

Critical Muslim Studies (Part V) Transcript

Friday August 27th, 2021

3:00pm -4:15 pm ET

00:21 Maura Cunningham

Okay. I think we will get started as the Zoom Room allows people to come in. Thank you very much for attending today's AAS Digital Dialogue session on Critical Muslim Studies. My name is Maura Cunningham and I'm the Digital Media Manager at the Association for Asian Studies. I would like to begin by thanking the Henry Luce Foundation, which has provided funding that enables us to hold these series of webinars, not just on Critical Muslim Studies, but on all sorts of interesting topics that we are we've taken a bit of a summer hiatus. This is our first webinar back from summer break, but we have an exciting lineup planned for the fall and I hope that everyone here will join us for some of our upcoming events. You can always find information about upcoming AAS Digital Dialogues and other AAS programs, including our 2022 annual conference in Honolulu, Hawaii, on our website, which is at asianstudies.org. And I will put a link in the chat for everyone so that you can find the Digital Dialogues page and see what we have coming up on the schedule throughout the fall. Thank you also to Stan Thangaraj who organized this miniseries on Critical Muslim Studies. This has been a really fruitful series of discussions. This is today's session is the fifth in the series. If you'd like to watch videos of past discussions, if you haven't been able to attend them, they are on our website and the video from this session will be on the website within a couple of weeks as well. With that I would like to hand things over to today's moderator Evelyn Alsultany and thank you very much for attending and enjoy the discussion.

02:01 Evelyn Alsultany

Thank you, Maura. And welcome everyone to the fifth Critical Muslim Studies session *salaam alaikum*. I'm Evelyn Alsultany, associate professor at USC, and I have the pleasure of moderating this panel. We are gathered today because Professor Stan Thangaraj wanted to create a space for us to engage with each other intellectually and create a community across disciplinary boundaries during these difficult and uncertain times. We're living through a global health crisis, the first of which we have ever experienced in our lifetime. Many of us are afraid to go out of our homes, be it anti-Asian racism, anti-Black racism and violence or the fear of contracting COVID. In addition, Stan wanted to support the work of junior scholars by offering a forum to share and celebrate their important work. These Critical Muslim Studies panels are the product of conversations with the Association for Asian Studies, the Association for Asian American Studies and the Arab American Studies Association. Thank you Stan Thangaraj, for putting this together. This also would not be possible without the incredible leadership of Jennifer Ho, Christine Yano and Amira Jarmakani. I'd like to thank Asian Studies for giving us this space via Digital Dialogues to have this conversation. I'd like to thank Hilary Finchum-Sung, Maura Cunningham and Molly DeDona for managing all the schedules and logistics and making this Digital Dialogue possible. This session engages in Critical Muslim Studies by looking at how the category of Muslim that means many things and captures a wide array of people circulates across race, gender, sexuality, class, ethnicity and nation, while showing the many ways that Muslim communities manage relationships to race, caste, nation class, gender and sexuality. The papers address how critical Muslim studies becomes an

important site for knowledge production, and social justice practice. Thus, we hope cultivating an intellectual, pragmatic and necessary toolkit that incorporates the theoretical influences of area studies, ethnic studies, and Gender and Sexuality Studies while pushing against canonization. Today, we have the opportunity to learn about the research of for scholars Nafeesa Andrabi, Samah Choudhury, Mariam Durrani, and Bilal Nasser. Each presenter will offer thoughts on their project for about 8 to 10 minutes each, and then we'll move on to Q&A with the virtual audience. I'm going to introduce each one right before they present and we're going to start with our first presenter, Nafeesa Andrabi, who is a fifth year sociology PhD student at UNC Chapel Hill, and a bio social Fellow at Carolina Population Center, and draws he draws on multidisciplinary theoretical and methodological approaches to understand health disparities and experiences of race and Muslimness in the US. Her research is funded by the National Science Foundation and the National Institutes of Health. Her dissertation examines the consequences of blissfulness at the intersection of race on health outcomes across the life course and intergenerational transmission of health disparities among non-US born Muslims. Additionally, she explores American Muslims and perceived Muslimness as a site for understanding how race, immigration, and religion shape identity formation and the US racial order. Lastly, her work theorizes the experiences of those who exist on the fringes of us racial categories, and how to interrogate practices of conceptualizing, measuring, and analyzing race as a variable, particularly as they relate to health research. Please join me in welcoming Nafeesa Andrabi.

06:05 Nafeesa Andrabi

Hi, thank you so much for having me today. And for creating this space. I'm really excited to be in community with all of these incredible scholars. As Evelyn mentioned, today, I'm talking a little bit about work that I'm doing at the intersection of Muslims and health. Thinking broadly about these ideas of Muslim health disparities, and how we can push the field of health disparities from being focused on race and thinking about where and how Muslims can be included into that discourse, and some of the consequences of excluding them from that discourse. And sort of motivated by how little we know at this point on how the lived experience of Muslims, particularly in the US context, shapes health outcomes, and affects them across their life course. So I want to just explain a little bit about health disparities, and the health disparity context. So we think about how the conditions in which people are born, grow, live, work, and all these conditions shaped their health outcomes. It's what we think of as the social determinants of health. And in the US, these conditions are really driven by socioeconomic status and race. That's how they're patterned. And we consider this socioeconomic status and race to be fundamental causes of health inequalities. And that's sort of what dictates how we think about health inequalities, in the in particular in the US context. The other kind of key concept to think about right is that racism is seen as a chronic or acute stressor, and experiences of racism, how they translate into health inequalities, one of that one of the primary mechanisms is through thinking about it, as the stress that lodges itself into the body gets under [digital static] skin. And one of the central causes of stress to health inequalities is this concept of allostatic load, which, you know, there's much to be said about any, any one of these of these things that I mentioned. But allostatic load broadly, is thinking about the wear and tear that happens on the body, due to the repeated activation of the stress response. So you can imagine that increased experiences of racism, either chronic or acute wear down the body, and over time our body becomes in this activated state, it's having to do a lot of work to manage those stressors. And over time, this leads to higher levels of disease and mortality. And that's kind of one of the central things that we really think about and work on when we're doing work that's health disparities research,

particularly as it's motivated by race. So one of the kind of key examples that I draw on and that's expanded on in my work is thinking, for example, about a pregnant person who may experience racism, we think about this as a potential maternal stress. And it can actually be an in-utero shock, that could then lead to adverse birth outcomes, for example, low birth weight, or preterm birth, and then these birth outcomes track over the life course, right? So now the question is, well, what happens when Muslims experienced racism or other kinds of discrimination? Is the same process happening? And is it happening only in response to these kind of acute stressors? Or is there some kind of chronic experience as a consequence of the broader conditions that Muslims are living in? And this work for me is situated right now in the US context, but is of course, influenced by what's happening globally. So I want to just quickly touch on how we're studying racial health disparities right now, because I think it's sort of important in making the case for how do we fit Muslims into this research. So right now at the population health level, most of our data is coming from places like the census or medical records or birth or death certificates and these research studies and the populations who fall neatly into these racial categories that I've listed over here, you know, and this is if you're being generous, you often see research that is even more reductive than just these populations. And I think thinking about these populations, and who fits neatly into these racial categories, helps us think about, you know, who is missing? How are experiences conflated, perhaps across skin tone? And then how is this impacting the kinds of outcomes that we see, with respect to health disparities? For outcomes, such as, for example, Black women are three times more likely to die from pregnancy related causes than white women. These are the kinds of outcomes that we're able to elucidate when we are able to do rigorous racial health disparities research. And they're the kinds of outcomes that frankly, we just don't know, how they're playing out in the Muslim community.

10:26

So, you know, I try to think about how can we think, you know, how should we be thinking about Muslim health disparities? It's a question that I come back to, in my work a lot. What kind of framing both theoretically and then methodologically should we be using? Or can we use even so here's an ambiguous person, maybe they identify religiously as Muslim, maybe they're perceived as Muslim because of their skin tone, or language or name or nativity, they might be a recent immigrant, so they might be unsure what race means they self-identify as Asian, unclear if that racial categorization is actually meaningful for them. There's a way of thinking about stressors that people experience that are called race related stressors, which I've highlighted here in blue. And I use those as a potential framing to think about, well, how did the experiences of Muslims in the US translate potentially, or fit within this framework of race related stressors. So you can think about, you know, being followed or observed by others, or being the only Muslim in an all white Christian workplace, or being stopped and forced by the police or detained by the TSA at the airport. So any one of these can kind of fit within potentially, right? This the structure that we use to study race related stressors and understanding kind of how our lived experiences then become embedded and get under the skin. So this is one of the frameworks that I'm drawing on to to kind of conceptualize the Muslim experience and how we might think about capturing, capturing what's happening in, in their health outcomes. So, you know, okay, how are we going to merge Muslims in racial health disparities? You know, what I think about is how did the Muslim Americans racialized experiences become articulated in this US race-based system? So you know, how are both you when we think about racial health disparities as just being driven by the normative racial categories that we use in the US, what's missing really is huge swaths of what's happening in the

migration context, in countries of origin, in broader global phenomena that are impacting influencing the way in which race is enacted, translated on the ground in the US, right? So race is fluid, and it's dynamic, and it's relational. And it's all of these things. But when we just rely on these, you know, kind of set racial categories, a lot of people's experiences are erased in that process. And you and I would, I would argue that we're missing a lot of the picture, or at least some of it in the health disparities research that we have going on so far. So for me, then the next kind of question is, well, can we use the logics and the methods of racial health disparities, and translate those over to US Muslims? I think what's really interesting about the, the this question, and the problems are, you know, what we've been talking about across these Critical Muslim Studies dialogues, is, you know, what's happening at the intersection of US racial categorization and Muslimsness? How do we translate the Muslim experience? Is it racialized? Isn't it racialized? How do we conceptualize Islamophobia? And there's so much rich theoretical work happening, and for me, it's really about well, how can I take those a phenomenal discussions that are happening, you know, kind of trying to understand these experiences and then translating them over into the health population health and health disparities field. So one of the big problems I run into is that, you know, religious identity isn't recorded in most of these large scale US surveys or government data, so it's hard to pinpoint at the population level. And then Muslim is also not a race and most of our data in the US is, is you know, coded, coded by race. Um, so one of the partial solutions that I have working on for my dissertation is focusing on US birth outcomes and race data that are coming from US birth certificates, all US births from 1990 to 2019. This is over like 3 million births every single year. And then I restrict that population to immigrants from Muslim majority countries to try to, you know, proxy Muslim ness and think about okay, well, if I can use being from a Muslim majority country as a proxy for Muslimness, then I can start to see, you know, I can, I can, you know, sort of presumptively identify that population and start to see what's happening in terms of birth outcomes, which are, you know, capture both maternal stress, and then this intergenerational transmission of stress.

14:42

So some of the big questions that are motivating my work, I hope to answer them sometime soon. I have no answers for you right now. Tune in. But you know, so between 1990 and 2019, just broad like descriptives. What are the birth outcome trends among foreign born Muslim mothers? I mean, we don't have sort of basic description on this, right? And then how do these vary by intersection of Muslim and a US racial categorization? Right, so um, do foreign born Muslims have worse birth outcomes? If they're racially categorized as Asian or Black versus white? Then I think about these social, socio political and geopolitical shocks, which a few folks, Elyas Bakhtiari¹, a colleague of mine this year had a paper come out on this, and a few epidemiologists Goleen Samari² and Nancy Krieger³ have looked at these kind of acute events like 9/11, and the Muslim ban as a as natural experiments where these shocks might happen. And so how are those impacting maternal stress as we assess that by birth outcomes? And how is that playing out at these intersections of race by Muslim? You know, race and Muslimness? The other thing that I'm really interested in unpacking is more localized events, right? Like, what, what about the Boston Marathon bombing or San Bernardino shootings? Or things that are happening at a more regional level? Is the effect of that as a stressor, is it diffused over time or by distance from the event?

¹ 15:21 [Elyas Bakhtiari](#)

² 15:25 [Goleen Samari](#)

³ 15:26 [Nancy Krieger](#)

So is there a consequence on maternal stress and birth outcomes of the Boston Marathon bombing, for example, just in Boston? Or does it trickle out? You know, so that's, that's some, those are some of the other questions that I'm trying to unpack. And then, you know, is living proximal to or in a large Muslim community for example, Dearborn, Michigan, is that protective of these stressors? And how do kind of these other local demographic compositions impact the experience of those stressors, and how those translate to health outcomes? So each one of these questions, I mean, opens up so many lines of inquiry, and there's, there's ample space for work that's being done both quantitatively and qualitatively, you know, to unpack all of this. And, you know, I'll let you know how it goes. And I just really quickly wanted to touch on what the data looks like that I'm working with, because it's, it's so rich, and I'm really happy to talk about and, you know, think about how can we be really creative with how we use this to describe what's happening to a population that's been relatively erased in the health disparities field, or invisible, right. So I have variation, racial variation. So even within mothers who were born in Pakistan, in 2018, there's range and how they are variation and how they racially identify, same for folks from Afghanistan and in other countries. And these are big enough samples where I can really start to tease out some of these nuances. And, you know, I can think about colonization context and other and other things that I just find really interesting. So I'm excited to kind of get into the weeds of this. Okay, so just really quick, thank you for listening to me speed talk through some of these ideas. I'm really excited to learn more from everybody on and keep building on these. I just want to really quickly thank my advisors, Bob Hummer and Charlie Kurzman. And Dr. Carmen Gueteriz, who helped me with access to this really awesome data. And then of course, Stan has been the champion of, of all of us and creating this really incredible space to engage in these kinds of conversations and then AAS and countless colleagues, and I have to acknowledge my funders, so National Science Foundation and the National Institute of Health. Thank you.

18:21 Evelyn Alsultany

Thank you so much Nafeesa. Really fascinating and important presentation, and I look forward to the Q&A session to learn more about it. Our next presenter is Samah Choudhury who is an assistant professor in the Department of Philosophy and Religion in Ithaca College. Dr. Choudhury's research surrounds American Muslim humor and the cultural politics that accompany what it means for Muslims to be socially legible in the United States. She's writing a book on how Islam and Muslims are articulated through the medium of stand up comedy, and the ways that they are recognized or become obscured through broader understandings of race, gender, and American secularism.

19:05 Samah Choudhury

Hi everyone, *salaam alaikum*, thank you for having me. Thank you for the invitation and the opportunity to share my work with you all today to Dr. Thangaraj to Dr. Alsultany, the Association for Asian Studies. Like Dr. Alsultany just said my name is Samah Choudhury. I'm an assistant professor at Ithaca College, where I'm spending my time thinking about Muslims and the construction of Muslims kind of within this broader milieu that Dr. Alsultany just described. So my research itself looks at the ways that Muslims have been constructed through the medium of humor and the contemporary US. And I think a common question you may be wondering yourself, one that I get frequently is why humor?

And we might ask that question. That's true. But already, the association between Muslims and humor is a relationship you most likely implicitly recognized, right? This is an association that perhaps is less a relationship between Muslims and humor. And instead one between Muslims and a lack of humor. That

relationship, especially in the last 40 some years, is something that feels and indeed, has been made to feel very natural. So Muslims are stoic, they're unfriendly, they're stubborn, they're, you know, quick to fly off the handle when you may be offended, offended them, you know, they just they can't take a joke, right? And there are global flash points in our very recent history that kind of undergird these assumptions we have what gets dubbed the Salman Rushdie affair in the 90s⁴. We have the Danish cartoon controversy in 2005⁵, the Charlie Hebdo shootings in 2015⁶. And these social debates that follow these events have usually boiled down to what I see as two very persistent questions, which is 1. Why can't Muslims take a joke? And then 2. immediately after that, is Islam compatible with modernity? Now, there have been a lot of scholars who have kind of taken up this charge. Some have argued that we should look to the earliest episodes of Muslim ministries for proof of Muslim humor. So in addition to instances that gets cited throughout the Quran and the Sunnah, scholars have documented references to the Prophet Muhammad himself, and his companions has been very light hearted gestures whose levity was something that was meant to be emulated by later generations of Muslims. And the fact that it's not being emulated is perhaps, you know, a mistake on their part, but certainly not at the originating point. There's still others who point to a more contemporary emergence of Muslim comedians after 9/11, where laughter becomes a symbol of freedom and the value of American democracy and opposition, perhaps to America's enemies. So what I'm trying to articulate through my work, however, is a little different. It's more about how and why humor and this ability to joke or to take a joke, how that has become a de facto principle of modernity and considered an admirable personality trait of a modern and modernized person. Because I think without an understanding of how humor and modernity have come to kind of stand in for one another, the reason those questions get coupled in that way, without understanding the roles that gender and race and religion have continued to play in that development, and our discourses and our scholarship alike are going to be doomed to return to these very tired and persistent premises where Islam is pitted against modernity with no greater comprehension as to why that premise is so naturally assumed at the outset. So by centering humor, and for me, it's really the idea of a sense of humor. I've been able to see how minorities Muslim subjects seize upon this notion embody this notion in order to find social legibility where they live. And in my case, I'm thinking particularly about the contemporary US. And this is important not just for Critical Muslim Studies, but Asian Studies as well precisely because these dynamics are informed by transnational politics by diasporic memory and trauma and affective networks. So by studying stand up comedy routines, cultural productions of Muslim comedians, I specifically look at comics like Aziz Ansari, Hassan Minhaj, Kumail Nanjiani. And, in particular, I'm thinking about their very precipitous rise in the comedy world over the last 10-15 years. I find that humor is not just a universal category of communication, but in fact, it's a very precise mode of secular discourse. By speaking it and embodying it. Muslims can demonstrate their fitness for secularity, despite the otherwise kind of gendered and racialized meaning that is emanating from their bodies at the same time. So the way that Muslims are spoken of and the way they've been imagined the way They even imagined themselves has become muddled with this language of race craft. It's certainly the case here. And much of that has come out of the rampant anti-Muslim hostility across places like the US and the need to then counter that hostility. And we see this in the academy as well as in social justice activist circles. So this is something that I'm arguing has resulted in the use of a racial or a racialized nomenclature, that then becomes the primary

⁴ Read about the Salman Rushdie Affair [here](#)

⁵ Read about the Danish cartoon controversy [here](#)

⁶ Read about the Charlie Hebdo shootings [here](#)

frame through which to understand Muslim identity. It results in a language of racial overlay that eclipses religious identities and religious difference, again, fitting very well into the secular structures in order to have you know, what deemed multiculturalism and diversity. So this racialization is fomented by what I'm calling a progressive consensus of recognition. And this is very much a part of a centuries long, transnational history of labor practices and Empire. But it's acutely impelled in the last several years by populist responses to things like the 2016 US presidential election, flagrant calls for institutionalizing anti Muslim hostilities into federal public policies, things like a Muslim ban, discussions about Muslim registries. And so this master category of race is being raised throughout these discourses to understand and combat that anti Muslim hostility. But it's leaving out the question of how to understand and categorize religion in that wake. And so when religion ceases to, I'm arguing maintain connection to the material, to the body, where we operate with religion as a non material category, in terms of interiority, in terms of individualized belief. We have this very kind of fragmented definition, left behind. So I'm more interested in reading religion as an embodied experience, one that needs to be understood through the lens of mobility and migration. And so we gain a clearer picture of that when we think about Muslim embodiment, as it gets conceptualized in the face of British colonial legal codes, the commerce of Orientalism in the early 1900s in the US, and this is all mingling at the same time with Jim Crow with the myth of the bestial Black brute, the dangers of a effeminate Asians, right, the terrifying terrorist, all of that is pervading the US throughout the 20th and 21st centuries, precisely in the last several years, right, these progressive consensus years that I'm calling, which I'm timing that to be about roughly between 2015 and 2019. We have comedians like Ansari and Minhaj, Nanjiani, who are attempting to kind of counter script, those embodiments, those embodied notions of difference that are read off of their bodies, and they do that by triangulating themselves. I'm arguing as the kind of right Muslim men in opposition to the wrong ones. They perform a rhetorical distance on stage through their stand up comedy in order to, you know, show themselves in separation from the kind of dominant images of raced bodies that are homophobic, misogynistic, zealot terrorists, right. And so the medium of comedy for them avows those secular bonafides as these new intersectional progressives of color, but they're never doing so in a threatening way. And I'll leave it here because I think I'm probably close to time, but I'm looking forward to questions and again, thank you for the opportunity to share my research.

28:35 Evelyn Alsultany

Wonderful, thank you so much. Our next presenter is Mariam Durrani, who is an assistant professor of anthropology at Hamilton College. As an interdisciplinary feminist scholar of global racialization, her research engages with migration studies, Digital Media Studies, and critical education studies through academic public and multimodal research in the US and Pakistan. Her talk today is entitled "The Imperial Optic: Migration, racialization, and the war on terror in Lahore and New York City". It focuses on the Imperial optic as a conceptual orientation to study how college students in the US and Pakistan are racialized by war policies that shape how they access their education, focusing on Pakistani origin students in New York City and Pashtun students in Lahore, this talk ethnographically illustrates how processes Imperial racialization occur across contexts shaped by us Imperial geopolitics. Her talk today is based on her book project that studies the impact of the US wars on terror on higher education and youth mobility both in Pakistan and the US.

29:48 Mariam Durrani

Thank you so much, Dr. Altsultany. And thank you to the Association for Asian Studies for convening us. I am going to share my screen and get started. So it's a pleasure to join you today and share a little bit about my book project. As was described, It examines how the war on terror impacts higher education in the US and in Pakistan. It is based on a multi sided multi year ethnography from 2013 until 2019, with Pakistani diaspora college students in New York and with Pashtun College students in Lahore. So I'm going to start by talking about my methodological approach to studying migration across two scales within a country and across borders. So in Pakistan, I worked with Pashtun students who migrated from Pashtun dominant regions, which is located more on the west side of the country to Lahore. They had grown up seeing their ancestral homes and villages directly impacted by US, Pakistani, Taliban, ISIS and other military operations, and were often the first in their families to move for college to what I call Lahore City University or LCU. This migration was made possible by a scholarship program from LCU that was designed to diversify their otherwise elite Punjabi dominant student body. And in the US, I work with Pakistani diaspora college students while they attended a public college in the city. Their parents had migrated at some point in the 80s and 90s, at which point they settled in Queens in Brooklyn and the students attended public school. Later, they may have moved elsewhere to the suburbs or Staten Island, but they all decided to attend a public college in the city, which is where I met them in 2013. The multi sided nature of my research facilitates an understanding about the intersection between US geopolitics and US racial politics, as a kind of US geo racial politics, which occurs across contexts. This conceptual orientation helps to highlight how migration, higher education, and imperialism are actually very intimately linked phenomenon. In other words, this approach reveals how college students in the US and in Pakistan both encountered localized infrastructure of the war on terror, and how that shaped their experiences in college. So on this slide, I'm situating my two sites within the global wars on terror thinking here with Nikhil Pal Singh's work on US Imperial dependency on perpetual warfare to show that global racial assemblages are constituted through and organized by US war objectives. So in the center is a map from Brown University's cost of war project, which marks the 80 countries that have been impacted by US counterterrorism activities. Both it includes as you can see Pakistan, but it does not include the US. So I have on the left side, a map of New York City from the cover of a report titled "Mapping Muslims" which investigated the NYPD is Muslim surveillance program that was created after 9/11. And the yellow dots across Brooklyn, Queens, Staten Island, and Manhattan kind of show the way that hotspots were identified by the police, which includes the college where I conducted my research. So placed side by side, you can see also on the right side, a photo of an image of Pakistan which highlights US drone strikes, which are also very much concentrated in the regions that the students that I've worked with come from. So looking at these side by side you can see a particular cartography of the wars on terror. It's been said that 21st century Imperial- US imperialism often evades detection and critique because US as an empire, US Empire as an object is perceived as too diffuse, mobile and lacking a linear narrative compared to the US as a nation. Moreover, this myopia becomes more pronounced because of the pervasive use of the nation state as a primary analytic to understand migration and identity. And to counter this approach, I study US Empire through the diffuse and get related structural conditions produced within higher education. I argue that this methodological orientation facilitates focused insights about imperialism as a project dependent on constructing racialized difference in hierarchy both within and beyond nation state formations. And so next here I'm going to share a little bit of more from my fieldwork. So in 2013 and 2014, when I conducted my fieldwork, I met many of the participants through the Muslim Student Association club room. The club room was an important place

to gather and relax for students, but this situated within an extremely anti-Muslim urban context, by then in 2013, we also learned that the NYPD had been secretly surveilling Muslims at the places where they ate, shopped, worshiped and studied, including the MSA clubroom. The program listed national ancestry as one criteria to identify individuals which included Pakistan among 27 other ancestries of interest. The news report that was released at the time solidified students suspicions that the police were surveilling their club room. And in response to these verified reports, students actually posted fliers such as please refrain from political convos in the MSA.

34:55

So student concerns about state surveillance came up frequently during our conversations. And once at a dinner I was talking to three young women about the latest with the MSA, and one of them asked what was up with one of the MSA brothers criticizing US foreign policy on the club's social media page, to which one student replied, he's probably an informant. When I asked her to tell me more, she explained that such comments were a red flag because for Muslim students, but especially for MSA students, who knew that surveillance was a possibility on campus, this would not be something to be said in public. Noreen's comment and subsequent explanation highlighted the sense of racialized consciousness among Pakistani diaspora youth who have been subjected to racialized surveillance and targeted discrimination on campus. Like their peers experiencing the inner war in the New York City students in Pashtun also have grown up with a long shadow of the war on terror in Pakistan in neighboring Afghanistan. Similar to students in New York, they also would condemn this seemingly perpetual state of war in the country. This was especially so for ethnically Pashtun students who had migrated for their education. They haven't been able to attend the University because of the scholarship program. And through this opportunity, they moved from their homes in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa to Lahore where they learned about more such diversity based educational opportunities, such as the US funded global undergraduate program, which arranged for some selected students to attend one semester in the US, paid for by the US State Department. The program was coordinated through the US Education Foundation in Pakistan and nonprofit partner organization. And as this 2016 flyer explicitly states, their preference was for women, people with disabilities and then a list of regions. It starts with Fata, the Federally Administered Tribal Areas, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, which are both major theatres of the war on terror in Pakistan. The program's preference for ethnic minority students which made it so popular that out of my 10 focal students, six of them applied got selected and temporarily migrated to the US for the program. Over the years, I stayed in touch with them over social media and follow up research trips, and in 2019, I met with Farhan, a U grad alumni who has been running his own technology startup in Lahore. And over the conversation he told me how important you ground was to his success. However, in the same breath, he remarked, for every bomb they drop in Pakistan, they have to send a kid to America on a Fulbright. His comment conceptualized how even as he participated in the program, he maintained suspicion about the relationship between these opportunities of the war, literally scholarships for bombs. While selected students received these opportunities, they simultaneously acknowledge how they were part of a US geopolitical effort to sanitize US and Pakistani responsibility for the constant state of violence that they faced, and that their fellow peers who were in far more precarious circumstances had to face much more directly. So Farhan's suspicion were correct, in that the funding for the U grad program was through the 2009 enhanced strategic partnership with Pakistan act, a bipartisan congressional bill designed to promote partnership with Pakistan and its people and for other purposes. The bill recognized Pakistan as a key ally in the global war, and it was specifically meant to

support democratic economic development and assistance programs. In other words, this program was designed to promote understanding and interfaith dialogue by expanding how the war on terror operated in the country and obscured its presence. This war policy undergirds the EU grad program flyer that I showed earlier, and its preference for students from particular regions that were impacted by the war, demonstrating an explicit structural agenda within the country. The ethnographic moments and war policies that I've sketched out so far illustrate my books argument about how group differences in related hierarchy such as religion in the US and ethnicity in Pakistan are refracted by US Empire and resulting in institutionally situated processes of racialization. Viewed side by side, the NYPD surveillance program and the strategic partnership with Pakistan act represent two war policies that impacted college students and exemplify what Junaid Rana has described as the global terror industrial complex. Across the two contexts, educational access is being mediated by US Empire. Across these contexts existing systems of difference in each location based on religion, migration, status, gender, ethnicity, change in meaning based on war policies, and lead to shared but distinct processes of what I call Imperial racialization. To reorient scholarly attention, I've developed what I'm calling the Imperial optic as an analytic to conceptually and empirically highlight Empire as it is, and always multisided racial assemblage based on fractionally congruent colonial national logics policies, and infrastructures. Specifically, I'm concerned with how the Imperial optic can illuminate the impact of war policies in higher education. And how this critique how this can help redirect our attention away from comparative analyses towards a more refractive understanding of empire that highlights the coherence and durability of empire across locations thinking with Ann Stoler's work⁷. The two vignettes demonstrate how students are aware of their positioning in relation to systems of difference constructed by Empire. My work is trying to bring attention to how higher education in particular is an institutional host for the war in different and yet related ways. College students in the US and in Pakistan realize their educational opportunities were contingent on performances of the racialized students subject as the Muslim or as the Pashtun subject. In both contexts, they would acknowledge that these processes of racialization as they became aware of being targeted. So although it animates an imperial visualization is animated differently, I think the Imperial optic highlights a few important features. First, this approach moves beyond colonial fetishes attached to region, country, religion or ethnicity, through multisided ethnographic work that expands our view of empire as an object of analysis. Second, this approach turns attention to how overlapping histories of imperial power produce the cartographies that we often take for granted, including how we study Pakistan and its diasporas. So emphasizing student experiences of the war in both contexts, helps to show the relational kind of analytic between these various wars and unveil how Imperial formations continue to thrive in plain sight. And finally, I want to emphasize that the Imperial optic should not be used to over determine or limit how we understand Pakistani diaspora, or push them youth forms of cultural practice, aspiration, or political and racial consciousness. In other words, it's not about the intentionality behind the individual choices, but rather how these choices are responding to structural conditions of educational imperialism in the US and in Pakistan. And that is stressing this important tension between the dominance of US Empire and an emergence of anti colonial anti Imperial resistance by racialized youth in both context is important to highlight as well. Both Noreen and for Farhan, the students I discussed, were suspicious about how US war efforts were impacting their lives. And this is something I explained further in the book. Thank you so much for listening.

⁷ Read about Ann Stoler [here](#)

42:29 Evelyn Alsultany

Thank you, Mariam. Our final presenter today is Bilal Nasir, who is a Chau Mellon postdoctoral fellow in the intercollegiate department of Asian American Studies at Pomona College. Professor Nasir's work draws on over two years of ethnographic research in Greater Los Angeles to examine how South Asian American and Arab American Islamic scholars and pious youth draw on traditions of Islamic ethics to forge social movements in critique of racialized policing. He's currently working on a book manuscript based on this research tentatively entitled, *The Laboratory, Laboratory: Surveillance, Race and Islam in the City of Angels*. Some findings from this research have been published or are forthcoming and *Anthropological Quarterly* and *Journal of Political Theology*. His talk explores the underlying anti Muslim racial logics of contemporary American policing in urban centers like Los Angeles, as well as the role of Muslims and ongoing struggles against surveillance and national security. The talk will consider how Muslims of immigrant backgrounds are increasingly turning to Islam as a decolonial ethical tradition to challenge white sovereignty in the City of Angels.

43:46 M. Bilal Nasir

Thank you so much. First off, I want to thank Stan, for inviting me here today and facilitating this great conversation around critical Muslim studies. And thank you to Molly and Maura, for all the logistical, you know, help and organizing. And I want to thank my fellow panelists for just such thought provoking and amazing talks, really looking forward to the conversation. And of course, Professor Alsultany who I'm very privileged to be in conversation with today. So I just want to start off my discussion by sharing an ethnographic moment from my fieldwork in LA, which I think really captures some of the broader socio-political questions and concerns that I have in my research. So just a week after the Trump inauguration, the White House did roll out executive order 13769, which was formally titled "Protecting the Nation from foreign terrorists' entry into the United States". And as has been well documented, the following morning, a lot of Muslims and non-Muslims flocked to airports to protest this quote unquote, "Muslim ban". I joined one of these demonstrations at LAX, Tom Bradley International Terminal, which was hosted by this organization called Vigilant Love⁸, which is a Muslim, Japanese anti surveillance solidarity collective. It consists of a lot of seasoned Muslim and non Muslim organizers of immigrant backgrounds that have predominantly come of age in the context of the global and domestic wars on terror. And so while at the airport, we were all surrounded by airport security, Department of Homeland Security agents, LAPD and Los Angeles Sheriff's Department officers, and I'm sure there were many FBI informants as well. And we sat there and protesters offered chants and critique of the executive order. And several members of the community gave speeches that highlighted the parallels between Japanese internment during World War II, and the treatment of Muslim Americans since 9/11. But also importantly, during the direct action, there was the Islamic afternoon ritual prayer, *salat al-'asr*, which was led by a Pakistani American Islamic scholar, Sheikh Hassen, who was from Anaheim, in nearby Orange County. And so at the call to the prayer the *adhan*, everybody moved out of the way and the din of protesters fell to a pin drop silence and the sound of *Allahu Akbar, God is great* reverberated throughout the airport, as each of us stood behind Sheikh Hassen, and bow and prostrated synchronically. So while the *salat* did take place as part of this larger demonstration, it was ontologically a different type of direct action, as both an embodied practice as well as an act of protest, the *salat* offered a distinct set of attitudes and sensibilities and behaviors that stood in conversation with but

⁸ [#VigilantLOVE](#)

outside of liberal secularism, about how to ethically respond to war, policing, and anti-Muslim racism in the age of national security. It was this tradition, the tradition of Islam that offered many of the Muslim protesters LAX that day, and over the last several years a political framework and a language for confronting the police state. So based over, based on over two years of ethnographic research with pious protesters and Muslim social movements in greater LA, my book project analyzes the anti-Muslim racial logics of 21st century policing, and Muslim American critiques of surveillance and national security that the shifting grammar of race has precipitated. Over the last several years, we've witnessed these horrific images and videos of Black Americans that have been subject to police violence, prompting the rise of social movements like BLM or Black Lives Matter. And a push for public and scholarly discussions around white supremacy and movements for the abolition of policing.

47:38

One of the recent texts that have addressed these issues collectively is Dylan Rodriguez's *White Reconstruction*⁹, which explores the concept of white being and how it emerged with the rise of counterinsurgency governance the United States, and especially in cities like Los Angeles, which is where my fieldwork was predominantly done. And so Rodriguez in his text frames the notion of domestic warfare based on the US Army counterinsurgency field manual, which he argues serves as an epistemological and political foundation to contemporary anti Black and racial colonial policing in LA as well as in the other urban centers. But what's curiously missing from Rodriguez's discussion is how General David Petraeus authored the field manual for the occupation of Iraq¹⁰, as well as how the US military and domestic policing apparatuses including the LAPD have predominantly targeted Muslims as its test subjects for counterinsurgency strategies, strategies that have certainly since been used on other Black and brown populations. And in doing so, Rodriguez also omits any discussion of Muslims, Black and non Black from histories of opposition to police violence in the global south and in LA. And so this exclusion of Muslims and Islam, in debates about racial race craft and white sovereignty, policing and abolitionists and decolonial praxis is not specific to this text that I'm discussing, but I believe is representative of a broader dismissal of the relevance of anti-Muslim racism and Islam in studying modern political formations and different modalities and forms of emancipatory politics. To remedy this oversight in critical ethnic studies, critical Muslim studies scholars have thoroughly documented how the West has historically positioned Muslims and Islam as its rational and moral other, establishing the secular world and prompting the rise of modern man and its attendant concept of race. In my own work, I argue that with the onset of the Global War on Terror, 21st century policing in global cities like LA has been overwhelmingly shaped by the specter of Islam and the rise of anti-Muslim racism. More specifically, I look at debates in the anthropology of religion and secularism to probe how the racialization of Islam in the US depends on secular modern power. And I argue that it's secular modern power that shapes the attitudes, disposition, sensibilities that constitute white sovereignty, and therefore also the grammar of race. And so the racialization of Islam that we see, which is based off of the shifting grammar of race, is not some kind of abstract discourse, but has very profound and material effects on everyday Muslim life, most notably in the domain of religion and politics. And so in my research, I examine how policing agencies like the Department of Homeland Security, the FBI and the LAPD demand that Muslim American communities partner with law enforcement to share security and policing responsibilities, which is the central tenet of counterinsurgency and governance and policing.

⁹ [Dylan Rodriguez, *White Reconstruction*](#)

¹⁰ [The U.S. Army/Marine Corps Counterinsurgency Field Manual](#)

And essential to this counter insurgency project is to establish and promote a quote unquote, “moderate Islam”, which entails adopting a form of religious and political practice that aligns with liberal principles like moral autonomy, human rights, free markets, as well as secular state sovereignty. And so I consider how the racialization of Islam by policing apparatuses in LA importantly, involves recruiting Muslims themselves to reform Islam. But these projects, as I quickly realized through my fieldwork are far from complete. What I found in LA was that Muslim Americans have forged robust social movements embedded in the Islamic tradition, and ideas of piety in critique of surveillance and policing. In other words, the racialization of Islam and the policing interventions that they've authorized in LA Muslim communities have been met with political theological movements rooted in what can be called a decolonial Islamic ethics, I'm happy to talk more about what I mean by decolonial here. And so the manuscript that I'm working on, I study how LA Muslims respond to de radicalization initiatives like the LAPD Muslim mapping program, and the Department of Homeland Security, countering violent extremism or CVE program. By invoking Islamic traditions of storytelling and embodying Islamic virtues such as *shukr* or gratefulness and *sabr*, which is patience, all the construct these ecologies of care were Muslim ways of life could thrive. In another instance, I examine how pious Muslims draw the Islamic concept of [indistinct], which means having a good opinion of one another, to combat the circulation of suspicion emerging from the proliferation of FBI informants in local machines and in community spaces. I also consider how Muslim youth of immigrant backgrounds draw on the religious authority of Hajj Malik el Shabazz, or Malcolm X, to promote an Islamic movement against anti Black racism and policing. And so it's through these cases that, I think through how Islamic traditions offer a decolonial and abolitionist resource, but not only establishing social movements, but more importantly, establishing ways of life in opposition to surveillance and policing. So I just, you know, want to end with a question can we think with, instead of against these pious Muslims to consider how to live ethically in the face of militarism, policing, and white sovereignty in the US, and for us critical Muslim studies scholars and critical ethnic studies scholars more broadly, what this requires is that we provincialize our own secular sensibilities, and teleological political projects, and a demand seeking Islam as an ethical tradition that is indigenous to Muslims seriously.

53:26 Evelyn Alsultany

Thank you all so much. These were really incredible presentations. I wanted to say a few very brief words, but I'd like to encourage those who are here to write your question in the Q&A, and we will address the questions that you have to panelists. I thought it was really interesting how the panel kicked off with Nafeesa talking about racial stress, and how it's a form for Muslims, the form of stress is not recognized and how do we make it recognizable, and you had a particular slide but outlined different forms of racial stress. I think it said TSA searches, surveillance, seeing pictures of torture, lack of representation or positive representation, the media discussions of US military occupation in your homeland as if it's every day, no big deal, and you had others, it was an interesting list to look at. So that was interesting to start with racial stress, that Islam as a religion, it's racialized, but have you even include Muslims in these conversations. And then moving on to Samah, I'm looking at Muslim humor, I was thinking, it could be seen as a way to manage racial stress, that you're going to tell jokes. And that Muslim humor in this case, and trying to resolve the racial stress, Samah argued that it's a mode of secular discourse. And then it produces an acceptable form of Muslims, the right kind of Muslim through that process of telling the jokes and maybe getting out of racial stress. And then we see in the case of Mariam's presentation, that the war on terror is shaping the experiences of students in the US and in

Pakistan, that the war on terror is influencing that's the most obvious form of racial stress, everything that's come out of the war on terror. And we have the NYPD surveilling Muslim students in the US, we have ongoing war policies in Pakistan. That even leads to encouraging Pakistani students to come to the US as if there's an escape when there really is no escape from this racial stress. And Mariam said that US Empire is mediating the experiences of Muslim students and use the term Imperial racialization to understand it. And then with Bilal's presentation, allows helping us put Muslims in conversations about policing. Again, this exclusion of Muslims, we're talking about race and racial politics in the United States, and highlighting the anti Muslim racism is not recognized. I thought it was interesting the example of the prayer at LAX. And how Bilal described it as challenging liberal secularism, a powerful way to confront the police. And I'm thinking about juxtaposing that with Samah's presentation about embracing liberal secularism. So on the one hand, we have this radical approach that's rooted in religion and being used to empower and challenge racial logics and police brutality, and the surveillance state. And then on the other, we have Muslim comedians trying to use humor in a way to further liberal secularism. So Bilal highlighted for us how Islamic traditions are being used in activism and protest and the necessity of including Muslims and conversations about abolitionism. So those are a few thoughts that were coming to my mind as I was listening to all of you. It's really fascinating and happy, I got to learn from you. And I'm going to look at our Q&A now. And let you know what we have. We have questions from Stan, one for each of you. And I'll just start with the first one, I think the Nafeesa, might have mentioned one of them. But we have a question for Nafeesa, from Stan, which is with relation to Marcia Inhorn's¹¹ work on Arabs in the Middle East and SWANA region, and in the US, what are ways you're thinking about and accounting for US Empire and ongoing wars that impact one's health, environment and reproductive capacity? And I'll open it to you.

58:00 Nafeesa Andrabi

Yeah, Stan, thanks for thanks for all the direct questions. This is something that I'm thinking about a lot. And I think, you know, the big thing that drew me into this work, in particular with racial health disparities, is our reliance on race as this construct and as this set of sort of normative categories that exist in the US, and sort of who ends up being erased, and what kinds of colonial and imperial contexts are just erased when you come into the US. And you're told you need to fit into one of these five boxes. And that's how we're going to study everything from here on out, right. So I think in what I'm hoping to do in this work, is to kind of push back on those categories a little bit and say, you know, maybe it makes sense to try to keep creating more categories to increase representation, right? So the introduction of MENA or SWANA category, you know, maybe it is about expanding those broad racial categories. Or maybe it's about shifting away from the reliance on that, and understanding what are the other ways in which you know, exactly this, like thinking about wars, thinking about occupations, thinking about how could we, you know, we understand vicarious racism, right? Where it doesn't have to happen to you, it could happen in your community, or you could know that it's happening and that can translate to your body. So thinking about well is something that's happening in Afghanistan, is that impacting? Is that a similar stressor for all Muslims? Or is it just proportionally impacting people who are more related to the Afghan diaspora? You know, who are more proximal to it location? Or is it happening sort of universally across Muslims in the sort of the Muslim diaspora in the US context? So, you know, I do I'm, I am trying to think about those things. I think there's a lot of limitations when it comes to the data. But I think what

¹¹ Read about Marica Inhorn [here](#)

I'm also just trying to say is, is race a meaningful category to study these disparities outcomes? And what are we missing when we just rely so heavily on these sort of normative racial categories, and then trying super hard to create more categories within the tools of you know, this race, which was, you know, is essentially, you know, construction of sort of these white supremacist institutions. And does it make sense to kind of just create more? Or does it make sense to just move away from those categories and find new ways of relating to- and integrating the colonial context, the Imperial context and recognizing that our experiences on the ground here in the US didn't just start and end here in the US, right, and they're impacted by as Mariam was talking about Bilal, Samah, like every, all of these sort of global processes are ending up sort of translating onto our experiences on the ground and in some ways lodging themselves into our body and potentially, you know, impacting health outcomes. So I'm trying to do it, I think about it a lot more in my head, but it actually comes out in the work but, you know.

1:00:38 Evelyn Alsultany

Thank you Nafeesa, I have a question for Samah from Stan. I really enjoyed and found productive your use of sense as in sense of humor, in this sense, how are you thinking about phenomenology embodiments? And are you in conversation with Sara Ahmed's work?

1:00:57 Samah Choudhury

Yeah, thank you for this question. Sara Ahmed's work has been really formative for me. And I think especially the ways that she thinks about orientation. In her work on you know, queer phenomenology, she talks about how orientation itself has this kind of colonial origin because, you know, orientation coming from orient the idea that this is something that, you know, the European gaze creates, by way of gaze of looking at that, which it's coming into contact to. And there are possibilities and you know, the rest of the book project does explore this, where it's not a clear straight line where these comedians are simply kind of, you know, buying into the liberal secularism wholesale. And there are definitely moments, I find, especially in the comedy of Hasan Minhaj, where the kind of racial orientation that he is, scaffolding is queered in a lot of ways. And it's taking up the effects of, you know, of mixing and coming into contact with, you know, things that reside on, different racialized lines. Where the, it's not entirely clear, right, that he's just kind of like this wholesale representative of, you know, the, the diversity complex. And so, I think we see that a lot more in his latest works, I find that I've been able to chart it a little bit better in the show that was just cancelled *Patriot Act*, which was on Netflix. But it's also interesting to think about how he's only kind of offered that possibility after he's kind of done something like *Homecoming King* and you know, done the types of stand up comedy that give him the access to the space to do this, this different work in the first place. So I'm always thinking about Sara Ahmed, and I think there's a lot more to do here with that. So I appreciate bringing this up for me. Thank you.

1:03:09 Evelyn Alsultany

Thank you. Question for Mariam from Stan. How does this geopolitical racial projects and imperial racialization also worked alongside other geopolitical projects run through the US University? I'm thinking about this in relation to Empire and the continuous need to recruit Asian students to US universities. I'm thinking about Nancy Ableman's, Adrienne Lo's and David Eng's work.

1:03:36 Mariam Durrani

Thank you so much. Thanks, Stan. I agree in the sense that that is part of how I have been trying to understand - oh the question left. Though, it's been part of the way that I've been trying to understand how higher education becomes an important site to think about how Empire is being reproduced in all these ways, both in terms of kind of methodologically how these topics or areas are studied or the questions that are asked about these about Pakistan for example, or Pakistani college students. And then in the US, of course, like, you know, I, I've definitely been reading of course, Adrienne Lo's work on Nancy Ableman, Roderick Ferguson and others who look at the higher education in the US also, of course, *The Imperial University*¹² by Sunaina Maira, edited by them. So I think all of these projects are kind of showing us how the US how higher education in the US has become a site of Empire. But I think connecting it to the way that US Empire influences and shapes college experiences beyond the US, is a really important way of kind of understanding how, why higher education. And we can also, for example, think about the 1965 Immigration Act and the kind of like selected the selection criteria that probably, you know, valued a particular kind of educational background, or professional background. And of course, that those individuals are those people who are able to avail themselves of that opportunity were also in the past benefiting within those contexts, pre independence from colonial infrastructures that recognize them in particular ways. And so I think that, you know, we must be kind of connecting across all of these contexts, in order to really deepen the insights and also, you know, speaking to everyone's, by the way, presentation was so fantastic, thank you so much, I learned so much and, you know, Bilal's presentation, kind of thinking about the way that piety becomes a becomes a resource becomes a way of, of making sense of, of the historic moment that we're in. And it's it is separate from this kind of, like secular approach to thinking about being a modern subject and kind of a very, you know, so I was really drawn to that set of questions, because within the young people kind of over the years, I think that has taken shape. So I mean, the benefit of a multi year project is being able to see how people who were once you know, 18-19, and thinking and dealing with things in a particular way, who are now 27-28, and how those experiences are defining them. And so again, thinking also, with Nafeesa's work in terms of like the long term impact, not necessarily I'm focusing on health, but certainly in terms of aspiration in terms of spiritual kind of, you know, relationships, etc. And I think that's, that's kind of something I'd love to talk more about with all of you. So thank you so much.

1:06:47 Evelyn Alsultany

Thank you. We have a question for Bilal from Stan. What are the ways that *salat* and performances of Muslim piety reconfigure space such as the airport and reimagines racial geographies? How are these practices of Muslim ness and Islam, indications of alternate and pleasure cartographies of belonging?

1:07:11 M. Bilal Nasir

Thank you, Stan, for this question. And I think I'll answer this question ethnographically, actually, so in 2007, the deputy of counterterrorism from the LAPD Michael Downing went to the Senate, and he gave this really long speech about this new program called LAPD mapping. And what he argued in that piece was that in LA, they need to create an environment where Muslims come to realize that the liberal values that are inherent to the United States are sacred. And he makes this argument to the Senate. And, you know, he comes back and he starts implementing this project through the LAPD mapping

¹² [*The Imperial University*](#)

program, which is about like collecting counterintelligence recruiting some Americans creating a geography across Southern California, which is, you know, such a vast and kind of differentiated space that is always been, you know, the LAPD has always kind of ruled that terrain in a very militaristic way, going all the way back to World War II and the way the LAPD develops, and then it becomes even more militarized after it's put under a consent decree in 2000-2001, which coincides with counterterrorism operations overseas in the US. So there's this attempt to create this environment where Muslims become proper liberal subjects, and this performance of the *salah* and you know, engaging in these forms of Muslim piety is really a response to that project. And I argue that these are ecologies of care where embodied Islamic practice is encouraged in public - not only in private, but in public spaces. So that Islam as a way of life as a way to kind of think about the present tribulations around surveillance and policing becomes a normative framework to think about one's place in the world and the community's place in the world. You know, and kind of deal with the issues of war domestically as well as globally. So what's also important this type of Islamic activism is it's always been in conversation, in LA at least, with other communities. And that's why I brought up the conversation around Japanese Americans and *Nikkei* organizers in LA, who have been really adamant about for example, holding, when they hold activist circles, or organizing meetings, and, you know, they have an *Athar* every year, they make sure there's a place where Muslims can pray. And it's not that just Muslims have the choice to pray. When the Muslims are praying, everybody else has to be silent, everybody else has to kind of surrender to that time and space that's in accordance with the Islamic tradition at that time. And so this is the way kind of activist circles have started to, you know, give solidarity to Muslims, but also how Muslims have asserted themselves in activist spaces. There has been a lot of recent discussion about how, you know, even in leftist spaces, there's a lot of anti-Muslim racism that really revolves around the inability of Muslims to engage in religious practice, and, and be outward religious. And these types of cartographies that I'm seeing in LA, are really about normalizing Islamic ethics in the face of, you know, an overwhelming kind of secular and racial Empire, that other rises, Islam and other rises those Muslims who engage in public piety.

1:10:36 Evelyn Alsultany

Thank you Bilal, we're almost out of time. But I know that Nafeesa would like to make a final comment.

1:10:41 Nafeesa Andrabi

I just wanted to share, I read a paper today, which was talking exactly about this sort of ideology, and, and sort of how people are raised based, based off of the ideology that they present. And it was focusing on sort of white and Black individuals, and how experimental work but how presenting a liberal versus a conservative ideology actually shaped the way people were perceived, and how they were racially categorized. And I'm just thinking about that. And in terms of, you know, what Samah was saying, and then what you're saying and the ideas of like, whether you present right as more secular, or how you present in terms of your ideologies and, and piety in your relationship to Islam, if that actually then shapes how people are both perceiving your phenotype. And then, in the US context, you know, categorizing you racially, I think there's some really interesting questions to be asked there and sort of lines of lines of reasoning to follow. Really, yeah, this is yeah. Love being in community with y'all.

1:11:38 Evelyn Alsultany

Thank you. So in closing, I want to thank everyone who attended today, the fifth Critical Muslim Studies session, Professor Stan Thangaraj for putting it together, the Association for Asian Studies Association for Asian American Studies, Arab American Studies Association, and our for brilliant scholars for sharing their work with us today. And I think Maura has some words of closing as well.

1:12:03 Maura Cunningham

Yes, thank you so much to everyone who attended thank you to our panelists and moderator and to Stan as everyone has said, for organizing this. Before you all go, I want to make sure I mentioned that our sixth and final Critical Muslim Studies, AAS Digital Dialogue will be on Friday, September 24, at 3pm Eastern time, we should have that on our website coming up fairly soon. So you'll be able to see who the participants are and register for that session. I also want to highlight that we have actually a double feature on September 24th. We have another Digital Dialogue earlier that day, which is part of our South and Southeast Asian Film Festival, which will be holding at the end of September and into the beginning of October. So that will be a virtual Film Festival. Again, we'll have all the information on our website coming up very soon, but we'll have to Digital Dialogues sessions in connection with that Film Festival, September 24, and September 30. So if you are not on our mailing list, please follow us on social media, Twitter, and Facebook and Instagram. We always post about all of these events there, on our website. And if you are an Association for Asian Studies member, you'll also get emails about all of these great events. So please join us at these upcoming sessions. Thank you again for coming today and listening to these fascinating presentations. And I hope everyone has a great weekend. Thanks so much. Bye!

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