Black Religion, the Security State, and the Racialization of Islam

As African American organizations like the Student Non-violent Coordinating Committee (SNCC), the Third World Women's Alliance, the Council on African Affairs, and the Congress of Racial Equality (CORE) continually emphasized, the plight of racist governance in the United States was already linked to US practices of colonialism. In tandem, they emphasized that the long arc of anticolonialism among African Americans was just one subset of a global struggle to create self-determination among the victims of Western colonialism. The rising scale of US imperialism, in this context, played an increasingly central role. By the end of the Second World War, with the emergence of the United Nations, the United States turned its attention more fully to expanding both its global reach and control of foreign territories through private corporate hegemony in Latin America, Asia, and Africa through open brutal military might as well as through CIA operatives to overthrow democratic and nondemocratic governments around the globe – in other words, by any means necessary. Why did the United States pursue this foreign policy approach?

African American Islam, Federal Repression, and US Empire

Between the years 1945 and 1960, no fewer than forty nations – comprising mostly non-White peoples colonized by European nations – rebelled against their conquerors and demanded their freedom, typically through violent, military action. These forty nations represented approximately 800 million human beings. Included in this number were the polities that would become Ghana, Kenya, Lesotho, Iraq, Iran, the Democratic

Republic of Congo, Kenya, and India. During the World War II years, the US economy had grown voraciously because of the rapid expansions of industries and consumerism based preeminently on cheap access to the natural resources located almost overwhelmingly in the regions colonized by Europe and the United States: petroleum, diamonds, rubber, uranium, copper, iron, tin, and aluminum. The nations that were fighting for independence from European colonialism had suddenly become exponentially more valuable in the eyes of the US government because of their natural resources.[1]

The United States did not claim to be fighting for imperial control over foreign lands, however. The message, crafted and perfected under Harry Truman's administration in the late 1940s, was that the United States was the leader of the "free world" (meaning White governments) and had to fight communism and other threats to democracy. The US intelligence state carefully elided the actual histories of structural oppression to which Third World movements (typically anticolonial) responded. When the US State Department and the CIA engaged with political Islam in Egypt, Iran, and Palestine, they consistently denied the political reality of Western imperialism while rationalizing murderous violence against Muslim polities and communists or their sympathizers throughout the Third World. Under the national security paradigm, Western imperialists branded rational resistance to US colonialism as hate-based fanaticism and extremist violence rooted in a bizarre racial constitution.[2]

Intelligence officials also applied to domestic subjects this paradigmatic strategy of eliding the material conditions of domination and describing resistance to a racist, colonial state as the consequence of racial psychology. To prepare its agents to surveil the Nation of Islam, the FBI headquarters created a training manual in 1955. Entitled *The Muslim Cult of Islam*, this monograph presented a specious history of African Americans in the urban North during the early twentieth century. It explained the religious leadership of founders such as Noble Drew Ali, Marcus Garvey, and Wallace Fard in derisive terms. And, most importantly, it catalogued

---

[1] Penny Von Eschen, *Race Against Empire: Black Americans and Anticolonialism, 1937–1957* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press), 168–75.

[2] In the run-up to the overthrew of Iran's democracy, Western officials caricatured Iranian demands for greater fairness in labor conditions and sharing of oil revenues as ignorant natives resisting the enlightenment of European civilization. See Stephen Kinzer, *All the Shah's Men: An American Coup and the Roots of Middle East Terror*, 2nd ed. (Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley & Sons, 2008).

a host of differences between real Islam and the "Muslim Cult of Islam," its term of preference for the Nation of Islam.

The FBI not only lacked any background in studying race and African American culture, but it also identified closely with the nation's institutional structures of anti-Black racism. So, it should come as no surprise that the training monograph rationalized the repression of African American Muslims. The manual established three major points: (1) poor, mostly illiterate African Americans raced to the urban North during the early 1900s to pursue the American dream of material prosperity; (2) these Blacks failed to realize they simply lacked the proper education and cultural sophistication required for gainful employment and aspirational success; and (3) they began to resent the superior, successful White race. In fact, the manual claimed Black "demagogues" such as Marcus Garvey, Noble Drew Ali, Wallace Fard, and Elijah Muhammad compelled these miserable Blacks to blame their lack of success on the White race. The result was a viral anti-White racial hatred. The manual went on to characterize the essence of this "Muslim cult" as teaching hatred and violence. According to the FBI, it was quintessentially a religion of primitivism and thereby expressed the atavistic, pristine racial nature of African Americans. The true religion of these Black subjects, in other words, was not an acquired religion of Islam as practiced in the Middle East but an essentially limbic religion of primitivism that stemmed from the racial constitution of Blacks.[3]

The manual also aimed to assure readers that the White race was innocent of antipathy or wrongdoing toward Blacks. Instead, it was the delusion of African Americans that created their irrational hatred of the White race. The bureau, in fact, described African Americans as childlike in their lack of intellectual capacity, inventing an illusion of White oppression to mask their own inferiority. In this narrative of history, there was no such thing as White racism or anti-Black violence. Even the nation's system of racial apartheid was rendered invisible. And African Americans who dared to issue a critique of institutional racism were merely misguided, nurturing a primitive religion of hate and violence by spinning fantastic tales of racial oppression in an effort to mar the blameless innocence of the White race.[4]

---

[3] U.S. Department of Justice, Federal Bureau of Investigation, Preface to report on "Muslim Cult of Islam," i–ii, available from http://foia.fbi.gov/foiaindex/nation_of_islam.htm, part 1 (accessed September 28, 2013).

[4] FBI, "The Muslim Cult of Islam," p. 37, http://foia.fbi.gov/foiaindex/nation_of_islam .htm, part 1 (accessed September 28, 2013).

The FBI headquarters also wanted field agents to understand what constituted authentic Islam and so devoted considerable attention to that subject. The manual asserted that *true Islam* had nothing to do with politics but was a thoroughly *spiritual* religion of peace and brotherhood. Employing language that could have been lifted from any Christian social gospel tract, the FBI manual reiterated throughout that in contrast to the fake "Muslim cult of Islam," real Islam was based on teaching universal divine love for all and universal "brotherhood" among all peoples. As the rising tide of civil rights agitation spurred the Nation of Islam to emphasize its message of economic, social, and political liberation, federal agents only intensified their propagandistic claims that the so-called cult was a hate-based political movement merely masquerading as a religion.[5]

By the late 1960s, the US intelligence state had militarized its repression of African Americans. In 1967, the Los Angeles Police Department became the nation's first to adopt Special Weapons and Tactics (SWAT), under guidance of the FBI. The New York Police Department quickly followed suit. This militarization rapidly exacerbated the already violent tensions between the nation's police departments (typically all-White) and African American activists. The Black Panther Party (BPP) is perhaps most notable for opposing police brutality during this era. In what became a permanent pattern of anti-Black violence, White police officers routinely killed unarmed African Americans with impunity. Because White state and federal officials refused to protect Blacks from this murderous activity and protected the killers from prosecution, the BPP organized armed defense against state violence and harassment. The organization also sought to expose the repressive tactics of the security state and end police harassment against all civilians. This armed resistance instantly drew a full-scale response from the FBI, which immediately targeted BPP activists throughout the country. Even the unarmed activisms of African Americans – particularly of the hundreds of Black Student Unions that mushroomed on college campuses – became chief targets of FBI infiltration and repression. By 1967, the Justice Department directly ordered the neutralization and destruction of these movements. And every form of political activity that African Americans executed in the United States – from the Southern Christian Leadership Conference's nonviolent civil disobedience to the youth activism of SNCC to that of the Revolutionary Action Movement – all were engaged by the intelligence state as threats to national security. Every action they performed was deemed not merely

[5] Ibid.

illegitimate or criminal (these activities, including those of the BPP, were legal and, in theory, protected by the US Constitution) but also an instance of anti-White hatred that threatened the internal security of the United States. From the perspective of the FBI, activities of racial rebellion demanded the utmost vigilance of the intelligence state.[6]

The FBI also began cultivating an unprecedented number of informants in African American neighborhoods, reaching a maximum of over 7,400 by 1972. These informants were instructed to report anything that might be used to prosecute Blacks for subversive activities. This largely amounted to prosecuting, intimidating, harassing, and detaining under arrest individuals exercising their constitutional rights of free speech and free assembly. Surveillance included tapping phones, bugging homes and workplaces, and assigning plainclothes officers to trail political targets.[7]

Beyond this, the FBI began to leverage its infiltration of numerous activist organizations to create violence through the use of agents of provocation. The result was an epidemic of fatal violence and the destruction of otherwise civil activist networks. At one point, the FBI operated its own Ku Klux Klan organization with more than 230 members under the leadership of an FBI operative. In addition, the bureau, in coordination with local police departments, employed intensive programs of psychological disruption and trauma by bankrupting targets with bail and legal fees for repeated incarcerations (typically on false charges), destroying marriages, and transforming coalitions of trust into volatile crucibles of discord and mayhem.[8]

The federal government's efforts to repress Black activists also launched an exceptionally effective initiative: *mass incarceration*. By arresting, detaining, and imprisoning – often for years or decades – Black activists and those in their social and activist networks, the US security state soon normalized the hyper-surveillance and criminalization of African Americans. It is no exaggeration to say that in the age of the so-called civil rights years, the criminalization of racial Blackness reached an apogee as a function of the intelligence state. It is equally important

---

[6] Memorandum RE CounterIntelligence Program Black Nationalist Hate Groups Internal Security, Director of FBI to FBI Field Offices, August 25, 1967, U.S. Department of Justice, F.B.I. file 100-448006, "(COINTELPRO) Black Extremists."

[7] *US Senate Select Committee to Study Governmental Operations with Respect to Intelligence Activities, Supplementary Detailed Staff Reports on Intelligence Activities and the Rights of Americans*, Book III, 3.

[8] *Report of the US Senate Select Committee to Study Governmental Operations with Respect to Intelligence Activities, The Use of Informants in FBI Domestic Intelligence Investigations*, 230–40, 251.

to note the parallel between the US engagement with African American Muslims domestically, who issued a critical assessment of racial power in the United States and abroad, and US policy toward foreign Islamic movements such as the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt and the Islamic revolutionary movement in Iran. Iran is an especially significant instance to consider, as it was there that the CIA for the first time overthrew a democracy in 1953. From the 1930s to the 1950s, the FBI characterized US Muslim targets of repression as uniquely prone to fanaticism, violence, and anti-White hatred. As the United States began to engage with stateless actors in the Middle East during the Cold War, federal intelligence agencies began to identify Muslims by employing the rubric of atavistic violence.[9]

Intelligence agencies emphasized the psychological proclivity of Muslims both within and beyond the United States as fanatical and hate-based. Criminalization and incarceration accompanied US actions abroad as well. For instance, the United States (collaborating with Britain) overthrew Iran's democracy in 1953 and installed a monarch, the "shah." The CIA also installed a regime of torture, anticipating populist dissent against the militarized puppet government. Policing dissent in Iran involved criminalizing protest, arresting and detaining social activists, and using legal repression to disrupt and undermine efforts to challenge the state. For the next twenty-five years, Iranian dissenters organized to oppose Western imperialism in Iran and the overthrow of their democracy. As this culminated in armed resistance and violent demonstrations against a military government, US officials increasingly resorted to the specific grammar of terrorism to represent political Islam. Distressingly, the Iranian Revolution was largely a revolt against widespread torture that the CIA had instituted to thwart dissent against US imperial interests.[10]

[9] Sohail Daulatzai, *Black Star, Crescent Moon: The Muslim International and Black Freedom beyond America* (Minneapolis: University of Minneapolis Press, 2012), 169–75.

[10] Darius M. Rejali, *Torture & Modernity: Self, Society, and State in Modern Iran* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1994). The US government's racialization of global Islam was by no means uniform or surgically even. It was, rather, a historical formation rooted in specific political interests, pragmatic imperatives, and often serendipitous alliances. The governing force behind US engagement with global Islam, however, was nevertheless the consonant aim to expand US control over foreign states and the global movement of natural resources like petroleum. So, by the late-1970s, for instance, Carter's administration had established robust military support for Afghanistan's Islamist resistance to Soviet influence. That strategy would lead to US support of the Taliban and the retention of key actors like Osama bin Laden as a CIA asset. This occurred simultaneously with the growing racialization of Islam as an anti-Western, racial threat. See Mahmood Mamdani, *Good Muslim, Bad Muslim: America, the Cold War, and the Roots of Terror* (New York: Pantheon, 2004).

The history of FBI repression against African American Muslims under a national security paradigm and that of US engagement with international Islamist movements bore other parallels, including the charge of being prone to violence. The FBI had begun in the 1930s to caricature African American Islam within the United States as anti-White hatred and fanaticism enlivened by the inability of Blacks to rationally assess their material plight. Supposedly, this led Black Muslims to promote violence against the White race. This was the putative basis for their designation as a national security threat. By the 1960s and 1970s, intelligence officials were branding Muslims abroad as violent terrorists motivated by hatred – nonstate actors attempting a fanatical political objective through illegitimate violence. This created a powerful metonymic association that was immeasurably intensified as political Islam became increasingly common, most notably following the US invasion of Afghanistan and Iraq in the early 2000s. As a result, the very grammar of terrorism and religion in the United States became rooted in the mythos of terrorists as Muslims and of Muslims as terrorists.[11]

In the early 1970s, US legislators first became aware of these tactics of counterintelligence repression in both domestic and international domains. They were shocked and alarmed, and they soon established an unprecedented investigation into the nation's entire intelligence complex. The single most important effort to make US intelligence operatives accountable to legal oversight was the US Senate "Church Committee" investigation of 1975–1976. Named for US Senator Frank Church of Idaho, who chaired the committee, it was created as an immediate response to the Nixon Watergate scandal. It quickly came to light, however, that the Justice Department's FBI, the CIA, and other institutions within the intelligence community were violating constitutionally guaranteed freedoms and protections. The most notable of these was the FBI's Counterintelligence Operation (COINTELPRO). The Church Committee hearings slowly revealed how this program engaged US citizens using

---

[11] As one example of the efficacy of this association, the Boy Scouts of America's "Explorers" program in the early 2000s began training thousands of young people in "counterterrorism" methods to prepare them for future jobs as law enforcement officers. Equipped with compressed air guns as well as conventional (i.e., real) firearms, gas masks, and protective body gear, the young Scouts engage and neutralize actors dressed in Middle Eastern attire. "This is about being a true-blooded American guy and girl," described one local Sheriff in Imperial County, California, where some of the training exercises took place. The Explorers program worked closely with and under the sponsorship of the Department of Homeland Security and the FBI. Jennifer Steinhauer, "Scouts Train to Fight Terrorists, and More," *The New York Times*, May 14, 2009.

tactics created to neutralize and destroy foreign entities. In deliberate dis-regard for the US Constitution, the FBI employed a range of methods to implement psychological warfare, personal intimidation, destruction of social and familial networks, violent provocation, illegal detentions, and even political assassinations.[12] As a result, US Congress passed the Foreign Intelligence and Surveillance Act of 1978, which articulated specific protocols to ensure that US citizens enjoyed constitutionally guaranteed freedoms and protections from government surveillance, threats, and harassment.[13] The goal was to preserve the imperatives of both national security and civil liberties. At the time, federal legislators hoped that the nation would never again experience the unbridled reign of obtrusive surveillance, unrestrained repression, and the cycle of violence that had been implemented in the name of national security against the activism of African Americans, Native Americans, and Hispanics as well as White political movements. In the wake of these hearings, the Justice Department repeatedly emphasized that COINTELPRO had been formally dismantled and that the bureau had ceased such operations as early as 1971.[14]

Racializing Islam

Approximately three decades later, however, in the wake of 9/11, it became evident that the FBI's counterintelligence operatives were not only alive and well but also far more advanced than what had existed in the 1970s. State aggression toward American Muslims ranged from detaining and prosecuting innocent Muslims (as in the case of Brandon

[12] Jeffrey Haas, *The Assassination of Fred Hampton: How the FBI and the Chicago Police Murdered a Black Panther* (Chicago: Lawrence Hill Books, 2010).
[13] The Hughes–Ryan Act of 1974 was the very first legislation that created accountability for the intelligence community. This required the US president to report all covert activity to select members of US Congress within a certain time period. The law resulted from disclosures of US covert military action kept hidden by official, falsified military reports. This resulted after the 1972 and 1973 hearings of the Senate Armed Services Committee investigated covert military operations in Cambodia, Laos, and North Vietnam in the early 1970s. Loch K. Johnson, "The Church Committee Investigation of 1975 and the Establishment of Modern Intelligence Accountability," *US National Security, Intelligence and Democracy: From the Church Committee to the War on Terror*, ed. Russell Miller (New York: Routledge, 2008), 38–44.
[14] John M. Crewdson, "Ex-Operative Says He Worked for F.B.I. to Disrupt Political Activities Up to '74," *The New York Times*, February 24, 1975. Anthony Lewis, "A COINTEL Story," *The New York Times*, March 29, 1976. The FBI's counterintelligence operatives came to public light in 1974. By that time US Attorney General William Saxbe claimed that the program had been disbanded as of 1971.

Mayfield, a White attorney from Oregon) to repressing the nation's Islamic charitable organizations.[15] Beyond this, a series of disclosures about anti-Muslim operations run by the FBI and frequently coordinated between the FBI and local police departments – NYPD, most notably – indicated that American Muslims had become the preeminent target of state-sponsored racism in the form of US counterintelligence operations. American Muslims were living under the exigencies of what US officials branded a "War on Terror" that was waged on a global scale. The very nature of this war – putatively not one aiming to conquer a nation-state or a specific territory but a battle against fear and a way of thinking – further collapsed the existing distinctions between the domestic and foreign domains of counterintelligence. Within the United States, Muslims were deemed public enemies by presumption. And intelligence officials programmatically trained field agents to recognize Islam proper as an extremist movement rooted in a foreign (non-Western), racial nature. In a training manual that was used as recently as 2009, FBI officials claimed that the religion of Islam transforms a "country's culture into 7th century Arabian ways." The FBI thus began preparing its agents to engage what it termed "the militant believer." The bureau's training also emphasized that it was the nature of "the Arab mind to be swayed more by words than ideas and more by ideas than facts."[16]

Since its inception in the twentieth century, the intelligence state had comprised not merely federal agencies but also an extensive network of entities at state and local levels. Most integral to counterintelligence operations against Muslims was the New York Police Department (NYPD). By the mid-1960s, before the FBI's counterintelligence tactics were formally branded as COINTELPRO, the bureau had already formalized a counterintelligence alliance with NYPD, the nation's largest police department. The bureau trained a select number of NYPD officers in surveillance, infiltration, and counterintelligence methods at the FBI academy and placed them in an elite NYPD unit, the bureau of Special Services and Investigation (BOSS or BOSSI). This unit functioned to infiltrate and undermine several Black antiracist organizations. BOSSI particularly created recurring conflict and fatal violence among

---

[15] Edward E. Curtis IV, *Muslims in America: A Short History* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009), 102–4.

[16] Federal Bureau of Investigation, "Investigative Interviewing in the Religious Extremist Culture," FBI training manual, p. 38, 54, 57. Available from http://demographicsunited .files.wordpress.com/2011/11/cultural-interviewing-interrogation-powerpoint1.pdf (accessed February 15, 2014).

African American Muslims, including the Nation of Islam, the Muslim Mosque Incorporated, and the Organization of African Unity, a secular, Pan-African coalition whose constituents were disproportionately Muslim. The racial imperatives of repressing Black liberationist activism, thus, had created a deep alliance between the FBI and NYPD.[17]

Partly because of its unusual size and location within the heart of a major world city, NYPD only continued to develop counterintelligence capacities that easily exceeded the scale of any other municipal policing entity. In the decades following the civil rights era, NYPD Commissioner Raymond Kelly was at the helm of the force. In 2002, Kelly took the unusual step of hiring a former CIA official, David Cohen, to direct NYPD's intelligence operations, refashioning the department's Intelligence Division to make repressing Muslims its core mission. This initiated a growing collaboration between the CIA and NYPD. With this recalibrated focus, the department became fully ensconced within the larger interests of the security state. In a ninety-page report entitled "Radicalization in the West: A Homegrown Threat," the NYPD Intelligence Division even identified Islamic radicalization as the chief threat to internal security, and it described the division's mission "to assist policymakers and law enforcement officials, both in Washington and throughout the country," in understanding how this Islamic radicalization occurred.[18]

During 2011, Kelly implemented a training video entitled *The Third Jihad*, which was viewed by about 1,500 police officers. The video claimed that American Muslims were working to destroy Western civilization from within the United States. The documentary also asserted that terrorism was just one form of the Muslim threat to US security. Unbeknownst to most citizens was the civilizational threat – a war being secretly waged by Muslims to destroy the Western nature of US society itself, transforming it into a Muslim society. Kelly himself appeared in the documentary, which was produced by the Clarion Fund, the same organization that created and distributed 28 million copies of *Obsession: Radical Islam's*

---

[17] Karl Evanzz, *The Messenger: The Rise and Fall of Elijah Muhammad* (New York: Pantheon, 1999), 507.

[18] See Inspector General David Buckley's memorandum and executive summary to CIA Director, 27 December 2011, "Review of the CIA-NYPD Relationship," https://www.documentcloud.org/documents/717864-cia-nypd-ig.html (accessed November 12, 2013). "The CIA and the NYPD," *The New York Times*, July 5, 2013. New York City Police Department, "Radicalization in the West: The Homegrown Threat," http://www.nyc.gov/html/nypd/downloads/pdf/public_information/NYPD_Report-Radicalization_in_the_West.pdf (accessed August 16, 2014).

War Against the West. NYPD officer Noel Leader, who cofounded the organization "100 Blacks in Law Enforcement Who Care," was especially critical of Kelly's vilification of Muslims. Leader immediately recognized the parallel between the NYPD's engagement with Muslims and the department's surveillance and repression of African Americans during the 1960s and 1970s. He referenced the Handschu Agreement as a case in point, which introduced legal restraints on NYPD's repression of African Americans during the 1970s, and he called for Raymond Kelly to resign or, failing that, for the city's mayor, Michael Bloomberg, to fire him.[19]

The single most important focus of domestic US intelligence, moreover, was the nation's mosques. In the 1960s and 1970s, the FBI cultivated informants among African Americans in various religious communities and their religious meeting spaces. In the twenty-first century, the focus became American Muslims and their worship centers, which the FBI began to regard as the central breeding ground for Islamic terrorism. Nearly half of US domestic terrorist prosecutions involved the use of informants (243 of 508), many of them incentivized by money (operatives were paid as much as $100,000 per assignment) or the need to work off criminal or immigration violations. By 2012, sting operations had resulted in prosecutions against 158 defendants. Of that total, 49 defendants had participated in plots led by an FBI operative attempting to persuade Muslim men to join the FBI's plots. With three exceptions, in fact, all of the high-profile domestic terror plots prosecuted between 2001 and 2011 were actually FBI stings.[20]

Although the US media were sensationally reporting terrorist plots foiled by FBI officials, the underside of these plots revealed an extensive scheme of more than 15,000 FBI informants and agents whose task was to lure American Muslims into pursuing ethically questionable activities that constituted legally defined acts of terrorism so they could be entrapped. Of the 508 cases of terrorism disclosed by the Department of Justice, moreover, the $3 billion annually appropriated to the FBI just for antiterrorism yielded only a handful of "actual terrorists." This bore

[19] Raymond Kelly, of course, remained in power as police commissioner and was even vetted by the Obama administration to direct the Department of Homeland Security. See transcript, "NYPD Commissioner Ray Kelly Urged to Resign after Police Conceal Role in Anti-Muslim Documentary," *Democracy Now*, January 27, 2012, http://www .democracynow.org/2012/1/27/nypd_commissioner_ray_kelly_urged_to (accessed September 27, 2013).

[20] Trevor Aaronson, *The Terror Factory: Inside the FBI's Manufactured War on Terrorism* (Brooklyn: Ig Publishing, 2013), 13.

an uncanny parallel to the FBI's initiative of the 1960s, when the bureau operated its own Klan organization putatively to entrap White supremacists. In the name of foiling the Klan, the agency was actually encouraging spiteful Whites to join the violent ranks of its racist, organized terror against African Americans. In the wake of 9/11, the FBI began regularly conducting terrorist cells to entrap terrorists. The bureau employed thousands of its spies, most of whom were devoted to counterterrorism, in coordination with militarized intelligence units from police departments throughout the country to target, sweep, surveil, and infiltrate the roughly 1,200 mosques and larger communities of American Muslims on a daily basis.[21]

As a result, American Muslims were forced to live in a constant state of fear of ongoing surveillance and infiltration. Virtually every American mosque was under the watch of at least one intelligence operative (from the FBI or a police department) trained in the use of highly sophisticated surveillance equipment to gather video and audio recordings of mosque events and conversations with other Muslims. This information was subsequently provided to FBI officials to decide how to target and perhaps woo unsuspecting Muslims into yet another FBI-designed terrorist plot that subsequently would be foiled in the nick of time, with the perpetrator paraded before the US media.

In the wake of 9/11, it became fully clear to scholars that the security state had racialized Islam. As with other forms of racialization, this elided the political realities of imperial domination. Instead of rendering visible the material, political stakes of conflicts, defenders of US imperialism pointed instead to the racial nature of Muslims or people of the so-called Arab world, who were in turn vilified as enemies of the West. This was precisely the tactic of the FBI when it declared in its 1955 training manual that the true religion of African American Muslims was primitivism. But by the early 2000s, not only African American Muslims but also the nation's non-Black Muslims were branded as promoters of anti-American hatred and religious fanaticism.

Among the most influential advocates of this racialization was the political scientist Samuel Huntington, who claimed that the fundamental conflicts of the post–Cold War era have been neither political nor ideological but essentially "civilizational." By civilization, Huntington meant the highest echelon of cultural entities. So, as he explained, although a village in northern Italy and another in southern Italy are both culturally

---

[21] Trevor Aaronson, *Terror Factory*, 13–15.

Italian, they share at the highest echelon a Western culture, beyond which no further "cultural entity" exists. In contrast to Western culture stand non-Western cultures. And in the wake of the Cold War's demise, Huntington argued, the chief threat to the West is what he termed the Confucian-Islamic connection. This consists of the religious civilizations of China and of Muslim polities.[22]

After the United States began devoting its unmatched military might to fighting Islamic terrorism in the early 2000s, Huntington became widely hailed as prescient and insightful. His admirers, however, seized not so much on his discussion of China but rather on his characterization of Islam. Huntington had argued that Islam was not merely a religion but a civilization that encompasses and unites at the highest echelon a basic societal type of people who are fundamentally at odds with the West as a civilization. This was both his brilliance and his error. In a sense, Huntington was wrong for all the right reasons. He never claimed to be talking about race. But of course the West is precisely a racial subjectivity. It is constituted as Europeanness, a subjectivity shaped by juxtaposition to non-Europeanness.[23] Huntington completely ignored the fact that the United States operates more than 1,000 military bases outside of the formal borders of the United States and continues to deploy murderous violence on a global scale to overthrow democracies, to institutionalize torture, and to target and undermine non-White states and political movements for self-determination. He claimed the central issue of international relations was the essential nature of Europeans versus that of non-Europeans – racial constitution – and not the struggle to control resources or to defend sovereignty. In this way, Huntington rendered a facile portrait of international conflict that became the standard rationale for the US War on Terror. Huntington's thesis of civilizational conflict, in this way, was centrally rooted in the racialization of Islam. Few spokespersons have made so explicit and concise the racial logic that drives the political imaginary of the contemporary US empire.[24]

---

[22] Samuel P. Huntington, "The Clash of Civilizations?" *Foreign Affairs* 72: 23–24, 46. Huntington subsequently published *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1996), in which he elaborated this thesis.

[23] Sohail Daulatzai, *Black Star, Crescent Moon*. Junaid Rana, *Terrifying Muslims: Race and Labor in the South Asian Diaspora* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2011). Gil Anidjar, *Semites: Race, Religion, Literature* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2008).

[24] Mahmood Mamdani compellingly examines this as "Culture Talk," which he notes is designed to obscure the political realities and conflicts that have given rise to political Islam (Mamdani prudently distinguishes political Islam from religious fundamentalism,

The ramifications of this racialization were far-reaching and impactful in the post-9/11 years. In October of 2003, for instance, Army Lieutenant General William G. "Jerry" Boykin began addressing numerous churches on the subject of religion, terrorism, and national security. He repeatedly asserted that the United States was a target of terrorism because it was a Christian nation, and he insisted that the United States could defeat Islamic terrorists only if "we come at them in the name of Jesus." Secretary of State Donald Rumsfeld affirmed Boykin's right to make such claims, even in uniform.[25] The fierce controversy over the so-called Ground Zero Mosque (it was actually a cultural center that included a Muslim prayer room) during the summer of 2010 made highly explicit the widespread, deep-seated conviction among mainstream US Americans that Islam is fundamentally alien and hostile to authentic US society.[26] The staunch opposition to a Muslim cultural center at Ground Zero was accompanied by protest against mosque construction throughout the United States. Anti-Muslim rallies also erupted in California, Wisconsin, and Tennessee to protest the construction of mosques during 2010. As one member of a Florida-based group devoted to defending Western civilization against Islam expressed the following:

As a mother and a grandmother, I worry.… I learned that in 20 years with the rate of the birth population, we will be overtaken by Islam, and their goal is to get people in Congress and the Supreme Court to see that Shariah is implemented. My children and grandchildren will have to live under that.[27]

In 2011 and 2012, US Representative Peter King organized congressional hearings to buttress his claim that US Muslims merited special scrutiny because their religion made them ill-fit for assimilating into Western culture and instead predisposed them to anti-Americanism and terrorism. The growing manifestation of anti-Islamic populism even grew to include efforts to create a preemptive ban against Sharia law in Oklahoma.[28]

---

the latter of which is inappropriately applied to Islamist movements). See his *Good Muslim, Bad Muslim*, 19–22.

[25] "Pentagon Intelligence Officer Says War on Terrorism is Battle Against Satan," Associated Press, October 16, 2003. Chalmers Johnson, *Nemesis: The Last Days of the American Republic* (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 2006), 4.

[26] "September 11 Attack Aftermath: Islamic Center Near Ground Zero Advances." *Facts On File World News Digest*.

[27] See Laurie Goodstein, "Across Nation, Mosque Projects Meet Opposition," *The New York Times*, August 7, 2010.

[28] See "Judge Issues Permanent Injunction on Oklahoma Sharia Law Ban," CNN, November 29, 2010 http://edition.cnn.com/2010/US/11/29/oklahoma.sharia.law/ (accessed October 2, 2013).

Accounting for Race

This history of the US intelligence state's relationship to African American Islam and to the numerous communities of the nation's non-Black Muslims that have emerged since the 1970s demands a rigorous understanding of what race is and what it does. The simple fact that religion can be racialized, for instance, renders analytically mute any phenotypic paradigm of race, as religion is not a phenotypic formation. Among the most popular treatments of race is that by sociologists Michael Omi and Howard Winant. In their widely influential *Racial Formation in the United States*, the authors examine race as a sociopolitical formation applied to specific types of bodies. Winant explains this succinctly in the following way:

At its most basic level, race can be defined as a concept that signifies and symbolizes sociopolitical conflicts and interests in reference to different types of human bodies. Although the concept of race appeals to biologically based human characteristics (so-called phenotypes), selection of these particular human features for the purposes of racial signification is always and necessarily a social and historical process. There is no biological basis for distinguishing human groups along the lines of "race," and the sociohistorical categories employed to differentiate among these groups reveal themselves, upon serious examination, to be imprecise if not completely arbitrary.[29]

Omi and Winant are highly representative of most scholarly studies of race in the sense that they treat race (1) as an essentially discursive formation rooted in thinking and attitudes (2) that is largely tied to bodies and rooted in phenotype. Once they have identified race in this way, they then proceed to "deconstruct" it by demonstrating the fallacy of encoding phenotypic difference with social meanings. This epitomizes the critical, deconstructive analysis of race that has triumphed in contemporary scholarship.[30]

In contrast to studies such as those of Omi and Winant is the work by scholars who engage seriously with the relationship that race bears with colonialism – in other words with state practices and political

---

[29] Howard Winant, *The New Politics of Race: Globalism, Difference, Justice* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2004), 235 n.4. See also Howard Winant, *The World is a Ghetto: Race and Democracy since World War Two* (New York: Basic Books, 2001), 317 n.1.

[30] It would be difficult to exaggerate the dominance of this approach to explaining race; examples are legion. Among the best known are Audrey Smedley, *Race in North America: History of a Worldview*, 3rd ed. (Boulder: Westview Press, 2007). George Fredrickson, *Racism: A Short History* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2009). Nell Irvin Painter, *The History of White People* (New York: Norton, 2010).

order. Foremost in this arena is the political theorist Barnor Hesse, who has critiqued what he describes as the fallacy of treating race as thinking or a set of concepts. Although certain ways of thinking can and do result from race, Hesse explains, *race is not "thinking."* Race is a colonial process that has constituted "Europeanness and non-Europeanness" through material, discursive, and noncorporeal domains. Encoding race through phenotypic difference, he writes, "is but one historical symptom and political formation of race through modernity."[31] Given the scale on which racial governance has historically been articulated through reference to "territory, climate, culture, history, [and] religion," it appears that the body was not so much the "ubiquitous metaphor" of race as its "privileged metonym."[32] Hesse demonstrates that racialization is a *governing* formation – it is a process that has structured the *political rule* of Europeans over non-Europeans. Racialization becomes articulated, thus, as "a series of onto-colonial taxonomies of land, climate, history, bodies, customs, language" and religion – "all of which became sedimented metonymically, metaphorically, and normatively as *the assembled attributions of "race."*[33] Hesse is distinctive for explaining race so succinctly as a system of governing through the colonial relation of power. A number of other scholars, however, occupy the same theoretical orbit as Hesse. Geraldine Heng, for instance, has likewise emphasized that race is a political formation rooted in establishing a colonial differential structure of power. Heng departs sharply from the common fixation on phenotype among theorists of race. She writes,

So tenacious has been scientific racism's account of race, with its entrenchment of high modernist racism as the template of *all* racisms, that it is still routinely understood, in everyday life and much of scholarship, that *properly* racial logic and behavior *must* reference biology and the body as their referent.[34]

In departing from this exclusively somato-centric approach to understanding race, Heng emphasizes that race is not a "substantive content" fixed in form and always appearing the same. It is, rather, a "structural relationship" of social power that produces "a hierarchy of peoples for differential treatment." Although critical race theorists, she observes,

---

[31] Barnor Hesse, "Racialized Modernity: An Analytics of White Mythologies," *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 30, no. 4 (July 2007): 646.

[32] Hesse, "Racialized Modernity," 653.

[33] Ibid., 659.

[34] Geraldine Heng, "The Invention of Race in the European Middle Ages I: Race Studies, Modernity, and the Middle Ages," *Literature Compass* 8, no. 5 (2011): 319. Emphasis in the original.

have widely acknowledged and examined this mutability of race – the capacity of race to manifest through multiple forms and modes – they have nevertheless typically limited their conception of race to something that happens strictly and exclusively within the *temporality of modernity*.[35] But Heng has persuasively demonstrated that race was operant in medieval Christendom as early as the 1200s and was at work in Christian governance over Jewish populations throughout Western Europe. The racialization of Islam on display in the wake of 9/11, she continues, constitutes "a moment in which cultural race and racisms, and *religious* race, jostle alongside racism-understood-as-somatic/biological-determinations...."[36] The hegemony of somato-centric approaches to theorizing race, in other words, now appears to be just that – an ideological fixation that seems unjustified in light of the actual history of biopolitics in both premodern and modern times.

This analysis is further manifested in the recent work of María Elena Martínez. In her *Genealogical Fictions: Limpieza de Sangre, Religion, Gender in Colonial Mexico*, Martinez likewise concludes that scholars who insist that race is necessarily about biology and phenotypic difference and who demand that race can be documented only when attested by a specific grammar that names race as *race* or a cognate term and is thus *linguistically recognizable* as such to professional researchers, are ignoring the actual work that race performs and are naively fixated on linguistic signifiers when they should be concerned with the work that race does and recognizing the existence and deployment of race on that basis. She argues that the theological and juridical system of *limpieza de sangre* operating in Iberia and the Americas in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries was nothing less than a system of race.[37]

What we have at this point is a fundamental failure of somato-centric theories of race to account for racialization before the period of so-called modernity. This situation, moreover, coexists with contemporary scholarship on the racialization of Islam that likewise exceeds the explicative capacities of rigidly somato-centric theoretical accounts of race. As Juanaid Rana has asked, how do we account for the racialization of American Muslims if religion cannot be a race? As he demonstrates in his *Terrifying Muslims*, the proper rejoinder is that religion can in fact be a race. In other words, religion can be racialized in order to constitute

---

[35] Heng, "Invention of Race in the European Middle Ages I," 323, 324.
[36] Ibid., 319. Emphasis in the original.
[37] María Elena Martínez, *Genealogical Fictions: Limpieza de Sangre, Religion, and Gender in Colonial Mexico* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2008).

part of the assemblage of differential essences that ground the exercise of governing through the colonial relation of power.[38]

This colonial relation of power is the form of political order through which a polity (viz., a state, be it monarchical or democratic) rules a population by treating its members as political aliens. This means the dominated population is governed as a political unit whose relationship to the political community of the ruling state is denied a pristine status. Racialization is achieved through this colonial form of political order when this dominated population is marked as perpetually, ineluctably alien. They are treated as incapable of truly belonging to the state. In the eyes of the state, neither the passage of time nor the adoption of new cultural forms alters this alien status. The most practical consequence of this colonial relation is the denial of the right to have rights. But in the terms of racial logic, those who are colonially governed exist as outsiders and political enemies because by their very nature (i.e., according to the coda of their racialization), they are people of a fundamentally different type (this is "differential essence"). They are *in* the society but not *of* it, even if they have been born in that society. They exist in contrast to other populations of the state who enjoy a pristine relationship with the political community of that state. Where this colonially governed population resides beyond the formal geopolitical borders of the state, we have an external colony. Where this population resides within the borders of the ruling state, we have an internal colony. The colonial relation itself, however, is constituted without regard for spatial distance within or beyond political borders.

This is essentially the analysis of race that Martin Delany advanced in the nineteenth century as he sought to navigate the divide between Black self-determination and the quest for membership within the political community of the United States. Delany argued that understanding race required attention to politics instead of phenotype or notions of prejudice. His critique resonates with recent theories of race that attend to colonialism and state practices. In this analysis, it becomes evident that race is not phenotype. Nor is race is a fictive code that overlays biology. And race is certainly not mere discourse. It is not feelings or attitudes or hatred, although it has certainly given rise to these. Race is a state practice of ruling people within a political order that perpetually places some within and others outside of the political community through which the constitution of the state is conceived. This conceptual context is essential

---

[38] Junaid Rana, *Terrifying Muslims*.

to interpreting the racialization of Islam and the national security paradigm within American democracy.[39]

American Islam, Democracy, and Counterintelligence

The parallel between the FBI's repression of African American Muslims and the post-9/11 racialization of Islam is not coincidental. The FBI's engagement with African American Muslims before the 1970s, rather, profoundly shaped the racial repression of Islam on display in subsequent decades as the nation's population of non-Black Muslims increased. This was due to several factors. Most importantly, African American Muslims were *Muslims*. And they constituted the majority of the nation's Islamic population until the immigration reforms of the 1960s. In other words, the history of the FBI's engagement with African American Muslims since the 1930s *is* the early history of the United States racializing Islam under the national security paradigm. It is important to get this right, because the temptation is to replicate the FBI's disingenuous claims that African Americans who identified as Muslims lacked the adequate intellectual constitution to grasp that they were imagining themselves to be Muslims and were merely delusional. Scholars, in other words, should avoid replicating the ideology of the FBI's training manual and must instead study the deployment of that ideology.

Islam as Racial Religion

Because African Americans generally constituted the face of American Islam for the FBI before the 1960s (i.e., before the Immigration Reform Act of 1965 ended the racial quota system), the FBI had become accustomed to engaging American Muslims as a racial population whose interests and aspirations contravened the imperatives of the United States as a racial state. This means the FBI had cultivated since the 1930s an institutional disposition toward Islam that was preeminently racializing. And the bureau continued to engage Muslims in this fashion after the 1960s

---

[39] Race is not an ineluctable formation in the context of the arrival or movement of new populations. Important counterexamples existed among the numerous Native polities such as those of the Choctaw, Chickasaw, and Creek nations that automatically naturalized foreigners and incorporated them into the political community. In a decidedly perverse turn of events, this practice was exploited by Anglo-American settlers to undermine Native sovereignty. See Sylvester A. Johnson, "Religion and Empire in Mississippi, 1790–1833," in *Gods of the Mississippi*, ed. Michael Pasquier (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2012).

as the American Muslim population became increasingly non-Black. In this context, the FBI branded hate-based violence as the racial essence of African American Islam. This involved two subtle but significant factors: the bureau's agents portrayed targeted subjects as atavistically violent, and they asserted repeatedly that these Muslims lacked any rational assessment of power or any ethical legitimacy in their critique of the US racial state. Putatively, they hated White America because Whites had implemented a superior working ethic and greater intellect to create a higher standard of living, personal success, and political might.

During both the civil rights era and the post-9/11 years, the FBI's engagement with American Muslims was shaped by the material and political conditions of US imperialism, which manifested through domestic (internal) and foreign structures of colonialism. By these terms, the FBI engaged Muslims as inherently and incorrigibly alien to the US body politic. It was not necessary for these Muslims to commit crimes, perpetrate violence, or physically endanger the lives of White Americans. By their very existence – again, constituted as racial subjects through colonial governance – they threatened the political community of the US racial state. This is precisely the ethnocratic condition of race-struggle or race-war that Michel Foucault described in his account of the racial state. In both its early and contemporary history of engaging American Muslims, the US intelligence state rendered US Muslims not merely as criminals but particularly as racial enemies of the nation, *from whom American society must be defended*.[40]

By formalizing COINTELPRO in 1967 as a distinct, uniform protocol, the FBI created a new and distinct phase in the nation's larger intelligence complex. It was at this point that federal, state, and local officials began repressing African Americans as the *chief* threat to the internal security of the United States. According to FBI Director J. Edgar Hoover, Black people exceeded communism as a racial threat to internal security by 1967. Prior to his assassination in 1965, the Muslim minister Malik Shabazz (Malcolm X) was regarded as the most volatile personification of racial threat to America. Within two years, the FBI explicitly identified Martin Luther King Jr. in this capacity. This was the context for the bureau's decision to launch COINTELPRO as a means of destroying racial threat. These domestic counterintelligence tactics were never limited to specifically racial deployments. However, the immense scale on

---

[40] I allude here to Michel Foucault's analysis of race war in his lectures at the Collège de France, posthumously published under the same name, *Il faut défendre la société*.

which counterintelligence has proceeded as a form of racial containment or race war attests to its racial origins and demonstrates the degree to which counterintelligence became a central practice of the racial state. The FBI's concentration of resources ($3 billion per annum) for containing a continuing racial threat (not to mention the resources of the CIA, NSA, and a host of other intelligence agencies) in the early 2000s is an institutional paradigm that was set in motion by COINTELPRO.

To be sure, counterintelligence has been strictly concerned with the category of political threat, not crime per se. So, gesturing to the innocence of counterintelligence targets misses the point. As the FBI transformed law enforcement at every level of government into coherent institutions of political counterintelligence, it also drastically altered the form and function of patrolling, arresting, and detaining. This, most succinctly, was the birth of mass incarceration. This deployment was never directed exclusively at Blacks. But the American racial state did single out African Americans as exceptional, unparalleled targets for mass incarceration. COINTELPRO thus became the central, foundational element in fully transforming incarceration into a massive institution of racial containment under the national security paradigm. In direct consequence of this, US prisons and foreign prisons based on the US maximum security (or super-max) model eventually became the preeminent institution for concentrating Muslims as a racial threat.

Two observations are at stake here. First, it was during the 1960s that the United States began to detain African Americans in record numbers as political prisoners. This was *not* the first time that the United States held political prisoners. It was, however, the period when the carceral institution became a central element of the national security protocol. At local levels, municipalities throughout the American South employed incarceration as the weapon of choice to attack civil rights activism, to stymie movements like the Black Panther Party and the Republic of New Afrika, and to terrorize political targets acting individually or as members of Black liberationist organizations. At the federal level, this was achieved through maximum security and, subsequently, super-maximum security facilities. Between 1961 and 1963, for example, 20,000 men, women, and children were arrested for participating in civil rights demonstrations. Richard Nixon's declaration of law-and-order, moreover, was quickly elaborated as the war on drugs, which specifically targeted African Americans and, increasingly, Latinos.[41]

---

[41] Michelle Alexander, *The New Jim Crow: Mass Incarceration in the Age of Colorblindness* (New York: New Press, 2010), 37.

The militarized engagement of American Muslims in the post-9/11 era was produced by the militarized policing that municipalities throughout the United States created in the 1960s, in collaboration with the FBI, with the aim of destroying Black political radicalism – also known as Black extremism. Policing was fundamentally reconceived as a military enterprise – specifically through SWAT – to conduct racial warfare within the borders of the United States against Black activists. This initiated a wave of militarization across US police departments. But more basically, the entire enterprise of law enforcement was fundamentally reconceived, in departure from policing as engagement with citizens qua members of a political community symbolizing consanguinity with the state. Instead, policing was reframed at the level of policy and practice as militarized engagement with *enemies of the state* in the same sense that military combat was rooted in the conquest of members of a foreign, enemy polity. Police departments acquired military weapons (often in the form of freely donated military surplus), hired military veterans (this was the specific protocol of the first anti-Black SWAT units), employed military tactics (with a special fondness for predawn raids), organized special intelligence divisions, adopted military terminology (police departments began conducting "strikes" on "targets"), and collaborated closely with the FBI to respond to national security threats.[42]

Because Islam had been racialized, American Muslims were constituted as a coherent, unified population that was incapable of pristinely exemplifying Western subjectivity (i.e., Europeanness). By the terms of their racialization, Muslims might live in the United States, but they did so as ineluctably incorrigible aliens. In the estimation of the US intelligence complex, they were internal enemies who threatened the US political community – the American people. This threat, moreover, was not merely a lethal threat that endangered the physical lives of the nation's citizens. Rather, it was also racial because it supposedly posed a fundamental hazard to the civilizational identity – that is, the racial vitality – of the United States as a Western (i.e., racially European) polity. Whether they were described as "hostile to the West" (in the language of NYPD's intelligence division) or as devoted to destroying the Western nature of the United States (in the words of the Clarion Fund), American Muslims were relegated beyond the pale of the body politic in a long-standing

---

[42] Radley Balko, *Rise of the Warrior Cop: The Militarization of America's Police Forces* (New York: Public Affairs, 2013), 49–80. Ward Churchill and Jim Vander Wall, *Agents of Repression: The FBI's Secret Wars against the Black Panther Party and the American Indian Movemen*t (Cambridge, MA: South End Press, 2002), 36–38.

pattern of colonial governance. This clearly demonstrated the racial paradigm of counterintelligence.

Democracy, Colonialism, and Racial Formation

The racialization of Islam demonstrates in stark terms how *democracy is implicated in racial formation and the colonial relation of power*. How is this so? Especially given the virtuous legacy that democracy enjoys in the popular and scholarly domains? The problem lies with the fact that the colonial relation of power inheres when one population, who constitute themselves as the body politic, governs other populations by designating them incapable of authentic membership in the political community of the state. The emergence of republican democracy as a specific political order, of course, became possible precisely because the monarchical state ceased to be the exclusive means of constituting the subjectivity of the state. Alongside the monarchical state there arose the "nation-state" (or alternatively, the people-state). Whereas the monarchical state was formally rendered and represented through the political body of the monarch (a king or a queen), the people-state was instead rendered through the political community comprising individuals among nobility and beyond, extending to those of low social standing (as examined in Chapter 3). Edmund Morgan referred to this as "inventing the people."[43] In his earlier corpus, Michel Foucault called this the invention of the population. But subsequently, in his lectures at the Collège de France, Foucault described this emergence as the creation of the racial state. He argued that Western European statecraft was able to produce the people-state precisely because political officials began to govern based on the economy of a shared political nature – a racial constitution – that demanded protection from political others who also lived in the same state and who inhabited the same society but who were nevertheless extraneous to the shared political nature of those constituting the people-state. What emerged, he argued, was a style of governing that was rooted in the imperatives of defending society from these racial others. This was the peacetime politics of race war.[44]

---

[43] Edmund Morgan, *Inventing the People: The Rise of Popular Sovereignty in England and America* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1988).

[44] Michel Foucault, *Society Must Be Defended: Lectures at the Collège de France, 1975–76*, ed. Mauro Bertani and Alessandro Fontana (New York: Picador, 2003). Foucault argued that peacetime between states veiled an ongoing war within states, and this internal struggle was race war, the struggle by the state and its political community to dominate and extirpate internal enemies, those who lived in the society but who did not belong to it. It was from these that the state needed to defend the society.

The sociologist Michael Mann has proffered a similar analysis of democracy using different language in his comparative sociological study of democratic states. Mann, who is one of the few scholars to include attention to non-Western states in his study of democracy (he examines the Cherokee nation), accounts for the ethnocratic function of democracies. They endow the people with ruling power, but not everyone gets to be "the people." Only some, he observes, constitute the people. Democracies are thus ethnocracies, and the *ethnos* that rules is a particular group – racial, ethnic, or linguistic populations, to employ his language – certainly not literally all of the people living in a given state. Because democracies are ethnocratic, they invest in ethnic cleansing along a scale that extends from mild to the most extreme form – genocide. Mann demonstrates, in fact, that ethnic cleansing is largely a symptom not of ancient monarchical states but of modern democracies. By this account, democracy is not an innocent, virtuous political order. It is, rather, the product of the colonial relation of power, and it takes that relation to its extreme manifestation.[45]

This helps to clarify what might otherwise seem to be counterintuitive and contradictory – that the United States, the world's first and greatest democracy, is not only a racial state but is also one whose euphoric populism in the age of a global war on terror has subjected US Muslims to a terrifying experience of constant surveillance, infiltration, and repression that has debilitated their communities, bred fear and distrust, and portrayed Muslims as internal enemies of the United States.

The racialization of Islam is not a contradiction of US democracy. It is a deeply troubling reminder and powerful manifestation of democracy. Foucault once quipped in his genealogical study of sexuality that "we must at the same time conceive of sex without the law, and power without the king."[46] It is with similar analytical urgency that scholars must be able to conceive of race without the somatic body, of religion without the creed. We must understand in the most rigorous fashion how race performs its work as colonial governance through the structures of democratic empire. And we must begin to appreciate religion as, at times, a racialized formation, one located squarely at the center of biopolitics. Only then can we perceive the entanglement of religion, race, and colonialism.

[45] Michael Mann, *The Dark Side of Democracy* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005).
[46] Michel Foucault, *History of Sexuality*, vol. 1, *An Introduction*, trans. Robert Hurley (New York: Pantheon, 1978), 91.