FRAMING POST-9/11 SECURITY:
A FEMINIST ANALYSIS OF THE SECURITIZATION OF THE CANADIAN STATE AND THE EXPERIENCES OF CANADIAN MUSLIM COMMUNITIES

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Since 9/11, North American and European state governments have pursued national security strategies designed to protect the state and its citizens from the ubiquitous threat of global terrorism. Examples of such strategies in Canada include the Anti-Terrorism Act and the controversial usage of the Canadian Security Certificate process for the detention of foreign nationals and permanent residents. Ironically, these *security* strategies have not advanced the security of some citizens and residents and, in some instances, have contributed to their *insecurity*, leaving them vulnerable to stereotyping, racial profiling and acts of intimidation. Further, an increasing climate of Islamophobia in Canadian society reflects and reinforces the Orientalizing myths that inform the securitization process and the broader "civilizing" mandate of the war-on terror. In this climate, Muslim women, in particular, are rendered vulnerable to racial profiling, hate crimes and intimidation. Such experiences of insecurity and the fear that it generates suggests that we need to unpack our current state-based conceptions of security, particularly as they have evolved since 9/11, and understand the concept of security as it is operationalized and experienced within the state.

Feminist interrogations that begin by examining *how* security is experienced by the most vulnerable and marginalized communities in Canada reveal a gendered security discourse that perpetuates racialized conceptions of citizenship and belonging. In this paper, I consider the experiences of Muslim, Arab, South Asian and other Canadian ethno-cultural communities that are perceived to be a threat to national security and values. Through an examination of government policy changes and media reports, I begin by analyzing the changing Canadian security landscape and its implication for Muslim (or presumed to be Muslim) Canadian residents and citizens. High profile security debacles like Project Thread and Canada's role in the detention and deportation of Canadian citizen Maher Arar reveal the Orientalist mythologies at work in the new security agenda.

Next, I analyze the gendered impacts of the national security discourse and policy changes on Canadian Muslim women, considering the ways in which the war-on-terror script continues to frame Muslim women as subjugated victims of a tyrannical religion and, indeed, in need of saving. Women who did go "off-script" following the events of 9/11 were publicly reprimanded by politicians and in the popular press. I then analyze similarly gendered constructions of Muslim men who are characterized as at risk of "radicalizing" by the state and therefore pose a threat to national security. While the Anti-terrorism Act provides for inter-cultural dialogue through the Cross-cultural Roundtable on Security, the Roundtable's work has been largely invisible and wholly underwhelming. I argue that the new national security discourse, developed and enforced by the state and reiterated and reinforced through the media, undermines the experience of belonging, the guarantee of civil liberties and, ultimately, the security of freedom for these identity communities.

A Critical Feminist International Relations Approach

The 'third debate' in International Relations (IR) in the 1980s and 1990s opened up the largely elite-focused and state-centric field to critical, feminist and post-structuralist approaches, where different agents, locations and levels of analysis were prioritized.[1] However, the post-9/11 return to a familiar state-centric focus and accompanying statist conceptions of security[2] presents

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[1] Christine Sylvester, "Whither the International at the End of IR," *Millennium: Journal of International Studies* 35, no. 3 (2007): 553.

[2] For a discussion on how mainstream IR analyses remain committed to a core set of assumptions, which include the prioritization of the state over other actors; granting moral status to the state to manage relationships inside and outside its borders; under-theorizing gender, ethnicity and identity; and emphasizing explanation-based analyses over the development of frameworks based on understanding in the international realm, see: Steve Smith, "Singing Our World into Existence: International Relations Theory and September 11," *International Studies Quarterly* 48 (2004).

a particular challenge for scholars who have been working within critical IR frameworks.[3] Jan Jindy Pettman observes that despite the work of feminist IR theorists, a renewed emphasis on terrorism and security,

> … trump all that careful unravelling of simplistic, naturalised understandings and the tracing of the complexities, contradictions, shifting alliances and multiple identities, contesting and reconfiguring power relations … coercive patriotism limit what can be asked, or said, and make us politically suspect—even before we get to explicitly engage in gender talk.[4]

Feminist IR approaches establish how hierarchies of power, based on hegemonic conceptions of gender and other classifications, affect those actors that are otherwise overlooked in mainstream analyses.[5] Further, some feminist IR treatments rethink what counts as knowledge by observing political events from the perspective of women's experiences.[6] Nearly two decades ago, Cynthia Enloe asked: "where are the women" in international politics.[7] Hilary Charlesworth and Christine Chinkin remind us that all of the central actors that came to the fore in the immediate aftermath of 9/11 were men: the hijackers, the brave firefighters and heroic police officers, the rescue workers, the men in the White House, and most of the major actors on the international stage. "The identity of the participants in these processes is significant. Women's voices and experiences are regarded as unimportant when issues of 'homeland security,' war, and retribution are at stake."[8]

The experiences of women are 'rendered invisible' when our analysis is focused on public events and figures and power politics.[9] By centering the marginalized Muslim and Muslim woman subject in my analysis, I attempt to draw out some of the gendered and racialized conceptions of belonging that inform the new Canadian security agenda.[10] Just as the Arab or Muslim man-as-terrorist trope seems evident in the treatment of Canadian residents and citizens under the Anti-terrorism Act, so too does the similarly Orientalist and gendered trope of Muslim woman-as-oppressed.

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[3] Jan Jindy Pettman, "Feminist International Relations After 9/11," *Brown Journal of World Affairs* X, no. 2 (2004): 90.

[4] Jan Jindy Pettman, "Reflections on the Gendering of States, Sovereignty and Security in the Study of International Relations," *Intersections: Gender, History and Culture in the Asian Context* 15 (2007), http://wwwsshe.murdoch.edu.au/intersections/issue15/pettman.htm (27 January 2008).

[5] J. Ann Tickner, "Feminism meets International Relations: Some Methodological Issues," in *Feminist Methodologies for International Relations*, ed. Brooke A. Ackerly, Maria Stern, and Jacqui True (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 40.

[6] For example, see: Ibid., 21.; Annica Kronsell, "Methods for Studying Silences: Gender Analysis in Institutions of Hegemonic Masculinity," in *Feminist Methodologies for International Relations*, ed. Maria Stern Brooke A. Ackerly, Jacqui True (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 127.

[7] See: Cynthia Enloe, *Bananas, Beaches, and Bases: Making Feminist Sense of International Politics* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990).

[8] Hilary Charlesworth and Christine Chinkin, "Editorial comment: Sex, Gender and September 11," *The American Journal of International Law* 96, no. 3 (2002): 600-601.

[9] (191)

[10] Bina D'Costa, "Marginalized Identity: New Frontiers of Research for IR?," in *Feminist Methodologies for International Relations*, ed. Maria Stern, Brooke A. Ackerly, and Jacqui True (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 129. Pettman, "Feminist International Relations After 9/11," 91.

The Changing Canadian Security Landscape

The Canadian government began instituting a series of security measures designed to protect Canadians from acts of terror in the aftermath of 9/11. Many of these measures have come under criticism from Canadian community organizations that claim these measures specifically target, and therefore unnecessarily harass, Canadian citizens and residents who are visibly of Middle Eastern or South Asian decent. Far-reaching changes were enacted three months after the 9/11 attacks through Bill C-36, now called the Anti-Terrorism Act. The Act introduced amendments to the Official Secrets Act (becoming the Security of Information Act), the Canada Evidence Act, the Proceeds of Crime and Terrorist Financing Act, the Canadian Security Intelligence Act, the National Defence Act and the Charities Registration (Security Information) Act. The Act also provided for the creation of the Public Safety Act to amend the Aeronautics Act and allow the government to, for example, collect and use information on airline passengers.[11] A controversial no-fly list was also introduced in June 2007 to alert airlines to people the Canadian government considers a threat to security.[12]

In 2004, the government issued Canada's first comprehensive national security policy.[13] It earmarked $690 million for new security initiatives including, for example, the creation of the Integrated Threat Assessment Centre (ITAC) and a new Department of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness.[14] The ITAC, housed in CSIS, was formed in response to Shelia Fraser's report on the lack of intelligence gathering coordination. It brings together a variety of security agencies and departments such as the Canada Border Services Agency, CSIS, DND, the Privy Council Office, Public Safety and the RCMP.[15]

These sweeping legislative and institutional changes create unprecedented powers of investigation, detention, and prosecution. Some legal observers and other critics argue that these changes represent a knee jerk reaction to the events of 9/11 and not a sound national security policy.[16] For example, legal scholar Lesley Jacobs argues that the Anti-terrorism Act was not intended to be an emergency measure to investigate acts of terror, evidenced by the fact that the Act is not subject to a sunset clause.[17] Instead, the Act entails *preventative* measures, through risk assessment, that necessarily involves criminal profiling.[18]

> The problem with risk profiling is that it involves identifying at least some of the "people" as terrorism risks and in this way divides the population into camps based on risk profiles. The upshot is that the security and freedom of those deemed to be

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[11] "*Implementation of the Public Safety Act, 2002,"* (05 February 2008); available from http://ww2.ps-sp.gc.ca/publications/news/2005/20050805-3_e.asp

[12] Caroline Alphonso, "First day of 'no-fly' list trouble free," *The Globe and Mail*, 19 June 2007.

[13] "*Terms of Reference: Securing an Open Society: Canada's National Security Policy* " (12 December 2007); available from http://www.publicsafety.gc.ca/prg/ns/ccrs/ccrstor-eng.aspx

[14] "*Executive Summary: Securing an Open Society: Canada's National Security Policy,"* (12 December 2007); available from http://www.publicsafety.gc.ca/pol/ns/secpol04-eng.aspx

[15] Jim McNulty, "Q&A: Interview with Anne McLellan," *The Province*, 8 September 2004. For information on the ITAC, see: "*Backgrounder 13: The Integrated Threat Assessment Centre,"*April 2007 (15 January 2008); available from http://www.csis-scrs.gc.ca/en/newsroom/backgrounders/backgrounder13.asp, "*Backgrounder: Integrated Threat Assessment Centre,"* (01 February 2008); available from http://www.csis-scrs.gc.ca/en/itac/itac.asp

[16] See, for example: Ronald Joel Daniels, Patrick Macklem, and Kent Roach (eds). *The Security of Freedom: Essays on Canada's Anti-Terrorism Bill* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2001), 7.; "Submission on Bill C-36: Anti-Terrorism Act," (The Canadian Bar Association, 2001), 13.

[17] Lesley A. Jacobs, "Securer Freedom for Whom: Risk Profiling and the new Anti-Terrorism Act," *UBC Law Review* 36, no. 2 (2003): 376-378.

[18] Ibid.: 378-379.

risks is compromised for the security and freedom of those people who are not.[19]

Indeed, as Justice Minister Anne McLellan remarked in the wake of the 9/11 attacks, the "balance" between the rights of the individual and between collective security considerations has shifted.[20]

In addition to these new laws and policies, other controversial security tools that the state uses include the Security Certificate Program. This program, part of the Immigration and Refugee Act, allows the state to detain foreign nationals and permanent residents. Through the Security Certificate process, a federal judge evaluates a Certificate in a secret hearing, without the detainee present, to determine what details of the detention must remain classified. Since 9/11, six certificates have been issued and a new detention centre has been built in Kingston to house detainees. All of the outstanding Security Certificates are for men of Middle Eastern origin. International human rights observer Amnesty International finds that the Security Certificate process "falls far short of international standards for fair trials and may result in arbitrary detention and violation of the right to liberty. Detainees are effectively denied their right to prepare a defence and mount a meaningful challenge to the lawfulness of their detention. The right to appeal is also denied."[21] Although detainees can choose to be deported to their country of origin, this is not an option for those who would be under threat of torture or death if they are returned.[22] In a landmark Supreme Court ruling in February 2007, the Court gave Parliament one year to address the part of the process that allows confidential information to be used in court. Although the federal government has recently tweaked the process by creating a "special advocate" system whereby court appointees will be privy to some of the secret information,[23] the Canadian Bar Association and the Federation of Law Societies of Canada agree that the changes still leave the program unconstitutional.[24] In my view, the process clearly establishes, along ethno-racial lines, which Canadian citizens and residents are entitled to "fundamental justice" before the law and which are not. In a hostile post 9/11 environment, the state, the national security agencies and other institutions define who belongs and for whose "security" is being protected.

Canada's track record in implementing these new or revived security measures has generated some skepticism. Two of the most controversial cases include the preventative detention of twenty-three men from Pakistan and India as part of Project Thread and Canada's role in the deportation of Maher Arar, a Canadian citizen, from the United States to Syria where he was imprisoned and tortured. In the case of Project Thread, although security officers found "no known threat," many of the men were subsequently deported – not as a security threat, but for fraudulent student visas. In the case of Maher Arar, Justice Dennis O'Connor, head of the Commission of Inquiry into the Actions of Canadian Official in Relation to Maher Arar, found

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[19] Ibid.: 382.

[20] Daniel Leblanc, "80 per cent would back national ID cards," *Globe and Mail* 6 October 2001.

[21] Amnesty International, "*Canada: Security Certificates -- time for Reform,*"2006 (28 January 2008); available from http://www.amnesty.ca/take_action/actions/canada_certificates.php

[22] See: Leila Zerrougui, Soledad Villagra de Biedermann, and Mohammad Hashemi, "*Working Group on Arbitrary Detention: Press Conference by the Working Group on Arbitrary Detention of the United Nations Commission on Human Rights,*" Press Release United Nations, 15 June 2005 (20 February 2008); available from http://www.unhchr.ch/huricane/huricane.nsf/view01/3BF0D474B35B1526C125702200470A2A?opendocument

[23] Colin Freeze, Tu Thanh Ha, and Omar El Akkad, "Secret files against terror suspects revealed," *Globe and Mail*, 23 February 2008.

[24] Richard Foot, "Wanted," *The Ottawa Citizen*, 29 January 2008.

that there is no evidence to suggest that Arar is or ever was a threat to national security.[25] O'Connor's damning report finds that information provided by the RCMP "very likely" informed the US authorities decision to detain and then deport Arar to Syria.[26] Further, Canadian officials deliberately tried to discredit Arar by leaking false information to the press.[27] Given Canada's hurried enactment of far-reaching legislation and the extent of several high-profile national security investigation fiascos, I suggest that the state is crafting a racialized conception of belonging that clearly renders the safety, security and freedom of some Canadian residents, such as the deported students and the treatment of Maher Arar, more vulnerable.

The war-on-terror script: Constructing Muslim women post-9/11

The securitization of the Canadian state rests on racialized and gendered constructions of belonging that are evident in popular representations of the 'Other' in the broader war-on-terror project. In the weeks that followed the attacks, women were introduced into the subsequent war-on-terror script – as oppressed Muslim women in need of saving by the West. This script was repeated in the popular press, and came to inform public dialogue on the Western Muslim women that may also be in need of saving. As Pettman writes: "They figured in a familiar guise, as symbols of difference, of Otherness, as border guards of the boundaries between Us and Them, marking their culture/religion, lack of civilization, barbarity, and unreformed religion."[28] Suddenly, and unusually, Laura Bush and Cherie Blair were organizing very public social projects in support of Afghan women. [29] For example, Laura Bush used the entire time slot allocated for one of President George W. Bush's weekly radio addresses in November 2001 to deliver her message: "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."[30] On the same day as Laura Bush's unprecedented radio address, the US State Department released a report entitled: *The Taliban's War Against Women*.[31] Women were clearly scripted as victims and in need of rescue from US led forces.[32] Similarly, Cherie Blair launched a campaign for Afghan women's rights and education, stating to the press: "The women of Afghanistan still have a spirit that belies their unfair, down-trodden image … We need to help them free that spirit and give them their voice back, so they can create the better Afghanistan we all want to see."[33]

Krista Hunt describes this process of including women as victims as the "(en)gendering of the war on terror." Hunt argues that the Bush administration "embedded feminism in the war in Afghanistan in order to favourably shape public perception that this was a war of liberation and to gain strong support for the project of 'civilizing' Afghanistan."[34] The rest of the world picked up on this narrative and have added women's rights and human rights to their list of reasons to support the war-on-terror. In the Canadian context, Prime Minister Stephen Harper, along with

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[25] "Commission of Inquiry into the Actions of Canadian Officials in Relation to Maher Arar. Press Release: Arar Commission releases its findings on the handling of the Maher Arar case," (2006), http://www.ararcommission.ca/eng/ReleaseFinal_Sept18.pdf (18 September), 2.

[26] Ibid., 3.

[27] Ibid.

[28] Pettman, "Feminist International Relations After 9/11," 89.

[29] Ibid.

[30] "Cherie Blair attacks Taleban 'cruelty'," *BBC News Online* (19 November 2001), http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/uk_politics/1663300.stm (01 February 2008).

[31] "*US Department of State: Report on the Taliban's War Against Women,"*17 November 2001 (1 February 2008); available from http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/c4804.htm

[32] Charlesworth and Chinkin, "Editorial comment: Sex, Gender and September 11," 602-603.

[33] "Cherie Blair attacks Taleban 'cruelty'."

[34] Krista Hunt, "'Embedded Feminism' and the War on Terror," in *(En)gendering the War on Terror: War Stories and Camouflaged Politics*, ed. Krista Hunt and Kim Rygiel (Hampshire, England: Ashgate, 2006), 52-53.

former Prime Ministers Paul Martin and Jean Chretien, affirmed this part of the mission. For example, in a speech delivered by Prime Minister Harper to Canadian troops in Afghanistan last year, he remarked: "Because of you, the people of Afghanistan have seen the institution of democratic elections, the stirring of human rights and freedoms for women, the construction of schools, healthcare facilities and the basic infrastructure of a functional economy."[35]

The hijab, or Muslim headscarf, in particular, was popularly characterized in media reports as both symptomatic and emblematic of the oppression of women in Afghanistan. For example, shortly after the war in Afghanistan began, Globe and Mail columnist Marcus Gee remarked: "It would be embarrassing for Britain and the United States, and a tragedy for Afghan women, if the new regime in Afghanistan were to keep women imprisoned behind the veil."[36] Such narratives about Muslim women are not new. As Cynthia Enloe writes:

> It recently has been taken off the nineteenth century imperial shelf, dusted, polished and put to new use, especially by officials of the US administration of President George W. Bush and their international allies in order to wrap its 'war against terror' in the justifying banner of 'women's liberation'.[37]

Clearly, the mission in Afghanistan was understood in those early days as not just about rooting out terror, but as a social, political and civilizing mission designed to emancipate the people. In this sense, security is not just about protecting Westerners (exclusively defined from a post-9/11 perspective) from the Muslim-man-as-terrorist, but also about protecting Muslim women from his tyranny.

Where Muslim women did speak out against their use as symbols of oppression to justify the war-on-terror, they were criticized in the press and by politicians in Canada for going *off-script*. This is particularly ironic given that part of the rationalization for the war-on-terror, as discussed above, was to "give them their voice back." For example, University of British Columbia Professor Sunera Thobani came under attack for her October 2001 speech entitled "Women's Resistance: From Victimization to Criminalization" where she said*:* "US foreign policy is soaked in blood. And other countries of the West including shamefully Canada, cannot line up fast enough behind it. All want to sign up now as Americans and I think it is the responsibility of the women's movement in this country to stop that, to fight against it." Thobani speech was publicly admonished by the Prime Minister in the House of Commons, by federal opposition parties, by the Premier of British Columbia and in the press. Columnist Diane Francis called Thobani a "mouthy and intolerant woman" and reasoned that "letting people say what they want can lead, quite simply, to the beginning of the end of civilization."[38] Similarly, Ottawa Citizen columnist Dave Brown: wrote: "It's war, folks. Ms. Thobani and her sisters are operational revolutionaries hell bent on rebuilding western society."[39]

She received death threats, hate mail, and calls for her dismissal from teaching at the University of British Columbia. In an unprecedented move, the RCMP publicly announced that Thobani was the subject of an investigation of hate-crime – ostensibly for her perceived anti-

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[35] Stephen Harper, "*Prime Minister Stephen Harper speaks to Canadian troops during visit to Afghanistan,"*23 May 2007 (15 January 2008); available from http://pm.gc.ca/includes/send_friend_eMail_print.asp?sendFriendEmailFlg=True&URL=/eng/media.asp&category=2&id=1667&langFlg=e

[36] Marcus Gee, "World's feminists are divided on Afghan war," *The Globe and Mail*, 20 November 2001.

[37] Cynthia Enloe, "Forward," in *(En)Gendering the War on Terror*, ed. Krista Hunt and Kim Rygiel (Hampshire, UK: Ashgate, 2006), ix.

[38] Diane Francis, "Yes, freedom of speech has limits," *The Province*, 19 November 2001.

[39] Dave Brown, "Finally, the media's noticed the feminist war against western society," *Ottawa Citizen*, 6 October 2001.

Americanism. Even though the complaint was dropped, Thobani says the RCMPs statement was personally, and financially, damaging.[40] Of the press reports and public statements about her speech, she writes:

> … by repeatedly reconstructing my status as a non-White, immigrant woman, the media reiterated – in a highly intensified manner – the historically racialized discourse of who "belongs" to the Canadian nation, and hence has a right to "speak" to it. This racialized discourse constructed me as an outsider to the nation, part of the "enemy" within its territorial boundaries, against which the ideological borders of the nation had to be defend. Repeated calls for me to be fired from my teaching position, and to have me "go back to where I come from" (and in a good number of cases for me to "go back" to Afghanistan!) reconstituted – in a moment of crisis – the vulnerable and constantly "under surveillance" status of Third World immigrants in Canada.[41]

Thobani, a prominent woman of colour, did not repeat the refrain of Laura Bush and Cherrie Blair – that the war would bring emancipation for women. Because she went *off-script*, arguing that that increased militarization is unlikely to bring emancipation for women, her personal as well as her professional security was compromised. Certainly dissent and the limits to what can and cannot be said were evident with the treatment of Thobani. In contrast, those women who do "speak out" against Islam are rewarded for their courage. For example, speaking of Dutch MP Ayaan Hirsi Ali, who was screening a film critical of Islam, National Post's Robert Fulford writes:

> Today, she comes across as articulate, passionate and elegant, as well as clearly secular. She has a kind of vertical beauty, a long face perfectly shaped. Apparently, a profound strength of spirit makes her appear serene, even after nearly three years of living under police protection. She makes her points with exceptional clarity in a subtle, Africa-accented English, one of her six languages. It would be hard to imagine a more persuasive advocate for Muslim women.[42]

Fulford recounts how Irshad Manji, also present at the meeting, told the audience that critical voices about Islam are not heard – either because religion is a sensitive topic, or because they fear being labeled a racist.[43] Manji's star continues to rise since 9/11 as a popular "native informant" who speaks critically of Islam.

When Muslim women are not being constructed as oppressed and in need of saving, they are being characterized as mysterious, dangerous and threatening to Canadian security. Indeed, a 2006 report published by the ITAC entitled "The Female Jihadist," warns that women in the "Islamic world" and the West ""have had the advantage of greater mobility and have traditionally been used for reconnaissance missions, as facilitators, as couriers and even as bombers. Women

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[40] Sunera Thobani, "War and the Politics of Truth-making in Canada," *International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education* 16, no. 3 (2003): 403.
[41] Ibid.: 401.
[42] Robert Fulford, "Multiculturalism's eloquent enemy," *National Post*, 15 August 2005.
[43] Ibid.

have also assumed leadership roles in groups."[44] In an August 2007 Gazette column, Peter Bergen and Paul Cruickshank suggest that Muslim women in the West are using the principles of gender equality to increase their participation in acts of terrorism. "The main way women have played a greater role in such operations is in auxiliary functions: running websites, handling finances and logistics, urging on their husbands." Their column suggests that women can play dangerous roles as "'stay-at-home' wives." [45] Women are using the liberty they have in the West, and their position as house wives, to threaten the security of Westerners. Similarly, the Globe and Mail ran the story "Hateful Chatter Behind the Veil,"[46] condemning the spouses of some of the men arrested on suspicion of terrorism who had made inflammatory anti-Canadian comments in internet chat rooms.

Bannerji reminds us that such characterizations of women mythologize their victimhood. She writes:

> The dehumanization involved in converting a person, an embodied socio-historical being, into a sign or symbol implies much more than an epistemological violence. It is based on the same principles that enable a physical, social, and symbolic violence to be visited upon jews in Pogroms and the holocaust, on various indigenous peoples in colonial genocides, and on Africans in slavery.

In both characterizations of Muslim women, whose oppression or malevolence is both marked by and hidden behind the veil, women are rendered as symbols of a backward, primitive and barbaric Islam.

Risk profiling and the "radicalization" of Canadian Muslim men

Just as gendered and Orientalizing discourses have framed women as either feeble and oppressed or duplicitous, Muslim men (and those presumed to be Muslim) are also constructed by gendered and Orientalizing discourses. Part of what informs the new preventative security strategies in Canada is a fear of potential "radicalization" of young Muslim men. This fear, perpetuated in popular discourses and by the media, is evident in the policy documents and statements from Canadian security agencies. National Post's Adrian Humphreys recently detailed a 2006 CSIS document that finds that "While there is a certain understanding of the radicalization process, there are still many questions about how an individual changes from 'the kid next door' to a suicide bomber or an extremist staging a terrorist attack against a civilian target."[47] Similarly, Humphreys outlines a report from the ITAC which states: "One of the shared features seems to be that at some stage they come to be 'seekers' of greater knowledge about Islam, and through this process may become radicalized, depending on the ideological influences to which they are exposed."[48] Speaking of such radicalization Mike McDonell, RCMP officer responsible for National Security Criminal Investigations across Canada and co-chair of the Canadian Association of Chiefs of Police Counter-terrorism and National Security Committee, reported to the Special Senate committee on the Anti-Terrorism Act in January: "Allow me to reiterate a well-used refrain: It is not a matter of if, it is a matter of when. The threat is there, casting a

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[44] Stewart Bell, "Internet plays role in 'female jihadists': report," *National Post* 9 November 2007.

[45] Peter Bergen and Paul Cruickshank, "The new face of terrorism; Women, no longer content with supporting roles, are increasingly joining the ranks of Islamic suicide bombers," *The Gazette*, 19 August 2007.

[46] Omar El Akkad and Greg McArthur, "Hateful chatter behind the veil," *Globe and Mail*, 29 June 2006.

[47] Adrian Humphreys, "Radical believers; Imprisoned but unrepentant, killers of abortion doctors say they did God's work," *National Post*, 27 December 2007.

[48] Ibid.

shadow at the heart of our society. Local level radicalization is happening in Canada."[49] Luc Portelance, assistant director of operations for CSIS, says the eighteen suspects arrested on suspicion of terrorism in the greater Toronto area in 2006 adhered to a violent, Al-Qaeda inspired ideology. "Any movement that has the ability to turn people against their fellow citizens is obviously something that CSIS is very concerned about."[50] Charges against seven of the suspects have since been stayed.

In this sense, the preventative risk profiling comes to the conclusion that every Muslim is a potential terrorist, even the 'kid next door.' Controversially, the Anti-terrorism Act amended the Criminal Code to define terrorism as an act committed in "in whole or in part for a political, religious or ideological purpose, objective or cause.[51] Roach and others have argued that this leaves the state vulnerable to the charge that it is actively using religious profiling in its attempt to establish motive.[52]

Islamophobia in a Canadian context

More than 58 per cent of the 6.2 million new immigrants to Canada come from Asia, including the Middle East, compared to only 12 per cent in 1971. As the ethno-cultural map of Canada is changing, racial, ethnic or religious profiling draws a clear distinction between those who count as Canadians.[53] The net effect of characterizing Islam in general and Muslim's specifically as potential threats to national security necessarily establishes that the security agencies are engaging in racial profiling. Indeed, Justice O'Connor's report found that since 9/11, certain religious and ethnic groups have been targeted.[54]

> In today's world, national security investigations are largely focused on the prevention of terrorism and often involve members of the Arab and Muslim communities. In the Factual Inquiry report, I recommended that the RCMP set down in writing its policy directing that investigations not be based on racial, ethnic or religious profiling. Moreover, it is important that all aspects of national security investigations pay appropriate attention to the human rights and interests of those who may be affected.[55]

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[49] "*Proceedings of the Special Senate Committee on the Anti-terrorism Act: Issue 2 - Evidence - Meeting*"28 January 2008 (10 February 2008); available from
http://www.parl.gc.ca/39/2/parlbus/commbus/senate/Com-e/anti-e/02ev-e.htm?Language=E&Parl=39&Ses=2&comm_id=597
[50] "Terror bomb gear seized: Seventeen in custody after Toronto raids," *Calgary Herald*, 4 June 2006.
[51] "*The Anti-terrorism Act: Definition of Terrorist Activity, Section 83,*" (20 January 2008); available from http://www.justice.gc.ca/en/anti_terr/fact_sheets/def_terr_act/def_terr_act_1.html
[52] Kent Roach, "National Security, Multiculturalism and Muslim Minorities," *Singapore Journal of Legal Studies* (2006): 421.
[53] "*Immigration in Canada: A Portrait of the Foreign-born Population, 2006 Census: Highlights,*"2006 (01 February 2008); available from http://www12.statcan.ca/english/census06/analysis/immcit/highlights.cfm
[54] Dennis O'Connor, "*A New Review Mechanism for the RCMP's National Security Activities: Commission of Inquiry into the Actions of Canadian Officials in Relation to Maher Arar,*"Public Works and Government Services Canada, 2006 (15 January 2008); available from http://www.ararcommission.ca/eng/EnglishReportDec122006.pdf, 437.
[55] Ibid., 521.

It is in this context, of gendered and Orientalizing characterizations of Muslims in Canada, that conversations and inquiries into the "reasonable accommodation"[56] of minority communities are taking place. In January 2007, the Quebec town of Herouxville passed a resolution detailing a code of conduct and instructing new immigrants that women are allowed to drive and that the public stoning or dowsing of women in acid is prohibited.[57] The resolution advised newcomers that: "we drink alcoholic beverages . . . and at the end of every year we decorate a tree with balls and tinsel."[58] This 'advice' is clearly directed at Muslim immigrants and makes assumptions about the content of cultural practices – that the treatment of women in Islam is necessarily oppressive.

It is in the post 9/11 context that there is a seeming culture of permissibility in which all things considered Islamic are on public trial. The veil has been similarly politicized recently concerning voting. Stephen Harper challenged the Election Commissioner's decision to allow women to vote while wearing the hijab. Other political leaders concurred such as Liberal Leader Stephane Dion who asked Elections Canada to change its diction and "to require veiled women to unveil their faces to confirm their identities."[59] We have to ask why this issue related to voting has captured the attention of party leaders now. In the past, this issue has not been a political flashpoint for those Canadians who vote by mail ballot.

These kind of discussions put Muslim women in a vulnerable position vis-à-vis the rest of Canadians. Salima Ebrahim, Canadian Council of Muslim Women, argues that Muslim women felt integrated and comfortable as part of the broader "Canadian mosaic" prior to 9/11.

> The ramifications of 9/11 in Canada were wide reaching and have been both negative and positive and have had an immediate impact on Muslims and Arabs in Canada because the perpetrators were Muslim and Arab … This climate of suspicion and stereotyping has led to increased racism and discrimination, particularly against Canadian Muslim women who are triply discriminated against due to their colour, gender and religion.[60]

The Canadian Council of Muslim Women completed a community research project in 2002 on this very issue. The report, entitled: *Voices of Muslim Women*, argues:

> Most people can easily make the connection that a woman wearing the hijab is Muslim, making Muslim women an easy target for harassment but also an easy source of information on Islam and its practices. Many women who wear the hijab, especially young women in high school and college felt a tremendous amount of responsibility was placed on them as teachers, colleagues, friends would come to them for answers on Islam. These women were forced into a position where they had

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[56] "*Commission de consultation sur les pratiques d'accommodement reliées aux différences culturelles,*" (15 January 2008); available from http://www.accommodements.qc.ca/index-en.html

[57] Gregory Bonnell, "One in five people foreign-born stats reveal as Canada struggles with overt racism," *Canada Press NewsWire*, 4 December 2007, Linda Gyulai, "Muslim groups to file complaint against town," *Montreal Gazette*, 5 February 2007.

[58] Tu Thanh Ha, "Welcome to town, here are the rules," *Globe and Mail*, 5 February 2007.

[59] Craig Offman, "Canadians with faces veiled can vote: Masks are a no go; Elections Canada ruling senseless, politicians say," *National Post* (2007), http://www.nationalpost.com/news/story.html?id=a3170edf-a111-443d-b2fe-2b2361274eb2&k=52399&p=2 (18 February 2007).

[60] Salima Ebrahim, "*Muslim Women in Canada,*" (29 January 2008); available from http://www2.ohchr.org/english/issues/minorities/docs/12/Canadian_council_of_muslim_women.doc

to talk about Islam and more often than not, defend Islam. Although some women accepted the task, some felt that they were being forced into a more vocal position, one that they did not necessarily want to assume.[61]

Similarly, participants reporting to the 2007 *Canadian Federation of Students Task Force* looking into the needs of Muslim students on Canadian post-secondary campuses explain that Muslim women are asked to speak to contentious questions related to Islam more frequently than men. The report states: "In addition to having to defend their religion generally, the Muslim value of modesty has resulted in women, particularly those in hijab, having to defend themselves against the allegation that they are self-oppressed."[62] Other university women reported being both physically and verbally harassed on campuses. For example, the Taskforce reports that a woman at the University of Windsor was pushed onto the street and called a "stupid Paki" while other women reported being called "witches" and "nuns."[63] These Islamophobic and sexist attacks on campuses are not isolated and faculty members have also been the victims of such abuse. For example, vandals spray painted McMaster University professor Muriel Walker's office door with anti-Islamic messages. Walker says she was targeted because she organizes and supports events on campus like "Hijab Day."[64]

Marie Chen, Acting Director of Legal Services, African Canadian Legal Clinic described the experiences of Somali immigrants to the Proceedings of the Special Senate Committee on the Anti-terrorism Act. The Somali community often describes the three strikes against them, related to their race and colour, their status as newcomers and their religion. As Chen explained to the Senate Committee:

> For Somali women, there is a fourth strike: They experience discrimination on the basis of gender. We have received anecdotal accounts from Somali women who have experienced added humiliation at border crossings, who have been asked to remove their hijab during searches and who also have endured the pat-down when you go through the airport. It is important to note that because of the particular vulnerability of this community, this kind of action has an added impact.[65]

The National Organization of Immigrant and Visible Minority Women of Canada (NOIVMWC) and the Canadian Research Institute for the Advancement of Women held focus groups across Canada in six languages in 2003 on behalf of Status of Women Canada on the impact of the new security agenda for Muslim women. In the focus group sessions, women reported that they were interrogated by security guards in airports and on cross-border train trips. One woman described being strip searched at Pearson Airport. All of these incidents led the organization to conclude that racial profiling is taking place in Canada. "These incidents and

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[61] Samira Hussain, "*Voices of Muslim Women: A Community Research Project,,"* Canadian Council of Muslim Women, July 2002 (18 February 2008); available from http://www.ccmw.com/resources/res_pub_VoiceofWomen_FullText.html

[62] *Final Report of the Task Force on Needs of Muslim Students* (Toronto: Canadian Federation of Students, 2007), 14.

[63] Ibid.

[64] Unnati Gandhi, "McMaster professor was targeted before, she says," *The Globe and Mail* 2007.

[65] "*Proceedings of the Special Senate Committee on the Anti-terrorism Act: Issue 16 - evidence - evening meeting,"*2005 (11 November 2007); available from http://www.parl.gc.ca/38/1/parlbus/commbus/senate/Com-e/anti-e/16evc-e.htm?Language=E&Parl=38&Ses=1&comm_id=597

many others recounted to us by the women in the study lead NOIVMWC to believe that racial profiling is alive and well in the aftermath of 9/11. Many of the focus group participants were traumatised by the publicity generated around Operation Thread …"[66]

Cross-Cultural Roundtable on Security: inter-cultural dialogue for a multicultural state

The Federal Government was clearly sensitive to the optics that the increasing securitization of Canadian policy and legislation would be perceived as a threat by some citizens and residents. This sensitivity is evident in a statement from Anne McLellan, then the Liberal Minister of Justice and Attorney General:

> Terrorism tries to turn one community against another, religion against religion, and race against race. Terrorism seeks all these things but it will achieve none of them, not here in Canada. This government has been clear but it is worth repeating over and over again: this is not a war against any one group or ethnicity but a war against terrorism.[67]

The federal government's own 2004 national security strategy document similarly states:

> Our commitment to include all Canadians in the ongoing building of this country must be extended to our approach to protecting it. We reject the stigmatization of any community and we do not accept the notion that our diversity or our openness to newcomers' needs to be limited to ensure our security.

In order to address the problem of optics, part of the new national security policy called for the creation of the inter-cultural *Cross-Cultural Roundtable on Security*. This fifteen-member Roundtable, composed of a cross-section of Canadians, is charged with the task of maintaining a national security dialogue between the government and Canadians. It works with the Minister of Justice and the Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness and reports to the Cabinet Committee on Security, Public Health and Emergencies.[68] They have not, however, managed to secure much of a public profile. For example, Anu Bose, Executive Director of the National Organization of Immigrant and Visible Minority Women of Canada, reported to the Special Senate Committee on the Anti-Terrorism Act that:

> … some of us do not even know who these community representatives are [on the Roundtable]. Maybe the website should have included a photograph so that we could collar them should we ever run across them. You are more familiar to us than they are. That is saying something.[69]

Roundtable members meet infrequently, convening only three times each in 2005 and 2006 and just once in 2007,[70] although they do independently organize occasional public events. At one of

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[66] Anu Bose and Monica Buchanan Johnson, "Report to the Special Senate Committee on the Anti-terrorism Act," (2005).

[67] "*37th Parliament, 1st Session: Edited Hansard, No. 095,*"2001 (1 February 2008); available from http://www2.parl.gc.ca/HousePublications/Publication.aspx?pub=hansard&mee=95&parl=37&ses=1&language=E#SOB-56586

[68] "*Terms of Reference: Securing an Open Society: Canada's National Security Policy* "

[69] "*Proceedings of the Special Senate Committee on the Anti-terrorism Act: Issue 16 - evidence - evening meeting,*"

[70] "*Meetings of the Roundtable: Roundtable meetings -- dates and locations,*" (15 January 2008); available from http://www.publicsafety.gc.ca/prg/ns/ccrs/meetings-eng.aspx

these events, National Post reporter Stewart Bell observed that the public participants consisted of "angry, sometimes ill-informed ethnic community representatives unable to move beyond venting at government."[71] Certainly, the goal of positive inter-cultural exchanges has not been reached at these meetings or as represented by the media.

Members of the Special Senate Committee mandated to review the Anti-Terrorism Act also draw attention to the fundamental disjuncture between the role of the Roundtable to disseminate information from the government to members of minority communities and the simultaneous role of the Roundtable to advocate for those communities that have been subjected to the Anti-terrorism Act. Others accuse the Roundtable of being a PR committee that lacks independence from the Department of Public Safety.[72] "The fact that an expert group of Canada's appointed Senators was critical and skeptical of the Roundtable underlines the difficulty of establishing a credible liaison with minority communities in the long shadow of immediate security concerns."[73] In its deliberations, the Roundtable tends to focus on issues like zero-tolerance for hate crimes and terrorism as opposed to addressing legitimate concerns related to, for example, racial profiling.[74] In this sense, the Roundtable serves state interests, discursively constructing minority communities as the subjects of the broader national security mandate.

Himani Bannerji's use of the Althusserian concept *ideological state apparatus* for evaluating state-promoted multiculturalism is helpful here for thinking about how inter-cultural exchanges demarcate the boundaries of belonging. Bannerji writes:

> We can see it [multiculturalism] as a devise for constructing and ascribing political subjectivities and agencies for those who are seen as legitimate and full citizens an others who are peripheral to this in many senses. There is in this process an element of racialized ethnicization, which whitens North American's of European origins and blackens or darkens their 'others' by the same stroke.[75]

Certainly, gendered and Orientalist mythologies filter through new legal measures, the mass media and political pronouncements in just this way. Both the Special Senate Committee and community representatives expose the ways in which the operation of state sponsored inter-cultural exchanges like the *Cross-Cultural Roundtable on Security* function to bring minority communities in line with government initiatives, not to bring government initiatives in line with the concerns of minority communities. To be sure, there is an element of Althusser's *repressive state apparatus* operating in post-9/11 Canada, whereby the new security agenda physically and repressively demarcates the boundaries between *us* and *other* through arrests, detentions, secret trials and deportation.[76] The state uses both ideological and repressive tools to reproduce boundaries of belonging.

Taken together, the racialized and gendered representations of both Muslim men and women are upheld by the securitization of the state and representations in the media and popular discourse – reflecting a national security discourse that constructs who belongs and who is excluded. Nima Naghibi argues that the representations of Muslims and Muslim women are more visible since 9/11, but they are part of a longer Orientalist discourse. "Visually, the Middle East is

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[71] Stewart Bell, "The sound & the fury of ethnic outreach," *National Post*, 17 February 2007.

[72] Roach, "National Security, Multiculturalism and Muslim Minorities," 412.

[73] Ibid.: 413.

[74] Ibid.: 411.

[75] Himani Bannerji, *The Dark Side of the Nation: Essays on Multiculturalism, Nationalism and Gender* (Toronto: Canadian Scholars' Press, 2000), 6.

[76] See: Louis Althusser, *Lenin and Philosophy and Other Essays*, trans. Ben Brewster (New York and London: Monthly Review Press, 1971).

marked as "Other" in the popular media by a concentration of images of bearded and turbaned men in robes who are construed as potential terrorist threats to "homeland security." Middle Eastern Muslim women are depicted as voiceless and abject, suffering behind the folds of the veil. These representations have been circulating with particular vigor since September 11, but … they did not emerge suddenly out of a vacuum; they have a long history in Western intellectual, literary, popular, and (liberal) feminist discourses."[77]

Those Canadians who do feel that the security measures are designed to protect their security are left fearful of the state and fearful of the ramifications of dissent. Speaking to the Senate Committee on the Anti-terrorism Act, Chen said:

> When you are talking about a particularly vulnerable community such as the Somali community, there are language issues; there are refugee-newcomer issues. They are afraid. The fear of stigmatization, of being labeled a terrorist, prevents people from taking it further. They would rather lose the money than seek recourse or try to clear their names. People retreat. It has created a climate of fear and restricted and curtailed their ability to remit money home.[78]

Conclusion: to what end is security sought?

Since 9/11, new national security measures, along with racialized conceptions of belonging, have created an environment of insecurity for many Canadian citizens. The securitization of Canadian policy is designed to protect Canadians from foreign (and domestic) threats. Particularly in light of the fact that this legislation is a direct consequence of the 9/11 attacks on the United States, and because it is designed in such a way as to identify threat based on adherence to ideology or religion, we can see how it is informed by racialized conceptions of threat. Canada is pursing a new security agenda at the same time as gendered and xenophobic constructions of Muslim *man-as-terrorist* and Muslim *woman-as-oppressed* are emerging with particular force in popular discourse. These policy pursuits and discursive constructions are not mutually exclusive; rather, they work together to reinforce the Orientalist myths on which they rest.

Feminist scholars tell us to look within the state, at marginalized actors and communities, to bring gendered mythologies into our purview. What feminist interventions reveal in this case is the way in which the Canadian state, in the interest of promoting security, actually renders "the lives of their most powerless citizens insecure."[79] In this analysis, I have focused on the experiences of those Canadians most likely to be the targets of the new security measures: Muslim (or presumed to be Muslim) Canadians and evaluated the interplay between ideas or tropes as well as state institutions and security policies.

Discursively, Muslim women are constructed as oppressed victims of antiquated and misogynist communities and therefore emblematic of the so-called anti-democratic and illiberal impulses of the "Islamic world." These same gendered constructions also place Muslim men at risk, especially when every Muslim "kid-next-door" is at risk of "radicalizing." When we consider the arrest of the twenty-three foreign students in 2003 and the role of CSIS in the detention and deportation of Maher Arar, it is clear that the preemptive anti-terror net is being cast too broadly.

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[77] Nima Naghibi, *Rethinking Global Sisterhood: Western Feminism and Iran* (Minneapolis and London: University of Minnesota Press, 2007), xii - xiii.
[78] "*Proceedings of the Special Senate Committee on the Anti-terrorism Act: Issue 16 - evidence - evening meeting,*"
[79] Tickner, "Feminism meets International Relations: Some Methodological Issues," 40-41.

To be sure, such constructions of Muslim, Arab, Middle Eastern and South Asian communities are rooted in a long history of Orientalist imaginings of the Other.[80] However, it is in the pursuit of the terrorist lurking in our suburbs, radicalizing in the Mosque and tyrannizing women that has created a culture of permissibility whereby every Muslim, particularly women, are answerable in an imagined national multicultural dialogue. Fantastically, Muslim women are called upon as the spokespersons for the cultural practices of an entire religion in newspaper features, television programs and university inter-faith panels. Women are thrust to the fore to defend Islam – an incredibly risky burden in a period in which Islam is on trial.

By examining the intersections of race and gender from feminist IR perspective, we open up our analyses to additional actors, communities and interests to build our understanding of the ways in which national security agendas can perpetuate racialized and gendered conceptions of citizenship and belonging. This is important for not only understanding how national security strategies are constructed in moments of crisis, but also how such strategies are experienced. This can allow for the breaking down of the *us* and *other* dichotomy – that is, who belongs and who does not – and for better theorizing freedom and security for all Canadian residents and citizens. After all, to what end is security sought?

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[80] See: Edward Said, *Orientalism* (New York: Vintage Books, 1994).

37th Parliament, 1st Session: Edited Hansard, No. 095 Ottawa: 2001, accessed 1 February 2008; Available from http://www2.parl.gc.ca/HousePublications/Publication.aspx?pub=hansard&mee=95&parl=37&ses=1&language=E#SOB-56586.

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