sup>201</sup> Olivia Katrandian, "Iraqi Woman Beaten to Death in California, Hate Crime Suspected", March 25, 2012, at <http://abcnews.go.com/blogs/headlines/2012/03/iraqi-woman-beaten-to-death-in-california-hate-crime-suspected/>. Visited on April 18, 2016.

and has managed to sell the idea that the entire Muslim American community is a burden to US society today. Where does one turn in the face of such odds?

To attempt to answer this question, we have analyzed the power of media, which plays an important role in this war against Muslim Americans. Propaganda, images such as Muslims burning the US flag, or a handful of fanatics claiming to be Muslims doing things that can only outrage the American public are widely broadcasted as examples of who Muslim Americans really are.

Predictably, the Republican candidates like Donald Trump have used such messages to get votes, by saying what people want to hear. It is easy to manipulate groups of people when they are excited by feelings of hatred and fear. One might understand how after the terrible shock of the 9/11 episode, many Non-Muslim Americans could feel afraid of what they believe to be a “fanatic religion” that encourages its believers to engage in act of terrorism. However, to understand is not to condone this violence.

It is difficult to understand when young boys and girls are harassed at school because of either their religion or their uniform clothing.

A new report from Inside Edition uncovered an alleged attack on a Muslim sixth-grade student. The outlet reported that a hijab-wearing student was attacked at the Bronx public school; citing an anonymous source at the school, the report said that the girl was playing at recess when three boys from her grade put her in a headlock and tried to remove her hijab. The report also says that one of the boys called her "ISIS" during the attack<sup>202</sup>.

A uniform is an identity; when someone sees a police officer with his or her uniform on, nobody judges him or her, everybody is proud. Police officers in the United States are known for having killed many hundred young African American men and women in the past years. Nevertheless, nobody generalizes by saying all police officers are killers or racist.

Young black men were nine times more likely than other Americans to be killed by police officers in 2015, according to the findings of a

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<sup>202</sup> Sameer Rao, “*Muslim Girl Reportedly Attacked, Called 'ISIS' at Bronx Public School*”, DEC 8, 2015 at <https://www.colorlines.com/articles/muslim-girl-reportedly-attacked-called-isis-bronx-public-school>. Visited on April 18, 2016.



Guardian study that recorded a final tally of 1,134 deaths at the hands of law enforcement officers this year<sup>203</sup>.

While on the other hand, when a Muslim woman wears her “uniform” (the veil), everybody judges her by advancing assumptions such as she must be a “terrorist sympathizer”. The victim will most likely be denied her basic human rights because of this veil; she might even be fired from her job if she refuses to take it off. Most of us are amazed that this prejudice has been allowed to develop to this extreme.

During the revisions of this memoir, I gained much new information about Islam, Muslims and the conditions of their lives in one of the largest western democracies, which proudly promotes multiculturalism and social tolerance. A country that accepts everybody but at the same time promotes propaganda that punishes those who Americans hate, who happen in this case to be Muslim American. We have come to understand why many incidents against Muslim American women are never reported.

Most importantly from, this work, I have discovered how Muslim American women fight back creatively, using their own resources in the arts, their considerable social skills, organizations, and using many other facets of their lives. Muslim American women very often embody strength, piety and love; they also include community leadership figures and skilled mediators.

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<sup>203</sup> Jon Swaine, Oliver Laughland, Jamiles Lartey and Ciara McCarthy, “*US police killed more than 1,000 people so far this year. Will 2016 be any different?*” December 2015, at <http://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2015/dec/31/the-counted-police-killings-2015-young-black-men>. Visited on April 18, 2016.

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## Appendix 1

### **Backlash Preparation**

Center for the Prevention of Hate Violence

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e-mail: [CPHV@usm.maine.edu](mailto:CPHV@usm.maine.edu)

website: <http://www.cphv@usm.maine.edu>

### **Hate Crimes Prosecution**

Michigan Attorney General's Taskforce on Hate Crimes

Michigan Attorney General Hate Crimes Prosecution Team

(517) 335-0804

### **Hate Crime Tracking**

Los Angeles County Commission on Human Relations

Marshall Wong

Hate Crimes Coordinator

(213) 974-7617

[www.LAHumanRelations.org](http://www.LAHumanRelations.org)

### **Affected Community Outreach**

Special Counsel to the Assistant Attorney General on Backlash Discrimination

Joseph Zogby

(202) 514-6534

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website: [www.usdoj.gov/crt/nordwg.html](http://www.usdoj.gov/crt/nordwg.html)

### **Corporal Daniel Saab**

Community Policing Officer

Dearborn Police Department

(313) 943-2800

### **Hate Crimes Investigation Support**

Office of the Maine Attorney General

Civil Rights Team Project

Attorney General Thomas Harnett

(207) 626-8800

website: [www.maine.gov/ag/civilrights.html](http://www.maine.gov/ag/civilrights.html)<sup>204</sup>

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<sup>204</sup> [http://www.hrw.org/reports/2002/usahate/usa1102-06.htm#P790\\_152566](http://www.hrw.org/reports/2002/usahate/usa1102-06.htm#P790_152566)

## Appendix 2



Salma Salat came from Kenya 17 years ago, when she was 4. Moreover, she says wearing the veil is part of her identity. » I do not remember it, but my mum found it tough adjusting and raising kids in a time when people were shouting things out from the streets. «In the day's post 9/11, a man approached Salma as she was walking with her sister. She remembers him yelling at them, "terrorists". She was seven and did not know what it meant.<sup>205</sup>

Faiza Ejaz

“On September 12, 2001, Faiza Ejaz, a Pakistani woman, was standing outside a mall in Huntington, New York waiting for her husband to pick her up from work. According to press reports, Adam Lang, a seventy-six-year-old man sitting in his car outside the mall, allegedly put his car in drive and started driving towards her. Ejaz was able to avoid the car by jumping out of the way and running into the mall. Lang then jumped out of his car and screamed that he was "doing this for my country" and was "going to kill her." Mall security agents seized Lang. Sergeant Robert Reeks, commander of the Suffolk County Bias Crimes Bureau, told reporters: "if she hadn't jumped out of the way, he would have run right over her." Lang was

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<sup>205</sup> <http://www.stuff.co.nz/life-style/life/62660607/Wearing-the-hijab-Its-a-choice>

charged with first-degree reckless endangerment, which requires an enhanced penalty if the crime is bias-motivated”<sup>206</sup>.

### Swaran Kaur Bhullar

“On September 30, 2001, Swaran Kaur Bhullar, a Sikh woman, was attacked by two men who stabbed her in the head twice as her car was idling at a red light in San Diego. The men shouted at her, "This is what you get for what you've done to us!" and "I'm going to slash your throat," before attacking her. As another car approached the traffic light, the men sped off. Bhullar felt that she would have been killed by the men if the other car had not appeared. She was treated at a local hospital for two cuts in her scalp and released later that same day. Local police and federal law enforcement officials have been unable to identify Bhullar's attackers”<sup>207</sup>.

### FK

“On June 18, 2002, FK, an American Muslim woman who wears a hijab, was allegedly assaulted by a woman in a drug store near Houston, Texas. Before assaulting FK, the woman told her that she had learned about "you people" over the last ten months and doesn't trust "a single damn one of you." Before FK could get away from the woman, she slammed FK to the floor and began pulling at her headscarf, which had the effect of choking her. Though FK told the woman she could not breathe, she kept pulling at the headscarf. FK then pulled off her headscarf, in violation of her religious obligations in a desperate effort to alleviate the choking. The woman then dragged FK by her hair to the front of the store. When police arrived, the woman was holding FK by her ponytail on the front sidewalk of the store. She told police that she was making a citizen's arrest. The police told her to let FK go, at which point FK was able to put her headscarf back on”<sup>208</sup>

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<sup>206</sup> [http://www.hrw.org/reports/2002/usahate/usa1102-04.htm#P349\\_57452](http://www.hrw.org/reports/2002/usahate/usa1102-04.htm#P349_57452)

<sup>207</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>208</sup> *Ibid.*



## Testimonies.

### Stories from Australia.

Manaya Chaouk, 27, social worker and mother, Guildford



PHOTO: [Manaya Chaouk wears the hijab.](#) (ABC News: Mohamed Taha)

"What happened to freedom of expression? Freedom of religion? We are already a target. Now the Prime Minister is helping the bigots and Bogans take their anger out on us. He is trying to instill fear in people. People look [at] me the wrong way. They say silly things. I have heard a lot of stories and seen a lot of stories. For any woman to be attacked, that is not right. There is still a lot of racism. Now the bigots have come out of hiding. I am afraid now; I am looking over my shoulder whenever I leave my local area. That is wrong. I should not feel like that. No-one should feel like that."<sup>209</sup>

Randa Jada, 32, accountant and mother, Granville



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<sup>209</sup> <http://www.abc.net.au/news/2014-10-02/australian-muslim-women-talk-about-how-their-lives-have-changed/5786374>

**PHOTO:** [Randa Jada wears the hijab.](#) (ABC News: Mohamed Taha)

"I was born here. Now that all this is happening, I've been getting a lot of dirty looks. I find it very concerning. They're ignorant. What's their reason to hate us? No-one sits next to me anymore, people move their kids away from my kids, people don't communicate as much. It's sad."<sup>210</sup>



**Name withheld, 33, mother and former secretary, Auburn**

**PHOTO:** [This Auburn resident wears the niqab.](#) (ABC News: Mohamed Taha)

"I wear [the niqab] because I love it. I do this to please Allah [God]. It's my choice. I've been wearing it for one and a half years now. The Prime Minister has to be very careful what he says. It's very divisive. It's all fear-mongering. He's ruining any chance of bringing the Muslim community and wider community together. Why do we get prosecuted for wearing this? We're productive citizens of Australia. For any woman who is attacked, it is disgusting. Veil or no veil. Muslim or non-Muslim."<sup>211</sup>

Maryam Ali, 56, grandmother of eight, Berala



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<sup>210</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>211</sup> *Ibid.*

**PHOTO:** [Maryam Ali wears the hijab.](#) (ABC News: Mohamed Taha)"Everybody has got a choice. It shouldn't be a problem what others choose to wear. I have been discriminated [against] because of my head covering. Australian culture is accepting. Let's respect that."<sup>212</sup>

Hayfa Bakour, 17, student, Greenacre



**PHOTO:** [Hayfa Bakour wears the hijab.](#) (ABC News: Mohamed Taha)

"[The reported targeting of Muslim women] is a bit scary. It actually makes me more scared to walk around. Nothing has happened to me directly. Now my mum always says make sure you're never alone, always leave the library with someone, with one of my girlfriends. When I was younger, I thought I was lucky to live in Australia. But now hearing all these terrible stories of woman being abused is really confronting"<sup>213</sup>.

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<sup>212</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>213</sup> *Ibid.*

Photos



BEFORE YOU  
JUDGE, COVER  
UP FOR A DAY.

#WORLDHIJABDAY  
FEBRUARY 1ST



“I support WORLD HIJAB DAY because I hope women will not be discriminated for wearing Hijab. A woman should not be criticized or looked upon differently just because she chooses to wear a hijab. People from other faith should learn to respect that.”

-Carol Lee (Mrs. Universe 2013)

WorldHijabDay.com ©





"My daughter Emma  
(8 years old), sporting her favourite  
scarf. She said she got called names  
but she kept wearing it and it didn't seem  
to bother her. We are Christians but love  
our Muslim sisters! She wants to involve  
her school next year."  
[Kerri-Jo Stewart, Canada]



09:06 / 11:26







## Résumé

A l'origine de cette recherche, les conséquences des attentats du 11 septembre 2001 sur les musulmanes aux États-Unis. Mais aussi le rôle de ces dernières dans une société dans laquelle elles n'ont plus leur place. Ce mémoire questionne aussi le constat, que j'ai fait pour ma part, de l'omniprésence de la phallocratie dans les discours politiques actuels ainsi que dans les sociétés contemporaines. Mais aussi comment de tragique évènement sont devenu l'argument de taille pour certaine figure Américaine. En outre, nous avons constaté que ces même évènements favorisent qu'il y ait des acharnements sur les femmes de manière globale.

L'archaïsme d'une société se mesure au fossé qui sépare les droits des femmes de ceux des hommes. Le vieux mur de la phallocratie érige de nouvelles frontières entre les hommes et les femmes. C'est à la vigilance citoyenne des femmes et des hommes d'abattre ces vieux murs et leurs fondations pour vivre ensemble<sup>214</sup>.

Ce travail, consiste à analyser les conséquences atroces d'un cataclysme, celui des attentats du 11 Septembre sur une communauté très spécifique, celle des « femmes musulmanes » Américaines. Ces attentats on créer chez les Américains et les Américaines un sentiment de mépris, de rébellion, de rejet et de vengeance dû au fait de la perte brusque de près de 3000 de leurs compatriotes. Durant cette période, l'Amérique connue comme un *Melting Pot* se voit diviser en communauté et commence alors une longue guerre ethnic et racial entre les Américains et les Musulmanes Américaines.

Mais avant d'entrer dans le vif du sujet et d'analyser les préjugés raciaux et la discrimination contre les femmes musulmanes américaines, ainsi que les origines de ces préjugés, il nous est impératif de reconstituer et d'essayer de comprendre l'histoire des femmes en général. La gente féminine n'a pas été épargner par la domination et la convoitise du pouvoir des hommes. Souvent designer comme subalterne et en charge des basses besognes, les femmes de manière globale souvent soumises ont été emprisonnées, torturées, tuées, et utilisés comme boucs émissaires dans le but d'unifier les communautés dans laquelle

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<sup>214</sup> Les nouveaux costumes des phalocrates, la Garde 4 novembre 2006 at [http://www.regardsdefemmes.fr/Documents/Articles/Rdf\\_les\\_nouveaux\\_costumes\\_des\\_phalocrates.pdf](http://www.regardsdefemmes.fr/Documents/Articles/Rdf_les_nouveaux_costumes_des_phalocrates.pdf). Visité le 4 Mai 2016.



elles vivaient, durant une période très distinct. Des idées farfelues, du type ces femmes doivent être sacrifiées pour que le bonheur revienne au village faisaient office de croyance.

Les origines de ces discriminations peuvent être retracées jusqu'en Europe. Durant le milieu du 15<sup>ème</sup> siècle, une période au cours de laquelle les femmes européennes ont souffert du contrôle des hommes dans des entreprises ou des croisades religieuses, communément appelé « chasse aux sorcières », des milliers de femmes ont été injustement traquées comme des animaux en fuite. Malheureusement, cette période sombre de l'histoire a pris fin seulement dans le milieu du 18<sup>e</sup> siècle, après 300 ans de souffrance intense.

Les sociétés patriarcales ou même phallogocentriques favorisent ce genre de perpétuation qui ramène la femme à un état de sous-homme. Présentement, nous ne voyons presque plus d'exécution ou de traque ouverte, mais nous assistons à une nouvelle série d'harcèlement et de discrimination qui se manifeste sous forme de peur, de rejet et d'isolement psychologique due à la manipulation en masse de l'opinion publique en général et Américaine plus particulièrement. Donald Trump est un produit du racisme et il représente selon moi le porte flambeau de ces Américains intolérants à la différence qu'elle soit religieuse, raciale ou liée au genre.

Dans notre mémoire nous nous pencherons sur une couche de femme, celles des femmes qui pour moi souffrent le plus en silence, celles qui portent le voile, qui ont été par ailleurs, l'une des « bénéficiaires » de nouvelles techniques d'harcèlement et de préjudice. Ce mémoire va décortiquer les conséquences qu'elles soient sociales, économiques, professionnelles, etc.

Cette communauté fait souvent l'objet de caricature et d'affabulation infondée qui pour la plupart du temps crée une gêne au sein de cette communauté, du genre les femmes musulmanes sont des « sympathisantes des terroristes ». Les femmes musulmanes ont longtemps été persuadées qu'être soumise était une question de religion et d'identité, et qu'elles devaient à tout prix éviter de ressembler aux occidentales. Mon objectif serait de dénoncer dans la même foulée cette mentalité qui dit que l'émancipation des femmes est un phénomène occidental. Ce serait, à ce titre, contraire à l'islam.

Or paradoxalement, on constate un désintérêt presque total dans la sphère des écrivains et des érudits pour ce sujet que la plupart considère comme « tabou ». Il est donc urgent de remédier à cette situation et de sensibiliser l'opinion publique sur des atrocités dignes

d'une guerre. Mais on se heurte à des problèmes multiples et complexes, notamment le discours que tiennent les représentants, notamment ceux de l'ancien gouvernement, principalement Bush et son administration, qui lors d'un discours prononcé lors du Forum Sagan sur la politique du Moyen-Orient en 2008, à Washington, DC le Président a dit :

« Le Moyen-Orient, est une région essentielle à la sécurité de l'Amérique, ou de la paix du monde libre, le Moyen-Orient représente une source de promesses, d'opportunité, et apportera une contribution essentielle à la prospérité du monde<sup>215</sup> ».

Certains diront que c'est très noble de portée assistance à des peuples en souffrance, mais je pense qu'il est plus noble d'aider sa propre population, comme par exemple les musulmans, une communauté devenu durant les 15 dernières années la cible d'attaque haineux et qui en même temps fait face à un regain de l'Islamophobie.

C'est pourquoi les solutions générales sont difficiles, sinon impossible à établir, dans un pays ou la politique étrangère américaine a subi un changement drastique après le 11 septembre, c'est passé d'une « diplomatie multilatérale » à un « militarisme unilatéral ».

Finalement, ce mémoire établi un lien entre des événements qui n'auraient jamais dû avoir lieu et une communauté qui est fait objet d'ostracisme, parce qu'on tient cette couche des musulmans directement et indirectement lier et responsable de ces évènements tragique que sont les attentats du 11 Septembre.

## **Introduction**

Le 11 septembre 2001 désigne une date fatidique dans l'histoire des États-Unis d'Amérique mais aussi dans celle du monde. Cette date a aussi déclenchée une haine sans borne entre les Américains et le monde Arabe, d'où le phénomène de « nettoyage ethnique ». Plus précisément aux États-Unis ou le rejet social a été imminent.

Juste après ces terribles évènements du 11 Septembre qui coûta la vie à plus de 2500 Américains, Bush et son administration ont déclaré une guerre, une guerre contre les terroristes et le terrorisme au début mais qui s'avère être une guerre d'intérêt. Le président Américain de l'époque s'engouffre dans une brèche causée par les désastreux incidents du 11

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<sup>215</sup> The White House, "Peace in the Middle East". December 5, 2008, at <http://georgewbush-whitehouse.archives.gov/infocus/mideast/> or <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=veYgyBQGnrs>. Visited on February 13 2015.

Septembre, son discours était d'instaurer la paix en Iraq et en Afghanistan pour « délivrer » ces peuples plus précisément pour délivrer les femmes victime des Talibans.

Les femmes musulmanes ont souffert de discrimination et d'ostracisme causé par des Américains aveuglé par la vengeance. Elles sont ce que j'appelle les oublier du pays au même titre que les Afro-Américaines durant la sombre période de l'esclavage.

Étant donné que les pirates de l'air du World Trade Center étaient soit disant des musulmans, chaque individu avec les mêmes traits est soupçonné, ouvrant ainsi la voie à des arrestations multiples. Depuis ce jour-là, l'islam est devenu l'ennemi N°1 pour beaucoup d'Américains, et ils appellent communément les musulmans des «terroristes».

Selon Anny Bakalian et Mehdi Bozorgmehr, deux auteurs Américains qui ont travaillé sur le sujet, le gouvernement américain ignore délibérément les conséquences sur la minorité musulmane. Ces deux mêmes auteurs soutiennent haut et fort que la politique américaine est « déguisée pour que chaque action islamophobe soit perçue comme étant préventive et dans l'intérêt de l'État ». Une très longue recherche de boucs émissaires a commencé après ces événements et les femmes musulmanes sont les parfaites cibles avec leur hijab.

En marge de la société, les femmes musulmanes qui portent le voile ou le tissu communément appelé « hijab » sont licenciées après les attentats, certaines d'entre elles sont même dans l'obligation de changer de ville. Pour couronner le tout, la plupart des entreprises décident de se cacher derrière des lois comme celle des « codes vestimentaires » qui interdisent de venir sur un lieu de travail vêtu avec un objet qui peut rappeler l'appartenance religieuse des travailleurs.

Paradoxalement, la constitution Américaine protège ces femmes et leur attribue le droit à porter ce qu'elles veulent mais aussi celui de pratiquer leur religion en toute liberté, les femmes musulmanes sont protégées grâce au premier Amendement de la constitution des États-Unis qui stipule que l'état Américain : « Protège la liberté d'expression, la liberté de religion, et la liberté de presse... ». Malheureusement, cet amendement n'est nullement respecté par les représentants de l'ordre public, et beaucoup de dossiers concernant des agressions sont classés sans suite faute de preuve, de témoin ou d'agresseur, alors, que les victimes sont atteintes physiquement et psychologiquement. N'ayant plus peur d'être rattrapées par la justice, les suprématistes et les Islamophobes augmentent les tentatives d'agression que je qualifie pour ma part d'inhumaine avec une cruauté excessive.

Ce travail est destiné à afficher dans quelle mesure les préjugés et les crimes contre les femmes musulmanes aux États-Unis se sont enracinés dans la société. Ce mémoire traite aussi de la controverse posée par le port du voile ainsi que comment le gouvernement Américain traite cette question très délicate.

Les femmes, historiquement, ont été refoulées au poste de mère et de procréatrice ; elles ne sont pas autorisées à être indépendante et à effectuer des travaux autres que ceux de leur maison. Lorsque le phénomène est survenu, certaines femmes musulmanes commençaient à se remettre sur pied après de longues générations vivant subordonnées aux hommes. Par exemple, pour se remettre sur pied, elles faisaient partie d'associations, elles écrivaient des livres, dénonçaient ouvertement l'injustice et la discrimination.

Après le 11 Septembre 2001, les rêves de milliers de femmes musulmanes aux États-Unis ont été écrasés parce qu'à ce moment précis, leur espoir d'une vie meilleure venait d'être emportée par une explosion. Lorsque la première génération de musulmane a quitté leur pays pour des raisons quelconques, elles étaient pleines de rêves et pleines de projets optimistes pour leurs enfants.

Elles voulaient saisir le fameux «rêve américain» jusqu'au moment de ce massacre. Immédiatement après l'attaque de 11 septembre, l'assaut a commencé sur les «responsables», selon les islamophobes et tous les musulmans ont dû payer un prix fort pour ce crime. Ce fut le début de l'ère appelée : *Envoyer les musulmans chez eux*.

*Une question très simple se pose alors, qui sont ceux qui bénéficient de cette discrimination ?*

Les médias Américains sont au centre de toute cette polémique, puisque les médias contribuent à dégrader l'image de ces femmes. Le corps médiatique est une puissante entité qui a le pouvoir d'innocenter un coupable mais aussi d'accabler un innocent. Grâce aux contrôles qui s'opèrent sur l'esprit des masses.

Les lobbyistes Américains ont compris l'ampleur du pouvoir que les médias ont eu sur l'esprit critique du public. Ainsi, la création d'une guerre psychologique pour justifier beaucoup de choses et dans ce cas, la propagande anti-musulmane a été utilisée pour justifier les milliards de dollars utilisés dans l'industrie de l'armement et pour justifier la présence de l'armée américaine au Moyen Orient ou du moins tout ce qui a avoir avec cette zone-là.

Exploiter la peur est un marché très rentable notamment pour un lobby en particulier, le lobby Israélien plus communément connue sous l'acronyme de « AIPAC » ou *American Israel Public Affairs Committee* est un lobby crée en 1951 aux États-Unis d'Amérique et vise à soutenir Israël et l'idéologie sioniste que cet état prône. Ce lobby a créé et finance à peu près une dizaine voir une quinzaine d'organisation dont le seul objectif est de détruire la communauté des Musulmans et des Musulmanes.

Par exemple, ils contrôlent Hollywood, ainsi ils peuvent manipuler le public à travers les écrans. Aladin, est un exemple très frappant ou les femmes musulmanes ne sont vu que sous un angle sexuelle et exotique. Les hommes comptent à eux jouent le rôle des méchant arabes, méchant voleur. A cette étape, ils (les lobbies) essayent de mouler dans les esprits des tout petits que « les arabes sont les vilains ». Selon des chercheurs de renom, entre 300 et 1000 films dégradent l'image des musulmans.

Une autre organisation qui peut être cité ici, est celle de la plus prolifique Islamophobe des États-Unis, *Brigitte Gabriel* et son organisation « Agir pour les États-Unis », cette organisation se fait passer pour une organisation qui promeut la sécurité du pays, mais en réalité ils transmettent un message de haine du genre, « les musulmans devraient rentrer chez eux » ou encore « arrêtons l'islamisation des États-Unis ». Au total un budget colossal de plus de 16.000.000 a été dépensé entre 2001 et 2009<sup>216</sup> pour tenir les Musulmans isolé de tout.

Beaucoup de musulmans pensent que leur tradition est bafouée par la culture occidentale ; certains musulmans croient aussi que les Américains cherchent à imposer leur idéologie. Ce sentiment général a été instauré au temps de l'administration Bush, mais selon certains chercheurs, il s'est intensifié après la guerre en Irak.

En parallèle, certains pays musulmans continuent d'avoir une vision négative des États-Unis et perçoivent les États-Unis comme un pays qui veut dominer le monde musulman, et qui veut porter atteinte à l'islam et à ses pratiquants. Les Américains ont également des opinions négatives sur le Moyen-Orient et sa population, en général, sinon certains d'entre eux n'auraient pas approuvé l'invasion de Bush.

Certains ont émis l'hypothèse que les racines de la colère musulmane envers l'Amérique et vice versa, se trouvent dans un « choc des civilisations » entre l'Islam et l'Occident, et que les musulmans sont simplement opposés aux valeurs de la démocratie, le

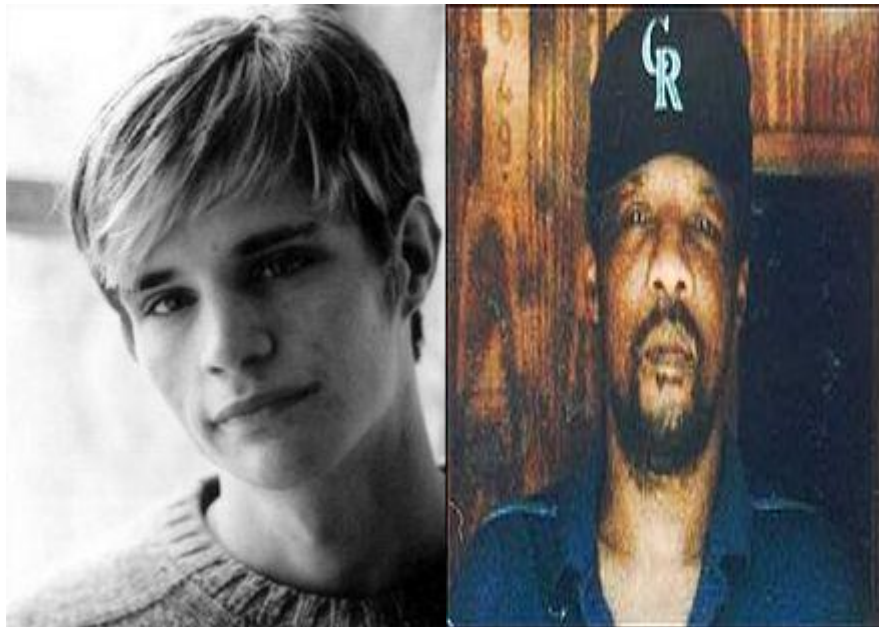
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<sup>216</sup> Voir p66.

pluralisme et les droits de l'homme que la plupart des Américains chérissent. Alors cette hypothèse est selon moi irrecevable parce que les musulmans du monde ont toujours vécu côte à côte avec des non-musulmans pendant des années sans qu'il y ait guerre ou violence.

Les sociétés modernes d'aujourd'hui sont réguler par des lois et des droits attribuer à chacun de ses individus, qu'il soit issue de l'immigration ou pas. Contre les attaques visées à déstabiliser les musulmans, une série de législation est apparus.

Quand on parle la législation contre les crimes haineux aux États-Unis, deux cas très symbolique viennent à l'esprit ; l'un d'eux est **Matthew Shepard** un jeune homme blanc de 21 ans qui a été battu, torturé et tué par deux autres hommes en 1998, pour son orientation sexuelle. Et le deuxième étant **James Byrd Jr.** un Afro-Américain, tué par trois suprématies blanc du Texas en 1998 à l'âge de 49 ans.



Après ces incidents tragiques, une loi du Congrès Américain, a été voter le 22 Octobre 2009, et promulguée par le président Barack Obama le 28 Octobre, 2009. Conçu comme étant une réponse aux meurtres de Matthew Shepard et James Byrd Jr., cette loi vise à réprimander tout ce qui à trait a une violence lier à la différence quel qu'elle soit.

Une des rhétoriques qui revient le plus souvent dans la bouche des Islamophobes est : *pourquoi les musulmans ne condamnent-t-ils pas les terroristes ainsi que le terrorisme ?*

En fait, les autorités musulmanes condamnent toutes les attaques. Les Musulmans du monde entier ont fermement condamné les attaques terroristes par l'État islamique qui a tué au moins 127 personnes à Paris, ainsi les attaques du 11 Septembre 2001.

Les femmes musulmanes américaines ont évolué parti d'une époque sombre pour un environnement plus optimiste d'indépendance et de liberté. Elles ont aussi évolué d'un statut de subordination / obéissance à un statut d'indépendance et de liberté. L'éducation contemporaine a joué un grand rôle dans leur éveil, parce que l'éducation ouvre les portes du monde intellectuel, un cercle qui exige un esprit critique et une pensée originale.

Les femmes musulmanes sont devenues plus sensibles aux questions qui exigent une humanité, une paix intérieure et le respect de l'autre ; parce que si tout le monde réagit de façon négative, personne ne survivra. Nous voulons faire savoir aussi que, historiquement, les femmes ont joué un rôle social important dans leur capacité à communiquer, de partager et de développer des liens de confiance avec d'autre personne. Leur capacité d'empathie a donné à la société la cohésion essentielle, sans laquelle la survie même de l'humanité serait remise en questions. Cela a parfois été appelé «soft power».

Les femmes musulmanes aux États-Unis sont instruites ; elles sont avocates, médecins, actionnaires, propriétaires, directeurs généraux, etc., elles ont été en mesure de gagner le respect de leurs semblable grâce à leur travail acharné. Leur lutte n'est pas facile ; au contraire, il est difficile, épuisant et effrayant physiquement et psychologiquement de faire face à des violences constantes et répétitives. Pour s'auto-autonomiser, les femmes musulmanes Américaines tirent parfois leur courage des activités sportives et de l'art, comme l'écriture, la poésie et la musique. L'art dans un sens est devenu une nécessité dans une société de violence, où la cruauté semble parfois constante.

Le but de cette thèse est de mieux faire connaître les conditions dans lesquelles les femmes musulmanes vivent. Les conditions qui pourraient être considérées comme étant contraire aux principes de l'humanité, contre la féminité aussi bien que contre les principes Américains formels de la liberté et de la justice, telle qu'elle est exprimée dans la Constitution des États-Unis.

Les femmes musulmanes américaines font partie d'une communauté de millions de personnes influentes qui, après le jour fatidique de 9/11 ont été victimes de discrimination à tous les niveaux. Cette thèse examine comment ostracisations d'un groupe spécifique dans un contexte de discrimination sociale ; est basé sur un symbole, une identité (le voile). Ce voile/hijab est devenu un signe du mal, pour certains et en même temps un signe de fierté pour d'autres.

Suite à une vaste vague de crime perpétré au nom de la démocratie, les morts, les blessés et les exilés ce compte par milliers. Je ne prétends pas être une représentante des femmes musulmanes aux États-Unis, mais je crois que ces femmes et leurs familles devraient recevoir une reconnaissance et plus de sécurité pour les aider dans leur lutte quotidienne afin d'apporter le dialogue entre les deux communautés.

Dans cette thèse, nous avons souligné les principaux acteurs qui soutiennent l'ordre du jour des organisations Antimusulmanes contre les femmes musulmanes Américaines ainsi que ceux qui les dirigent comme Brigitte Gabriel et Frank Geller qui ont dépensé des millions de dollars pour financer une telle campagne de haine contre les musulmans. En outre, il y a d'autres voix éminentes qui favorisent l'islamophobie, telles que la Ministre française des affaires familiales et des droits des femmes, Laurence Rossignol qui durant une interview accordée à BFMTV en Mars 2016 compare les femmes voilées aux « nègres Américains qui étaient pour l'esclavage ». Selon moi les femmes musulmanes voilées pensent et ont un esprit critique donc elles dérangent. Ces voix ont réussi à vendre l'idée que l'ensemble des musulmanes Américaine ou pas sont le « fardeau » de la société aujourd'hui.

Des propagandes et des images telles que des musulmans brûlant le drapeau des États-Unis, ou des fanatiques prétendant être des musulmans sont largement diffusées à titre d'exemples pour décrire les musulmans d'aujourd'hui.

On pouvait s'y attendre, les candidats Républicains comme Donald Trump ont utilisé de tels messages pour obtenir des votes, en disant ce que les gens veulent entendre. Il est facile de manipuler des groupes de gens quand ils sont excités par la haine et par la peur. On pourrait comprendre comment après le choc terrible de l'épisode du 11 septembre, beaucoup d'Américains non-musulmans pourraient avoir peur de ce qu'ils croient être une « religion fanatique » qui encourage ses fidèles à se livrer à des actes de terrorisme.



Nous avons aussi analysé l'idée de l'uniforme, et nous l'avons vu sous l'angle d'une identité. Par exemple, quand quelqu'un voit un représentant de la loi avec son uniforme personne ne le juge, tout le monde est fier. Mais pourtant, les agents de police aux États-Unis sont connus pour avoir tué plusieurs centaines de jeunes hommes et femmes d'origine afro-américaines au cours des dernières années. Néanmoins, personne ne généralise en disant que tous les policiers sont des tueurs ou des racistes.

Alors que d'autre part, quand une femme musulmane porte son «uniforme» (le voile), tout le monde la juge en avançant des hypothèses telles que, elle doit être une «sympathisante des terroristes». La victime se verra très probablement nié ses droits fondamentaux à cause de ce voile ; elles sont même congédié de leur emploi si elles refusent d'enlever leur voile.

Durant tout au long de la rédaction de ce mémoire, j'ai collecté beaucoup de nouvelle information sur l'islam, les musulmans et les conditions de leur vie dans une des plus grandes démocraties occidentales, celle qui favorise fièrement le multiculturalisme et la tolérance sociale. Un pays qui accepte tout le monde, mais qui en même temps, favorise la propagande qui punit ceux que les Américains haïssent. J'ai aussi découvert comment les femmes musulmanes Américaines sont créatives, tout en utilisant leurs propres ressources, leurs compétences sociales considérables, les organisations qu'elles ont créées. Les femmes musulmanes Américaines incarnent souvent la force, la piété et l'amour ; elles incarnent également le leadership communautaire.

Et enfin, pour conclure l'objectif premier de ce travail est de mettre en lumière la dure réalité à laquelle les femmes musulmanes font face depuis qu'une guerre a été déclarée entre le monde musulmans et l'occident. Dans la même mesure j'essaye de rendre hommage à ces femmes qui sous de telle violence même après un séjour hospitalier dû à des sévices physique reviennent plus forte et plus déterminée que jamais.

**Résumé :** Comment les Femmes Musulmanes aux États-Unis sont-elles passées d'un statut d'« inconnue et d'Invisible » à celui « de l'Autre et d'Ennemi » après les attentats du 11 Septembre 2001 ? Ce mémoire traite une thématique très tabou et très controversée aux États-Unis, celle des femmes Musulmanes voilée.

**Mots Clés:** 9/11, Muslim Women in U.S., Veil, Islamophobia, Women, Discrimination, Racial Profiling, Gender Issues, Minorities, Islam, Media Manipulation, U.S. Foreign Policy