

ABSTRACT

Dissertation Title: Service, Sacrifice, and Citizenship: The Experiences of Muslims Serving in the U.S. Military

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The events of 9/11 and the subsequent “War on Terror” activated long standing stereotypes in the United States that portrayed Muslims as fundamentally different from other Americans. In this project, I interview 15 Muslims who have served in the U.S. military since 9/11 to determine if and how the activation of this us/them boundary shaped their military experiences.

I find that the us/them atmosphere that characterizes civilian discourse about Muslims is present in the military. However, most of my respondents felt that it had little practical effect on them. I discuss this in terms of the presence but irrelevance of this boundary. I connect this finding to the history of racial integration in the U.S. military, arguing that characteristics of the military, including an emphasis on policies of equal opportunity, the ability to compel certain behaviors, and the nature of military service, which promotes close contact among diverse individuals, can mitigate some of the negatives effects of being othered. While most of my respondents had positive experiences, in some units the us/them discourse was exacerbated, creating atmospheres of distrust and suspicion which led to negative outcomes including harassment, accusations, and decisions by Muslim service members to leave the military.

A theme that emerged in exploring this dichotomy of experience among my respondents was the role of leadership. Leadership that saw value in diversity and was invested in supporting it, mitigated negative effects of othering, making this an irrelevant frame. However, leadership that repeated stereotypes or fears reinforced this tension, creating toxic environments in which Muslim service members felt excluded.

I began this project with the expectation that citizenship would be a central narrative for Muslim service members, as it was for Japanese Americans in World War II. However, the respondents in my sample rarely use their military service to directly make claims on citizenship. They do however express institutional motivations to serve and engage in dialogue, bridge building, and other aspects of everyday citizenship.

SERVICE, SACRIFICE, AND CITIZENSHIP: THE EXPERIENCES OF MUSLIMS
SERVING IN THE U.S. MILITARY

By

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

On September 11, 2001 (“9/11”) four passenger jets were hijacked and flown into the World Trade Center and the Pentagon in a coordinated terrorist attack that killed almost 3,000 people. It was an unprecedented act of terror on American soil, and defined the new century as the United States grappled to find a balance between security and civil rights while engaged in what became a long-lasting, unconventional war on two fronts. The events of 9/11 fundamentally shaped the experiences of Muslim Americans who suddenly found themselves sharing an identity with the terrorists. Within this context, thousands of Muslims chose to serve in the U.S. armed forces. In this project I consider the experiences of some of these Muslim service members.

The events of 9/11 and the subsequent “War on Terror” activated long standing stereotypes in the United States that portrayed Muslims as fundamentally different from other Americans. These processes of othering have shaped the experiences of Muslim Americans. In my examination of the experiences of Muslims serving in the U.S. military, I find that this us/them¹ distinction is salient in the military. The Muslim service members I spoke with identified this attitude and expected it to shape their military careers. For many of my respondents, despite expecting this boundary to matter, they felt that it ultimately did not. For others, attitudes of suspicion born out of this mentality fundamentally shaped their experiences in the military. Differences in leadership emerge in many of the narratives, suggesting that leadership plays a central role in either mitigating or exacerbating us/them tendencies.

¹ Throughout this dissertation I will conceptualize this dichotomy as between “us” and “them”. The terms “we” and “they” can also be used to communicate this concept. Us/them is more commonly used in contemporary literature focusing on the experiences of Muslims.

MUSLIMS IN THE UNITED STATES

Islam came to the United States long before 9/11 brought it to national attention. Among slaves brought to the United States, as many as 10 percent were Muslim, though most were later converted to Christianity (Ba-Yunus and Kane 2004). Early in the twentieth century, there was a slow flow of Muslim immigrants from the Middle East. However, this flow was largely stopped by the quotas of the National Origins Act of 1924. In 1965, immigration from the Islamic world resumed. In recent years there has been speculation that a uniquely American form of Islam is emerging. Some have suggested that American Islam is more universal, transcending nationality, race, and sect,

A certain schism is evolving between two generations in the United States, those who came as immigrants to the United States, and their children. Muslim youth see themselves as both more socially daring and closer to religion than their parents. [...] the parental generation is perceived to be stuck in the trench of ethnicity, and thereby unable to allow Islam to reach what is seen as its social and non-divisive, trans-ethnic potential. To these youngsters, Islam is a message to all humankind, potentially outlived by all humankind, thus doing away with ethnic fragmentation (Schmidt 2002: 9).

It is difficult to get an accurate estimate of the U.S. Muslim population. Pew (2011) estimates the Muslim population in the United States to be about 2.75 million while Ba-Yunus and Kane (2004) calculate that there are 5.7 million Muslims in the United States. Pew (2011) reports that of U.S. Muslims, 30 percent are white, 23 percent Black, 21 percent Asian, 19 percent other/mixed, and 6 percent Hispanic. According to Pew (2011), 63 percent of the adult Muslim population in the United States is foreign born, and 15 percent are the children of immigrants. Of foreign-born Muslims in the United States, 41 percent were born in the Middle East or North Africa, 26 percent in South Asia², 11 percent in Africa, 7 percent in Europe, 5 percent in Iran, and 10 percent

² The category “South Asia” usually includes India, Pakistan, Afghanistan, and Bangladesh.

elsewhere³. Sirin and Fine (2008) note that the Muslim community in the United States is the most ethnically and racially diverse in the world.

MUSLIMS IN THE U.S. MILITARY

Muslims serve throughout the armed force. Estimates of the number of Muslims in the U.S. military vary wildly; reports range from a low of 3,400 (Azad 2008) to a high of 15,000 (Amanullah 2005). The Defense Manpower Data

Branch	Total Number	Percent
Total Active Duty	3,535	.002
Army	1,668	.003
Navy	740	.002
Air Force	454	.002
Marine Corps	673	.002
Total Reserve/Guard	1,503	.002

Center (DMDC) collects official data on religious affiliation, and as of March 2009, reported a total of 3,535 Muslims serving in the active forces and 1,503 in the reserves. Table 1 shows these data by branch. These are the estimates commonly used by the media; however, these data have some significant limitations. DMDC collects these data voluntarily upon entry into the military, and so cannot account for individuals who choose not to reveal their religion, those who change their religion during their service, or religiosity of service members.

Muslims are fully integrated into the U.S. military. Muslim service members deploy to both Iraq and Afghanistan.⁴ There are Muslim cadets at the service academies (Serrano 2006) and there are Muslim chaplains. Captain Abdul-Rasheed Muhammad was commissioned in the Army as the first Muslim military chaplain in 1993. In 2001, there

³ Although Indonesia has the largest Muslim population in the world, Indonesians make up a very small proportion of the Muslim population in the United States. Ba-Yunus and Kane (2004) estimate that Indonesians make up less than 3 percent of the Muslim population in the United States.

⁴ As of 2006, seven had been killed and 212 awarded Combat Action Ribbons (Elliott 2006).

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were fourteen Muslim military chaplains (Goodstein 2001). By 2008, the number of Muslim chaplains in the military had dropped to six (Turner 2008). Even though they are few and far between, the existence of Muslim chaplains is important. According to Hansen (2008), “because there was a Muslim chaplain present, the [Muslim] sailors felt better about being in the military than they would have if there hadn’t been. This is exactly the function the military chaplains are supposed to serve” (44).

OVERVIEW OF RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

As one of the first studies of its kind, this project seeks to document the experiences of members of this minority group in the military. The central question this project explores is: What are the experiences of Muslims serving in the U.S. military? In answering this question, I address several sub-questions. After establishing the existence of an us/them discourse in the civilian world, I ask if this idea also suffuses the U.S. military. Upon finding that it does, I consider the role of leadership in shaping the effects of this discourse. Finally, I ask if Muslim service members are using their military service as a way to negotiate this us/them atmosphere by using it to make citizenship claims as Japanese American veterans did during World War II.

This project utilizes a qualitative research design. Data were collected through interviews with service members and veterans who self-identified as Muslim and have served since 9/11. In total, 15 respondents were interviewed. These respondents came from a variety of backgrounds and have served throughout the U.S. military. See Chapter 5 for a full discussion of methodology.

OVERVIEW OF FINDINGS

Othring and Us-versus-Them in the Military

I find that the us/them atmosphere that characterizes civilian discourse about Muslims is present in the military. However, although this discourse is clearly present, most of my respondents felt that it had little practical effect on them. I discuss this in terms of the presence but irrelevance of this boundary. My respondents were aware of the use of us/them rhetoric. Many expected being Muslim to matter for their careers; however, ultimately they felt that it did not. I connect this finding to the history of racial integration in the U.S. military, arguing that characteristics of the military, including an emphasis on policies of equal opportunity, the ability to compel certain behaviors, and the nature of military service, which promotes close contact among diverse individuals, can mitigate some of the negatives effects of being othered.

However, although they were the minority in my sample, I did find that in some units the us/them discourse is exacerbated, creating atmospheres of distrust and suspicion which leads to negative outcomes including harassment, accusations, and decisions by Muslim service members to leave the military.

While the use of the us/them framework was supported by the narratives of my respondents, it also became clear that the frame itself is too simplistic to fully capture the complexity of processes of othering. Using the framework of us/them requires the researcher (and respondent) to implicitly take on a particular perspective. In this case, the implicit perspective is the one in which “us” is equated with non-Muslim Americans and “them” is equated with Muslims (both American and foreign). However, othering is not limited to one perspective, and just who is “us” and who is “them” depends entirely on

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where you stand. This point is driven home in the experiences of Jamal (Chapter 6) who finds himself violently targeted by al-Qaeda. This does not undermine the utility of the us/them frame, but reminds us to be aware of the implicit perspective that is necessary in using the frame.

Leadership

The idea of us/them appeared in almost all of my interviews. However, for some respondents this discourse had little effect while for others it fundamentally shaped their experiences. A theme that emerged in exploring this dichotomy of experience among my respondents was the role of leadership. Leadership that saw value in diversity and was invested in supporting it, mitigated negative effects of othering, making this an irrelevant frame. However, leadership that repeated stereotypes or fears reinforced this tension, creating toxic environments in which Muslim service members felt excluded.

Performing Citizenship

I began this project with the expectation that citizenship would be a central narrative for Muslim service members, as it was for Japanese Americans in World War II. However, the respondents in my sample rarely use their military service to directly make claims on citizenship. Some of the difference may be due to historical experience. The bloviation of a few politicians aside, the right to serve in the military has not been seriously threatened for Muslims, nor have they been systematically interned as Japanese Americans were. My respondents serve for a myriad of reasons, but they all take their ability to serve for granted.

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I argue that rather than seeing military service as a way to fight for rights, my respondents take their rights for granted, and in so doing, military service become a symbolic performance of citizenship. My respondents don't feel that they need to serve to prove their loyalty or their American-ness. They don't serve to become Americans; because they see themselves as Americans, they serve.

SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS STUDY

This research is a study of inclusion and exclusion and institutional diversity. It contributes to a greater understanding of processes of othering by looking at the military, an institution central to the social construction of the nation (Krebs 2006). It examines the effects of othering within the institutional context of the military, and considers the role of leadership on the success or failure of inclusionary measures. In Chapter 9 I build on this finding to propose a series of intermediary factors that may shape experiences of othering. It will become clear throughout this dissertation that while us/them processes are present, they are much more complex and fluid than often theorized.

This study also adds to the literature on the connection between military service and citizenship by presenting a case in which military service is used not to gain citizenship, but as a performance of citizenship.

Muslims in the United States are understudied, and a greater understanding of how members of this group negotiate the often divisive environment of post-9/11 America provides insight into stigmatized minority groups. This research begins to fill the lacuna of empirical evidence in scholarly and popular discussion on the varied roles of Muslims in the United States.

ORGANIZATION OF MANUSCRIPT

This manuscript is divided into two sections. The first section consists of introductory and theoretical material. Chapter 2 considers processes of othering and activation of the us/them boundary following 9/11. In Chapter 3, I discuss diversity in the military, including a discussion of leadership. Chapter 4 is a consideration of citizenship and the relationship between military service and citizenship. Chapter 5 describes the research design including research questions, sample selection, profile of the sample, and a discussion of data analysis.

The second section of this dissertation focuses on the analysis of the data. Analysis is organized by person, rather than by theme, although individual narratives are grouped together in order to draw out certain themes and concepts. In Chapter 6, I explore issues related to us/them in the military. I use the cases of Mahmood, Ahmed, and Kareem to illustrate the existence of the us/them discourses in the military. However, for these three respondents (and others), it is seen as having little actual effect. Therefore, these three cases illustrate my conceptualization of the presence but irrelevance of the us/them frame in the military. Next I consider the cases of Omar and Dani, both linguists who have studied at the Defense Language Institute (DLI), their narratives illustrate the role of us/them discourses in military education. Finally, I introduce Jamal whose narrative illustrates the complexity of perspective when using us/them as a framing concept.

In Chapter 7, I consider the role of leadership in shaping the manifestation of us/them. I first introduce Tarek, Najib, and Pervez all of whom experienced strong

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leadership that was invested in diversity and successfully mitigated the effects of us/them. I then introduce Basim, Zafir, and Sadia, the respondents in my study who had negative experiences resulting from being othered. A common theme throughout these cases is the role of leaders in shaping their experiences.

In Chapter 8, I explore the idea of military service as a performance of citizenship. While use of military service to make direct claims of citizenship was rare in my sample, many respondents articulated their desire to serve in terms of institutional motives arising from a sense of belonging. I use the cases of Hakim, Rahma, and Yusuf to illustrate this conceptualization.

NOTE ON TERMINOLOGY

When using Arabic terms, I use the transliteration that I anticipate will be the most familiar to the readers. For example, I use the spelling Osama bin Laden although Usama is a more accurate transliteration. I use both the spellings Qur'an and Koran in reference to the Islamic sacred text. I use the spelling Koran when I am quoting a source that uses this spelling. I also use this spelling to signal that a respondent has used a tone that is meant to be read as an imitation of ignorant or malicious mispronunciation.

CHAPTER 2: OTHERING AND US-VERSUS-THEM

The events and reactions to 9/11 activated an us/them boundary that distinguishes between “Americans” and “Muslims” and imagines these categories to be mutually exclusive. These boundaries were activated as Muslims were identified with the enemy. In this chapter, I consider processes distinguishing us from them. I begin with a discussion of the concept of othering and then examine how social theorists have conceptualized this process under different names; I examine racialization in particular. I then examine the specific history of othering of Islam using Said’s concept of Orientalism and I discuss how Islam came to be the salient other in the context of the Global War on Terror (GWOT). I conclude with a discussion of the limitations of the us/them framework.

OTHERING AND US/THEM BOUNDARIES

Othering, or the act of identifying the self in opposition to something beyond the self, does not inherently entail a confrontational relationship. In its psychological applications, discerning self from other is a crucial stage in development and the self and other are understood as neutral categories. In Sociology, the idea of the benign other is conceptualized by Mead as the “generalized other.”

In Social Identity theory, us and them are conceptualized in terms of “in-group” and “out-group”. Forming these categories is considered a normal cognitive process that simplifies and makes manageable an extremely complex reality. This process draws on stereotypes of the out-group, and preference for other members of the in-group.

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While in social psychology the importance of the “other” is seen in the oppositional construction of the self, I am taking an approach that draws on political sociology and postcolonial studies. In this view, the other is not just a neutral construction used to define the self, but is an active social construction used to exclude and devalue another group.

The boundary between self and other may become a site of conflict when groups of people compete for resources; self and other transform into us and them (Yuval-Davis 2010). Us-versus-them is seen as dichotomous and zero-sum. The boundary between us and them is imagined to be solid. This situation is characteristic of conflict and is often accompanied by demonization of the other. Us-versus-them dismisses the range of possible social relationships in favor of this simplistic approach.

Alexander (1992) explores the semiotics of othering in the rhetoric of civil society, “When citizens make judgments about who should be included in civil society and who should not, about who is a friend and who is an enemy, they draw on a systematic, highly elaborated symbolic code” (291). He argues that the world is perceived as a dichotomy; on one side are people perceived to be active, autonomous, rational, reasonable, calm, sane, and realistic. All others are perceived as passive, dependent, irrational, hysterical, excitable, insane, and unrealistic. This symbolic categorization leads to the categorization of these others as undeserving of the full benefits of society, “these persons deserve to be repressed, not only for the sake of civil society, but for their own sakes as well” (292). Alexander’s schema can be quite neatly applied to much of the contemporary anti-Muslim and anti-Islam rhetoric; his conclusion that due to this system of categorization the other “will be [seen as] conspiratorial, deceitful toward others, and

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calculating in their behavior, conceiving of those outside their group as enemies” (293) can clearly be used to understand claims of anti-Islam scholars (see Chapter 3).

In this project, I am accepting the argument that us-versus-them is acting as the dominant discourse, though I recognize that it is not universally used. As I will explain in greater depth later, I am *not* accepting this simple dichotomy as an accurate representation of reality; what I am arguing is that the belief that the world could be understood by a simple binary division into “good” and “evil”, “us” and “them”, has been the dominant discourse.

The process of distinguishing between us and them is one that many social theorists have dealt with under a variety of names. Some, like Huntington (1993), embrace processes of othering, while others criticize the essentialist nature of these approaches.

Cultural Racism and the “Clash of Civilizations” Model

Cultural racism is an attempt to conceptualize the ways in which racism affects social groups that are not a “race”. Cultural racism relocates the basis of immutable and fundamental conflict from biology to culture. This mode of thought conceptualizes culture as consistent, unchanging, and irreversible, “Thoughts and actions of people are reduced to and determined by a constructed cultural origin” (Shooman and Spielhaus 2010: 203). Although cultural racism is often referred to as a “new” form of racism, it is not unique to the contemporary period, nor does it replace biological racism; it supplements it (Meer and Noorani 2008).

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Huntington's (1993) controversial yet popular "Clash of Civilizations" model provides an example of this mode of thinking and an example of the activation of the imagined boundary between Islam and the West. Huntington argued that current and future sources of conflict will largely be along the lines of competing "civilizations". He categorized the world largely by religious tradition: Western, Confucian, Japanese, Islamic, Hindu, Slavic-Orthodox, Latin American, and African (his order). Huntington argued that the differences between civilizations are real and fundamental, and are "less mutable and hence less easily compromised and resolved than political and economic ones" (27). He argued that civilization ("What are you?") cannot be changed, suggesting that a Muslim literally cannot belong in the "West." Most research on Muslim American identification since 9/11 refutes this claim of incompatibility. I cite Huntington to demonstrate the pervasiveness of the activation of us/them boundaries, even in academia.⁵

Racialization

Although Islam is not itself a race, the concept of racialization can be applied. Racialization is the process by which people are categorized based on perceived racial characteristics and often denigrated based on this categorization. Miles (1989), one of the sociologists to reintroduce the concept in the contemporary era writes,

I therefore employ the concept of racialisation to refer to those instances where social relations between people have been structured by the signification of human biological characteristics in such a way as to define and construct differentiated social collectivities. The concept therefore refers to a process of

⁵ Although the "Clash of Civilizations" model has been thoroughly critiqued, it is widely taught. It was a part of the curriculum for my BA in International Relations, and an internet search of syllabi in International Relations and Affairs show that it still forms a part of the introductory canon.

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categorization, a representational process of defining an Other (usually, but not exclusively) somatically (75).

Racialization is often tied to discussions of nationalism, nationhood, religion and politics (Barot and Bird 2001) and so is clearly relevant to my project here.

The use of this conceptualization to gain traction on the experiences of Muslims in the West is complex as Islam is not a racial or ethnic identity. The global dispersion of Islam from an early period makes the use of phenotypical characteristics to distinguish Muslims from non-Muslims difficult. This has not however prevented erroneous assumptions that it is possible to identify Muslims solely on external characteristics. Individuals of certain national descent, such as South Asians and Arabs, are commonly, and often inaccurately, believed to be Muslim. At the same time, Muslims are often treated as if they are a cohesive ethnicity,

It is also important to remember that in the same way that the majority population imagine certain ethnic groups as conforming to certain religious faiths, the religious groups also may undergo a certain ethnification: that is, they are imagined to resemble each other in terms of what seems to be almost a biological (pre)determination as much as an ideological one. Ethnification of Islam is frequently part of political and media discourse, helping shape public attitudes (Schmidt 2002: 3)

In popular discourse, Muslims are often identified as having a “brown” phenotype and dressing in certain ways. Attire associated with Muslim-ness includes hijab and/or abaya for women, a beard, kufi, and/or “traditional” clothes such as thobe or shalwar khameez⁶ for men (see Göle 2003 for a detailed discussion of the role of clothing in identifying Muslims). Name is another way in which Muslims are often labeled,

⁶ *Hijab* is the headscarf worn by some Muslim women; there are many different styles of hijab. In addition to covering their hair, women wearing hijab usually dress modestly, covering arms and legs. *Abaya* is a long sleeved, floor length gown or over-robe worn by some Muslim women. *Kufi* is a cap worn by some Muslim men. *Thobe* is a robe commonly worn by men throughout the Arab world. *Shalwar khameez* are outfits consisting of pants and tunic worn by men and women throughout South Asia.

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“Muslims are turned into *a* Muhammad. Like the Cohen regularly featured in anti-Semitic jokes and songs, the name Muhammad also often figures into jokes about Muslims” (Khosravi 2012: 70).

Meer (2008) refers to Muslim identity as a “quasi-ethnic sociological formation” (66) based on the intersections between religious and ethnic boundaries. He notes that “many British Muslims report a higher level of discrimination and abuse when they appear ‘conspicuously Muslim’” (72). This issue gained attention in the United States when Juan Williams, an analyst for National Public Radio (NPR) made the comment, “But when I get on the plane, I got to tell you, if I see people who are in Muslim garb and I think, you know, they are identifying themselves first and foremost as Muslims, I get worried. I get nervous” (Folkenflik 2010). The focus on a “Muslim” appearance can lead to misidentification, and when combined with violent processes of othering, have tragic results as in the fatal shooting of Balbir Singh Sodhi on September 15, 2001. An Indian Sikh, Sodhi was mistaken for a Muslim and killed in retaliation for 9/11.

Several of my respondents identify themselves as “brown.” “Brown” is a racial categorization used by many groups, including South Asians, Arabs, Hispanics and others who do not fit well into the black/white racial dichotomy common in the United States. The term is used by some and rejected by others. The use of the conceptualization of “brown” in South Asian and Arab communities is supported both by academic literature and by my own experiences working and living with these communities. It is not a concept embraced by every member, but it is a concept that is generally understood to capture the distinct experience of being what Kibria (1996) terms “ambiguous non-whites”. “Brown” may have specific sub-group meanings (for example, see Frost’s

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(2010) discussion of “brown” masculinity among Punjabi youth in British Columbia), but the general conceptualization refers to the distinctness of a group that is seen as neither white nor black. For both South Asians and Arabs in the United States, debates about their race have a long history. Race of immigrants in the early twentieth century was often a matter requiring a legal decision as naturalization required the applicant to be white or African. While most groups were ruled on as a whole, South Asians and Arabs often faced rulings that varied from case to case (Morning 2001). While South Asians have long been seen as an “other” falling between the categories of white and black, Arabs were often perceived as white in the early twentieth century. However, since the mid-1970s, they have increasingly been perceived as non-white. Since 9/11, being Muslim has become associated with being “brown”. Patel (2005) argues that “Following September 11, mainstream media, perpetrators of hate violence and speech, and many activists began thinking of ‘Muslim-looking’ Arabs, Muslims, and South Asians as a single racial group” (63).

Regardless of the complexity of using the term “racialization” when dealing with a non-racial group, it is clear that the process of othering affecting Muslims parallels the racialization of other groups. Byng (2008) argues that Muslim religious identity came to “mimic the inequality of race identity via essentialist images of Islam, government policies, and experiences of discrimination” (659). She continues, “Even though *Muslim* is a religious label and not a racial one, since 9/11 Muslim American identity has been restructured to reflect the systemic inequality that is readily associated with racial minorities” (662).

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ORIENTALISM: ISLAM AS “OTHER”

The East, and Islam in particular, have long formed an “other” for the West, a boundary that was reinvigorated following 9/11. Said (1978), in his seminal examination of othering of the Orient, points to the hostility of this division,

[the] habit of deploying large generalizations by which reality is divided into various collectives: languages, races, types, colors, mentalities, each category being not so much a neutral designation as an evaluative interpretation. Underlying these categories is the rigidly binomial opposition of ‘ours’ and ‘theirs,’ with the former always encroaching upon the latter (227)

Said used the term “Orientalism” to describe this emphasis on dichotomous categorization of the world into East and West and the accompanying devaluation and denigration of the East.

The boundary distinguishing Judeo-Christian “Americans” from the Muslim “other” and casting this as an us-versus-them equation has a long history and was easily accessible following 9/11. Said (1981) refers to this as “subliminal cultural consciousness” about Islam (6). The stereotypes of Muslims and Middle Easterners that frame American understandings of the current conflicts can be traced to their development in the Middle Ages. Since its beginning in the seventh century, Islam was perceived as a threat to predominately Christian Europe. Islam was seen as a false religion and the superior military might of the Islamic empire posed a very real threat to Europe. From its earliest encounters, the West viewed Islam as an existential threat. Centuries of warfare honed these negative narratives and embedded them deep within western thought. Karim (2000) locates them in the works of Beethoven, Dante, Mozart, Shakespeare, and Voltaire and argues that as these classics are revisited in each generation, they “[sustain] a world view in which ‘Mohammadens’ are essentially

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gripped by violence, lust, greed, and barbarism” (2). Daniel (1960) explores the development of Christian European approaches to Islam in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, arguing that contemporary approaches to Islam are heir to this legacy; “the style of the day changes, but the themes are perennial” (17). These themes developed great internal coherence in their representation and understanding of the Muslim “other” and explicitly posed Christendom in opposition to the Islamic world. Western images and understandings of Islam present it as monolithic, static, and antithetical to western liberal values (Karim 2000). This long standing sense of conflict and threat is often latent; however, 9/11 crystallized American fears of Islam and made many Americans feel vulnerable to an Islamic threat (Gottschalk and Greenberg 2008).

OTHERING IN THE CONTEXT OF WAR

In times of conflict and war, processes of othering and identification of boundaries between “us” and “them” are often used to frame the enemy. September 11 and the subsequent invasions of Afghanistan and Iraq and the identification of al-Qaeda as the primary enemy made this Islam/West boundary salient.

The relationship between othering and the social construction of the enemy is well-established (for example see Dower’s (1986) account of this in World War II). According to Schmitt ([1927] 1976), the enemy must be other, “existentially something different and alien” (27). The enemy is defined in contrast to “us” and conceived of as homogenous and static with an intrinsic and immutably evil nature.

The other/enemy is often dehumanized. According to Dower (1986), during World War II, the Japanese were labeled as other, bordering on being another species.

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Imagery of apes, lesser men, primitives, children, and madmen were used to describe the Japanese. Dower argues that these images were not unique to this situation. He notes that after World War II, these same ways of thinking were attached to new enemies as they arose including Soviets, Chinese, Koreans, and Vietnamese. I extend this argument and claim that they have been lately applied to the Muslim “enemy”.

Similarly, Alexander (1992) observes a long history of othering enemies,

For most members of a national community, great national wars clearly demarcate the good and the bad. The nation’s soldiers are taken to be courageous embodiments of the discourse of liberty; the foreign nations and soldiers who oppose them are deemed to represent some potent combination of the counterdemocratic code. In the course of American history, this negative code has, in fact, been extended to a vast and variegated group, to the British, native peoples, pirates, the South and the North, Africans, old European nations, fascists, Communists, Germans, and Japanese (298).

He argues that othering the enemy is necessary in order to engage in the attempt to kill the enemy in combat,

Identification in terms of the discourse of repression is essential if vengeful combat is to be pursued. Once this polluting discourse is applied, it becomes impossible for good people to treat and reason with those on the other side. If one’s opponents are beyond reason, deceived by leaders who operate in secret, the only option is to read them out of the human race (298).

During times of conflict, othering of the group that is identified with the enemy can lead to fears of the “enemy within”. The loyalty of those who look like “them” is questioned and they may be perceived to compose a fifth column. For example, Malik (2009) summarizes literature finding that in European anti-Muslim discourse, Muslims are seen as “incapable of loyalty to liberal democratic states” (207). This suspicion can lead to formal charges of disloyalty based on little more than identity. For example in 2004, American Muslim Brandon Mayfield was arrested in connection with the Madrid train bombing. Evidence used against him included a partial fingerprint that was not a

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match to his, and his children's Spanish homework (Associated Press 2004). Suspicion and distrust can also lead to violence against members of the stigmatized group (see Tilly 2003 for a discussion of processes by which us/them boundaries become sites of violence).

PERCEIVING A THREAT: HOW ISLAM CAME TO BE THE ENEMY

The official rhetoric of GWOT has consistently avoided defining the enemy as Muslim. In the speech that launched the war, President Bush said

I also want to speak tonight directly to Muslims throughout the world. We respect your faith. It's practiced freely by many millions of Americans, and by millions more in countries that America counts as friends. Its teachings are good and peaceful, and those who commit evil in the name of Allah blaspheme the name of Allah. The terrorists are traitors to their own faith, trying, in effect, to hijack Islam itself. The enemy of America is not our many Muslim friends; it is not our many Arab friends. Our enemy is a radical network of terrorists, and every government that supports them (Bush 2001).

While the explicit singling out of the Arab and Muslim communities signaled that they were "other", these groups were officially disassociated from the enemy. How then did this "other" come to be perceived as the enemy?

The conceptualization of these groups as distinct, as other, has been based on competition and conflict since the middle ages. The framework for understanding Islam as a potentially violent and aggressive threat to the West was pre-existent, and provided an easy, natural-seeming, pattern of thought to fall into.

Understanding Muslims as a threatening "them" was not the only way in which American society reacted to 9/11. While there were expressions of anger and violence against Muslims, there were also outpourings of support, friendship, and dialogue.

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Reality is complex, and it is grossly oversimplifying matters to suggest that there was only one way in which Muslims and non-Muslims interacted following 9/11. What I am arguing is that the idea of us-versus-them was ascendant. In attempting to deal with a complex conflict centered in a region of the world unfamiliar to many Americans, involving individuals of a faith with which most Americans had no personal contact, it was easy to accept the simplifying dichotomy of us/them. Us-versus-them became the dominant discourse. There is a long historical tradition of using this frame to understand Islam, and as I will show, the media discourse relied on this same frame. Following Foucault (1980), I recognize that there were many competing discourses for understanding 9/11 and the GWOT, and these discourses are formed throughout society (politicians, media, film, literature, individual interactions); however, one particular discourse, that of us-versus-them, became dominant.

Ambiguous Enemy

The official rhetoric was notoriously vague in naming an enemy against which American military might and public opinion could be brought to bear. Without a clearly defined enemy but given the demographic characteristics of the hijackers and the populations of the countries invaded, existing frameworks for understanding the Muslim other provided an easy way to frame the conflict.

The Bush administration often used vague language. The enemy was repeatedly referred to as “evil doers” or “evil ones”. It was not until September 20, 2001 that President Bush explicitly identified the enemy as the networks of terrorists identified as the Taliban and al-Qaeda. Pipes (2002) argues that this ambiguity posed a problem, “Nor

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are generals the only ones who need to know whom they are fighting and what they are fighting for; so do others in government, so do foreign friends and enemies alike, and so, of course, do the American people” (245). There was a social need for a tangible enemy.

At the same time that the official rhetoric framed the enemy in vague terms, the actions that were being taken by the government and military could be seen to be targeting specific populations; populations that centuries of othering had prepared Americans to see as monolithic and dangerous. Policies requiring the registration of men from countries as diverse as Oman and Somalia⁷, the detention of over a thousand Muslims, monitoring of mosques by the FBI, watch lists full of Muslim names, and military invasion of Afghanistan and Iraq provided a way to understand who the enemy was. This understanding built on a historical framework that imagined these geographically, racially, and culturally different groups to be primarily identifiable by a shared label: Muslim.

Media Coverage of 9/11

President Bush’s famed statement “You are either with us, or you are with the terrorists” posed an us-versus-them frame that paralleled the dominant frame being used in the media to cover 9/11. Unlike Bush’s speech which distinguished terrorist from Muslim, the media

has generally constructed a polarized world in which anyone with the slightest connection to Islam comes under suspicion. When such frameworks are operative, Muslim Americans – even those with deep roots in the USA – are excluded from the collective Self. Despite the

⁷ Men over age 16 who were nationals or citizens of Afghanistan, Algeria, Bahrain, Eritrea, Iran, Iraq, Lebanon, Libya, Morocco, North Korea, Oman, Qatar, Somalia, Sudan, Syria, Tunisia, UAE, and Yemen were required to register at INS in person, and report back annually thereafter. The program was ended in April 2011.

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appearances of some print media articles and broadcast items that address the considerable differences in views held by Muslims on terrorism and relations with the West, the dominant discourses overwhelmingly present most followers of Islam as a threat (Karim 2006:117).

The news media had to scramble to make sense of 9/11 for the viewing public. In dealing with this unscripted event, the media tended to draw on existing cognitive models and themes, “Even though the events were extraordinary, their reporting – following the initial period of disorientation – was eventually put in frames that had been in place to cover such issues as violence, terrorism and Muslims” (Karim 2006:125).

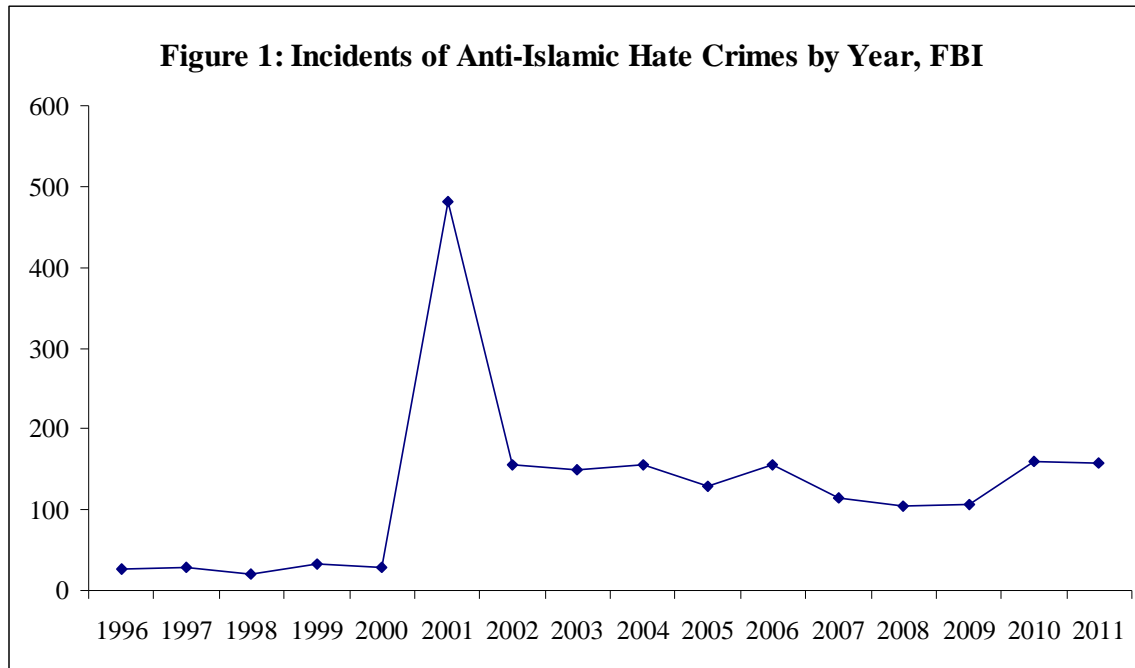
Karim (2006) focuses on the single story told about 9/11 across the media. In the aftermath, the emphasis was on security matters and larger context was eschewed in favor of the hunt for “Islamic terrorists.” Although there were alternative perspectives, they were largely drowned out by the ubiquity of the dominant discourse narrating a story of good (self) versus evil (other). This frame simplified complex events, making it appear that the events could be understood purely because “they” were not like “us”.

EVIDENCE OF ACTIVATION OF US-VERSUS-THEM BOUNDARY

The activation of an us-versus-them boundary following 9/11 posed Muslims as “other” and enemy and subject to sanctions including stares, discrimination, verbal harassment, and even physical violence. FBI Hate crime statistics show a dramatic increase in anti-Islamic hate crimes in 2001. From about 30 incidents per year in the late 1990s to a high of 481 in 2001; hate crimes have declined since, but remain about three times what they were prior to 9/11 (see Figure 1). The Council on American-Islamic Relations (CAIR) issues annual Civil Rights Reports which also show evidence of anti-

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Islamic prejudice. Cases documented by CAIR include vandalism of mosques, arson, beatings, and murder.



Studies of Muslim youth following 9/11 provide a window into life at the boundary of us and them. Peek (2003) interviewed 68 Muslim college and university students in New York City following 9/11. Her respondents report negative responses ranging “from stares and ‘nasty looks’ to verbal harassment and even physical assault” (275). Ewing and Hoyler (2008) interviewed 19 South Asian Muslim youths in North Carolina following 9/11. Their respondents reported feelings of marginalization and politicization of their identities as Americans and Muslims. They note that the atmosphere following 9/11 and the discourse surrounding the GWOT “deprived most of the youth we met of a sense of full cultural citizenship as Muslims came to be positioned more explicitly as outsiders” (85).

A respondent from Peek’s study echoes this sentiment,

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When they say ‘America Unites’, they did not mean us. They did not mean Muslims. At every moment when they said, ‘America must unite’, they did not mean us (282).

Both Peek (2003) and Ewing and Hoyler (2008) note that even though physical violence was rare, the knowledge that such violence existed shaped the experiences and perceptions of their respondents. The violence that did occur was highly visible,

The message of the anti-Muslim violence seemed clear: Muslims are not ‘real’ Americans. [...] To many young Muslims, anti-Muslim violence conveyed the message that they could not be both Muslim and American and that they would never be considered as such (Ewing and Hoyler 2008:85).

In addition to violence, policies such as increased scrutiny at airports were experienced as a form of symbolic violence. Even when second-hand, the perceived humiliation and ill-treatment of family and community members shaped perceptions of the atmosphere. These stories and experiences transformed abstract concepts of citizenship and belonging into an “immediate, visceral experience” (Ewing and Hoyler 2008:86). Being a victim of harassment or violence personally was not necessary to feel excluded, othered, and frightened.

LIMITATIONS OF US-VS-THEM APPROACH

Snow and Su (2011) note the danger of relying too heavily on a framework of othering to explain group conflict. Reducing conflict to the relatively simple idea of us-versus-them may be greatly over-simplifying matters. Snow and Su observe that while dehumanization is a necessary condition for mass violence it is not a sufficient condition. This is likely true in the case I am studying as well. Othering of Muslims sparks into anti-Islamic and anti-Muslim violence and exclusion only with additional conditions.

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Even the concept of us-versus-them is potentially very complex. Pintak (2006) provides a nice discussion of the complexity present even in this most simple conceptualization of us and them and of the shifting nature of this boundary,

This ‘good versus evil’ dichotomy [found throughout American foreign policy] is an extension of the more elemental *Us* and *Them* comparison. As human beings, we measure ourselves against the Other. [...] I am American, she is Russian. It is true of individuals, of communities, of racial and ethnic groups, of nations and of entire peoples [...] The boundaries between *Us* and *Them* are constantly shifting, as with siblings who bicker incessantly but instantly unite in the face of a challenge from outside the family. Former president Ronald Reagan jokingly used to say that all it would take for the Arabs and Israelis to set aside their differences was an alien invasion (Pintak 2006:6).

Salience of Identity and Claims of Mutual Exclusivity

In using us/them frameworks to approach this study I am not arguing that this is a true lived dichotomization, rather that there is an *expectation* that the categories of “Muslim” and “American” are incompatible and must be selected between. Although individual Muslims in the United States may find the identities compatible, the expectation that they should not shapes situations where it is assumed that they must pick between two mutually exclusive identities.

Sirin and Fine (2008) conducted a multiple-methods study of how Muslim American youth negotiate identity following 9/11. They found that the us-versus-them framework common in the U.S. following 9/11 made Muslim identities salient; “In the fall of 2001, these young people and their families were ejected from the national ‘we’” (7). However, they find that the identities of “American” and “Muslim” are not mutually exclusive for most of these youths,

Contrary to what many have predicted, Muslims in this country have not ‘given up’ their American identity for the sake of their Muslim identity, despite the many

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pressures from Muslim fundamentalists and some Western intellectuals, who claim that one cannot be a good American and a good Muslim at the same time (2).

CONCLUSION

In this chapter, I have discussed sociological conceptualizations of othering. I have shown the history of othering Muslims in the West. I have discussed how conflict can (re)activate boundaries and I have explored the path by which Muslims became an everyday “other” following 9/11. Finally, I provided evidence that this boundary forms a dominant discourse with real effects on the lived experiences of Muslims and those perceived to be Muslim. I have also outlined some of the limitations of relying primarily on this framework. Among other limitations, there is ample evidence that while this conceptualization forms a dominant discourse in contemporary American society, it does not reflect the lived the experiences of Muslim Americans.

CHAPTER 3: DIVERSITY IN THE MILITARY

The U.S. military moved relatively quickly from practices of racial exclusion to racial inclusion. In World War II, there was a shift from exclusion of racial minorities to segregated inclusion. During this period the military utilized racially segregated units. Segregation was seen as necessary to maintain unit cohesion. By the end of World War II, discussions about integration were underway. “Project Clear”, a study on attitudes towards racial integration, was conducted during the Korean War. It found that integrated units were equally or more effective than segregated units and that unfavorable racial incidents were rare. Project Clear and subsequent studies argued that racial integration would increase military effectiveness and recommended an end to segregation. By the Vietnam War, all branches of the U.S. armed forces were racially integrated. With the end of conscription in 1973, the proportion of minorities increased. As white men opted out of the now voluntary service, military officials worked to create more enticing working conditions, ultimately attracting many minorities who felt the military offered them more opportunity than the civilian labor force. This shifted military race relations policy towards a focus on equality of opportunity. This focus remains (Moore 2003b).

In this chapter I will discuss characteristics of the U.S. military that may facilitate integration, including hierarchical structure, formal commitment to equal opportunity, cohesion, and contact. I will then consider closure in the military and will address specific examples of anti-Islam rhetoric in the U.S. military. I will conclude with a discussion of leadership.

MILITARY CHARACTERISTICS PROMOTING INTEGRATION

The military has been able to dramatically change its race relations in a relatively short time span because of some of its unique characteristics. In this section I will consider the role of the hierarchical structure of the military, commitment to equal opportunity policies, cohesion, and contact in facilitating integration in the U.S. military.

In many ways, racial integration of the military was successful because it occurred under specific military conditions. What makes the military remarkable

is not its policy of racial equality, which is found in every institution in the United States, but its ability, through its organizational structure, to enforce this policy. Because of its formal bureaucratic structure, the military is governed less by the subjective views of its leaders and more by institutional policies that reflect the laws of civilian society (Moore 2003b:244).

Integration began under conditions of conscription. Rapid integration was possible because the military was already in the business of coercing service members from diverse backgrounds to work and live together. Bogart (1969) points out that the service member was already “receptive to a drastic reshaping of his values” (15). Service members were also separated from civilian society during their service, facilitating rapid integration. Bogart (1969) attributes the success of integration to the Army being a “closed” society; soldiers experiencing the changing policies were separated from social networks at home, and did not have to take into account the expectations, opinions, or pressures of family, friends, and neighbors in interacting with diverse colleagues. The coercive nature of military service and the emphasis on hierarchy also allowed the military to enforce behavioral change and compliance. Additionally, the military is an authoritarian system which has power to constrain the behavior of members.

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The U.S. military has also officially embraced policies of equal opportunity. Bogart (1969) refers to the army as the “great leveler” and both he and Moskos and Butler (1996) point to unique aspects of military service, such as pay by rank, uniformity of dress, code of discipline, common duties, shared facilities, and even title (“soldier”) as factors which neutralize differences among service members.

In their study of multinational forces, Elron, Shamir, and Ben-Ari (1999) argue that the military instills a shared worldview and a common military culture in its members. This can create a sense of a military “in-group” that overrides individual differences. This relates to ideas of cohesion. There are two types of cohesion: social cohesion and task cohesion. *Social Cohesion* is a product of homogeneity, and is based on the idea that units where members are like each other and would voluntarily spend time with each other are stronger and more effective. As Harries-Jenkins and Dandecker (1994) explain it, this perspective assumes trust and commitment “to be most evident in ‘a mate who is like I am’” (199). Emphasis on social cohesion leads to the use of exclusionary barriers to maintain homogenous units.

Task Cohesion, on the other hand, is group unity that is achieved when individuals are able to work together to successfully accomplish shared goals. Under these conditions, group members develop trust and respect for the abilities of each other. Whether or not group members are similar or personally like each other is irrelevant in this conceptualization; differences are overcome in the pursuit of a common goal, and with the achievement of this goal, group ties strengthen. This conceptualization is used in arguments in favor of diversity.

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Mullen and Cooper (1994) argue that it is task cohesion rather than social cohesion that is relevant for group effectiveness. Moreover, they argue that cohesion may be the result of group success rather than the conventional assumption that cohesion leads to success. In support of this is the finding that integration (race, gender, sexuality) is rarely observed to have direct negative effects on effectiveness (Segal and Bourg 2002).

The Contact Hypothesis

At the same time that the military enforces rules against overt racism and other exclusionary practices, the military brings together diverse populations and creates situations where individuals from diverse backgrounds must rely on each. This connects to the contact hypothesis.

First articulated by Allport (1954), the contact hypothesis considers the role of contact between individuals with different backgrounds in breaking down stereotypes and habits of prejudice. Since prejudice and group conflict is often based on stereotyping, the opportunity to communicate with members of the opposing group can lead to greater appreciation and understanding of alternative perspectives and experiences, and thereby diminish prejudice. Allport argues that contact alone is not enough, but that certain conditions must be met to transform interactions into acceptance. Casual contact – passing on the street or in the store, for example, does not break down stereotypes, but may instead strengthen them if adverse mental associations are reinforced. On the other hand, in-depth contact under certain conditions has the potential to lessen prejudice. This can be achieved through education, but direct experience is better, “Contacts that bring knowledge and acquaintance are likely to engender sounder beliefs concerning minority group, and for this reason contribute to the reduction of prejudice” (268). Allport argues

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that as the “other” comes to be seen as a complex human being through in-depth contact, prejudices based on simplistic and inaccurate conceptualizations break down. Being around people different than you is a start, but it is not enough according to Allport, who argues “The nub of the matter seems to be the contact must reach below the surface in order to be effective in altering prejudice. Only the type of contact the lead people to *do* things together is likely to result in changed attitudes” (276).

In addition to being meaningful contact and not just diversity for the sake of diversity, in order to break down prejudice, contact must occur between individuals of similar status and preferably with institutional support,

Prejudice (unless deeply rooted in the character structure of the individual) may be reduced by equal status contact between majority and minority groups in the pursuit of common goals. The effect is greatly enhanced if this contact is sanctioned by institutional supports (i.e., by law, custom or local atmosphere), and provided it is of a sort that leads to the perception of common interests and common humanity between members of the two groups (281).

The racial integration of the military was central in Allport’s original formulation and the contact hypothesis remains a valuable frame for examining diversity in the military. The criteria are met in the military where service members often work in diverse groups towards shared goals, and where regulations and/or leadership can be used to officially promote integration.

The role of intergroup contact is clear in Bogart’s (1969) discussion of the findings of Project Clear. It was found that both white and black soldiers who had served in an integrated units were much more favorable to the idea of integration than were those who had served in only segregated units. One of the principle findings was that attitudes towards integration were shaped by experiences serving in integrated units,

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Men learn to accept integration. As it is experienced, attitudes become more favorable. Thus the probable success of any new attempt at integration may be gauged not in terms of what attitudes men hold at present, but in terms of what attitudes they are likely to hold under the impact of their new experience (183).

MILITARY CHARACTERISTICS PROMOTING CLOSURE AND EXCLUSION

While there are aspects of military service that have the potential to increase inclusion, it is important to point out that the military is also an institution that practices closure and exclusion both formally and informally. For example, the military has historically been, and remains, a masculine institution. The military is a unique social institution in that it can legally disqualify applicants from certain jobs based solely on gender, and until recently, sexuality. Exclusionary boundaries have historically been maintained through an appeal to cohesion; that is, by claiming that if the excluded group were allowed to participate, service members would be less likely to work well together leading to a decrease in military effectiveness (Segal and Kestnbaum 2002).

Another common argument used to maintain barriers against diversity appeals to ideas about physical difference. For African Americans these concerns centered on hygiene, inherent characteristics, and sexual proclivities (Bogart 1969). In the debate on the integration of women in combat, differences in physical strength between men and women are used to suggest women would be less effective in combat. Women's reproductive capabilities, including pregnancy and menstruation are also raised as reasons women are not acceptable in combat.

In addition to formal policies of closure, which are often based on erroneous conceptualizations of cohesion and stereotypes about physical differences, the culture of

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the military can be exclusive. Informal sanctions may be used against members seen as “inappropriate”. For example, harassment of women service members. Miller (1997) argues that sexual harassment is a way members of the dominant group (men) express discontent with the increased participation of women. Miller finds tactics include resisting the authority of women, scrutiny, gossip, sabotage, and indirect threats (e.g., that other men will rape her). In my sample the most common expressions of resistance to inclusion were feeling under scrutiny and the spread of rumors and gossip about the Muslim service members.

Increased efforts at inclusiveness are likely to face resistance as service members adapt to the changes. Gropman (2006) reminds us that racial friction, and even race riots, have occurred in the military. Moskos and Butler (1996) discuss racial complaints, which often involve racial slurs and slights, as well as more difficult to resolve perceptions of inequality in evaluations, promotions, and assignments. However, when formal policy and informal culture meet, integration can occur successfully, even in this highly traditional institution. While gender remains a contested domain in military service, the end of “Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell” and the acceptance of openly homosexual service members in the U.S. military has been notably uneventful.

VIEWS OF ISLAM IN THE MILITARY

The context of the Global War on Terror shapes the relevance of Islam to the U.S. military. The U.S. military has been in Afghanistan since 2001. Afghanistan is predominately Muslim and is well known for being controlled from 1996 to 2001 by the Taliban, a radically fundamentalist Islamist group. The U.S. military entered Afghanistan in pursuit of al-Qaeda, a terrorist organization claiming an Islamic foundation. Given

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these conditions, it is inevitable that Islam become a salient military topic. With the invasion of Iraq, an Arab country with a population 97 percent Muslim, the centrality of Islam to the military missions of the United States remained. The emphasis in these conflicts on “winning hearts and minds” has also highlighted issues of religious accommodation, for example the increased use of women soldiers to facilitate searching and communicating with Afghan and Iraqi women. For these reasons Islam is a part of military education/training and how it is depicted is likely to shape the atmosphere, especially since the general American population knows little about Islam. Education and attitudes vary and existence or absence of certain beliefs by a given leader explains some of the variation in the experiences of my respondents.

In addition to the relevance of Islam to contemporary military missions, the role of Muslims in the U.S. military has been made prominent by the acts of violence committed by a few Muslim service members. There are three cases that have been well publicized and have prompted heated debate about the military service of Muslims.

Chronologically, the first occurred on March 23, 2003 when Army Sergeant Hasan Akbar threw grenades into the tents of sleeping soldiers in Kuwait killing two officers. The second, and best known, incident occurred on November 5, 2009 when Army psychiatrist Major Nidal Malik Hassan opened fire at Fort Hood killing 13 people. Most recently, on July 27, 2011, Army Private Naser Abdo was arrested outside Fort Hood. At the time of his arrest he was staying in a motel room that contained a handgun, directions for building a bomb from an al-Qaeda publication, and the supplies to build a bomb.

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In addition to these cases where the service member is undoubtedly guilty of committing violence, there have been several other cases where accusations were publically made against Muslim service members that were later dismissed. For example, Army Chaplain James Yee, a Muslim chaplain working at Guantanamo Bay, was arrested on September 10, 2003 and charged with sedition and espionage. Yee was held for 76 days before all charges were dropped in March 2004. He subsequently received an Article 15⁸ for adultery and storage of pornography on a government computer. He denies all the charges (Yee 2005).

Hakim, who I will introduce fully in Chapter 8, brought up the case of Chaplain Yee in our discussion,

it does bother me when I see [Yee's] case being utilized as an example. That is an injustice to do that without giving the full story and conclusion as to yeah he was found not guilty of any of [the charges]. So we've had these incidences in the military by certain individuals but when you contrast [...] that with tens of thousands of Muslims who have served honorably and with distinction, you know we have Muslim soldiers who [...] have died in the line of duty. Some of them are buried at Arlington cemetery. And so their legacy and what they've done cannot be dismissed because of a few who have done just the opposite.

Given the particular context of the military in relation to Islam, it is useful to consider how military education approaches Islam. As with many forms of education, what is taught depends on the particular instructor. Systematically assessing the attitudes and content of military education as it relates to Islam is beyond the scope of this project; however, media reports do indicate that at least some instructors take a very us/them approach to the topic. Additionally, two of my respondents (Dani and Omar in Chapter 6) made troubling assertions about the absence of Islam in language and culture training.

⁸ Article 15 is a non-judicial punishment that is dispensed by one's commanding officer for minor disciplinary offenses.

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Among those who write and teach about Islam there are, broadly speaking, two camps. One side, exemplified by Karen Armstrong, presents a generally positive view of Islam and considers Islam to be a religion equivalent in scope and effect to other religions. At the other extreme are authors such as Daniel Pipes, who among other positions has taught at the U.S. Naval War College, who preach a doomsday scenario of an Islamic conspiracy to destroy the West. The latter camp often begins their discussion in terms of Islamism (a political movement), but quickly devolve into an association of all Muslims with fundamentalism, violence, and terrorism. This perspective takes the stance that Islam poses an existential threat; Pipes (2002) writes, “The preservation of our existing order can no longer be taken for granted; it needs to be fought for” (125). The form of this threat is often proposed to be “creeping sharia,” the idea that religious accommodation and multiculturalism will lead directly and inexorably to a world in which “sharia law” dictates the behavior of both Muslims and non-Muslims. This perspective is also marked by the belief that there is no such thing as a “moderate Muslim”, that all Muslims are suspect, and that profiling is a justified and effective technique to combat terrorism. Pipes (2002) writes, “All Muslims, unfortunately are suspect” (140). Perhaps most troubling is the assertion from this camp that Muslims regularly practice *taqiyyah*, a form of deception believed by this group to be pervasive.⁹ This allows them to dismiss any Muslim who speaks against them based on the assumption that they are lying.

⁹ In Islamic jurisprudence, *taqiyyah* is the practice of dissimulating about religious beliefs under conditions of extreme duress, such as when revealing your religion could result in your death.

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This viewpoint can be found among both military educators and analysts. Mark Silinsky¹⁰ follows very clearly in Pipes footsteps and identifies as a “28-year veteran of the defense intelligence community.” He is quite open about his fear and loathing of Islam, writing “I make no apologies or qualifications for my article’s thesis that Islam presents a danger to the US Armed Forces like none other” (Silinsky 2010a). He also argues that Islam should not be understood as a religion on par with Christianity or Judaism, and frequently publishes such inaccurate and inflammatory statements as,

Much of Islam is predicated on violence, celebrates violence, and demands violence against non-Muslims. Verses in the holy Islamic text drip with the blood of beheadings, amputations, eye gouging, and mutilation (Silinsky 2010b).

Attitudes such as this are at a minimum present in military intelligence and analysis.

In mid-2012, a curriculum used to educate military service members about Islam was released by Danger Room that demonstrated that such ideology can also be found among those providing the training on Islam. In April 2012, the Pentagon suspended a course, “Perspective on Islam and Islamic Relations” at the Joint Forces Staff College in Norfolk, VA after material used by the instructor, Lieutenant Colonel Matthew Dooley, became public. The course has been offered since 2004 and about 800 students have taken it (Jelinek and Burns 2012). The presentation in question used an explicit us-versus-them framework, “Your oath as a professional soldier forces you to pick a side here” reads text following a diagram that visually poses the U.S. Constitution and Sharia in opposition (5). He claims that “Islam has already declared war on the West” (7), and proposes “Total War” as an appropriate response. In a proposed message from STRATCOM he writes,

¹⁰ Silinsky came to my attention when he was slated to present a paper on a panel with me at the Inter-University Seminar on Armed Forces and Society (IUS) biennial conference in Chicago in October 2011. He did not show up.

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Islam, though it may describe itself as an ideology of peace, as a means of ‘Taqiya’ or deception, is not a religion of tolerance. [...] it is clear that Islam remains an ideology and system of governance that demands the extermination of anyone who does not subscribe to each and every one of its tenants [sic]. [...] Whether the United States chooses to declare war or not is no longer a relevant question. The fact that the US, and the western world in general, are in a fight for our very survival is a matter now intuitively obvious to any who have observed the basic, undisputed elements of Islam. [...] It is therefore time for the United States to make our true intentions clear. This barbaric ideology will no longer be tolerated. Islam must change or we will facilitate its self-destruction. Let it be known that the United States remains, and will forever be, a beacon of freedom, self determination, hope, and representative democracy. The American people will not be converted. We will not submit. We will not be intimidated, and we will not be driven from this earth (28).

This curriculum clearly draws on the tradition of writers such as Pipes. It also clearly draws on an us/them frame, among other things neatly erasing the millions of Muslim Americans and setting (implicitly non-Muslim) Americans in a dichotomy with Muslims with the claim “The American people [...] will not submit.” I am not claiming that all members of the military embrace this type of extreme ideology. However, this is evidence that this approach to Islam can be found in the military, as in civilian society. I introduce this material to illustrate the way in which specific unit context matters. Since curriculum like this is not standardized in the military, only some units will be subject to this attitude. The presence of this approach within the education of the unit or of leadership has the potential to dramatically affect the experiences of some Muslim service members.

IMPORTANCE OF DIVERSITY

Diversity has several benefits for the U.S. military. Diversity is crucial for the social legitimacy of the U.S. military. As a powerful social institution that controls the legitimate uses of violence, civilian society prefers a military that resembles the society

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as a whole. In the U.S., this means a diverse force. While the military led civilian society in racial integration, it has lagged behind civilian society with respect to gender and sexuality integration and the heated debates about this topic demonstrate the importance of diversity in maintaining social legitimacy (Segal and Bourg 2002).

In purely practical terms, successful integration of diverse personnel can increase performance. Throughout history, the U.S. military has recruited minority populations to meet personnel needs, the ability to integrate these new populations into the military is crucial for military effectiveness. In addition to helping meet personnel needs, diversity is also a powerful asset in the globalized marketplace. Diversity brings new perspectives and approaches. As an institution greatly involved in international operations, the U.S. military can benefit from reservoirs of cultural competence that are maintained in a diverse force.

Cultural competence is the ability to effectively work with individuals and groups from other cultures, and the importance of this skill set is increasingly being realized in contemporary military missions. Cultural competence may refer to in-depth experience with a specific culture or a broader adaptability that allows one to move between multiple cultures. The operations in Afghanistan and Iraq have required U.S. troops to work in close proximity with non-western civilian populations. The nature of these operations and the emphasis on “winning hearts and minds” requires a nuanced understanding of cultural differences.

Figuring out how to address cultural competence has been an ongoing challenge for the military. Healey (2008) notes that military cultural training commonly includes a checklist of do’s and don’ts, some phrases of Arabic, and a simplified historical

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overview. This level of preparation is unlikely to be of much use, “This level of cultural awareness training may be enough to keep a Marine or soldier out of jail in a foreign land, but it does little to increase the likelihood of accomplishing the military mission” (Healey 2008:12). For example, in February 2012, American troops burned a store of Qur’ans at Bagram air base in Afghanistan, triggering violent riots and attacks on U.S. troops. These soldiers had been provided with a list of “don’ts” for handling the Qur’an but nothing was mentioned about burning it. This example demonstrates the weakness of training that tries to distill culture into a list of rules. Montgomery McFate, an anthropologist who has worked with the U.S. Department of Defense explains, “It makes culture into a set of arbitrary rules. You don’t understand why [...] The Bible is not considered itself a holy object, and unless you’d grown up in a religious tradition where that was true, you wouldn’t understand the way that Muslims feel about the Koran” (Qtd in Duncan 2012).

Language and culture skills are not inherently tied to ethnic or religious identity. Non-Muslims are capable of learning languages and cultures associated with Islam, just as many Muslims have no linguistic or cultural fluency in these areas. However, within the current educational and social culture of the United States, many of these skills are concentrated in this community. In 2009, 35,083 students studied Arabic at 466 institutions of higher education in the United States. Of these enrollments only 13.6 percent were advanced enrollments. To put this in perspective, Arabic enrollments account for only 2 percent of all foreign language enrollments. Other languages relevant to the current military missions are even less accessible in the United States. In 2009, 974 students studied Urdu, while only 114 students studied Pashtu (Furman et al 2010).

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Interest in these regions and languages are increasing, but implementing academic programs takes time, and a commitment to achieving linguistic and cultural fluency requires years of study. As these programs develop, much of the needed language and culture skill must be sought among those who learned from family and community.

ROLE OF LEADERSHIP

Leadership involves using social influence to get a group of people to accomplish a given goal. Leadership can be accomplished through different means. Lucas and Segal (2011) identify a difference between leading with power and leading with status. Power relies on formal position, and the ability of the leader to impose punishments or grant rewards. Leading with power can lead to resentment and it may be resisted. Status, on the other hand, is a position based on respect. Leading with status is less likely to breed resistance and resentment and is more likely to lead to changes in behavior.

In their study of American soldiers in World War II, Stouffer et al found similar value placed on respecting and trusting leaders. They found that forward units had more favorable attitudes about their officers than rear units. For units on the front lines, leadership was daily demonstrated through shared risk-taking, while for those in the rear, authority was based on the formal military hierarchy rather than a sense of personal respect or loyalty.

Leadership is a central component of U.S. military culture, and plays a crucial role in the success or failure of efforts to integrate diversity in the force, “The degree to which the organization accomplishes successful integration of previously excluded groups is a function of leadership commitment to that integration at all levels” (Segal and Bourg 2002:713).

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Leaders shape both behavior and atmosphere of the unit as it relates to diversity, tolerance, and integration. Leaders serve as role models, shaping the behavior of other members. They also directly shape behavior through the enforcement (or non-enforcement) of anti-discrimination and equal opportunity policies. Elron et al (1999) include institutional support through supportive leadership to be part of the recipe for successful multinational operations.

“Diversity Leadership”

The Military Leadership Diversity Commission (MLDC) is invested in developing “diversity leadership” in the U.S. military because of the advantages of institutional diversity. While diversity can be beneficial, they note that it must be effectively managed through strong leaders in order to produce positive effects.

The MLDC (2010) sees effective diversity leadership as leadership which is able to overcome the differences among service members and get everyone working towards the same goals. Under these conditions, the increased innovation, creativity, and differences in perspective and skills associated with diversity can be effectively utilized. When diversity is left unmanaged, existing social categorizations can overpower the shared military aims, and lead to splintering, “Leaders also influence whether and how diversity creates social identities that are either relevant to work or not, such as in-groups/out-groups, self-categorization, and perspective” (3). This seems to be what happened in the cases I will present in Chapter 7. Rather than foster a strong sense of unit inclusion, leaders in these units privileged existing us/them identities, which led to a fragmentation of the unit and the exclusion of Muslim (and other) service members.

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According to MLDC, successful diversity leadership has more to do with having a specific perspective – consideration of how diversity affects the mission – than with specific leadership practices. However, they address some broad goals of leadership invested in diversity. Leaders who value diversity will instill a sense of identity based on mission rather than other social categories and will actively manage diversity to avoid formation of identities based on social rather than military characteristics, “unmanaged diversity increases conflict and decreases communication” (3). This involves leaders being proactive in managing diversity-related conflicts and being fair in their use of rewards and punishments. They must both model inclusion and enforce formal policies.

Another element of good diversity leadership is facilitating effective communication. One of the aspects of diversity is difference in perspective. Effective leaders must learn how to communicate with subordinates who may have a different perspective. This may include learning to listen to subordinates and also awareness of different perspectives. Successful diversity leaders must also learn to operate beyond assumptions and stereotypes. In line with the literature on task cohesion, to effectively leverage diversity leadership must provide the tools to do the job. A lack of resources can lead to disintegration of cohesion as individuals default to existing divisions in the scramble for scarce resources, rewards, or to avoid punishment. Finally, leadership must establish personal and professional credibility, “When people are asked to work with and for people who are not like them, leaders need to consciously build confidence in their leadership” (4).

In Reed and Bullis’ (2009) investigation of what they term “destructive leadership,” they find evidence of widespread “interpersonal behaviors by those in

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leadership positions that negatively impact followers” (6). This “dark side” (Conger 1990) of leadership can negatively affect service members, just as high quality leadership will tend to positively affect service members. From a diversity perspective, bad leadership will be leadership that is blind to diversity issues and/or leadership that relies on assumptions and stereotypes about minority groups. These flaws seem to characterize the narratives of those respondents who had negative experiences.

CONCLUSION

While times of war can strengthen us/them boundaries and intensify processes of othering, they can also provide opportunities for minority group members. The military, due its hierarchical structure, commitment to equal opportunity policies, and contact, can be a space of inclusion and opportunity. Leadership is crucial in this process, and the quality of leadership often defines the success of integration.

CHAPTER 4: CITIZENSHIP

For Japanese Americans during World War II, military service and citizenship were closely linked. I began this project expecting to find something similar with Muslim service members; however, this was not supported by my data. However, although the connection between military service and citizenship was not straightforward, themes of patriotism and a sense of being American flowed through my respondents' narratives. Citizenship is a relevant frame shaping the experiences of my respondents, though it takes a subtler form than I anticipated. The connection between citizenship and military service has largely been conceptualized as a direct relationship with military service leading to increased citizenship. I expand this conceptualization and argue that in addition to this relationship, citizenship – feeling that one is a member of the nation – can lead to military participation.

In this chapter I provide a brief overview of the literature on the connection between military service and citizenship with an emphasis on the experiences of Japanese Americans. I then introduce the Institutional/Occupational model, using ideas of institutional motivation to highlight the connection between citizenship and military service. I then consider conceptualizations of informal citizenship focusing on the ways citizenship is enacted in everyday social interactions. I connect this to the idea of “hyphenated selves” and explore the role of “bridge builder” that several of my respondents take on.

MILITARY SERVICE AND CITIZENSHIP

In the United States, there has long been a recognized connection between military service and citizenship rights. This relationship has been theorized in two different forms. On one hand, military service, especially during times of war, can lead to increased citizenship rights. On the other hand, the right to serve in the military can be understood as an indicator of citizenship. Krebs (2006) articulates these related conceptualizations, “Participation in the armed forces has, at least in the nation-state system, been depicted as a sign of one’s full membership in the political community as well as evidence of one’s worthiness for membership” (17). Being allowed to serve indicates you are seen as belonging while serving can prove your worthiness to belong.

The role of military service as a signifier of inclusion can be seen in the reluctance to include minority groups in the military. Burk (1995) argues that for African Americans and women, exclusion from military service was connected to a reluctance to recognize them as full citizens. Segal and Hansen (1992) consider the debate about greater inclusion of women in the military and note a change in rhetoric from one based on military effectiveness to a discourse of citizenship rights and responsibilities. A similar transition is evident in the debates about the military service of open homosexuals. In the United States, military service has been contested for African Americans, Native Americans, women, and homosexuals, among others (Krebs 2006). Being included in the military is a powerful indicator that you are seen as member of the nation.

Military service has also been used to make citizenship claims. Military services, and the risks it entails, are seen in this conceptualization as ways to prove loyalty and

worthiness of being considered a full citizen. In 1862, Congress first passed legislation granting expedited naturalization for immigrants who served in the U.S. military. After World War I, because only whites and individuals of African descent were eligible for naturalization, Asian veterans were often denied this benefit. However, military service ultimately won out, and the passage of the Nye-Lea Act in 1935 allowed Asian veterans to be naturalized almost 20 years before racial qualification for citizenship was repealed. Slayer (2004) argues that the “hyperpatriotic” atmosphere of World War I allowed men to demonstrate their loyalty to the United States as “military service became the ultimate test of a man’s Americanness” (848).

During World War II, the Japanese in America were subject to the intensification of long-standing us/them boundaries with the onset of military hostilities between the United States and Japan. This historical example illustrates both aspects of the connection between military service and citizenship.

Japanese Americans in World War II

Japanese Americans successfully used military service in World War II to renegotiate their position in society from suspected enemy to model minority. Early in the war, they faced extreme policies resulting from the activation of us/them boundaries and their identification with the enemy. However, exemplary military service and sacrifice was used to successfully incorporate them into the nation.

Already unpopular for the economic challenge they posed to the white population, with the onset of the war, public perception of Japanese Americans worsened. Japanese Americans were stigmatized for belonging to the same ethnicity as the enemy. They

became targets for the desire for revenge and fears during early Japanese victories in the war, “the Nisei¹¹ were now being socially constructed as belonging to another human species, incapable of being loyal citizens of the United States” (Moore 2003a:8). In response many Nisei emphasized their American citizenship.

On February 19, 1942 President Roosevelt signed Executive Order 9066 which granted the War Department control of enemy aliens and the distinction between citizen and alien lost meaning (Shibutani 1978). Japanese Americans on the west coast were evacuated and interned. Hawaiian Japanese did not face mass evacuation although representatives of the Japanese government, Shinto and Buddhist priests and priestesses, language teachers, and fisherman were detained (Moore 2003a). Following the attack on Pearl Harbor in 1941, there was no immediate policy regarding Japanese American soldiers and commanding officers acted on their own discretion; while some Nisei were allowed to continue with their regular duties, many were disarmed, reassigned, transferred, or discharged (Shibutani 1978).

In June 1942 the War Department and Selective Service System reclassified all Nisei as 4-C, “aliens ineligible for military service” and stopped their induction (Moore 2003a; Shibutani 1978). Then, in January 1943, the War Department announced they were seeking volunteers for the formation of a special combat team¹² of Japanese Americans. At the time, the military was segregated into white and black units; fitting poorly into this dichotomy, Japanese American soldiers could have been integrated into

¹¹ Nisei refers to second generation Japanese Americans. These are individuals who were born in the United States to parents who immigrated from Japan.

¹² There were two all-Nisei units: the 100th Infantry Battalion and the 442nd Regimental Combat Team. The 100th was based on an existing Hawaiian National Guard unit, and its exemplary performance during training led to the formation of the 442nd. Eventually the 100th was absorbed by the 442nd. The 442nd served in the European theater.

existing units (and some did serve as interpreters and in intelligence positions in white combat units). The creation of an all-Nisei unit was seen by the U.S. Army as a means by which Japanese Americans could demonstrate their loyalty. Part of the rationale for forming a segregated unit was that a separate unit's performance would be noticed and could serve to refute the charges of disloyalty while the service of individual Nisei scattered throughout the Army would be more difficult to measure (Shibutani 1978). Members of the units made deliberate efforts to present themselves favorably including wearing proper uniform at all times, meticulous attention to military courtesy, eschewing the use of Japanese, regular and repeated blood donations, and buying war bonds. Masaoka worked during the war as a publicist for the 442nd, interviewing Nisei soldiers and sending stories back for distribution in United States. He reports,

In all I wrote more than 2,000 stories, with many of the interviews being conducted under combat conditions. 'Why are you out here fighting for your country?' I would ask these men. In other outfits the reply might be a wisecrack, like 'The draft board got me before I could get away.' With the Nisei the invariable answer was: 'Because we want to prove ourselves as Americans' (164-5).

In April 1943 Nisei women were officially allowed to volunteer for the Women's Army Corps (WAC).¹³ They were not racially segregated. Moore (2003a) finds that the Nisei women volunteering for WAC service "felt a great need to show loyalty to the United States" (27) and joined the military to prove they were Americans. She identifies the treatment of Japanese Americans as a driving force, inspiring "super-patriotism" among the Nisei. Some of Moore's respondent's identified the military service of Nisei as instrumental in the establishment of full citizenship rights for Japanese Americans, and

¹³ Nisei women from Hawaii were not recruited until October 1944. Nisei women were never permitted to serve in the Navy or Air Force Women's services (Moore 2003a)

most saw it as contributing to personal upward social mobility. Recruitment of Nisei women drew explicitly on the connection between military service and citizenship; a recruiting press release quoted in Moore (2003a) read:

All Americans, whatever their ancestry, must remember that they will be judged in the future by the part they play now. If we shirk our plain duty to our country in a time of its greatest need, we must be prepared to have our loyalty questioned. Indeed, I think it should be questioned (97).

According to Masaoka (1987), reestablishing the draft for Nisei men was seen as crucial to the claiming of citizenship rights for Japanese Americans. In a speech for the Japanese American Citizens League (JACL) he proclaimed

let me ask you to think of your future—and that of your children’s children. When the war is won, and we attempt to find our way back into normal society, one question which we cannot avoid will be, ‘Say, Buddy, what did you do in the war?’ If we cannot answer that we, with them, fought for the victory which is ours, our chance for success and acceptance will be small. We need Selective Service, the least we can do is to ask for it. [...] I call for a resolution to the President and the Army of the United States asking for a reclassification of the draft status of the American-born Japanese so that we shall be accorded the same privilege of serving our country in the armed forces as that granted to every other American citizen (120-121).

In January 1944, the War Department reinstated the draft of Japanese American men and classified them as 1-A, “immediately eligible for conscription” (Moore 2003a; Shibutani 1978).¹⁴ The All-Nisei units served admirably in the war and received favorable media coverage (Moore 2003a). The all-Nisei units received many military awards, including

¹⁴ By the time the draft was reinstated for Nisei men, many felt that the claim for Nisei rights had already been successfully made, and often lacked the zeal of the earlier volunteers. Shibutani (1978), for example, provides an in-depth consideration of the breakdown of Company K, an all-Nisei unit formed near the end of the war that was most notable for widespread absenteeism, insubordination, and violence. While strong primary groups among Nisei units earlier in the war emphasized proving the loyalty and competence of the Nisei, strong primary group ties became the cause for inefficiency in Company K where informal group norms emphasizing protest overruled formal norms of military discipline.

9,486 Purple Hearts (Masaoka 1987). Their successful military service led to a reassessment of Nisei in mainstream society and they became popular heroes (Shibutani 1978). As the Nisei units demonstrated their dedication in fighting overseas, the media was eager to follow their exploits. By 1945 Shibutani reports that Japanese American families in the United States were greeted by white neighbors with inquiries about “your boys in Italy” and employment and housing became notably easier to obtain. Shibutani argues that the unexpected achievements of the units were the impetus for the stereotype of Japanese Americans as an overachieving, model minority group.

For Japanese American during World War II, military service was used to directly claim citizenship. Excluded from conscription, military service itself was a form of citizenship that had to be fought for. Some fought for their right to serve in the military, and ultimately the military service of a select group of Japanese Americans became a stepping stone by which the entire community made claims of national belonging. In this case the connection between military service and citizenship was clear and direct. Members of this community used the sacrifices of military service to demonstrate their loyalty to the United States and so make citizenship claims.

INSTITUTIONAL MOTIVATIONS

This direct connection between military service and citizenship did not characterize the narratives of my respondents; instead military service takes the form of an expression of informal everyday citizenship. While Japanese Americans had to fight for their right to serve, all of my respondents take their right to serve for granted. Military service is not a fight to prove themselves as Americans. However, for many, military service is an organic expression of their sense of belonging. My respondents don't serve

to prove their American-ness, they serve because they feel American. Rather than using a model of military service and citizenship directed towards minority groups, this finding fits best in a more general model: Institutional/Occupational.

One way to demonstrate the connection many of my respondents made between feeling American and their military service is through the Institutional/Occupational model. Since 1973, the United States has relied on recruits and volunteers rather than conscripts to meet the personnel demands of the armed forces. With this dramatic change in accession policy, military sociologists began to investigate what motivated young adults to *choose* to serve in the military. The literature developed a varied, but relatively consistent, list of motivations. These include economic considerations such as pay, job skills, job security, educational opportunities and money for education; service motives such as a desire to serve the country; an interest in self-improvement and discipline; a chance to escape local economic or social problems and get a new start to life; opportunities for travel and adventure; and equality of opportunity (especially for women and minorities) (Eighmey 2006).

A popular way to conceptualize motivations is using the Institutional/Occupational (I/O) Model. Charles Moskos first proposed the I/O model in 1977 arguing that the U.S. military had undergone an organizational shift from institutional to occupational driven by the end of conscription and the decision to use the dynamic of the labor market to recruit the force. The institutional military was conceptualized as one “legitimated in terms of values and norms, that is, a purpose transcending individual self-interest in favor of a presumed higher good” (Moskos 1988:16), whereas the occupational organization is “legitimated in terms of the marketplace. Supply and demand, rather than

normative considerations, are paramount” (Moskos 1988:17). When applied to motivation to serve, it suggests that in the institutional organization individuals serve out of a sense of duty and honor while in the occupational organization, motivation was governed by self-interest and market dynamics.

This notion of institutional service describes the motivations expressed by many of my respondents. In expressing institutional motivations rather than seeing military service as something which can be bartered for greater citizenship rights, my respondents are implicitly expressing a sense of belonging. To feel institutional commitments to the nation-state suggests a sense of belonging. Military service for these respondents may be an expression of loyalty and citizenship, but it is not being used to make a claim for recognition of this loyalty and citizenship.

EVERYDAY CITIZENSHIP

While the institutional/occupational model is a model with general applicability, the specific context of us/them does still shape some of the ways in which my respondents express citizenship through their military service. Most notably, while my respondents see military service and an organic expression of their sense of being American, they often have to engage with others who question their American-ness and negotiate a space where they can be both American and Muslim. This connects to articulations of informal citizenship.

While formal citizenship is a straightforward concept defined by naturalization, informal citizenship is more complex. No legal document defines this status; no certificate is issued for achieving this (Glazer 1996). Glenn (2011), in her Presidential

Address to the American Sociological Association addresses this, “Citizenship is not just a matter of formal legal status; it is a matter of *belonging*, which requires *recognition* by other members of the community” (3). Informal citizenship is a lived experience that transcends legal citizenship and which is negotiated in everyday interactions, “belonging is enacted and constituted in quotidian practices of inclusion and exclusion” (Siu 2001:9).

Glenn (2011) also emphasizes the everyday and negotiated nature of citizenship,

Sociology’s special strength may lie in its focus on the social processes by which citizenship and its boundaries are formed. In particular, sociologists can highlight how citizenship is constructed through face-to-face interactions and through place-specific practices that occur within larger structural contexts (2).

Citizenship is an everyday process. It occurs in the interactions between people. It involves presenting yourself as a full member of the collective, and being accepted as one.

For my respondents, the military is a place where some of these everyday negotiations takes place. They see themselves as full Americans, but must occasionally negotiate with others who see them as necessarily divided people, torn between being Muslim and being American. The expression of citizenship in this case involves questions of difference and belonging. Rosaldo and Flores (1994) elaborate, “Cultural citizenship refers to the right to be different (in terms of race, ethnicity, or native language) with respect to the norms of the dominant national community, without compromising one’s right to belong” (57). By wearing military uniforms and identifying as Muslims, my respondents are examples of this. They are *both* different and the same. They literally take on a uniform of the nation while maintaining aspects of identity that distinguish them as “other.”

Hyphenated Selves

As I outlined in Chapter 2, my respondents are negotiating power structures that have a tendency to see them as necessarily divided. The context of us/them argues that unless they give up their religious identities, these individuals cannot be full Americans. Military service is not used explicitly as a way to fight against these ideas, but it is an expression of American Muslim self. Through their military service, an everyday act, my respondents are performing authentic selves that embrace both American-ness and Muslim-ness. Particularly powerful, this performance seems to be largely unconscious. Military service for these respondents is not an act of protest or an intentional claim on formal or informal citizenship. My respondents are not serving in order to be recognized as Americans. But in serving, and in expressing commitments to service and duty, they present selves that belie conceptualizations of the mutual exclusivity of Muslim and American identities. My respondents are Muslim *and* American. There is no need to select between these two identities. They do not serve in the military despite their Muslim-ness, or in an attempt to claim American-ness. They demonstrate the integration of these identities.

Sirin and Fine (2008) use the concept “hyphenated selves” to describe the way in which American Muslims see themselves as cohesive selves, not torn between mutually exclusive identities. The conceptualization of hyphenated selves allows for the recognition of multiple identities and may be joined or separated in an individual,

we argue for the notion of *hyphenated selves* in order to understand how youths create and enact their identities when political or social conditions place them in tension. We use this idea to help us think about how youth negotiate, embody, and narrate their multiple selves, at the hyphen, in a fractured world, nation, community, home, or school (123).

They elaborate, “we now consider the hyphen as the pivotal psychological hinge where identities cast 'in tension' are at once joined and separated” (195). In this conceptualization, the identities of Muslim and American are not necessarily separate, the “hyphen” allows flexibility in the way these identities are experienced and expressed.

It is this “hyphenated self” that many of my respondents are expressing when they combine practices and values associated with their Muslim identity with the patriotism, sacrifice, and institutional aspects of military service. As with many of the adolescents in Sirin and Fine’s study, the respondents in my sample don’t try to hide their identity, for example, none of my respondents changed their name or used an Americanized nickname. My respondents publically assert their Muslim identity to varying degrees. Some openly practice and formally request religious accommodation, others practice privately. However, even for those who restrict their practice, this is related to personal inclinations, not an intentional attempt to down play their Muslim-ness.

Despite the pressure to prioritize between identities driven by activation of the us/them boundary, for my respondents, as for many American Muslims, there is nothing to choose between. The identities of Muslim and American are not experienced as being in opposition. Sirin and Fine observe,

we found strong empirical evidence that Muslim American youth indeed develop strong commitments to both their Muslim identities and their American identities. This finding fundamentally challenges the dominant 'incompatibility' hypothesis, which proposes the Muslim and 'American' cultures are mutually exclusive (149).

As members of the military who claim both identities simultaneously, my respondents are demonstrating the commitment of multiple identities. By expressing this

complexity, they are negotiating recognition of their citizenship in everyday way, not based on prioritizing one identity over the other, but by expressing both.

Bridge-Builders

While my respondents see no conflict between their identities, they occasionally find themselves in situations where they must actively defend this. This often takes the form of engaging in dialogue or educating those around them who assume that being Muslim and American is incompatible. These everyday interactions become places where citizenship is negotiated and claimed.

Some of my respondents take on the role of “bridge builders”. This is a role identified by Sirin and Fine who find that one response to being othered and having integrated identity questioned is to actively engage in dialogue and education,

For Muslim Americans, civic engagement is a way not only to deal with the current crisis but also to claim their rightful position as fully engaged members of the mainstream U.S. society. Besides the frustration, pessimism, and anger, the young men and women also see Muslim Americans as critical bridge builders both between their community and the mainstream society and between the Muslim world and the West (111)

For these respondents, dialogue is not just something that is engaged in as needed, but it comes to be seen as a distinct role. The intersubjective work of negotiating citizenship becomes an important part of the military service of these respondents. As Sirin and Fine put it, “they know that if anything is going to change, it will be because they have spoken up” (170).

In interaction, distinctions between us/them can be reinforced or they can be challenged, weakened, and perhaps even crumble, therefore engaging in dialogue is a form of citizenship work. My respondents are engaging in this work inside a social

institution that is powerfully connected with ideas of the nation. My respondents who take on the role of bridge builders engage in this work in at least three directions: with non-Muslim service members, with Muslim locals, and with other American Muslims.

CONCLUSION

There is a well-established connection between military service and citizenship. This was quite clearly used by Japanese Americans during World War II. However, the narratives of my respondents do not take this form. For my respondents, military service is not about claiming citizenship rights, but is an expression of citizenship. I explored this idea using the frame of institutional motivations to serve. That these motivations are at the core of so many narratives speaks to this expression of citizenship. My respondents by and large feel deeply American (regardless of how others might view them), and military service is an organic expression of this.

In addition to seeing military service an expression of belonging, my respondents also demonstrate the idea of “hyphenated identities” and some actively negotiate a space for themselves in the military as both Americans and Muslims. They actively challenge conceptualizations that suggest they must choose between these identities, and embrace both using dialogue and other social interactions to negotiate citizenship. As a part of this, some take on the role of “bridge builder” and use their multiple identities to engage with diverse clients including U.S. service members, Muslim locals in other countries, and other American Muslims.

Although these frames are useful for contextualizing the experiences of my respondents, they are limited by the nature of my sample. There are many different ways to experience “living at the hyphen”. By the nature of my project, I did not recruit from populations that are hiding or rejecting their Muslim-ness. In responding to my announcement, my respondents are in a small way performing this hyphenated identity. Yes, they are willing to participate in a study on “Muslim Veterans”. My use of this frame of citizenship then is not generalizable to the population of Muslim American service members, but it remains valuable because it provides traction on the narratives I present here.

CHAPTER 5: RESEARCH DESIGN

My research question lends itself to a qualitative approach, which I have taken in this project. Exploration of varied experiences is not a topic that can be easily captured by close-ended survey questions. As I will show in the data analysis, the experiences of my respondents varied greatly. It would be very difficult to capture the complexity and subtlety of these issues with standardized multiple choice questions.

As one of the first projects on this population, a certain amount of exploratory work is also necessary. In this project I am exploring the experiences of individuals as they relate to a bounded set of sociological concepts. This is not hypothesis testing in the classical sense. Qualitative methods are well suited to this project because they allow researcher and respondents flexibility to discuss topics as they arise. The lack of generalizability that results from the use of a small sample is not a barrier to the goals of this project because I am seeking to identify themes and motifs relating to processes of othering and institutional diversity, rather than test specific hypotheses with the goal of confirming or refuting them.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

In times of conflict, definitions of the enemy using the same terms as those used to characterize the stigmatized minority group intensify the us/them boundary and may make it a site of violence. The military-civilian boundary is permeable, so it is expected that us/them discourses will be found in the military; however, the military has a history of providing a more level playing field for some minorities and due to the emphasis on

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discipline and loyalty may provide protections against othering of members. This is supported by my data.

Under conditions of othering, members of the stigmatized minority group may use military service to make claims of national belonging and to mitigate processes of othering. This conceptualization was not supported by my data. My respondents are confident in their rights and military service becomes a way for them to perform complete selves. Rather than see themselves as favoring Muslim or American identity, military service is an opportunity for them to be American Muslims.

ALTERNATIVE FRAMES

Although I treat Muslims as a unique group in this project, it is possible that a more general frame would be better suited. In this section I consider a number of alternative ways to conceptualize the military service of Muslims in the contemporary period.

Ethnicity

Rather than it being the label “Muslim” that matters, ethnicity may be the most salient characteristic shaping the experiences of this group. Perhaps it is being “brown” that matters rather than being Muslim. I do not fully address this possibility in this project. As I was not able to recruit any black Muslims to participate in this study, I cannot address if the label Muslim transcends racial categories. My respondents are ethnically diverse; however, most of them could be read similarly. My sample does

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include three white Muslims. Their experiences are not substantially different from those of my other respondents, lending support to the frame I use.

In addition to a more diverse sample, the question of whether religious or ethnic identity is more salient could be addressed by using a sample of respondents of similar ethnic background but different religions. For example, are the experiences of South Asian Buddhist, Christian, or Hindu service members different or similar to the experiences of South Asian Muslim service members? This is beyond the scope of this project.

Immigrants in the Military

Another possible frame is that of immigrant military service. The American Muslim community is largely foreign born. Perhaps Muslims' military service is not shaped by being Muslim but rather by the experience of being immigrants. Immigrants have served in the U.S. military since its inception and the military has provided a way to "become American", both legally and culturally. Legal Permanent Residents are eligible to enlist in the military, though citizenship is necessary for a commission or to serve as a warrant officer. As of June 2010, there were 16,500 non-citizens serving in the military, composing about 1.4 percent of the enlisted force (Department of Defense 2010).

Religious Minorities in the Military

Another possible frame for considering the service of Muslims is the military service of other religious minorities. Perhaps it is not being Muslim specifically that

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matters, but being a member of a minority religion. However, given the role of Islam in the current conflicts, this approach seems likely to bring us back to the us/them frame.

No Difference from General Military Population

It is also possible that Muslims in the military can best be understood through existing lenses based largely on the white, heterosexual, male experience. That is, there is no difference between their experience and that of the general military population. This of course allows for a great deal of variance. While I did find evidence of the existence of us/them boundaries, this often had little effect on the experiences of my respondents making this a relevant frame.

RESEARCH QUESTION

As one of the first studies of its kind, this project seeks to document the experiences of Muslims serving in the U.S. military. The central question this project explores is: What are the experiences of Muslims serving in the U.S. military? In answering this question, I address several sub-questions. I first ask whether the us/them atmosphere that characterizes civilian discourse about Muslim Americans is present in the military, and I find that it is. Having established the permeability of the military-civilian boundary, I then ask how this atmosphere affects the experiences of Muslim service members. I find that for many, it has little effect. I connect this to the history of racial integration in the U.S. military, arguing that characteristics of the military, including an emphasis on policies of equal opportunity, the ability to compel certain behaviors, and the nature of military service, which promotes close contact among

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diverse individuals, mitigates some of the negatives effects of being othered. However, I also find that in some units, the us/them discourse in exacerbated creating atmospheres of distrust and suspicion which leads to negative outcomes. Having established this dichotomy of effects, I examine the role of leadership on these outcomes, arguing that leadership is a crucial factor that shapes whether units become inclusive or exclusive. Finally, I ask if Muslim service members are using their military service as a way to negotiate this us/them atmosphere by using it to make citizenship claims as Japanese American veterans did during World War II.

SAMPLE SELECTION

The population of Muslim service members and veterans is small, and there is no comprehensive tally of the population. Given the small size and the impossibility of accessing a comprehensive accounting of this population, my sample is constructed non-randomly. I use a purposive convenience sample. My sample is drawn from a specific group, Muslims who have served in the military, but within this group my sample is composed of those who heard of my study and volunteered to participate. I will discuss some of the barriers to finding respondents later in this chapter.

To be in the sample, respondents had to self-identify as Muslim and have served for any length of time in the U.S. armed forces since September 2001. I did not limit the sample by branch, and I accepted respondents who served in the National Guard and Reserves as both have played an active role in the GWOT. My sample includes both veterans and current service members.

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I acknowledge that the label “Muslim” encompasses a very diverse population. Muslims in the United States come from a variety of racial and ethnic backgrounds, are of various socio-economic classes, and have diverse personal and family backgrounds and characteristics. While it is not useful to speak of one homogenous “Muslim perspective”, in this project I am interested in common challenges associated with this shared identity. As with sociological research on any social group, I recognize the diversity within the group but focus on shared identity in order to draw meaningful conclusions about social groups, institutions, and processes.

I conducted interviews from June 2010 through December 2011 (18 months). In total I spoke with 15 respondents. My sample provides valuable information about this understudied population. This study was designed as a qualitative exploration of theoretical issues of citizenship, belonging, and military service within a particular historical moment. As such, the emphasis is on exploring experiences and looking for emerging patterns and processes. In this type of study, frequencies and statistical tests provide little leverage on the research questions.

When approaching a qualitative study, the guiding principle in sampling should be saturation. Saturation occurs when new data no longer provide new insight into the research topic (For example see Mason 2010). On some topics I believe that saturation was achieved or nearly achieved. On topics such as motivation to join the military, little new information was being uncovered by the last interviews. However, on other topics, such as experiences in the military, saturation was not achieved and each new interview brought new insight to the topic. I acknowledge this weakness, which was unavoidable due to limitations preventing using saturation as the primary guideline. As a Ph.D.

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dissertation, there were time and funding limits which dictated that at some point data collection must be halted so analysis could begin (Mason 2010 discusses the limitations of “funded work”, a concept he applies to Ph.D. research). More constraining however, was the difficulty locating respondents, which I will discuss more fully in the next section. Although not ideal, this is the context in which this project developed. As Strauss and Corbin (1998 [1990]) note, “Sometimes the researcher has no choice and must settle for a theoretical scheme that is less developed than desired” (292).

Despite these limitations, I do believe that the data I have is of high quality. There are benefits to a small sample size. With only 15 interviews I am highly familiar with all of my data and was able to keep the entire field in mind while interviewing, coding, and analyzing. I believe that this improved flexibility during interviews and facilitated the development of codes and recognition of themes and patterns.

Finding Respondents

The original plan was to draw a snowball sample; however, this process did not work. Respondents were identified via personal contacts, social networking websites (e.g., Facebook), flyers (Appendix A), email listservs, and word of mouth. Respondents were asked to contact the researcher directly if they wished to participate. I worked with religious networks, military networks, and academic networks.

Religious communities I contacted included Muslim student groups at colleges and universities and local religious institutions. I also used personal contacts within several geographically disparate Muslim communities to disseminate information about this study. I attempted to contact 33 Muslim Student Associations (MSAs) of which three

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confirmed that they had sent my announcement out to their listserv. I repeatedly tried to contact the American Muslim Armed Forces and Veterans Affairs Council, but consistent with the experiences of Hansen (personal communication), who wrote his dissertation on religious diversity in the U.S. military, I never received any response. I joined two relevant Facebook groups targeting Muslim service members and veterans. I attempted to find respondents in these groups by contacting the administrators, posting to the wall, and sending unsolicited messages to group members. I distributed flyers on campus, including in the campus *musallah* (Islamic prayer room). I also posted flyers at one local mosque. Mosques and Islamic centers posed a particular challenge in seeking out respondents because while some mosques are very welcoming to the idea of military service of members, others are strongly opposed to it. As such, I did not pursue contacts with mosques beyond this one, relying instead on personal contacts within various communities to help me disseminate my announcement.

On the military side, I emailed student veterans groups around the country. I attempted to contact 33 groups of which three confirmed that they had sent my announcement to their listserv. The similarity in numbers with the MSAs is purely coincidental. I received one very negative response from an individual listed as the point of contact for the student veterans' organization at a west coast university that was both disturbing and spoke to the tension that may be experienced by members of the population I am considering. I also utilized contacts through the Socy 869 group¹⁵ to disseminate information about this project in military networks, and pursued contacts at the Naval Academy, with Equal Opportunity officers, and linguists within the military. I also attempted to get in touch with the military chaplaincy. Over the course of this study I

¹⁵ Socy 869 is a working group of students and faculty in military sociology.

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was given the contact information for three Muslim military chaplains. Those that responded were busy and unable to provide me with any assistance. On the advice of personal contacts, I tried to contact the chapel at Ft. Meade (a local base) which lists Islamic services on their public website. The Chapel directed me to Public Affairs who did not respond to any of my multiple phone calls.

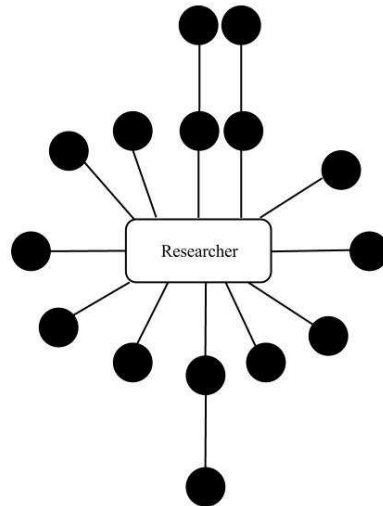
I also sent my announcement out to several academic listservs. These included the Sociology of Islam listserv, the Peace, War, and Social Conflict section of the American Sociological Association, and The Society for Military Psychology listserv. I also presented my research at various stages at four different conferences where I included a plea for help finding respondents. These conferences were Eastern Sociological Society (ESS) in February 2011, American Sociological Association (ASA) in August 2011, Inter-University Seminar on Armed Forces and Society (IUS) in October 2011, and Defense Equal Opportunity Management Institute (DEOMI) in December 2011.

In my original proposal for this project, I anticipated that my sample would largely be based on snowballing. I anticipated that once preliminary respondents were identified, I would be able to seek their advice and recommendations on finding more respondents. This method was not effective. Consistently respondents reported either knowing no other Muslim service members or having lost contact with those few they did know. I found that there appeared to be an absence of a social network among Muslim service members (or the network is deeply submerged and inaccessible to researchers given the time and travel constraints of my project). Figure 2 details the network (or lack thereof) among my respondents. Very few of my respondents knew each other and there

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was very little successful snowballing. There were only three situations where one respondent referred me to another respondent.

Figure 2: Network Diagram of Respondents



Also important seems to be a personal connection of some kind. Only four of my respondents agreed to participate based only on an email or flyer. The other 11 respondents were recruited through personal contact, either by the researcher or a third party. In addition to the three cases where a respondent referred me to another person who agreed to participate, in two cases I personally met the respondent in the course of this project and recruited them. Another two respondents agreed to participate after being contacted by a third party who saw my announcement on an email listserv. The remaining four respondents were found through personal connections. In two cases only one link was required; I contacted a friend or acquaintance and they contacted the respondent on my behalf. In two more cases there was at least one additional link; my personal contact contacted a third party (not known personally to me), who contacted the respondent. In one interview resulting from a personal contact, the respondent was

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curious about my connection to the person through whom we had gotten in touch. Being able to demonstrate that I knew the intermediaries personally (having attended a religious celebration at their home) seemed important. Other respondents responded to initial contact skeptically until I could demonstrate a chain of connection (so-and-so recommended that I get in touch with you); this did not guarantee an interview, but it seemed to improve my chances.

Non-Response

A concern when developing any sample is non-response; that is, is there systematic bias due to people with certain characteristics or experiences choosing not to participate. Due to the nature of how I collected my sample, I cannot provide empirical data on the rate of non-response. I have no way of knowing how many people with the requisite characteristics saw the announcement but choose not to contact me. I can however outline potential respondents who did contact me but ultimately refused to participate, or otherwise never completed an interview.

In total I was contacted by six potential respondents who did not complete interviews. Three of these actively declined to participate. One cited concern about the permissibility of participating, another told me that his commanding officer had instructed him not to participate, and the third did not have time. The rest simply could not be reached after initial contact. In addition, I heard back from two personal contacts who said that they passed on word to potential respondents who were not willing to participate. Additionally, I spoke with one respondent who reported that he had received my announcement but had decided not to participate, but changed his mind when he saw

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me present on my preliminary findings at a conference. This large number of refusals that I know about, combined with concerns voiced by some respondents and other researchers, leads me to believe that there are severe barriers to access to this population.

There are two important populations that are missing from my sample. One is African-Americans. Although African-Americans are estimated to comprise almost half of Muslims in the military (Elliott 2006), there are none in my sample. This absence makes it impossible to determine whether or not being labeled or identified as Muslim transcends racial labeling. In the United States, many people do not think of black bodies when they think of Muslims, and so the experience of being a black Muslim in the military may be distinct from being a white or brown Muslim in the military. I did not intentionally exclude this population.

Another population that is missing from my sample is implicitly excluded due to the design of this study. This is the population of those who are “passing” as non-Muslim. From conversations with my respondents as well as personal contacts, it is clear that this population does exist and they are unlikely to participate in a study such as this because participating carries the risk of “outing” themselves. I was not able to establish the level of trust necessary for this within the time constraints of this project. The members of my sample are all openly Muslim. This likely influenced the findings.

Barriers to Access

One finding of this study is that there are several substantial barriers to accessing this population. Although I anticipated that locating respondents would be difficult, I did

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not anticipate that it would be as difficult as it was. The elusiveness of this population for research is worth discussing.

Probably the largest barrier is building the trust and credibility to effectively recruit from this population. As I noted earlier, working through a personal network was necessary; this carries with it the sense of the researcher being vouched for by a known member of the community (often a relative or friend). The credibility this lends the researcher is important in this case because of (justified) concerns in the Muslim American population of surveillance. This is a population that is under great scrutiny. Leaks and lawsuits in the past few years have brought to light varied methods of police surveillance including the use of informants in mosques across the country. Media interest in the Muslim American community is often tied to coverage of violence and terrorism. In general, this is a community that is very aware of being under surveillance and of the repercussions of being seen negatively. Members of this population may be wary of participating in research such as this because of this sense of surveillance and concerns about how the information they share will be used. Some may avoid participation so as not to “out” themselves or to draw attention to this identity. Others may have concerns about being stereotyped.

This sense of surveillance is likely increased for Muslim service members. Acts of violence committed by Muslim service members have focused scrutiny on all Muslim service members. In addition to media interest, outreach aimed at supporting this population within the military can also create barriers. While the military population in general is over-surveyed, those who are openly Muslim may feel especially over-exposed

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as they are subject to research on the general population, media interest in Muslims in particular, and other research (such as this project) targeting this very small population.

DATA COLLECTION

Once a respondent agreed to participate, we arranged a time for the interview. For respondents residing in the mid-Atlantic region, we would meet for a face-to-face interview. All other respondents were interviewed via telephone. Six respondents were interviewed in person, the remaining nine by phone. Most of the respondents were located in the United States, but two were located overseas. There was no systematic difference in content by interview method.

The mean length of the interviews was one hour and four minutes. The shortest interview was 28 minutes, the longest two hours and eight minutes. Interviews were digitally audio recorded and then transcribed. All transcription was completed by the researcher. There are 175 pages of text resulting from the almost 16 hours of recordings.

Interviews followed a semi-structured format. Semi-structured interviews are scheduled and planned and are effective when you only have one chance to interview a respondent. Semi-structured interviews follow an interview guide (a list of questions and topics to be covered) and usually consist of direct questions asked by the interviewer who then follows up on the respondent's response with "probes". See Appendix B for the interview guide. Unlike surveys and structured or standardized interviews, semi-structured interviews leave the interviewer and respondent able to follow leads and allows the respondent to provide the information he or she thinks is relevant and important. Interviews can raise concerns of accuracy: just because a respondent reports

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something it does not mean that it occurred. However, in this project I am less concerned with objective accuracy and more concerned with subjective experience.

The data this project seeks to collect are far too complex to capture reliably via a survey or questionnaire. Also, because this is one of the first projects looking at Muslim service members and veterans, it is valuable to use a more open-ended approach in gathering data so as to be able to identify themes and motifs that may emerge from respondents' descriptions that were not anticipated in the design of the study. Finally, this community is very small and is the subject to great scrutiny. Building rapport and connections within the community is essential to gathering good quality data. The best way to establish legitimacy is direct interaction. This method also allows the researcher to gauge respondents' reactions to questions, to probe and follow-up on respondents' answers, and to make on-the-fly alterations to the format as needed.

PROFILE OF SAMPLE

Chapters 6-8 will present detailed pictures of each respondent. Here I provide a general overview to the composition of my sample for orientation. Table 2 outlines the demographic characteristics of my sample. My sample is predominately male and South Asian, though I also interviewed white, Arab, and multiracial respondents. A substantial demographic that is absent from my sample is black Muslims serving in the military. Most of my respondents either immigrated to the United States or are the children of immigrants.

My sample is ethnically heterogeneous. This is acceptable for my project. Much of the literature argues that following 9/11 religious identity came to outweigh ethnic

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identity. It has also been noted that Muslim American youths tend to emphasize religious unity over ethnic and cultural differences. Consistent with the literature, I did not find any differences in experiences associated with ethnicity. While being Muslim is a salient identity for my respondents in order for them to agree to participate, the similarity in themes across ethnicities is consistent with the findings in the literature that being Muslim has come to act as a master status in the contemporary period.

Gender	
Men	13
Women	2
Race/Ethnicity	
South Asian	8
White	3
Arab	2
Multi-racial	2
Immigrant?	
Immigrant	8
Parents Immigrants	4

An alternative way to interpret my sample is to focus on the ways in which they may be read by others as ethnically homogenous. Most of my respondents could be read as “brown”. Although they came from various ethnic and national backgrounds, several noted the ways in which people made erroneous assumptions about their ancestry and/or thought that categories such as Arab and South Asian were interchangeable.

Table 3 outlines the military characteristics of my sample. Most of my respondents are no longer serving in the military. The members of my sample have varied military experiences. I talked to respondents from every branch except the Coast Guard.

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The branches with the largest number of respondents were Navy and Air Force. Only one respondent served in the Marine Corps.

Table 3: Military Characteristics of Sample	
Currently Serving	4
Veteran	11
Branch	
Army	4
Navy	5
Marines	1
Air Force	5
Length of Service	
<5 years	2
5-10 years	5
11-19 years	4
20+ years	4
Rank ¹⁶	
Enlisted	9
Officer	5
Experiences	
Combat Position	3
Deployed to Iraq or Afghanistan	5

My respondents were at different points in their careers when they left the military (or at the time of interview). Most of my respondents served fewer than 20 years; however, several served 20 years or more. Among those who have left the military, the shortest career was 4 years, the longest 24 years. The mean length of service for those who have left the military was 10.7 years. My sample was predominantly enlisted and only a few respondents were in combat positions. A third of my respondents have deployed to Iraq or Afghanistan.

¹⁶ One respondent made the transition from enlisted to officer, not included here.

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Religious Identification

My sample is based on self-identification as “Muslim”. An important conceptual distinction is the separation of identifying as Muslim from practicing Islam. For this project, it is the label “Muslim” rather than religiosity that matters. Meer (2008), in exploring anti-Muslim discrimination in Britain, argues for the use of self-identification rather than of definitions based on behavioral compliance with the “five pillars” of Islam.¹⁷ The use of self-identification has the advantage of being a sociological rather than a theological definition.

My sample included individuals who identified as Muslim due to religious practice, conversion, and family history. In terms of religiosity my sample covered the spectrum from atheistic to pious. I did not ask respondents about their denominational affiliation (e.g., Sunni, Shia) as this is not relevant to my research questions. When I asked respondents about their religious practice they tended to categorize themselves based on practices such as praying, fasting, and dietary restrictions:

I wasn't a very good Muslim on active duty. I didn't pray five times a day. That's really the only thing that I didn't really observe. I didn't really drink [alcohol], I didn't eat pork, I fasted Ramadan (Kareem, Chapter 6).

Several respondents reported that their main religious practice occurred during Ramadan.¹⁸

I practice my religion [only] in Ramadan [...] otherwise I didn't even pray. (Zafir, Chapter 7)

I practiced moderately, and then when Ramadan comes around I practice a lot more. (Najib, Chapter 7)

¹⁷ The “Five Pillars” are doctrinal duties. They are 1. Profession of faith (*shahadah*), 2. Prayer (*salah*), 3. Charity/alms-giving (*zakat*), 4. Fasting in Ramadan (*sawm*), and 5. Pilgrimage to Mecca (*hajj*).

¹⁸ During Ramadan, practicing Muslims abstain from food, drink, and sexual behavior from about an hour before dawn until sunset. The fast lasts for a lunar month, about 28 days.

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Increased practice during Ramadan is a common phenomenon in the Muslim community. It is similar to Christians and Jews who only practice on holidays.

On the extremes, one respondent identified as an atheist but self-identified as Muslim because he was born into a Muslim family. Several respondents reported high levels of religious practice:

Yeah, everybody knows I'm Muslim because I practice my religion. I fast in Ramadan, I pray five times a day, I go to the Friday prayer. (Basim, Chapter 7)

My sample includes both individuals who were born into Muslim families and those who converted. The inclusion of converts is a fair picture of the U.S. Muslim population which Pew (2011) reports is comprised of 20 percent converts. Interestingly, for Omar (Chapter 6), Dani (Chapter 6), and Rahma (Chapter 8), Islam was something they began to explore due to specific military experiences.

DATA ANALYSIS

This analysis takes a content analysis approach in which the transcripts are approached as texts (Altheide 1987). This approach best fits the goals of this project. This research is based on a framework that has been established before entering the field and seeks to explore this framework.

Content analysis relies on inductive coding (Bernard 2006). I began work with a “start list” of codes based on my theoretical framework, my research questions, and my expected findings. The list of codes was revised and refined during the course of the research to recognize emerging themes and patterns. Analysis was a combination of inductive and deductive coding. In the coding process, text was organized and analyzed

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by theme. See Appendix C for list of codes and preliminary themes. These overarching themes came from the framework and research questions; however, within these themes I analyzed data using deductive methods to identify common themes. Although preliminary analysis was done thematically, presenting the data in this way undermines much of the power of an in-depth qualitative investigation by removing context and making it difficult to address unique situations. After establishing the common themes through a process of coding and preliminary analysis, I reorganized the presentation of data to put individual respondents at the center of the analysis.

DATA PRESENTATION

I have organized this dissertation around my 15 respondents. I present the story of each respondent, relying heavily on their own narrative. I make an effort to include similar components for each respondent, including motivation to join the military, and what it was like being Muslim in the military.

I have grouped these individual narratives as I have in order to draw out common themes and to allow easy comparison across similar cases. As relevant, I direct the reader to previous and subsequent cases that relate to the themes and motifs of each case. The decision to group the narratives in this way is a product of my research questions and the results of my coding. Grouping the narratives in a different way could draw attention to a different set of themes and motifs. There is overlap in theme and motif: some respondents have experiences that could place them in several different groupings. I organized groupings around the central idea(s) to which I wanted to draw attention.

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All names used are pseudonyms. Respondent pseudonyms were selected with the goal of being distinct and easy to remember for the reader and have no relation to the name or ethnicity of the respondent. Given the small size of this community, relatively minor details could be used to identify these individuals. I have therefore obscured details that would in most studies be included. This includes any indication of the military branch the respondent served in. Aggregated totals can be found in this chapter, but all identifiers of branch in the narratives themselves have been replaced with generics (such as “military”). In order to maintain the flow of the narratives without drawing attention to this censoring, in most cases I have not marked where I have made such changes.

I have also obscured the origins of my respondents by aggregating specific backgrounds into the pan-ethnic terms of “South Asian” and “Arab”. When I use these terms, they are accurate reflections of the respondent’s background, but intentionally imprecise. As with military branch, I have replaced specific references in the narratives with a generic term.

In addition I have done minor cosmetic editing to some of the narratives to enhance readability. If substantial text was removed I indicate this with [...]. Ellipses without brackets indicate that the narrative is intact, but signal a noticeable pause and often a switch of topic.

ROLE OF THE RESEARCHER

The researcher is also a relevant component of the research design. Lukens-Bull (2007) notes the particular position researchers who study Islam and/or Muslims are often put in. While identity and presentation of the researcher is relevant in any research

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endeavor, they may be particularly salient when studying this population, “the researcher who studies Islam has to deal with the question of subject position in particular, if not unique, ways” (173).

I am highly qualified to conduct this research in this community. I have experience with both the military community and the Muslim American community. As a doctoral student specializing in Military Sociology, I have many connections with the military and with other scholars doing work on diversity issues in the military and have worked for the past several years on issues of diversity in the military. I also have close associations with the Muslim community and am myself Muslim. I have taken several courses in Islamic studies and have lived, studied, and traveled throughout the Middle East and North Africa. I am extremely familiar with Islamic customs and language, including a familiarity with both colloquial and Qur’anic Arabic. My cultural competence allows me to function within the Muslim community and interact with respondents unobtrusively and with minimal cultural friction. Additionally, my participation with several Muslim organizations provided a number of personal contacts I worked with to find respondents.

Although I can work effectively within this community, my own external identifiers (name and appearance) may undermine this. My name is easily identifiable as having German origins, potentially creating assumptions that I am an outsider to the Muslim community. Similarly, my appearance is white/Anglo-European and I do not wear hijab. While I can work effectively once I have gained access, these characteristics may increase the barriers to access.

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In the interviews I utilized an ambiguous presentation of self. I used military jargon early in the interview to establish a level of in-group knowledge. I used in-group pronunciations of religious terms (e.g., /'mu:slɪm/ rather than /ɪmæzləm/). I used linguistic religious markers (e.g., *inshallah*) if the respondent used them, or if the context clearly called for it. For face-to-face interviews, I dressed modestly (covering legs and arms, but not head). This presentation gave respondents leeway in how they read and reacted to me. This ambiguity was a balance between the potential for increased access through claiming in-group membership, versus social desirability bias which might inhibit open discussion, particularly on topics of religious practice. If respondents asked me directly about my identity, either religious or military, I answered them straightforwardly and honestly.

Although there are many stereotypes about gender relations within the Muslim community, experience with this community and results of interviews suggest that my gender did not pose a barrier. Muslim veterans and service members have served in a gender integrated military and are unlikely to be uncomfortable interacting with a woman interviewer. The nature of the project and the interview questions do not violate any norms of modesty within the Muslim community. Additionally, my cultural competence made it unlikely that I would inadvertently interact with a respondent in a way that might make them uncomfortable (for example, I did not initiate handshakes when meeting a new respondent, but would shake hands if they initiated it).

DATA ANALYSIS

CHAPTER 6: US/THEM IN MILITARY

Although most of my respondents found military service to be a rewarding experience, most also used the us/them frame in their narratives. This often took the form of respondents remembering feeling concerned that their identity as Muslims would impede their military careers. For several, they felt that the current political and military situations made their identities as Muslims salient. Almost all of my respondents had experiences with other people telling jokes about Muslims, making stereotyped comments, or using epithets, though for most of my respondents these incidents were seen as minor. These experiences and this sense that being Muslim should have mattered supports my use of the us/them framework in this project. While many scholars have established the activation of this boundary in the civilian world, I extend this analysis, and demonstrate that this frame is also present in the U.S. military. This is to be expected as the boundary between military and civilian spheres in the United States is permeable. Service members come from the civilian community and remain in contact with civilian friends and family while serving, in addition, many continue to live in civilian communities while serving.

In this chapter I consider issues related to us/them in the military. I use the cases of Mahmood, Ahmed, and Kareem to illustrate the existence of the us/them discourse in the military and to illustrate my conceptualization of the presence but irrelevance of this frame. Next I consider the cases of Omar and Dani, both linguists who have studied at the Defense Language Institute (DLI). Their narratives illustrate the role of us/them

discourses in this arena of military education. Finally, I introduce Jamal whose narrative illustrates the complexity of perspective when using us/them as a framing concept.

BEING MUSLIM IS SALIENT BUT IRRELEVANT

The processes of othering I describe in Chapter 2 are relevant in analyzing the experiences of Muslim service members. My respondents articulated the salience of being Muslim clearly and consistently. However, while us/them was present, for most of my respondents, they felt that ultimately it did not shape their military experiences. Although several respondents voiced concerns that being Muslim would limit their promotion or otherwise directly impact their military careers, most felt that it did not. Their concern that it would matter speaks to the presence of this boundary, while the sense that it didn't actually matter suggests that for many, us/them was irrelevant. The framework of us/them remains useful for analyzing the experiences of my respondents; it shapes their own narratives of their experiences and their expectations, but for most, it did not seem to shape their careers.

MAHMOOD

Mahmood has been in the military for 10 years and plans to stay until at least 20 years at which point he is entitled to retired pay.¹⁹ Recently married and in the middle of his career, Mahmood is successfully balancing the demands of the military with the expectations of family and community. A “success story”, Mahmood does not stand out

¹⁹ After 20 years of service, service members are eligible to retire and collect retirement pay, which consists of a percentage of their base pay as well as benefits such as health coverage.

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among my respondents. His reasons for joining the military, his experiences while serving, and his general satisfaction were common among my respondents.

Mahmood immigrated to the United States from South Asia as a teenager and followed in the footsteps of his father and brother who both served in the military. His motivations included family, opportunities for travel, and the military lifestyle,

[I: What made you decide to join the military?] Because of my brother, and just join the military, see the world kind of thing. I wanted to see the world and it seemed like the military [would give me that], and the camaraderie of the guys and all this kind of stuff.

Mahmood's decision to join the military reflects both institutional aspects, such as family tradition (Faris 1981) and a sense of service, and occupational aspects focused on self-improvement. While not financial in consideration, he voices a desire to join the military based in part on what the military can do for him: help him see the world, and provide a sense of community. However, belying Moskos' continuum model, Mahmood also sees tradition and a sense of service as reasons to join.

Mahmood's experiences are shaped by a sense of service, something that came up in many of my interviews. As an immigrant to the United States, he sees his military service as a way to acknowledge what the United States has meant for him,

This is my new home, and I think joining the military is the right thing to do, whatever country you're in. I feel that's how you can serve your country and the United States has been awesome, excellent to myself and my family. I feel like the country's given me so much and I am doing my share to pay back sort of.

This is an example of what I mean by performance of citizenship, a conceptualization I will more fully address in Chapter 8. Mahmood does not conceptualize his service in terms of claiming rights; rather he sees it as a natural

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extension of being American. Military service is a way to “pay back” the United States for providing him and his family with opportunities. By expressing a sense of duty to the United States, he is expressing, not claiming, citizenship.

Mahmood directly links his military service and his sense of belonging

[I: Are you proud to be in the military?] Yeah, I really am actually. Especially with the kind of political stuff going on, I don't feel like anybody can say anything to me. [...] I don't think anybody can question my patriotism or something like that.

Mahmood acknowledges the prevalence of an us/them atmosphere in society at large, “the kind of political stuff going on” that could lead someone to confront him about his patriotism, or, we can extrapolate, his right to belong in American society. He sees his military service as a clear response to this abstract challenge. He is performing a self that is both Muslim and American. While others might try to impose one identity over the other on him, he uses his military service as an opportunity to counter this.

The military lifestyle has been a good fit for Mahmood and he has enjoyed his service, adapting with humor to the annoyances it can present,

Yeah I like [military life]. I've enjoyed the moving around, though it gets kind of old because your stuff's damaged. We just moved here, we're missing three couches [laughs]. They're somewhere. Things like that get old but they only come about every three years or so thankfully.

Looking at his 10 years of service, he has only positive things to say,

You know, I can't really think of a bad experience. I mean OCS [Officer Candidate School], was miserable, but now looking back it was fun. [The drill instructor would] yell 'Get in the dirt! Get in the grass!' Basically doing a lot of push-ups, just doing physical stuff and the whole time I'd kind of be thinking 'Wow, we're getting yelled at by this drill sergeant, it's kinda like a movie.' And so it was stressful because there's no time and you've got to do a lot of stuff, but now looking back I only have good memories of OCS.

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Until recently Mahmood did not consider himself to be a practicing Muslim.

Recently he has been striving to become more observant,

I don't wanna come off as being a super religious, pious person because I have not been. [But] now I'm trying to be, like praying and stuff like that and fasting 'cause [Ramadan] just ended. Now if I were super religious and strict I don't know what my experiences would've been like in the unit, if it would've caused friction or whatever the case may be. But being the way I was, people knew I was Muslim but I kinda did the stuff that I'm not supposed to like drinking and all that, so it didn't really make that much of a difference because of how I acted. Now if I was completely following every rule that I'm supposed to, I don't know if it would've been different or not. But I don't know if it would've been because, I mean, you can go pray in your car or something, so it's not like I'd be pitching the prayer mat in the middle of the room, so the only thing that I'd be doing differently is probably not drinking and there's plenty of people that are not Muslims who do not drink and it's not like they were excluded, so I don't think it would've made a difference even if I was a more practicing Muslim than I was.

Mahmood has had no experience seeking formal religious accommodation, and expresses uncertainty about whether a higher level of religious practice would have changed his experiences. After some discussion, he concludes that he does not think that behavior such as praying and abstaining for alcohol would have had an effect on his experiences. Interestingly, while he argues that abstaining from alcohol would not be unique and so could be done publically without social sanctions, he sees prayer as something that is best accommodated by placing it in the private sphere, hidden from colleagues. This treatment of prayer as something to be hidden comes up in several interviews.

While prayer and social restrictions have not factored heavily into his military experiences, Mahmood does observe the month-long fast of Ramadan. Two strategies emerged from my interviews with regards to fasting. One approach, which Mahmood does not take, is to modify military duties to accommodate the fast. This strategy requires seeking formal accommodation, and includes things such as rescheduling physical

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training or altering working hours. Mahmood uses the opposite strategy; he adapts his religious practice to the demand of the missions of the day,

On the days when I had [duties] I didn't fast basically. So it's not like I was going to have the schedule changed for me, so I just decided not to fast on the days I had [duties] or if I had early [duties] or late [duties]. If I could do it then I did, and if I didn't think I could do it I just didn't fast. If I was super religious then I would have made up the missed fast later I guess.

Respondents, like Mahmood, who used this approach, came up with personal ways to negotiate their religious practice without seeking formal accommodation or alteration of their military duties. Like Mahmood, these respondents generally described a set of personal "rules" they used to guide their fasting. In this case, Mahmood does not fast on days where he has certain duties, or those duties overlap with the times of breaking the fast.

Although Mahmood did use the frame of us/them in his narrative, he does not feel that his identity as a Muslim had any impact on his experiences in the military.

I don't think it's like anything different than being non-Muslim. [...] I mean, with all these conflicts going on maybe you could have a thing like stuff's going on in every Muslim country, [...] [but] that's more political. Personally, being a Muslim in the military hasn't really, I don't think, affected me.

He acknowledges that the identity of being Muslim may be particularly salient because of global political events. However, while this identity is salient, he does not find it meaningful in his career. He does not feel that it has shaped his decade of service at all. Mahmood, like many respondents, is adamant that although his identity is salient, and may be brought up, it has no real impact on his experiences.

As an example of presence but irrelevance, Mahmood talks about being teased by colleagues based on his identity, but understands this to be friendly ribbing,

The military is not PC [politically correct] at all, so I get teased about doing things or whatever the case may be, but the thing is in the academic world everything's so PC and I feel like for me and my background, you know some of my friends call me a terrorist or I'm going to blow myself up, it's completely different, it's not some redneck making some joke at me. So there'll be that kind of teasing back and forth and all this kind of stuff going on [...] But I don't want you to get [the idea] that I was picked upon because I'm Muslim because that wasn't the case at all. [...] That teasing goes on with everyone basically. You've gotta have a thick skin in the military, and it wasn't personal, I don't want you to think that.

These interactions are experienced as signs of strong cohesion, rather than as suspicions that undercut it. That his colleagues feel free to tease him, and that he takes the teasing with good humor is a sign of unit strength. Being teased is a sign of inclusion, and because cohesion is strong and the teasers are known and trusted, the interaction is friendly rather than malicious.²⁰

AHMED

Ahmed is the respondent with the longest career in the military. He has served for over 20 years, and was still on active duty at the time of interview and had no immediate plans to retire. As an aviator, he has served all over the world, including in Operation Enduring Freedom (Afghanistan). Ahmed is an immigrant from South Asia.

He identifies as a moderately practicing Muslim, he fasts and sets up Friday prayers on base, but also says, "I'm not really religious". As with Mahmood, Ahmed did not seek any formal accommodation for fasting, preferring instead to work it around his regular duty schedule,

I've actually fasted and I've broken my fast in the airplane. [...] Nobody ever told me I couldn't, it was a very personal decision, and if I knew I could do it then I did it. And my colleagues knew that I'm fasting and you know they would make fun of me yeah we saw him eating a date in the airplane or whatever because the sun had gone down.

²⁰ This is description is in line with observations that it is common in military basic training for recruits to be identified by unique physical characteristics (for example see Field 2006).

Ahmed also reports taking on a leadership role in the military religious community,

On every base that I've been stationed on I've always set up the Friday prayer. And so every Friday whether I attended or not we had the opportunity to pray our Friday prayer. [...] Before 9/11 I would get a couple of dozen Muslims [...] but then after 9/11 I would run into Muslims and I'd say 'Hey listen we do Friday prayers would you be interested?' And quite a few of them would say 'No, I'd rather not tell somebody I'm Muslim.'

Ahmed's first-hand observation supports the supposition that official tallies of Muslims in the military undercount the actual population, as, among other reasons, many Muslims may choose not to reveal their religious affiliation. That Ahmed ties this change in attitude to 9/11 also supports my claim that this particular us/them boundary was re-activated by 9/11. This attitude likely also contributed to my difficulties finding respondents; Ahmed claims that any given Friday before 9/11 there were about twice as many people attending prayer on one base as I could locate to interview.

Ahmed enjoys his military service and finds the military lifestyle rewarding; his experiences have encouraged his brother and daughter to pursue military careers,

I've had a fantastic time, I enjoy [my work], and I've moved up the ranks. It's all been good, and honestly people ask me how long you going to stay and I tell them I've not even thought about getting out because it truly has been an absolutely phenomenal experience. And you know the stuff that we do is absolutely amazing. Yeah there was no question I was going to stay in, and my brother joined after me, and I have a daughter who wants to be an officer. It is just been a very positive experience for the whole family. And I mean it's not an easy life, it is definitely very tough, deployments are really tough, you go away, it's not easy to say goodbye to your family [...], so it definitely is difficult, very trying but then the positive aspects of that I tell people is that the homecomings are so special, I remember each and every time I came home [...] In the military, life is not for everybody, but if it's for you I think it's a fantastic career.

Ahmed grew up wanting to fly,

I am a son of a [South Asian] Air Force pilot, and since as far back as I can remember I always wanted to fly and I was interested in military aviation [...] I was 17 when I started flying, then eventually I came to the United States. After I

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finished up college I was going to go back to [South Asia] and fly for the national airline there. But then *Top Gun* came out, and I saw *Top Gun*, and I thought you know what this sounds way better than flying for an airline.

Initially Ahmed's father was disappointed in his decision to stay in the United States and join the military rather than return to his birth country,

my father, because he paid for all my college, I was the older son, he basically was hoping that I was going to go back and pick up where he was going to leave off. And so he was very disappointed, he didn't speak to me for two years and then he came to visit me and then everything was okay.

References to media, including movies, books, and video games, turned up in the narratives of several respondents. The media mentioned is always a part of American popular culture, indicating that for these respondents, the decision to join the military, at least in part, emerges from an immersion and identification with American popular culture.

For Ahmed, one of the best aspects of military life was the opportunity to broaden his horizons and meet new types of people (and in turn be there for others to meet)

The military helped me break some of [my stereotypes], and conversely I was able to help break some of the stereotypes that Americans had of Muslims, and then also when I would deploy outside the United States, I would come in contact with Muslim officers from different nations and they would ask me 'Listen, how are you treated?' And so to help break some of those barriers was pretty positive. I came to this country with a lot of stereotypes, and those are the same stereotypes that a whole bunch of Muslims, when they come to this country, they have those stereotypes and not until you actually get to know the people that you have some of these feelings about, you know you can't break those barriers until you're actually given a chance, giving yourself an opportunity to meet and get to know, and then when you do you realize that hey we're all the same.

Ahmed sees his role not just as a Muslim for other service members to meet, but as a Muslim service member for Muslims in other countries to meet. He serves to broaden the perspective of U.S. service members, and of the citizens of other countries *about* the U.S. military.

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After I joined the military I met people from all parts of the country, which was absolutely phenomenal, and because I met people from all parts the country I met an ex-Ku Klux Klan member, and then I met people who were extremely liberal, extremely accepting, maybe not very religious, so basically I met the gamut. For me that was an absolutely fantastic experience, and that is really when I started feeling like I was an American, and I felt that if they accepted me and I accepted them, and even though they felt like there's something different about this guy we got close enough to where they could joke about my religion or about my background. So I was one of the boys, but I was a little bit different, and that was okay. So that's when I really felt good and so that was the start and like I said there's all kinds of people and that is one thing that's so beautiful about the military that you take folks from every corner the United States, every different background, you throw them together and sure enough because of this assimilation most of the people come out a little bit better. So that's kind of been my experience, and during this time I met some extremely racist people and I met some people that I knew thought of me as some evil terrorist or something, and that's another thing in the military because we are an equal opportunity organization you can't openly go out there and make accusations or make fun of somebody because the repercussions a pretty severe.

There are several interesting elements in this narrative. Ahmed speaks of the many different types of people he met through military service (and the many different types of people who got to meet him). This is an example of the contact hypothesis at work. Because the military provides a space where contact can occur with institutional support and on equal grounds, it can successfully break down boundaries. Despite the extreme diversity, Ahmed feels accepted, "I was one of the boys". The military provides a space for Ahmed to be Muslim *and* American, "I was American [but] I was a little bit different, and that was okay." As with Mahmood, teasing and joking about his background is positive for Ahmed because it means he is included.

The role of formal equal opportunity policies also comes up in this narrative. The military formally endorses integration and equality of opportunity, and there is a clear system to address complaints of unfair treatment. Ahmed observes this sort of protection in serving in the military. While the military brings together diverse populations, it also

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provides structure and constraint on these meetings. Whatever their personal feelings, service members must comply with behavioral norms of inclusion, and if they fail to do so, there is a clear way to address and correct this behavior.

Ahmed did occasionally encounter anti-Muslim discourse among his colleagues, though it was never targeted at him,

I've had this happen, where, you're part of a group where somebody will generalize, and they'll call all Arabs terrorists, or, they'll say oh yeah camel jockey or whatever, they'll call names, or they'll just make just a very generic statement. So that happened where somebody would just say something negative about Muslims and then go oh my gosh we have a Muslim, and then all turn and look at me.

He also relates a specific story of encountering this attitude among intelligence officers.

Disgusted with this attitude among those he expected to be the least ignorant about Islam, he confronted them,

There are a couple of intelligence officers that were making fun of Muslims. And so I sit there and I listen, and they had no clue that I was a Muslim, and so then I told them 'You know what, you guys are ignorant.' I said 'If you've got a question you can ask me cause I'm a Muslim, but don't just go out there and spread stuff that's not accurate 'cause you're supposed to be intelligence officers, and you're officers and you shouldn't conduct yourself that way.'

Ahmed expressed concern that being Muslim would negatively affect his career, but was surprised to find that this did not seem to happen. A few years after 9/11 he came up for a prestigious promotion

So I thought that with my name and the fact that I was a Muslim, and this is post-9/11, I thought there was no chance I was gonna get selected. But I was. And when I [got the position] I became the very first Muslim [in this position] in the history of the [branch], and that is after 9/11. That for me was very positive 'cause I thought you know what we are equal opportunity, this war is not on Islam, and in the military we reward people that work hard.

This narrative illustrates the presence but irrelevance of the us/them frame. That Ahmed assumes that his identity would disqualify him from the position is an acknowledgement

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of the presence of this us/them boundary. He explicitly frames the concern as a product of 9/11. However, despite his concerns, he gets the promotion. This shows that while this boundary is present, in many cases it is seen as irrelevant. There is recognition of this boundary and an acknowledgement that it exists; these respondents are aware of it.

The only issue Ahmed has encountered in the military stemming from his identity and origin was with obtaining a security clearance,²¹

Even though I bleed red, white, and blue and I love the military I had the hardest time getting a security clearance. Almost every time they do an investigation on me, they always come back with some nonsense about your uncle lives here and we're not sure where your allegiance is, things that just frustrate me to no end. So it's like 24 years of service and since I joined every operation the United States has had I've taken part in it, and so it just makes me mad that somebody that sits behind closed doors in rooms with no windows and has no clue and what's going on in life is going to judge me and hold something against me because I'm a Muslim or I was born in [South Asia]. That does frustrate me a lot but I think the time will come when we will start getting past that and start recognizing that oh my gosh this is huge to have somebody who has that background ready to use that to our advantage. [...]

For Ahmed, being treated with suspicion despite a career of service is sore spot.

In no other aspect of his military service is Ahmed's identity as both Muslim and American questioned. Ahmed sees his service as demonstrating his loyalty. Ahmed's service is also tinged with sacrifice in the form of separation from his family and personal risk; in demonstrating his loyalty he doesn't just mention his service, but qualifies it with his sacrifices, pointing out that he has "joined every operation the United States has had".

²¹ In my job with the National Security Education Program (a program in the Department of Defense) the difficulty of getting a security clearance for those who lived or have family in many Middle Eastern and South Asian countries was something we discussed frequently. There is a large amount of anecdotal data to support Ahmed's complaint; however, because of the sensitive nature of security clearances, no empirical data. Information on the adjudicative process can be found at <http://www.dhra.mil/perserec/adr/foreigninfluence/foreigninfluenceframeset.htm>. Note that behaviors as benign as having family in a foreign country, communicating with them at least every two weeks, and visiting every 2-3 years are seen as potential warning signs.

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Ahmed also relays a moving story that belies the simplistic view of a military with a black-and-white view of an American-us at war with a Muslim-other. After finding the body of a local civilian, Ahmed is called to help the chaplain perform Muslim funerary rites in order to bury this man with honor and dignity - more dignity than the neighboring Muslim countries gave the man,

we had just kicked off Operation Enduring Freedom [...] And so one day I got a phone call in the afternoon 'Hey listen, the chaplain wants to talk to you.' So I went to see the chaplain he said 'Hey listen, we found a dead body and we're not sure where he's from, but he's dark, we have a feeling he's either Pakistani or Omani. And so the U.S. authorities contacted both the nations and said 'Hey listen this might be your citizen would you like to claim him?' And both the country said 'No we don't.' The chaplain had contacted me so that I could do the Muslim prayer that you do before you bury somebody. I'm not really religious, I don't know the whole prayer, but I knew parts of it. But I felt, it really moved me because I thought here it is, I myself am flying missions in support of this operation and there are people that are saying it's a war on Islam. But we found a dead body and just because we think this guy's a Muslim we want to bury him with dignity. And so I did the ceremony. And I thought this is what's so remarkable about the United States. The terror attacks happened but we're not going to hold everybody accountable or responsible, and this poor civilian that we found we're going to bury him with honor and not feel like Oh he's a Muslim, you know the Muslims attacked us or whatever. I was very surprised.

The narratives of Mahmood and Ahmed serve as good introductions to what I found in this project. Both enjoy their military service and have found success on this career path. Both express the presence of the us/them frame, and both provide illustrations of minor manifestations of this, such as teasing based on their identity, or in the case of Ahmed, witnessing anti-Muslim rhetoric in action. However, neither Mahmood nor Ahmed feels that being Muslim has affected their military careers. The distinction between us and them is present, they know it's there, but it has little practical effect on their experiences.

ABSENCE OF ISLAM IN LANGUAGE TRAINING

OMAR

Omar has recently left the military after putting in eight years. Although Omar joined the military as an alternative to further schooling and as an opportunity to travel, he became a linguist and spent his entire career stateside, much of it in school. Omar converted to Islam while in the military. After his conversion, his leadership resisted assigning him to languages associated with Islam and he had to involve the Equal Opportunity office. Omar did not enjoy the military lifestyle in general, and reports being happy to be a civilian again. Omar is multi-racial and was born in the United States to immigrant parents.

Omar joined the military out of high school as an alternative to college.

I just didn't want to go to college and like I didn't want to study or anything like that, and I picked like the last job for that. Like being a linguist you're constantly studying and constantly learning languages, so it kinda backfired [laughs].

As with several of my respondents, Omar also referenced popular media in his decision to join the military,

I can understand why people want to be in the military, there's like really cool Playstation games, really cool movies. I saw *Independence Day* and I was like I gotta be in the military.

Although he decided to join the military straight out of high school, Omar – a pacifist who appreciates his independence – predictably found the military to be a mismatch for his personality and values,

My family like, they were cool with it but a lot of them didn't think I'd really do it 'cause I'm all pacifistic and stuff. So I kinda did it also to prove them like hey I'm doing this, learn how to hold a gun and stuff [laughs]. But that's why I got out though, 'cause it obviously wasn't me

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Omar is thrilled to be out of the military. While other respondents reported appreciating the discipline and hierarchy of military life, Omar found it oppressive,

I just hated the PT [Physical Training], all the exercise and things like that, I just want to be healthy on my own, I don't need someone telling me to be healthy. There's a lot of little nit-picky things that just add up. It's so much better being out, so much better. And not just 'cause being Muslim, it's just not a life I imagine anyone would ever want. [laughs] [...] I think the best, I don't know if you read *Harry Potter*, but the best description would be the Dementors²² who just suck your soul out, that's exactly how [it felt in the military]. I used to be so cheery and things like that [...] But they really just took every happy thought out of my life, [...] it's like they're just constantly beating down on you, whether it's religion related or just the way they act around you. I just got out and [it's] like the sun's shining, I see the flowers and everything. It's nice.

Omar converted to Islam during his military service. His process of religious exploration arose, ironically, out of anti-Muslim attitudes expressed by an instructor,

When I joined I wasn't Muslim. My family was, but I wasn't brought up learning anything about it. And when I was in class I had this one Sergeant who did like a tour in Somalia, and he always had mean things to say about Muslims 'cause he was an "expert" and I didn't agree with what he said and I knew a lot of people who are Muslim -- like family, relatives, or people from when I was in high school, and I had a good impression of them. I didn't know anything about it, but I knew that they were nice people. I couldn't argue with the guy because I had nothing to back up my argument, so I just went to the library and got like a *Dummies Guide to Islam* or something and I started reading it and then I liked it, and then I decided to become Muslim myself.

Growing up in a diverse community and family, Omar is an example of the contact hypothesis in the civilian context. Throughout his childhood, Omar was in contact with peers and family who are Muslim, meeting many of the elements of Allport's model. Later in life, when Omar is confronted with one-dimensional depictions of Muslims as evil "others" he draws on his own experiences with Muslims that he has known to question this. This supports the idea that having the opportunity to meet Muslims, not as

²² "Dementors are among the foulest creatures that walk this earth... they glory in decay and despair, they drain peace, hope and happiness out of the air around them... Get too near a Dementor and every good feeling, every happy memory, will be sucked out of you... You'll be left with nothing but the worst experiences of your life." (Rowling 2001: 140).

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“others”, but as complex and complicated humans, facilitates the rejection of simplistic stereotypes.

Omar’s narrative also points to the role of military education. In his unit an “expert” with a particular ideological approach was tapped to teach about Islam. This attitude does not characterize all instructors in the military, but the views expressed by particular instructors may play a role in shaping the atmosphere of leadership and by extension the unit as a whole.

For Omar, being Muslim shaped his experiences in the military in ways that he often felt were negative,

It’s always, the odds are always out of your... I mean even if you’re not, even if you’re Muslim and not in the military, it’s still a disadvantage because everywhere you want to go for breakfast is bacon and ham and sausage. So in the military it’s even more of that kind of stuff. I can’t really be specific about it. But you’re always on the losing end of something. You get used to it.

He felt that his identity and religious practices, such as not drinking, set him apart and prevented building strong relationships with his colleagues,

They know that I’m not going to go drinking with them so I had less friends ‘cause he’s not gonna do anything cool. So they were just really good work friends and none take home friends.

Omar’s characterization of socialization with his colleagues is very different from Mahmood who argues that although he did drink alcohol, abstaining would likely have little impact on off-duty socialization. It is possible that Mahmood’s hypothesis that abstaining from alcohol would have had little effect is incorrect and he like Omar would have felt excluded if he did not drink. It is more plausible however that other differences between Mahmood and Omar explain this discrepancy. There may be individual-level differences such as personality. There may also be unit-level differences, with

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Mahmood's colleagues being more accepting of voluntary sobriety than Omar's colleagues.

Omar sought formal religious accommodation during Ramadan. Rather than adapt his religious practice to his military duties, Omar adapted his military duties to accommodate fasting. Unlike many other aspects of military life, which Omar felt were weighted against him as a Muslim, accommodation for Ramadan was easy,

whenever Ramadan came up I could just walk up to the PT leader and be like 'Hey, I can't. I can't drink anything and if I run like 10 seconds I'm just gonna pass out' and then he or she would just be like 'Ok, just come back when it's over'. And I don't think I ever really had a problem doing that

Omar provides one of the clearest examples of hiding prayer. This was a common theme among my respondents; several people spoke of finding someplace private to pray. This stood in contrast to other religious practices, such as fasting, that my respondents engaged in publically. Omar treated prayer as a secret. Rather than explain why he would leave his office, he let his co-workers form their own rumors,

I always went somewhere isolated to pray. [...] There was one guy, [...] he was really religious, and I would meet with him to pray and we'd find some isolated place to pray. [My colleagues] probably thought we were doing something weird 'cause I'd always come in 'Are you ready?' and we'd leave every day.

There are several possible reasons prayer was treated as something to be hidden while fasting was never talked about by my respondents this way. One is the familiarity of the practice to others within the Christian norms of U.S. society. Fasting is a practice that is found in Christianity (and Judaism), and although what is meant by "fasting" differs (most Christian and Jewish fasts allow drinking water, while Islamic fasting does not), the general practice is familiar. On the other hand, *salah* is seen as foreign to Christian tradition. Salah is most commonly understood to be required five times a day

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and is formal and formulaic, involving precise movements of the body combined with recitation of certain phrases in Arabic. This is very different from contemporary Christian prayer which tends to be less frequent, more personalized and requires minor bodily movements (folding hands, crossing arms, kneeling, etc).²³

Fasting and prayer are also very different in their popular associations. Ramadan may be recognizable due to media coverage as an “exotic” but celebratory event. Because Ramadan is celebrated in many Islamic countries with feasting and decorations, the images in the media are comfortingly cheery. Salah however, is associated in the media with the idea of Islam as other and violent. Shaheen (2001) considers the portrayal of Arabs and Muslims in Hollywood movies and notes how images of Muslim men praying is often used in association with violent villains, “When mosques are displayed onscreen, the camera inevitably cuts to Arabs praying, and then gunning down civilians. Such scenarios are common fare” (9).

Unlike Mahmood and Ahmed, Omar did feel that being Muslim had negative effects on his career, and this might also shape his reluctance to discuss his religious practice with his non-Muslim colleagues,

they would behind my back say, and that happened a lot, they would just say all these anti-Muslim things behind my back even though they spent all day with me. They learned such and such about Islam and they would still say that same thing that I just corrected.

After five years as a linguist working with a European language, Omar requested a more challenging language,

²³ There is an Islamic equivalent of the personalized prayer for the needs or wishes of the supplicant, this is called *dua*. *Dua* can be performed at any time and does not require ritualized movement or a particular format. However, when speaking of “prayer” with Muslims, it is usually understood to mean salah.

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the commander said ‘I will not give you an Islamic language ‘cause you’re Muslim’. He thought I would use it to communicate with terrorists and things like that.

With the help of the Equal Opportunities Office he was eventually given a new language, but rumors about his loyalty flourished,

after that people did have rumors about me, like maybe I would be a traitor or whatever because I was helping them with Islamic topics. [...] It wasn’t a problem being Muslim until I started helping them out with Islamic things. For some reason that drew more attention.

The distinction implicitly made between us and them in this statement is interesting.

Working on Islamic topics as a non-Muslim is viewed as acceptable as is being Muslim working on other topics, according to Omar’s account. It is only when identity and topic intersect that suspicion arises. This suggests that for Omar’s colleagues, the boundary between us and them was only salient under certain conditions, but under these conditions the boundary was actively policed. This is a very different experience than either Mahmood or Ahmed.

Omar also alleged that within military language education Islam was routinely excluded from the curriculum. This was a claim also made independently by Dani who I will introduce next. Omar studied at the Defense Language Institute (DLI) in the early 2000s and says that at that time instructors were not allowed to teach students about Islam.

The teachers did like me more because they weren’t allowed to talk about Islam but I was because I could say I researched it and this was my project. Which I did. And the students they just loved it

This exclusion of religion does not appear to be a universal policy at DLI.

Another respondent, who I will not name for confidentiality reasons, studied Russian at

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DLI in the 2000s. He reported that not only was religion included in the curriculum, but his class was required to attend a Russian Orthodox Church service,

Omar used class assignment and projects as an opportunity to bring Islam into the discussion, seeing its exclusion as problematic,

I got to speak about Islam to my class and things like that and they were really into it 'cause hey we're learning about Afghanistan, we should learn about Islam. It only makes sense. But that was only my class. They put how many classes through a year and I come here and I see the people who learned other languages that have to do with Islam, they don't know a single thing. And it's bad. This is what keeps the war going. People assuming things about other people.

This void of formal consideration of Islam in the classroom seemed to allow common stereotypes and misconceptions to take hold among the students,

And [the students] were like yeah I heard that you're actually supposed to kill non-Muslims if you're Muslim. That's like, I can't believe how you got this far learning the language and still think that. I mean all your teachers were from Afghanistan, do you think they would teach you? [laughs] Are you alive right now? I mean they would've killed you if that was true. It's just common sense some of this stuff.

It is important to remember that Omar here is talking about advanced students learning specific languages to support the military mission. I was surprised that he reported these attitudes among these students, who I assumed to be more open-minded due to their education. However, throughout my sample many of the specific examples of anti-Islam encounters involved those who should be most aware of these issues: linguists and those in intelligence.

Omar also taught an optional class on Islam. Enticing students to attend with pizza, Omar used these classes as a venue to address common myths about Islam and Muslims,

Sometimes we had topics for the day but sometimes we just asked people to ask us questions. Because they're too nice to ask us about virgins and blowing

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yourself up and stuff, so we brought those subjects [up] and explained to them, hey this is not actually, this is just a rumor and things like that and then we'd give proofs and things like that. So they liked that, that we weren't just saying 'Hey Islam's peace', we were actually giving proof. And a lot of people were coming because they liked what they were learning, but a lot were just coming for pizza [laughs].

DANI

Dani is a veteran who served for 20 years, much of it as a linguist. Experiences while deployed to the Gulf War led Dani to convert to Islam. Dani is white and was born in the United States.

Dani joined the military primarily for occupational reasons; the military was a source of social and geographic mobility,

I was from a small town and my family was poor. [...] I'm a product of two non-college graduates, so I'm still from Small Town, USA where everybody doesn't go to college when I was growing up and they didn't know how to recommend what school or anything to you. They just, ok you graduated high school, time to get a job. I ended up going into the military, I thought it was cool.

Dani did not go into the military anticipating that he would make it a career,

I wanted to go in for two years get some money and go to school, be the first one in my family to finish college.

However, a responsive leadership worked with Dani to find him opportunities that appealed to him, so he stayed for much longer. Eventually, the appeal of retirement benefits enticed him to remain for 20 years although he felt that his opportunities had dried up,

I was just like I'll stay in for a couple years and get out, but it kept going and going and then I had like 18 years in and I knew I was...I was disappointed with the promotion and all that, I never really got promoted like I thought I should have. And there was 18 years and I could have got out, but [...] I was like, hm let me think about this I could either get out now at 18 and just get a job and get nothing ever, or I could stay two more years and get paid every month for the rest

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of my life. Hm, what should I do [laughs]. So I stayed in the rest of the way. But after 20 I just was done.

In general, Dani was satisfied with the military lifestyle. As with many of my respondents, he felt that the military expanded his horizons,

How do I know that I would ever have taken *shahada* [converted to Islam] if it wasn't for the military. Living in Small Town, USA how do I know I would have ever had that exposure. How do I know that I would have ever met my wife, started my family, who knows.

As with Omar, Islam was something Dani began to explore due to specific military experiences.

I was in Saudi Arabia for the [Persian Gulf] War and I'd see these people pull over on the side of the road to pray. I thought it was the coolest thing. [...] I learned so much, just kept learning more, and I became a Muslim.

As a white man with a typical American name, Dani provides an interesting opportunity to explore how people are recognized or identified by others as Muslim. While many of my respondents discuss being identified as Muslim due to their name or appearance, Dani had neither external marker. Perhaps because of this, when his commander was asked about the status of Muslims in his unit, he reported that they did not have any despite the active role Dani played in the Muslim military community,

The General called all the commanders and each installation had to report back to the Secretary of Defense 'Ok we're good here all our people are taken care of'. But then the people who were in charge of me reported 'thumbs up, we don't have any Muslim soldiers', or something like that. And the General, I knew the General because I was the lay leader on [base], he goes, 'So [redacted] doesn't work in your battalion anymore?' And [my commander] was like 'Well yeah he does but what about him?' 'Well, he's just the head of all the Muslims on the base and downtown, but you don't know anything about him?' And they were so embarrassed.

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Although he did not have any formal anti-Muslim encounters as Omar did, Dani did feel that Christian norms pervaded military culture, and occasionally made him feel excluded,

That's probably my least favorite thing about the military, it's a Christian culture. I mean I was in it for long enough I understand it, but it's a very Christian culture. [...] If you don't believe in these values, you're not one of the good guys.

I asked him to elaborate on the Christian culture of the military,

There's always a prayer before everything, let us pray, and praying for the country and the commanders, and the commander's kids, and his pets [laughs]. And then in Jesus' name, they always say in Jesus' name.²⁴

Dani also discusses the implicitly Christian nature of the annual winter "holiday" party,

everybody tries to be politically correct now, it's no longer a Christmas party, it's a holiday party, but every holiday party has a Santa Claus and a [Christmas] tree. And I'm like really, a holiday party? [...] I made the mistake a couple of times of calling it the Christmas party, and they were like 'Oh no this is a holiday party.' I was like, whose holiday is it? Whose holiday is in December? It's a Christmas party, we get it.

Dani observes that replacing the Christian term "Christmas" with the generic "holiday" does not change the underlying meaning of the event. The timing and the decorations clearly communicate that this is a Christmas party, whatever it may be called.

Dani also independently corroborates Omar's observation that Islam was explicitly excluded from language curriculum at DLI. Dani attended DLI in the mid-1980s and in the late-1990s. He says that even at that time, Islam was a touchy subject,

There was a big Middle East contingent there it was really very shy about staking a claim to Islam. [When I] went back for the refresher course [...] I'd see them on break and they'd whisper to me like *enti Muslim?* [Are you Muslim?] and I'd be like *ta3ban* [Of course]. And they were looking around like they were so paranoid of somebody. And then I found out there were so many political things of hiring instructors. Arab instructors, they wouldn't talk about their religion or their

²⁴ Military chaplains are encouraged to offer nonsectarian prayers when performing public prayers outside denominational services. However, this is an accurate report of what Dani told me.

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beliefs because the [Coptic] Christians²⁵ were in charge at the time. And if you would let it be known that you were Muslim they wouldn't hire you.

According to Dani's account of DLI in the 1990s, the avoidance of discussion of Islam had little to do with the contemporary us/them boundary I am exploring in the dissertation, and more to do with an often tense sectarian divide in the Arab world (another type of us/them boundary). Dani continues,

They went through a change [in] the 2000s because the Department of Defense was giving a lot of money for culture instruction.²⁶ [...] I asked them like where's your cultural stuff in here, when do you talk about this? They say that because they have native instructors in front of the class that's the culture piece. I'm like really?!? But yeah, I don't know how much they really talk about it, because it seems to me like it's inseparable.

Religion is a central component to culture and its absence from language and culture curriculum can handicap students. Learning to communicate in another language is not simply a matter of learning a new vocabulary and syntax. A whole host of nonverbal strategies must also be learned as well as a familiarity with underlying cultures values and norms that make this communication possible. How prominent a role religion should take in this will obviously vary depending on the language being learned and how similar the associated culture is with the student's native culture. For a language such as Arabic, religion is a relevant component. From a purely linguistic standpoint, the Qur'an is understood to be an exemplary example of the poetic possibility of Arabic,²⁷ religion shapes everyday life, and religious expressions are used throughout the Middle East in

²⁵ Copts are a minority ethno-religious group found primarily in Egypt where they comprise almost 10 percent of the population.

²⁶ As of the writing of this dissertation, the stated mission of the DLI is to "[provide] culturally-based foreign language education, training, evaluation, research, and sustainment for DoD personnel in order to ensure the success of the Defense Language Program and enhance the security of the nation." (<http://www.dlifle.edu/mission.html>).

²⁷ Qur'anic passages were used in Arabic classes I took to teach certain linguistic concepts, just as Biblical passages were used for this purpose in my Hebrew classes, and examples from literature were used in my German studies.

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everyday contexts. A basic understanding of religion helps grasp cultural significance and also matters at a purely linguistic level,

I know so many people who graduated around the same time I did and they never talked about any religion stuff, although now I see everything is integrated because even non-Muslim Arabs say *Allah*²⁸ they'll use *salaam aleikoum* as a greeting. We weren't taught that at DLI, we were taught *marhaba*.²⁹ And I'm like they don't even use it. [...] We didn't learn about Ramadan, I mean just the effect that month of fasting has on everyone in that area and anyone associated with the *deen*.³⁰ At DLI you didn't learn about Ramadan, you didn't know Qur'an or hijab, simple stuff that everybody in the Middle East knows, whether Muslim or not. You didn't learn that at DLI 'cause they wanted to separate the culture or the religion from the language learning. Which I think is sorta ignorant.

The exclusion of topics such as Ramadan, hijab, and Qur'an in an Arabic language class is a serious handicap for students who will be working in the Middle East. As Dani observes, these are concepts that are highly relevant to life in the Middle East, regardless of religion. This would be equivalent to sending a Hebrew linguist to Israel with no understanding of *Shabbat* [Sabbath], not knowing when or why a *kippa* [yarmulke] is worn, and unfamiliar with what the Torah is. This person may be able to get around to a certain degree (though they may face problems when the daily schedule is changed due to Ramadan or Shabbat), but they would be missing important information conveyed by nonverbal cues such as clothing, and would be unaware of the significance of religious texts and interest groups in popular culture and political life. In these countries, certain religious practices shape the entire society for everybody, even those of other religions, and because they are different from practices common in the United States must be actively taught if students are to understand them.

²⁸ Allah (الله) is the Arabic term for God. It is used as a proper name and is understood to refer to the Abrahamic God. It is like the English "God" (rather than "god"), and is used by all Arabic-speaking monotheists.

²⁹ *Salaam aleikoum* means "peace be upon you" and is used when Muslims greet each other. It is also used commonly by Arabic speaking non-Muslims. *Marhaba* means "welcome", and it is rarely used by native speakers. It is primarily something someone who has learned Arabic from a textbook uses.

³⁰ When used in this way, *deen* connotes Islamic religious practice and faith.

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As with Omar, Dani found that this void led to the use of inaccurate stereotypes about Islam including the oft-repeated claim that Muslims are enjoined to kill non-Muslims,

After 9/11, when people wanted to know about Islam and everything, it was like always the most Christian person usually would always try to give this [presentation] of what Muslims are supposed to believe and what they're supposed to do. And I was like really, about how the Muslims had to kill people in order to go to heaven. I was like really? I guess I need to know stuff like that being a Muslim and all, thanks [sarcastic]. Sometimes I would [just] laugh.

As with Omar, Dani found that sometimes the stereotypes were so ridiculous that the only response was to laugh them off. Also similar to Omar, when teaching classes on Islam, Dani worked to address these misconceptions,

One of the classes I would teach was an Islam class [...] we'd talk about *jihad*, probably one of the most misunderstood things about the *deen* and I'd talk about the greater jihad, and the lesser jihad.³¹ [...] At the end I'd say, for example greater jihad can be teaching a bunch of military people about Islam, that's some Muslim's greater jihad. And they still didn't get it. And then I'd get these whispers "Are you Muslim?" I sure am. Why do people always whisper about it, it's like you have a disease or something. It's funny.

At the same time, Dani was clear in his denouncement of the idea that only Muslims can or should teach about Islam,

my boss [would introduce me with] 'Well he's a Muslim' and I went to him and said hey you don't have to tell people that, it's none of their business. First of all why would it matter? I mean if I'm able to teach the classes.

Omar and Dani provide additional evidence of the use of us/them discourses in the military. Both identify situations where they felt excluded due to being Muslim. For Omar, the attitude of a specific leader negatively affected his career, though he did successfully utilize the equal opportunity system to address the issue. For Dani,

³¹ Lesser jihad (*al-jihad al-asghar*) refers to a physical, military war; greater jihad (*al-jihad al-akbar*) refers to internal struggle for personal improvement (for example a Muslim might refer to the "jihad" of waking up for pre-dawn prayer, meaning the struggle of striving to achieve this).

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manifestations of us/them were much more subtle, and as with Mahmood and Ahmed, he didn't find being Muslim to significantly shape his career. The cases of Omar and Dani are also interesting for what they say about military education. Both worked as military linguists, and both studied at DLI, though their sojourns there did not overlap. Between them, they provide a glimpse at military language learning over a period of more than 20 years. They independently provide reports of similar exclusion of any discussion of Islam from language training in Arabic and other languages spoken in predominately Muslim countries. This apparent concern with separating education about religion and language speaks to the framework of us/them, particularly as it is not observed by another respondent studying Russian. The avoidance of this topic seems to allow a specific set of stereotypes to take root among language students.

COMPLICATING US/THEM

KAREEM

Kareem is a veteran with an 11 year career as a military machinist. Kareem immigrated to the United States from the Arab world as a teenager. Us/them permeates his narrative.

Kareem's motivations for joining the military were primarily occupational; he joined for the benefits military service offered. As with many of my respondents he felt that the opportunities available in the military were excellent, and in his case they enticed him to remain for more than a decade.

Initially I just wanted to travel and experience new things away from home, the travel, money for college basically. The plan was to do it for four years and get out but I decided I liked it too much so I stayed in for 11 years.

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For Kareem's father, military service was not a part of the life he envisioned for his son in the United States.

My dad's main concern was how is this going to fit in with your school 'cause my father is, he came to the U.S. to study and do his grad school here in the U.S., so he values education very much, so his main concern was no, you go to school, you finish your undergrad, you go to grad school, then you get a good job, then you buy a house, then you get married and that's the track of life he had imagined for me.

Kareem's family immigrated to the U.S. to enable his father to complete his graduate education. This is a common family history in the American Muslim community, especially among recent immigrants. With the end of the Asia Exclusion Act in 1965, immigration from the Islamic world increased and became characterized by high levels of education and ambition, it "included a large number of highly educated, socially mobile, professional Muslims – part of the Arab and South Asian 'brain drain'" (Haddad 2004:5). For Kareem's parents, and for many immigrant Muslim parents, a specific trajectory is expected for their children that emphasizes education and family. Serving in the military, and particularly choosing to serve in the military before or in instead of attending college is a serious deviation from the expectations of many parents within this community. Kareem also suggests military service may also be viewed unfavorably because it is seen to encourage a lifestyle at odds with religious/cultural expectations,

I'm sure the reason why [my father] was against me joining the military he thought I was gonna go, 19 year old boy wanted to leave home and his immediate thought was oh this guy wants to party.

Despite the reservations of his family, Kareem found the military to be highly rewarding. Like many of my respondents, he felt that there were many opportunities in the military.

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The military was extremely good to me, I would say that the military was my rich daddy. There was no question whatever I wanted to do I could totally do it. I'd say military, daddy, I wanna travel and [they] sent me everywhere, or allowed me to go everywhere, provided me with the opportunity to go everywhere [...] I said oh I want to go to school for this, they'd send me to school for that. They'd send me to all kinds of military school, even like civilian education for my undergrad and even for, when I got out of the military I went to grad school, I was completely out of the military, I went to grad school and I was still collecting veteran benefits, I was getting paid every month. The new GI Bill, the post-9/11 GI Bill it's an incredible deal. [...] It was an incredible opportunity I have absolutely nothing bad to say about the military. No regrets whatsoever even though I joined at a young age. I could've wasted my life on booze and party but I didn't. I think the military it is what you make out of it.

In line with his general occupational bend, after over a decade of service, Kareem felt ready to pursue opportunities in the civilian world and left the military.

Kareem noted the increasing presence of the us/them boundary in the civilian world. Kareem, who began his service before 9/11 saw this shift in both military and civilian spheres,

The awareness of the simple American [shifted], not just the simple [service member], of what a Muslim is, or may be. I'll call it the paranoia factor, the Muslim paranoia. Yeah that really started up in 2001. [...] I think today people are more aware, they know brown people are dangerous, people from the Middle East are dangerous, people who are different, Middle East, Far East yeah that's all the same. Muslim, Sikh, Baha'i, Hindu, they really don't know the difference. The average American still does not know the difference. All they know is that Middle East, Far East, oh terrorist. They really don't know.

Kareem noted that while people were more aware of "brown" people, a great deal of ignorance remained,

People really honestly did not know what the hell Arab is. [...] Occasionally I'd say I'm Arab and people would say 'Oh my God, my next door neighbor's from Bangladesh, you should totally get together.' [...] They actually thought that people from Bangladesh, people from Afghanistan, people from Libya and Morocco [are the same], they all speak the same language, they all eat kebabs, cool.

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For Kareem, it is obvious that attitudes in the civilian world will permeate the military

the military, it's a small society in itself so the factors of society are very well represented in the military as a whole, so there are racist people in the military

My discussion with Kareem illustrates the centrality of perspective in conceptualizing us/them. Kareem noted that us/them could be constructed by al-Qaeda to include anyone residing in the West,

A terrorist organization is a terrorist organization, when the time comes to kill, for them to kill someone they will not distinguish between Muslims or infidels. They would bomb the University of Maryland with a Muslim sister³² there, knowing that there are a lot of Muslim brothers and sisters there just because it represents the infidels period.

Kareem notes that from the perspective of al-Qaeda, or similar groups, "us" encompasses only those with similar worldviews as proven by living outside the United States. From this perspective, "them" includes anyone living in the United States, regardless of religious, ethnic, or national identity.

Kareem provides an example of yet another us/them perspective. Discussing differences in opinion within the Muslim community, he explains that some Muslims characterize "us" as all Muslims regardless of ideological view ("us"),³³

some people like to interpret Islam differently. Some are more fundamentalist than others. Some will say the sheik³⁴ bin Laden, others will say the terrorist bin Laden. So the ones that say sheik bin Laden are the ones that'll say the military is *haraam*,³⁵ we will not participate in any campaign that kills Muslims, that's *haraam*. I participate in campaigns that kill bad Muslims, you know. If it walks

³² The terms "brother" and "sister" are commonly used in the American Muslim community to refer to fellow Muslims.

³³ The context of this perspective is complex and beyond the scope of this project to explain. Kareem's discussion is useful for illustrating different ways us/them is used, but should not be taken as a reflection on the opinions of most American Muslims.

³⁴ Sheik/Sheikha is an honorific in Arabic. It means "elder" and connotes being a leader and a religious scholar.

³⁵ Not-permissible, forbidden, sinful. Within the Islamic worldview, a distinction is drawn between what is permissible (halal) and what is forbidden (haraam).

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like a duck, if it quacks like a duck, it's a duck. A terrorist organization is a terrorist organization [...] It's like no, we don't just go and kill Muslims, we kill bad Muslims, period. We don't just go and bomb Sheik Muhammad the peaceful guy who leads people at prayers on Friday, no. We will however conduct a campaign and get the guy who killed thousands and thousands of people and drop him in the ocean, yeah. We're not bad guys for doing that.

Kareem actively redefines who is us and who is them in his response. Rather than accept an approach based on ethno-religious identity, Kareem argues that the enemy is composed of those who are terrorists, which he sees as easily identifiable, "A terrorist organization is a terrorist organization". He distinguishes between "Muslims" as a group, and "bad Muslims", identifying only the latter as the enemy (and presumably lumping bad-non-Muslims in this category as well, though he does not elaborate on this).

The ones I have a problem with are those who have a problem with the military, particularly because they kill Muslims, and to me these people are no different from the average redneck, forgive my [language], who doesn't know the difference, this is an Arab, this is a Pakistanian [intentional mispronunciation], they're all the same, they're all raghead. And again the Muslims who don't make the distinction between good Muslims and bad Muslims, or violent fundamentalist Muslims and good Muslims, are no different from those ignorant rednecks who have no idea. To them Muslims are Muslims, bad or good they're all brothers and sisters. I beg to differ.

Kareem sees the use of monolithic categories based on religious identity to be intellectually lazy when used both in the non-Muslim American community and in the Muslim community. Just as he denigrates "the average redneck" for thinking all Muslims are the same, he also expresses disdain for Muslims who do not recognize radical and violent elements within their global communities. This speaks to the necessity of complicating ideas about us/them.

JAMAL

Jamal is a veteran with a 20 year career in the military. Of South Asian origin, Jamal immigrated to the United States as an adult. For Jamal, positive experiences while immigrating shaped his desire to join the military,

[The immigration official] said ‘Well [education and IQ are] irrelevant, you’re coming as a husband, you’re married to an American.’ That was one of the most emotional moments of my life, I almost broke down. I could not believe that a rich country would be so governed by law, so governed by humanity, that they didn’t care that I was a doctor or not a doctor, they didn’t care if I was retarded or smart, just based on my value as a human being they were willing to let me immigrate. And at that moment I decided that this is a country worth dying for. And that’s when I decided that I would eventually join the [military].

Jamal powerfully articulates the sense of service that was common among my respondents, for him, the U.S. was “a country worth dying for”. Jamal’s motivations were highly institutional, and stem largely from his specific experience of immigration. Jamal expresses no occupational motivations, though he does note that one of the unanticipated benefits of his military service is the status it conveys to him as a brown man who might otherwise be treated with suspicion,

What I did not anticipate of course was 20 years later as a brown-skinned Muslim man now [at] every airport I have to prove I’m not a terrorist and of course a military ID helps.

While other respondents addressed reluctance in the South Asian community to have children serve in the military, which is viewed as less prestigious than other careers, Jamal provides insight into how generational differences and particular histories of colonialism may shape the perceived prestige of a military career. Speaking of his parents who grew up in Colonial India, he explains,

what is important in their life growing up was the might of the British Empire, which was of course made evident through the might of the British military. So for them, my joining the military was a source of great pride. [...] During the

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British times the British recruitment policies favored big tall strong soldier races [...]. So the British army was mostly Sikhs or Punjabi Muslims. And people from my tribe, we were excluded from the Army, we were too small, too pathetic, too weak, too cowardly, or so the stereotype went. So when I could get into the military from my parents' point of view that was a big success and they showed off about it incessantly.

While his identity as a service member was a source pride for his parents, Jamal anticipated that his Muslim identity would be a source of concern in the military, but was surprised to find that it had little effect,

I don't think I was ever harmed by [being Muslim], in fact I was a little surprised why it didn't come up. Somehow I thought that surely my Muslim heritage should have aroused suspicion a long time ago, but it apparently never did.

Jamal expected his identity to pose a barrier to success in the U.S. military and was surprised when it did not. The expectation speaks to the presence of this boundary, while the outcome suggests that this boundary has little relevance in the military setting.

Jamal's work focused on terrorism. He felt that his South Asian Muslim background added depth to his work,

I have a [published academic] theory of terrorism. It's not too different from everyone else's theory, but it differs in minor details. [...] The strength of it probably was that because of my Muslim heritage I know of things that can't be proved by data but I can understand certain nuances of language and looks that non-Muslims probably miss. So I've spoken to, I'm not saying that I've spoken to millions of terrorists, but I've spoken to millions of Muslims, and they have various degrees of political opinion. I'm probably more difficult to fool than someone else. I do speak Urdu and I can pick up these very subtle nuances, especially in Urdu which is a very poetic language.

For Jamal as for Pervez, who I will introduce in Chapter 7, growing up in this particular ethno-religious community provided him, he felt, with a depth of knowledge as well as certain unquantifiable characteristics that gave him an advantage in dealing with issues of terrorism in the Muslim world. Jamal attributes this intuition to being able to subliminally process cues from language, dress, and behavior based on a lifetime of experiences

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interacting with diverse members of this group. This is not to say that all Muslims will have this “sixth sense” or that it is impossible for non-Muslims to gain this knowledge. It is seen by both Jamal and Pervez as a product of a particular process of socialization rather than an innate characteristic.

Jamal also found that his background enabled him to build rapport with locals while he was deployed. While serving in Afghanistan, he encountered a man living locally. Based on their shared language (Urdu) they struck up an extended acquaintance. During the course of their chats they discussed Muslims in the United States

he said to me ‘So what’s it like in America?’ and I said ‘life is wonderful’ and he said ‘How do people treat you?’ and I said ‘Very well.’ And he said, ‘They do?! They treat you well? But you’re Muslim.’ And I said, ‘Can’t you see? I [have a good career], I joined the military without any problems. [...] I’m a Muslim American, I live in a society where nobody messes with my religion, I can practice whatever religion I like, I joined the military, got promoted. It’s a very fair society.’

Jamal felt that his military service was an opportunity to demonstrate the extent of diversity and religious tolerance in the United States. Such efforts may help bolster the social legitimacy of the U.S. military as it strives to win the “hearts and minds” of civilians in Afghanistan and Iraq. The opportunity to interact directly with Muslim service members is a powerful counter argument against claims made by al-Qaeda that Americans are monolithic. While I have discussed the contact hypothesis in terms of developing inclusion in the U.S. military, Jamal serves a similar role for the local population and humanizes Americans.³⁶

Jamal’s interaction with this man continued, taking a fantastical turn and building on local traditions of storytelling,

³⁶ Differences in status stemming from the differential positions of soldier and civilian complicate Allport’s model in this case; however, we can also see this theme in the narratives of Ahmed, Hakim, and Pervez.

And he said, ‘Yeah yeah, [...] has anyone done anything *really* good for you?’ [...] And then I remembered a story of a man I’ve never met. I said after 9/11 the Muslim community in America was fearful of a backlash. I was fearful that I could go out and somebody would beat me up or something. [...] Every time I tell this story I tear up a little bit, the story that I heard was that [Dr. Fried] showed up for work and started growing a beard, and when he was asked why are you growing this beard, he said that most of my residency class are mostly foreign doctors and half the class is Muslim. He said after 9/11 I want them to know, I want those with beards to know that I’m one of them. If anyone has a problem with my Muslim residents, they have a problem with me. It’s a very powerful message for me. So I told this man that Dr. Fried, who I’d never met, did this apparently. And the man in front of me was large, mean-looking, tough-looking, it wouldn’t have surprised me if he had one foot in al-Qaeda.³⁷ I would not want to be alone with him in some Afghani cave or anything [laughs]. He was spellbound at my story and his eyes became teary. [...] So he says to me, this man must be rewarded. I said I’m sure God will give him his reward. He said no no, I have to reward him. [...] So I said to him, you’re not without influence, you can commit an act of charity I’m sure. I said I’m pretty sure that Dr. Fried is Jewish, and I’m pretty sure that most Jews fear that if they’re caught by al-Qaeda they’ll be very harshly treated. So if you have this influence and you want to reward Dr. Fried why don’t you give me permission to inform Dr. Fried that in his name any Jewish prisoner that you capture will not be treated harshly, and that will be his reward. And he said, that’s very difficult for me to do, that’s a war decision, I don’t make those decisions and that may not go down very well with my people. And I said well do you think it went down well with Dr. Fried’s people. After 9/11 it showed enormous courage, enormous character, and if you don’t [have the character] he doesn’t want your carpet and trinkets and whatever. [...] He said okay tell Dr. Fried he has six lives. So I have no idea who that man was. I have no idea if this was a game he was playing with me, I have no idea if he was sincere or insincere, and there’s no way I can check or anybody can check. The story’s not fictitious, [my co-workers] can confirm that this man came in. [...] But yeah there’s good outcome to the story which at least in my fantasy I like to believe there is. I mean I have no idea how many Jewish American soldiers get taken prisoner in Afghanistan. Probably not many. I have no idea if this man will be there at the time. But you know there is a tradition of storytelling in Afghanistan, so I’m pretty sure that this man told the story of me to many of his friends, and I’m sure he said that I met a Muslim and gosh guess what he lives in America. It’s not impossible that he tells this story as well, I’m hoping that generates a certain environment of compassion, mercy, love.

This fantastical story stems from Jamal’s ability to build rapport with this local. Through a shared language and a shared appreciation for the art of storytelling, Jamal introduces

³⁷ Among other things, that this man spoke Urdu, which is not the local language of the area where this occurred, suggests that he may have had political reasons for being there. That Jamal makes this connection without elaborating it is a demonstration of this “sixth sense” he spoke of earlier.

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this man to a complex vision of America where Muslims and non-Muslims can form friendships, and where in the wake of 9/11 many Americans stood with their Muslim friends and neighbors rather than against them. A facility with the cultural norms of storytelling, and also an understanding of cultural norms of honor and respect, helps Jamal humanize American service members, and he hopes that this will have a long term positive effect, even if just among those people this man shares his tale with.

Although his identity did not pose a barrier to his military career, Jamal discovered that the us/them boundary could be seen in the visceral reaction of others. He attributes a close call with friendly fire to his “brown” appearance,

Once I was nearly shot at but it wasn't because of my religion, it was because of my looks, my skin color. We were in Iraq, in the first Gulf War and we got lost. I was in a jeep and it was 2 o'clock in the morning and we got lost and we came to some checkpoint and some 18 year old idiot guard stopped the driver, checked the driver's ID and then he came to the back and suddenly, it all happened in one millisecond, he pointed the gun at me and locked and loaded. So I saw the gun pointed at me and I heard the click and of course everyone yelled and so he didn't fire. And then a minute later he was trembling and saying 'Oh my God, gosh, are you ok?' and was very apologetic. And apparently what had happened was earlier that day this idiot 18 year old had been reprimanded for not checking carefully enough. So at 2 o'clock at the morning, he'd probably woken up from sleep, we're in the middle of Iraq and it's very dark so he has a flashlight and he comes to the back of the car, he's probably not very awake, he opens up and he sees five white faces and one brown face. I think it was that instantaneous visual look. And his instincts were to lock and load which he did.

Although being brown has little relevance for Jamal's career, this story points out that there are other possible relevancies in military life. In this context, split-second decisions about friend or foe based as much on intuition as on rational thought can mean the difference between life and death. In this situation, being connected, however subconsciously, with an enemy-them can be dangerous. Jamal is the only respondent to report an incident of (near) friendly fire so I do not have data to elaborate on this further.

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But this incident does remind us that in many ways the military remains a unique context where internalization of us/them discourse may have more potentially violent outcomes than in civilian society.

Jamal also shares a story that illustrates that who is “us” and who is “them” is a matter of perspective. For Jamal, being seen as a dangerous other, one of “them”, by al-Qaeda had tragic consequences. Jamal, who analyzes terrorism, served as an expert on local television shows, and so became a public face of anti-terrorism work. It is this prominence, he believes, that led to him being threatened by a stranger,

[Before I deployed to Afghanistan] I took [my mother] to the butcher. [As we were standing in line] the guy next to me turned to me and he said ‘What’s the difference between a chicken and a traitor?’ He said it with a big smile, so I thought it was some sort of a joke, [laughs] ‘I don’t know, tell me the difference between a chicken and a traitor.’ And he said ‘The chickens first we kill and then we skin, but the traitors first we skin and then we kill.’ And then he walked away. And suddenly I was frozen. I mean I started sweating, it was such a chilling statement that he just made and for like one millisecond I couldn’t speak, I couldn’t move. Of course by then he was gone. And I thought did I hear this correctly? Was this a joke? Was it a threat? Does this guy know me; I don’t know him from Adam. But that’s what happened. [...] I told my commander [...] but the next thing I know I’m on a plane to Afghanistan.

While he was deployed in Afghanistan, his uncle in Pakistan was murdered:

When I came back [from Afghanistan], [...] I heard that my uncle [in Pakistan] had been murdered. And nobody ever told me that al-Qaeda did it, but just the coincidence of, he was an old man, never harmed anyone, nothing was stolen from his home. So one of the theories was that he was pushing me, an American soldier to go back and give a lecture on terrorism and al-Qaeda’s position was we don’t need a lecture on terrorism from this man’s nephew, especially someone who is so against us. But the murder was unsolved, robbery was ruled out, because Pakistan is an ugly place, there are robberies, but robbery was not the motive ‘cause nothing was stolen.

More devastating, Jamal’s father was subsequently murdered in Pakistan:

[My father] showed off about me a lot, ‘My son the soldier.’ [...] I got a medal once and I’ve given him a copy of the little commendation and he put it up on his wall. So he wasn’t shy about showing off that his son was an American soldier.

And then one day I got the news that he was dead. When I looked into it I could not get any details the best I can get is the local newspaper [...] and then I learned that the headline was that he had been tortured and killed and I discussed with many people including his own brother, nobody wants to talk about it. His own brother, I said can you give me the death certificate? And he said I'm not going anywhere near this case. And the only thing that can arouse such fear and intimidation is if al-Qaeda had done it. [...] nobody wants to discuss it, talk about it, nobody wants to meet me if I'm there. Nothing was stolen from his home and he was tortured. In robberies nobody's tortured. [...] When I heard all that it made me ill for a week and [ultimately] I decided to quit the military, I mean it's just too ugly, too horrible. I have other relatives there. They killed my uncle then they killed my father and I just didn't know if they could kill somebody else. Everyone in the Pakistani community here told me you know you're behaving very dangerously by being so outspoken about your political views.

This idea of U.S. military service members as “them” has been clearly expressed by al-Qaeda. In 1998, Osama bin Laden and al-Qaeda issued their famous “fatwa”³⁸ in which they called for the murder of Americans and their allies

The ruling to kill the Americans and their allies -- civilians and military -- is an individual duty for every Muslim who can do it in any country in which it is possible to do it [...] We -- with God's help -- call on every Muslim who believes in God and wishes to be rewarded to comply with God's order to kill the Americans and plunder their money wherever and whenever they find it. We also call on Muslim *ulema*,³⁹ leaders, youths, and soldiers to launch the raid on Satan's US troops and the devil's supporters allying with them, and to displace those who are behind them so that they may learn a lesson (qtd in Foreign Broadcast Information Service 2004)

This statement is a clear example of us/them rhetoric from an alternate perspective. While some in the United States see Islam as bent on the destruction of America, al-Qaeda and similar groups see the United States as pursuing a campaign against Islam and use propaganda to this effect to attract followers. From al-Qaeda's perspective, Americans, regardless of religion, are suspect and legitimate targets. Just as we've seen in the use of this us/them framework in the United States, being Muslim and

³⁸ A “fatwa” is a juridical ruling usually issued by a scholar. Different schools of Islam have different perspectives on the validity of fatwas. In this case I use the term because it is the term used by al-Qaeda, though it is arguably a misuse of the concept.

³⁹ Scholars, connotes Islamic religious scholars.

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being American are posed as mutually exclusive. In this statement, being American overrides all other identities and affiliations; it is impossible to be American without being the enemy. In particular, the focus of al-Qaeda on the U.S. military and its engagement in the Middle East, makes service members a particularly “othered” status. For al-Qaeda, the religion of a service member does not make them less “them”, in fact, a Muslim choosing to serve in “Satan’s US troops” may be viewed even more negatively than a non-Muslim doing so. Such a decision may be seen as being a traitor, as we saw in the threat made against Jamal.

Jamal’s narrative reminds us to beware of an overly-narrow conceptualization of us/them. Seen as a potential “them” from the perspective of a young American soldier on guard duty, he is also seen as a dangerous “them” by al-Qaeda, who respond with threats and violence, torturing and murdering Jamal’s uncle and father. Overall, Jamal’s narrative illuminates and complicates the framework I have proposed.

Jamal and Kareem both had generally positive experiences in the military, and both add evidence to the existence but irrelevance of the us/them framework in the military. Jamal expects his identity to shape his career, while Kareem observes growing “Muslim paranoia” in both civilian and military spheres. Despite the presence of this boundary, neither Jamal nor Kareem feel that their military careers have been negatively impacted by their identity. Jamal was surprised to find that his identity rarely came up, and Kareem has taken full advantage of many opportunities during his military service for travel and education. More importantly, Jamal and Kareem complicate the idea of a simple conceptualization of us/them. It is easy to fall into the trap of thinking of us/them in only one direction, when in reality this dichotomization can be used by anyone, and

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both us and them can and are defined in many different ways. For example, this frame is actively used by al-Qaeda to pose all Americans as “them”.

DISCUSSION

While presenting very different stories, the preceding accounts illuminate the theme of us/them and demonstrate that this discourse is present in the U.S. military. These respondents all recognize that being Muslim sets them apart to some degree. They all articulate recognition of the us/them boundary. For some it is articulated through global political situations, for others it is made clear to them through the responses of others service members to them.

For most of the respondents introduced in this chapter, although us/them was a feature in their narrative, they found that it had little practical effect. These respondents felt that they were identified by colleagues as Muslims and all saw the ways in which this us/them boundary was activated. However, with the exception of Omar, these respondents felt that this membership had no effect on their military careers or experiences. For the most part, these respondents felt like full members of their units. They worked towards shared goals with their colleagues, and felt that their abilities were respected by others.

As another way to establish the existence of the us/them discourse in the military I presented two narratives about language and culture education in the military. The accounts of Omar and Dani provide additional evidence that an us/them that distinguishes Muslim from non-Muslim is salient in the U.S. military.

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Finally, the narratives of Kareem and Jamal, which recognizing the role of this specific use of us/them in the military, also complicate this conceptualization by posing situations where who is “us” and who is “them” is defined differently.

CHAPTER 7: LEADERSHIP

Having established that the discourse of us/them is present in the military I turn my attention to the role of leadership in shaping whether this discourse becomes relevant or not. For most of my respondents, although they were aware of us/them, it did not shape their experiences in meaningful ways. For some of these, leadership that valued diversity and was invested in providing a safe a supportive environment shaped the irrelevance of processes of us/them. For those few respondents who had negative experiences relating to being Muslim, leadership played a central role in exacerbating tensions. In addition to controlling rewards and punishments, such as Omar's leader denying him permission to change languages, leaders also set the tone for the unit. Leaders communicate through their actions and attitudes what behaviors will be tolerated in the unit.

In this chapter, I present three cases of strong leadership. For Tarek, leadership sets an example of support after a troubling encounter with us/them and his colleagues rally around him. Najib experiences the benefits of institutionalized religious accommodation during Ramadan at a military academy, and serves with a leader who models the value of cultural competence. Pervez finds that his particular skill set makes him useful on the ground in Afghanistan.

I also present three cases where weak leadership, or leadership that accepts the us/them dichotomy, negatively shape the experiences of respondents. Zafir spends a short career constantly at odds with a specific commander. With a history of racial intolerance, this commander shows a disdain for diversity and uses us/them conceptualizations in

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accusing Zafir of supporting the insurgents and referring to him as “Taliban.” Sadia also faces an unsupportive leader. Accused of being a terrorist by her ex-husband following a domestic dispute, Sadia’s commander institutes a full-fledged investigation and tolerates an atmosphere of gossip ultimately leading Sadia to leave the military early. Basim decides to leave the military after an over 20 year career when he feels that the post-9/11 atmosphere in his unit is marked by suspicion and distrust. His decision is also shaped by a new leader who denies him basic religious accommodation and fosters a generally unwelcoming environment.

These cases will be used to draw out themes of leadership, arguing that since us/them permeates the military, as it does the civilian society, leadership serves as a powerful factor in either mitigating this divisive atmosphere or exacerbating tensions to the breaking point.

GOOD LEADERSHIP

TAREK

Tarek is a veteran who worked in a military clinic for four years. Born in South Asia, Tarek came to the United States as a child. Tarek’s motivations to join the military were primarily occupational, including money for college and on-the-job medical training. In addition to these occupational concerns, Tarek also voiced a sense of service,

So many people come into this country and don’t do anything to, like all they do is take; no one gives back. Honestly I didn’t do it because I had this epiphany of patriotism but I did it to better myself, but then once I joined, after being in the military, I found a sense of pride, it sounds very clichéd but [...] I had that.

Tarek was the first in his immediate family to serve in the military though he had an uncle and a cousin who had served. His mother was concerned about his decision to

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join the military because of the ongoing conflicts, but his father approved of the decision seeing it as a good long term investment.

Tarek is proud of his military service. Though he begins by couching it as a joke, the depth of his pride is clear,

[I: Are you proud to be a veteran?] Oh yeah. I get to eat free at Applebee's, it's great [laughs]. Yeah, I didn't realize there were so many benefits for being... I was in class today and my instructor told me he's so impressed. And I'm like I didn't really do anything. It's nice, the country as a whole always has pride and respect for people who served. I'm not trying to milk it or anything but it is nice, you have more pride than you had before, everyday it kinda grows. So it's nice.

Although he does not frame his pride in terms of citizenship, his discussion of being respected by others is related to my conceptualization of performing citizenship. Because he has served, he feels that he is held in higher esteem by others than if he had not. In addition to the opinions of others, his service has increased his own sense of pride.

Tarek enjoyed the military lifestyle

I liked the discipline of it, all those different things that I didn't like at the time, like I didn't like being told what to do, but at the end of the day the military is a cakewalk compared to jobs in the real world.

Tarek saw his military service as a series of opportunities,

I started to realize that there's opportunity for education, there's opportunity for advancement, there's opportunity to travel; it's a very accommodating environment if you allow it. People tend to think that the military is harsh and is no room to grow and I never had that feeling. I enjoyed being around other service members. So in a nutshell I enjoyed the variety of it.

Tarek also observed that the military provided the opportunity for service members to broaden their horizons,

I think a lot of times when people join the military they go outside their bubble just like I did. But it was easier for me to get used to it because I grew up in a diverse part of the country. I know there's kids I went to boot camp with that never saw snow and I know there are kids I went to boot camp with, I know this one kid from Kentucky he never saw an African American, you know he never

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saw me, a brown person. There's still people like that in this country and that's OK. It just comes down to how you deal with your experiences. Overall my experience is great.

This observation speaks to the idea of the "Contact Hypothesis". In the military, Tarek comes into contact with all sorts of people; he goes "outside [his] bubble". At the same time he is the "other" for service member who have never encountered someone like him before. The military provides an environment where service members can meet and work with people different from themselves learning to think beyond stereotypes and us/them dichotomies.

Contact occasionally required action on the part of my respondents to address stereotypes and misconceptions. Tarek reported using dialogue and humor to defuse tense situations and to educate those around him,

Once people found out like 'Oh you're born in South Asia?' 'Yeah I was born there.' It was like time to play 21 questions. I never shied away from anything. I told them I like the Yankees, I don't know anything about cricket, I'd make little jokes like that. Sometimes it would defuse it. I think people, just being curious, would ask questions.

Tarek is a practicing Muslim who, among other things, only eats *halal*⁴⁰ meat,

During boot camp all the meat wasn't *halal* so I was basically vegetarian, so I lost a lot of weight. I got in shape so it was an advantage.

Due to his work schedule, fasting during Ramadan did not require any accommodation, though he did discover how much he had previously been relying on the formal support of his family in maintaining the fast,

[I] just did my 9 to 5, it was fine. It's hard to do it solo I didn't realize, that was the tough part because when I was growing up, mom would wake us all up, we'd crawl out of bed, stuff food in our face, pray and then go back to sleep. On my own it was all on me so of course it was tough, there were times when I wouldn't

⁴⁰ When referring to meat, *halal* means that the animal was slaughtered in a specific manner according to Islamic custom. Some American Muslims eat only meat slaughtered under strict Islamic guidelines; others view all non-porcine meat as acceptable.

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eat in the morning and fast without but you just get it done, just a part of being an adult I guess.

Tarek felt that he was largely identified by others as being Muslim due to his name and his appearance,

I have a very common [Muslim] name, very popular name, and obviously the way I look, so most people are like where are you from? Well I was born in South Asia but I grew up in New Jersey, and the first thing people say, it still surprises it's still pretty funny, they're like 'Wow you don't have an accent.' They associate South Asian people with the guy from *The Simpsons*.⁴¹ I came here with my family when I was five years old. I don't think people get that.

This again demonstrates the presence of the us/them framework. Tarek recognized that he was seen as "other" despite of his lack of an accent. Due to his name and appearance, he found that people made assumptions about his differentness, associating him with a cartoon character who is largely defined by his "otherness".

Tarek also found that he was able to identify other Muslim service members by their names. When he came into contact with foreign exchange officers,

I kind of befriended them when I was doing the medical coverage because I'd start writing his name down and I could tell right away he was from another country, he was kinda happy to see me, so we would all do Friday prayers together, it worked out.

Interesting in Tarek's narrative is the implicit sense of us and them. The foreign service members, likely coming not just from South Asia but from throughout the Arab world and perhaps elsewhere, identify with Tarek. The similarities in their names, and the religious affiliation this communicates, form an instantaneous bond. Tarek reports that he knew "right away" and that these service members were "happy to see [him]". That these foreign service member and Tarek recognized each other as members of the same in-

⁴¹ The character Dr. Apu Nahasapeemapetilon first appeared on the television show *The Simpsons* in 1990. An Indian immigrant with a Ph.D. in Computer Science, Apu works at the local convenience store and speaks with a strong accent.

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group affirms the presence of the boundary between Muslim and non-Muslim in the military.

Although he did witness anti-Muslim comments from other service members, Tarek does not report feeling targeted or treated in a discriminatory manner,

There's times where you feel uncomfortable but I think a lot of that was associated with people making remarks, the same type of prejudice, certain opinions that you get with people who weren't in the military. For example someone making a remark about terrorists or someone making a remark about al-Qaeda. All those negative things you hear on the news. It was never targeted towards me. I was always peer side by side.

As I demonstrated in Chapter 6, the boundary between us/them is present in the military; here Tarek discusses occasionally finding himself in situations where he feels uncomfortable. However, even in these situations he does not feel excluded. While us/them is clear in these types of remarks, Tarek does not feel targeted; he feels that he remains a peer.

Tarek did report one particular situation where a patient had a negative interaction with him based on his identity as a Muslim. However, the event led to an increased sense of inclusion when his colleagues and superiors rallied around him, demonstrating the role of strong leadership in shaping the us/them environment. On this occasion, Tarek was working at night in the clinic, when a family came in with an ill child,

I did have one patient be a little racist towards me. But the surprising thing was I just brushed it off. I was working in the pediatric clinic and I was checking in this lady's daughter. And she looked at my name badge, she was friendly, she wasn't angry towards me at all, and she's like 'Oh are you Muslim?' So I said 'Yeah I am,' I didn't hesitate, I said it with pride. And she was like 'How radical are you?' And I was taken aback because it is very shocking. And I just said 'I'm not radical and all.' And I just ignored her

In this situation, the patient presumably identifies Tarek as "other" because of his name (perhaps in combination with his appearance). She then makes a comment that reflects an

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acceptance of stereotypical conceptualizations of Muslims in which all Muslims are inherently “radical”. Shocked, Tarek ignores the incident until his superior addresses it with him later.

The doctor I was working with was right next door and she heard the conversation so we were closing up the clinic and she was like, ‘Wow I’m really impressed how you handled that.’ And I said ‘What do you mean?’ And she said, ‘I would have been furious.’

The doctor, one of Tarek’s superiors, offers Tarek support, both informally by congratulating him for handling the situation well and also formally by suggesting that a formal grievance be filed. Tarek feels that this will only exacerbate the situation,

my clinic manager wanted to file a grievance against this patient. I was like ‘Whoa, time out.’ The last thing I want is this lady’s kids to hate me because they can’t go see their pediatrician. And I thought about it and everybody at work was like comforting me and they were like ‘Wow I can’t believe she said that.’ But I think it was just she chose her words very poorly and it’s a shame [...] I didn’t lose faith in people I actually gained faith in people because all of my coworkers comforting me and supporting me, that was nice.

By providing support to Tarek, and respecting his decision to drop the matter, Tarek’s superior is clearly modeling a commitment to maintaining a safe and diverse workplace. Tarek’s co-workers express their support of him after the incident, demonstrating the cohesion of this work unit. The support of his co-workers contextualized the stereotypes of one patient as a minority opinion, allowing Tarek to largely dismiss the incident. With the context of his colleagues’ support, Tarek begins to think of the incident as a situation of poorly chosen words, rather than anything more malicious. In focusing on the task of effectively providing healthcare to military families, the staff of the clinic drew together, supporting each other.

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After the interview is finished, Tarek and I chat for a few minutes and he brings up the case of Nidal Malik Hasan, the Army psychiatrist who killed 13 fellow service members at Fort Hood, TX,

When I heard about it I was at work, and it's not like I was looking over my shoulder or anything; I think people around me were objective enough to realize ok this guy has more things going on than being Muslim. He was also disturbed and angry and frustrated and he turned to this Imam [Anwar al-Awlaki]. I guess that's just my way of thinking that it's just like Timothy McVeigh and the guys at Columbine, it's a common theme, someone is emotionally disturbed. I talk to people and they ask me 'Hey what do you think?' And I'm like he deserves the worst penalty. It's a shame because he was supposed to be the one consoling people, that's the thing that frustrates me, 'cause not only am I Muslim, but I'm in the medical community. It was like a double, triple hit for me.

In the interviews, I intentionally did not mention the case of Hasan to see if respondents brought it up on their own; only two did. For Tarek, because Hasan was not just a Muslim but also in the medical field, the events at Fort Hood seem to be particularly salient. Consistent with the situation he experienced with the problematic patient however, the cohesion in clinic appears to be healthy and his co-workers are easily able to reject simple conceptualizations of us/them in order to acknowledge the complex combination of personal experiences, emotional problems, and opportunity that shaped the events at Fort Hood.

NAJIB

Najib is currently serving, and has been for nine years. A military academy graduate, he currently works in a support position. Najib's parents immigrated from South Asia and he was born in the United States.

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Najib joined the military for primarily occupational motivations; initially the military was his second choice after not getting onto the prestigious academic track he desired,

I wanted to go to a magnet [high] school and I failed [...] I was like what am I going to do with my life if I can't get into a magnet school and go to Harvard or MIT and be a scientist or whatever. And then I somehow learned about the Academy and I saw all the opportunities that there was coming out of the Academy.

Although Najib's motivation was largely occupational - to take advantage of the opportunities presented by military service, he also expressed institutional motivations,

the reason I wanted to go into the military was for that opportunity to serve and to have opportunity in general available to me.

He also connects his motivations to popular media, as several others did, indicating embeddedness in American popular culture

when I was little I played too many computer games, it was a flight simulation that sparked a little bit of interest, and then I read too many Tom Clancy books which sparked a little bit more interest and then I wanted to [join the military].

Najib's family viewed his decision to join the military as a deviation from their expectations,

my brothers majored in engineering and my sister majored in neuroscience, and they all have decent careers in their fields, and here I am doing something completely off the ball, joining the service, and potentially going to war, and not coming home. So they were really against it.

His family also had concerns about his safety,

They were really against [me joining the military]. They said if you do this with the world in this kind of state, we're afraid what's going to happen, [...] you're going to get hurt

Ultimately they accepted his decision. He notes, however, that his family would still prefer he resume the expected life course,

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they still want me eventually to leave, like as soon as possible. ‘Eventually as soon as possible’, makes sense right. But that’s more because they want me to get on with my life and start a family, get married have kids, the things that they were raised to do. As South Asian guys, we’re supposed to go to school, get an education, get a job, get married, have kids, have a family. And so far I’ve got an education and I’ve got a job, so a little behind the curve.

Najib, as with most of my respondents, did not think that being Muslim had impacted his military career,

maybe I’m naïve, but I don’t think people look at me as a Muslim I think they just look at me as another guy in the office.

He observes that discussions of religion rarely came up within his unit,

If it was a topic of conversation it was a topic of conversation when we had free time, and we didn’t have a whole lot of time, we were mostly working. I don’t think that people were afraid to talk about it, I think it just didn’t matter at the time, in that environment.

Najib’s narrative adds to the evidence that in a healthy unit that is not plagued with rumor, gossip, and suspicion, normal processes of cohesion incorporated Muslim service members, making this identity irrelevant. In this unit, leaders are apparently shaping an environment where work identity outweighs other identities.

As a former cadet at one of the academies, Najib’s narrative provides a window into institutionalized religious accommodation. At the academy there were institutional preparations for Ramadan that facilitated the religious practice of Muslim cadets with a minimum of fuss or disruption,

So at the academy they know that it’s coming; they prepare for it and are ready. The Food Service Officers have the guys prepare like a box lunch. [...] And so we get that for breakfast. So we wake up in the middle of the night and eat and say our prayers. [...] When the Muslims all had dinner at the academy we went to a separate room in the dining area and we ate dinner together, the same dinner as everyone else we just didn’t have pork served to us. It was a good time. And then they also have those boxed lunches for morning there so we just take them to our rooms and we could eat it in our rooms in the morning.

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Najib commented on the way this institutional support shaped his religious practice.

Accommodation being provided as a part of everyday life at the academy encouraged his observation of the fast. After leaving the academy, seeking religious accommodation and making preparations for the fast fell on him as an individual and he was more likely to forgo the practice.

After the academy it was completely on us and there were years when I just didn't fast. [...] This past year, I did fast, and I did the fast because [I'm stationed in a Middle Eastern country and] this country is so supportive of fasting during Ramadan that it's actually illegal to drink and eat in public during daylight hours.

Granted, it is not the role of the military to enforce or encourage religious practice.

However, what is interesting here is the clear illustration of the difference normalized institutional support can make. Najib's narrative demonstrates that, at least for some, it does make a practical difference in whether or not support is provided and whether or not that support is normalized. By taking the initiative in providing boxed breakfasts for fasting cadets and providing a space for them to break their fast at the end of the day, the academy is communicating that this diversity is valued. Cadets who want to fast can easily do so without having to worry about potential repercussions of formally requesting accommodation from leadership with an unknown attitude towards Islam.

After leaving the academy, Najib had some mixed experiences, but eventually landed a position with a leader who he deeply respects. Najib clearly articulated the important role of leadership. He explains why strong leadership is important, and how it can create a sense of self-worth and positive military experiences

The most proud thing that I can feel was knowing that our boss and the guys in command trusted us to do the jobs that we were doing that we are sometimes the only guys that could do the job that we were doing. That's a good feeling when

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your boss trusts you to do something, to go out on your own and do that, that's something that's very important.

Najib wants to do his work well because he respects his commander, not because of extrinsic rewards or punishments offered by the leader. This is an illustration of strong leadership. Experiences with this commander shaped Najib's view of his military service. Feeling appreciated, being given responsibility, and not being singled out for his identity made Najib feel like an integral member of his unit and the military.

Najib's commander also goes out of his way to show respect and interest in Middle Eastern culture. At the time, Najib was serving in a Middle Eastern country (outside the war zone), and his commander, a non-Arab and a non-Muslim, made a conscious effort to learn about and respect the local culture, which had positive effects in building rapport locally, and also gave Najib a sense of pride in this leader,

[My superior's] speech is very eloquent, he's very well versed [...] We've got some really good friends like our rug dealer, Abdul, [...] They have conversations about Islam pretty regularly. Captain's very curious about it and he knows quite a bit, and he's learning Arabic a little bit, he practiced Arabic in his office and his kids are taking Arabic. His son is actually pretty good. So he comes from a very open-minded family I think. It's kind of refreshing to have the personality that you're working with every day.

This normalization of cultural competence, the idea that even an officer in a leadership position will make the effort to learn another language and culture speaks volumes to his unit about the value of respecting and striving to understand the local culture.

Interestingly, this level of everyday respect is occurring here in a unit that does not have a primary mission relating to language, culture, or intelligence.

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PERVEZ

Pervez is a veteran with a seven year career in the military. A product of the ROTC system, Pervez served in the infantry and deployed to Afghanistan where he was wounded. Pervez's parents immigrated from South Asia and he was born in the United States.

Pervez joined the military for largely occupational reasons,

So I stopped by [the ROTC information desk], talked to them, and I found out more about the program [...] They told me you can do it for the first two years and we'll pay for your tuition and you can walk away after two years if you decide not to serve. [...] So I said, 'Ok you're going to pay for my tuition, teach me first aid and how to shoot a gun? I'm in, sign me up!'

Pervez's parents were supportive of his decision. Though after he was wounded his parents became more concerned,

I was wounded in my first deployment to Afghanistan and that really affected my mother. I had a second deployment I had to go on and they were more concerned for my safety at that point than anything else because the reality kinda hit of the nature of my job.

After his initial tour of duty, Pervez's parents started expressing the desire that Pervez continue his education, find a career, and start a family,

when I told them that I wanted to extend my service they voiced some concern, not so much about my safety, but as any parents I guess they kinda wanted me to move on in my life, I was single at the time. They wanted me to further my education and come back. And they'd missed me 'cause I'd been far away from home. They kinda wanted me to come back to you know "settle down" and choose a long term career path for myself.

In deciding to leave the military, Pervez considered family demands and the type of father he wants to be,

I stayed single the entire time I was in the military. I knew I wanted to get married and have kids. As much as I loved my life in the military, I personally, especially being a Muslim, I didn't really want to live married and family life while being active. And it's not like the military is a bad place for Muslim married couples

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'cause I know Muslim married couples that were active duty and they had very strong marriage and stuff like that. But I watched the guys on my team, like on webcams, watching their kids open presents from them on Christmas, and it's just like it's a huge sacrifice that they made, but I just, I kinda look back at the way my parents raised me and my dad was always there whenever I needed him, and I wanted that for my wife and for my kids, so I made the decision to leave the service.

Pervez is a practicing Muslim, and one of the few in my sample who reported being public in his religious practice, "I prayed in front of my guys, they knew exactly what I was doing." However, this wasn't his usual approach; he preferred to pray in private, not wanting to be seen as "showing off" and seeing religion as a personal matter,

For me it was like religion's always been more of a personal thing, so I wouldn't like go and deliberately pray in front of our men to show [off]

Pervez recognized that the us/them boundary was activated following 9/11, but felt, as with most of my respondents, that it had little effect on him personally,

I know it's [discrimination] gone on, so I'm not going to deny that it doesn't. But I never personally [experienced it]. I was always fairly confident in my faith. After September 11th you'd hear, sometimes you'd hear comments but it'd be more out of curiosity than anything else. And you'd be surprised the folks in the military now, where they've been, what they've seen, how much understanding they have of the Muslim faith and they can pretty easily distinguish between everyday Muslims and those that choose to use religion for bad reasons.

Pervez has not personally experienced any negative effects of the activation of the us/them boundary. However, he does acknowledge that this boundary is present, saying that he can't deny that anti-Muslim discrimination does occur. As with many of my respondents, Pervez reports hearing comments following 9/11, but unlike most of my other respondents who characterized at least some of these comments as being negative, Pervez perceives them as results of curiosity not malice.

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Also in contrast to most of my other respondents, Pervez feels that members of the military in particular are able to see beyond this dichotomy. Because Islam is relevant to the contemporary missions of the U.S. military, Pervez feels that service members have learned to think beyond generalization and engage with the complexity of the situations they face. This perspective stems from the positive experiences Pervez had with inclusion and diversity.

Pervez's leadership expressed the value they placed on diversity, and were happy to use his skills and background to their advantage, for example, after 9/11

one of my unit commanders asked [me] to do a presentation on Islam, you know because a lot of people were very ignorant about what was going on, what was being said. So yeah, I've always been viewed as an asset in that regard and as an information source.

Being actively viewed as an asset rather than with suspicion or as diversity to be "managed" demonstrates the value placed on diversity in this unit. In addition, in the field, Pervez took on a leadership role, reinforcing the value of diversity through his own leadership practices. As a practicing Muslim, Pervez continued to practice while deployed to Afghanistan where he found that his identity had benefits for the mission. He found that having a mosque on base was a useful tool for building rapport with local leaders and soldiers

Whenever I got the chance I'd go, we actually had a small mosque that was built on our base, mainly for the Afghan soldiers and local village elders to use but I'd go and pray with them.

Although he went to the base mosque to fulfill religious duties not as a show to attract local attention, his presence created a chance to interact informally with Afghan soldiers

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and civilians thereby building rapport while serving as a visible representation of the inclusiveness of the U.S. military.

So when I walked in, being an Urdu speaker and also being Muslim, I mean one of the first things we do when we get on the ground is building what's called rapport with your locals and also your Afghan National Army soldiers and it was instant for me. I mean they recognized my name, me being Muslim. I prayed with them and you know I met with the local villagers, introduced myself as Muslim...and especially when you're talking about a country where some of the villagers don't have any access to electricity, no TV, no internet, so you can imagine what their perception of America is. So me coming in and introducing myself as an American, as a Muslim, can have a huge impact. Saying that I understand the religion, I understand the cultural dynamics. It was amazing how much respect the Afghan National Army soldiers gave me as well the village leaders when I was there.

Pervez encountered a population ignorant of America and cut off from global communications and information flow. As with Jamal, Pervez saw his presence as having “a huge impact”. He was not just able to quickly build rapport with local soldiers and leaders, but was able to serve as a representative of a diverse and inclusive military force and country in the face of stereotypes and myths about Americans and the U.S. military. At the same time, his success building rapport with these locals provided an example for his unit of the value of having a diverse team.

His identity as well as his cultural and linguistic competence helped Pervez build rapport with local soldiers and civilians in Afghanistan.

no matter how much you get from the schoolhouse, nothing can replace me. At that point I'd had 27 years being Muslim, being raised in a Muslim family, understanding things.⁴²

⁴² Despite his advantages, Pervez encountered situations that he was not prepared for, illustrating that in-group membership will not erase cultural and regional differences, “I was kinda shocked at, you know I'd say certain things to my team leaders about our religion, and the religious practice in Afghanistan can be very different [laughs]. They're like ‘they're not really doing what you said’ and I was like ‘yeah dude, I don't know what's going on’ [laughs]. You know ‘cause it's, I mean a very uneducated society; some of the things that they do it's just like a lot of tribal influences on the things that they do. [...] I'm sure you've seen the blend between culture and religion and just put it on steroids and that's what you get in Afghanistan [laughs].”

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As with Jamal, Pervez felt that growing up in a Muslim community gave him an advantage in interacting with the locals.

The value of diversity was reinforced by the success of this unit. Pervez and his team were very good at what they did,

we were very very successful with our mission in our area in Afghanistan. We created an environment that was very peaceful. We basically achieved mission success in our 5 to 10 km radius.

For the members of this unit, having a diverse team is something to be respected, something that contributes to their ability to complete the mission, and as an infantry unit in a war zone, success contributed to their personal safety. In a situation like this, the value of diversity is obvious and likely helped shape the irrelevance of us/them boundaries.

While Pervez was seen as valuable to the military, he also recognizes the role his military service has played in his subsequent pursuit of a professional degree and employment,

my military experience is plastered all over my resume, so it's not like an official veteran hiring preference, but there's no doubt that I got the current position I'm in because of my military experience on my resume. I'm absolutely certain that's the reason why, that's what kinda sets me apart from my peers is the military experience but it's not just, I don't think it's just cause of a check mark that I'm a veteran, it's because, again not to pound my chest, but I think I'm a very unique individual being Muslim in the military post 9/11. There aren't too many of us like that. Yeah, it definitely helps.

Like most of my respondents, while being a veteran was personally meaningful, it was not something Pervez likes to brag about,

I don't pound my chest with it or anything, no. If people ask about it, or are curious, I'm more than happy to talk about it. It's definitely something that I'm proud of as well, I'm not shy to talk about it. [...] but I don't, unless it comes up somehow in a conversation I don't force it, or introduce it into the conversation

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when it's not really a part of the conversation. Unless I'm getting a discount somewhere, then I'll drop it in a heartbeat [laughs]

Joking about receiving veterans discounts was a fairly common response when I asked respondents if they were proud of their service. As with invoking popular culture media to explain joining the military, the reference to receiving discounts at restaurants and the like speaks to embeddedness in American culture. Unlike the Nisei Masaoka (1987) wrote about, my respondents don't make a direct link between their military service and their citizenship; instead they respond with jokes about everyday things, demonstrating a sense of belonging.

WEAK LEADERSHIP

While most of my respondents had positive experiences in the military, Omar experienced negative events that he attributed to discrimination. In addition to these incidents, two respondents, Zafir and Sadia, reported consistent conditions of suspicion and fifth column treatment. These respondents felt targeted because of their identity as Muslims and both of them spent substantial amounts of time during their military service under investigation. Both left the military extremely disappointed and with a negative view of their service and of the military in general. Basim had generally positive experiences, but his military career ended on a bitter note. Following 9/11 he felt targeted and treated with suspicion. This combined with a new leader who denied him religious accommodation he was accustomed to led him to leave the military.

ZAFIR

Zafir is a veteran with a four year career in the military. He joined the military with dreams of using his language and culture skills to help the U.S. military, but found

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himself entangled in unit-level politics. He perceived himself to be singled out for negative treatment because of his religion and background. Feeling disgusted with the system, he left the military. Zafir immigrated to the United States from South Asia as an adult.

As was common among my sample, Zafir reported a sense of service as one of his main motivations for joining the military

I wanted to do *my* part to serve the country and to utilize my knowledge, my skills and abilities about Middle Eastern and South Asian cultures [and] languages so I actually joined the military.

His sense of service is not just a general sense of obligation or desire to give back, but is specifically based on his experience with cultures and language relevant to the current military missions.

Zafir also expressed secondary occupational motivation in the form of seeking expedited citizenship. He is the only one of my respondents to make this type of connection between his military service and formal citizenship

I had green card and I wanted to get my citizenship expedited. So that was another reason for me to join the military.

For Zafir and his family, military service was seen as positive, and related to ideas of heroism and American-ness,

my mom felt pretty good because she knew that her son was gonna be a hero. She loved the United States

Zafir clearly articulated the view that having a diverse military was crucial to maintaining social legitimacy. In this view, having practicing Muslim service members in the U.S. military serves as proof of multiculturalism and religious tolerance in the United

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States; it also supports executive claims that the current operations target terrorism not Islam. Zafir argued,

I think I should work here so that I can stop people like Osama bin Laden and people of al-Qaeda and Taliban in their propaganda that the United States is fighting a war against Islam and Muslims.

He also articulated his sense that inclusion is an important tool against radicalism,

It's very important to impose the EO policies and to make sure that those Muslims who are serving in the military are not called Taliban or Al-Qaeda, like I was [...] We have to learn from previous experiences. I gave them an example of 7/7 bombing in London.⁴³ I told them that those people who committed that act they were born in the United Kingdom, [...] and the terrorism experts [think] that most probably were suffering from identity crisis because [they were] born and raised there and they have a feeling in general that they are not treated like the white British people. So it becomes easy for the radicals to recruit them and tell them hey these people hate you because you're a Muslim, so they go against their own country. My fear is that this may happen in the military. If they don't control and impose the EO policies we may end up seeing something like 7/7. And, the fear came true when I heard about the Fort Hood shooting and the person who did it he said that he was discriminated against.

In addition to a consideration of the practical importance of inclusion as a method of preventing future attacks from "homegrown terrorists", Zafir also addresses the willingness of al-Qaeda to accept followers based on ideology rather than ethnicity or background,

[I was] helping the United States with the education I got, not because I wanted to get something but to do my part to serve the country. How was [the] United States gonna win the war against an enemy who doesn't care about the skin color, about the country of national origin, about the English accent of a California-born white American, Adam Gadahn or John Walker [Lindh, and Richard] Reid.⁴⁴ Because those people they, even though they are evil people, but they are very sincere to their cause. And I was not finding a lot of sincerity with the people I was working with.

⁴³ On July 7, 2005 four western-born terrorists carried out suicide attacks on London public transit killing 52 civilians and injuring 700 others.

⁴⁴ Adam Gadahn is a California-born convert to Islam who adopted an extreme ideology and is now a propagandist for al-Qaeda. Richard Reid is the "shoe bomber", a Briton who attempted to bomb a flight in December 2001. John Walker Lindh is an American citizen who was captured in 2001 in Afghanistan fighting with al-Qaeda.

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For Zafir, trying to fight an enemy that is willing and able to make use of diverse forces requires that the U.S. military learn how to effectively include diverse service members in the force.

Zahir worked in a language and culture specialty and found that he had to begin by educating those he worked for on the very basics of the region,

When I joined the program I actually found that people didn't know most of the things, like they thought that Afghanistan was an Arab country. I was the first person who told them that it's not an Arab country. Was it a Middle Eastern country? I said No, it's actually a South Asian country.

As with Kareem, Zafir felt that activation of us/them boundaries created a sense of monolithic other, Zafir articulates how this facet of us/them can negatively affect military effectiveness in the planning stages. The idea that Muslim countries and populations in the Middle East and South Asia are indistinguishable was something Zafir speaks here about encountering. Later in our discussion he recalled having to explain that different languages were spoken throughout Pakistan complicating recruiting projects as only speakers of certain languages were needed.

Zafir felt that while working for a specific commander he was consistently treated differently than his colleagues. He felt that this treatment was a result of his identity,

The most negative experience, I felt, was the mindset of the people. [...] They do their best to punish that person in order to remind him that if he doesn't belong to their race, or their skin color, or their life as child he is wrong.

He elaborated on the various mistreatments he perceived which included job instability, assignments that wasted his skills, and accusations of misconduct and disloyalty.

Due to the nature of his job, Zafir could either be assigned to his post for an extended term, or he could be renewed monthly. His commander chose the latter leading

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Zafir to feel that his job was unstable and not knowing from month to month where he would be working. Due this uncertainty, Zafir was uncomfortable committing the resources to move closer to his workplace, and so commuted 90 minutes each way,

since I was not sure about stability of [my] job, I didn't move, and I was driving back and forth every day, back and forth. I had no life.

Zafir reported that this commander called him names,

[My commander] once called me a Taliban and once he told me that I was trying to infiltrate the military.

Unlike other examples of name calling my respondents recount, these comments seemed to reflect a breakdown in unit cohesion, rather than friendly ribbing among colleagues. Most notably, these comments are different because they came from Zafir's commander rather than from peers or in the context of basic training.

Zafir also felt that his commander was actively targeting him for negative treatment. In addition to name calling, Zafir reports that he was regularly ordered to take on tasks outside his job duties, including babysitting and assembling furniture,

[My commander] was trying to do something so that I get frustrated and I disrespect him. I didn't do it. He told me to make shelves, I made them, even though they were not related to [my job] at all.

Subsequently, Zafir was accused by a co-worker of sexual harassment

she started flirting with me. [...] So I started flirting back. And then she introduced me to another female, and they both were flirting with me. Then one day I got a call from my First Sergeant in the unit. She said that somebody filed a sexual harassment complaint against you.

The complaint was taken to a higher jurisdiction and Zafir was required to appear before a board where charges of disloyalty were added,

I was shocked to hear what they say. They said that this guy he was flirting with us and not only this, but he came to us and told us that he didn't get deployed, that I didn't get deployed because I support the insurgents.

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Zafir tried to counter claims that he supported the insurgents by pointing out the logical inconsistency in accusing him of both sexual misconduct and of sympathizing with an organization known for its violently conservative sexual views.

And I said ‘How is it possible? A guy who is *married*, ok, not even single, and he’s flirting with not one but two females at the same time and he supports those insurgents who are religious radicals and they beat a man in public if somebody’s just guilty of looking at a woman who’s not his wife.’

Eventually the accusations of Zafir’s disloyalty were dropped, though Zafir continued to pursue the matter,

I actually filed a complaint against those females, that what they made was a false accusation

Zafir presented his complaints to a Colonel who tried to mollify him,

when I appeared before a full-bird Colonel, he told me ‘Ok, forget all these things, tell me what *I* can do for *you*.’ [...] he told me that majority of people in the United States are so ignorant, we go to France, Germany and talk to them in English expecting they be able to speak English, so he said that this is a problem in our country, people are ignorant. It’s not ignorance. False accusations were made, it was pre-planned.

Despite the apparent support of some elements of the command structure, Zafir reports that problems remained with his immediate commander. Zafir reports that this particular leader had a history of problematic encounters with non-white soldiers,

One time he actually verbally abused the security personnel in the garage because they were African Americans [...] And he had a weird excuse all the time, he used to tell me that he was white and he worked at [redacted] which is predominately black and he was always discriminated [against]. So I said, Sir, I wasn’t the person who was discriminating against you, why should you discriminate against me?

This suggests that this particular commander may have been a “destructive leader” (Reed and Bullis 2009) or at the very least, a leader uninterested in supporting diversity. In this situation, Zafir’s treatment may have more to do with general prejudices of this leader

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than with his Muslim identity; that it, if Zafir had been non-white but Christian, he may still have been singled out for negative treatment, as these guards were. However, that the reported mistreatment took the form it did reflects the activation of us/them boundaries – in another historical moment it is unlikely he would have been called “Taliban”.

For Zafir, the final straw came when he felt his family was being dragged into the conflict. At the time Zafir lived with his mother. After the charges against Zafir were dismissed, he reports that his commander made repeated demands that Zafir and his mother host him at their home,

The worst thing that happened was that he insisted [I] tell my family members to invite him at my home. and I told my mother, my mother says ‘That sounds kinda weird, why should we invite him?’ And he was continuously insisting [...] And I said ‘If it was my home I could invite you, my mom is not ready for this.’ And he said, ‘Do you live at your mother’s home or your mother lives at your home?’ I said ‘She’s my mother, I’m her son, it doesn’t matter who lives at whose home and who’s paying the money.’ [...] he said ‘No you have to invite me.’ I said ‘Ok, I can try I will ask my mother if she does that’s okay.’ And he did it seven times. [...] my mother was so frustrated. She was so angry. She said that he is treating us like slaves because my mother doesn’t fall under the chain of command, I’m the person who falls under the chain of command. [...] he told me that it was never an order, but he told me that you gotta do it.

Zafir eventually enlisted the help of the EO office. Ultimately his commander was ordered to stop this behavior, though Zafir was angered to find out that his commander was subsequently relocated and then promoted,

I found out that that Captain who mistreated me, mistreated my family members [...] was promoted in rank from Captain to Major just after that formal complaint in which they acknowledged the fact that what he did by harassing my family members were wrong, they said that he was gonna take the cultural classes. I said it’s not a cultural issue, it’s a human rights issue.

Zafir’s negative experiences took a toll on his health,

I got so frustrated at that time, I got so sick I couldn’t sleep for three days, I went to the hospital; they gave me medication. That was the first time that happened to me that I experienced insomnia and it was terrible.

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Zafir is not a regularly practicing Muslim, he explains, “I practice my religion [only] in Ramadan [...] otherwise I didn’t even pray.” So to the extent that these issues were motivated by his identity, it was a conceptualization of an “other” based on skin color, national origin, and associations with religion, rather than actual religious practices. This is the idea that it is the label of Muslim that is salient, not religiosity. Zafir explicitly linked his treatment to his identity as perceived by others. Zafir perceived himself as fully American,

since I wanted to become an officer I got rid of the citizenship of the country where I was born and raised. and I didn’t consider myself [foreign nationality] anymore.

Zafir left the military due to these experiences and the opinions of his mother and wife,

When I joined the military I had so many things in my mind that I would help the United States. [...] So I wanted to utilize those things but all my time was wasted in proving myself right and refuting other people’s false accusation. [...] So I mean this was really frustrating, and so after that I actually had no choice but because of my family pressure I went to ETS out of military.

Zafir was one of the few respondents who reported extremely negative experiences. Throughout his service he felt that he was treated unfairly and that his unique skills and knowledge were wasted. Ultimately this led him to leave the military and left a very negative impression of military service for himself and his family. Many of Zafir’s negative experiences stemmed from interactions with a particular leader who Zafir notes may be generally prejudiced against racial and ethnic minorities. This leader himself creates problems for Zafir, but also fosters a culture of suspicion in the unit.

SADIA

Unlike Zafir, Sadia is a practicing Muslim. However, as a white convert Sadia is not automatically seen as Muslim due to her name or appearance. Rather she is identified by her religious practice and public identification as a Muslim. Sadia left the military after a five year career. Trained as a linguist, Sadia converted to Islam while in the service. After a hostile split from her husband, he accused her of being a terrorist, and she spent the following two years under investigation. Her security clearance was revoked and she was reassigned to administrative work. She remarried, and her new husband was also treated with suspicion for his connection to her. Sadia was eventually offered the opportunity to leave the military early, and did so.

Sadia joined the military on a whim after high school and intended to stay for a career. Sadia is a good example of what Ginexi, Miller, and Tarver (1995) refer to as a “Flounderer”. Based on in-depth interviews exploring motivations to join the military, they identified institutional and occupational motivations, but also identified “Flounderers” which they describe as, “the visit to the recruiter and subsequent decision to enlist was completely unplanned and extremely abrupt. These individuals’ goals were very unclear [...] these individuals appeared to have been waiting for something to happen in their lives yet had lacked the initiative or motivation to alter their present situations” (9). Sadia’s description of her decision to join the military fits this conceptualization,

It was sorta random, and I woke up one day and decided to do it. It was the best and worst decision I ever made [laughs], but it worked out in the end.

Sadia generally fit in well with the military lifestyle. She had family members who had served and was familiar with the demands of military life, though she does not attribute her decision to join to the family history,

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when I was little I wanted to join the military cause my mom was in the military before I was born and my dad was in the military. I mean a lot of people when they ask me why I joined the military I would cite that, 'Oh it's just a family tradition,' when really I just woke up that day was like you know, it's a Tuesday, I think I'm gonna join the military.

Sadia enjoyed the language training she received in the military, and like many of my other respondents enjoyed the way the military broadened her horizons, including introducing her to her current husband. Despite her early positive experiences, Sadia's Muslim identity was taken as evidence of her untrustworthiness. Sadia spent two years under investigation during which time she was removed from her skilled position, lost her security clearance and was given temporary secretarial work. The investigation began after her ex-husband made a false report following a domestic dispute:

He was upset, he was very angry and then I gave him all his stuff back [...] and I gave him back his ring and so he was very angry, and he went in to the commander the next day and said I was a terrorist.

At the end of an all-night shift, Sadia was told to report to her commander. Thinking it was to receive praise for an extraordinary test score she had recently received ("I had like the best test score that they had ever on that test"), she was shocked when her commander accused her of disloyalty,

Like 'Oh you know you've been doing this and you've been doing that so we're putting you under special investigation' and stuff like that and I'm like what?! Like me seriously shaking. They escorted me off the base and that was pretty much the beginning of the end for me.

She was confused and in a state of disbelief

The investigation was horrible 'cause I didn't really grasp that they were serious. They were accusing me of funneling information and stuff to the enemy and clearly I'm not doing that. I know that, and they know that I wasn't doing it

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During the course of the investigation, Sadia was under surveillance, noticing strange cars following her, “And then later I’d see the pictures of myself doing random things.”

After she was removed from her job, rumors began flourishing.

it was hilarious. [My colleagues said] I got sent to Guantanamo, I was in Levenworth, I went crazy and was in an institution. [...] ‘cause I wasn’t allowed back, I just disappeared one day and so you know the rumor mill. I was still in the dorms though! Those people lived there, like how did they not see me?

Despite having planned to make the military a career, this experience convinced Sadia to leave the military and left her with negative feelings about the military,

I signed for 6 [years] originally cause I assumed that I’d stay in forever, that I’d stay in until they kicked me out ‘cause I was too old and crusty. And yeah, so I love them a little less now.

Like Zahir, the stress of being under suspicion also had negative health effects,

I was having panic attacks, I’d forget where I was; I’d forget where I lived. I would completely black out, you could ask me what planet I was on and I’d not be able to tell you.

As with Zafir, specific leadership seems to play a central role in Sadia’s story.

Without knowing the details of the investigation from the military’s point of view, the decision to conduct the investigation, place Sadia under surveillance, remove her from her skilled job, and push her out of the military seems extreme, and likely the result of particular attitudes from leadership/climate of unit.

Zafir reported that his commander had a history of treating non-white soldiers negatively, suggesting a general climate of intolerance, Sadia also observed troubling tendencies in the atmosphere of her unit suggesting that weak leadership may have been an issue. She noted that other religious minorities, such as Mormons were also singled out for negative treatment,

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I mean it's not exclusive to Muslims, like I worked with a Mormon girl, [...] she took a lot of abuse. [...] they hated her because she was Mormon and you know they were otherwise generic Christian or probably not practicing or anything, but since you're not their flavor they are angry about it. And so before I came she was public enemy #1.

While hiding prayer was a common theme in my data, Sadia used her in-limbo status to make her prayers public.

I'm like whatever. I'm already under investigation; they're claiming they think I'm a terrorist, what else are they going to do? So I'd pray at work, just get my little rug out and bam right there in the middle, which upset a lot of people. At the last place I got farmed out to, there was one guy I could tell it really bugged him. I was like whatever I don't care about you.

Using prayer as a way to discomfit people as an act of resistance speaks to the idea that it "should" be hidden. Since the military is not a secular institution where the discomfort would be expected from any religious expression, this suggests that certain expressions of faith are encouraged over others. That *salah* can be used to create discomfort also demonstrates the presence of us/them and supports my suggestion that *salah* has negative associations for some non-Muslims.

BASIM

Another example of the role of leadership in shaping the environment and acceptance of Muslim service members were the experiences of Basim. Basim is a veteran who spent 22 years as a linguist for the military. He has served in both Afghanistan and Iraq. Basim joined the military due to difficulties finding stable employment. Although he enjoyed most of his career, Basim reported that after 9/11 the atmosphere changed, and upset with institutionalized suspicion in his unit and difficulties

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getting religious accommodation, he decided to retire. Basim immigrated to the United States from the Middle East as a teenager to pursue his education.

Basim joined the military for occupational reasons. Unable to find steady employment, Basim decided that the military was his best option,

I didn't have a job and I work[ed] from fast food restaurant to fast food restaurant and nobody [was] hiring, almost like we have now. Then I decided to go ahead and join the military. At least there was something stable. [...] I was living on my own, trying to make rent, and the car payments and everything else and I was struggling, so finally I joined the military and it worked out for me.

For Basim, 9/11 was a defining moment in his military career. Up until this point he had enjoyed his military service, and intended to stay not just to retirement at 20 years, but for a full 30 years. However, in his view, 9/11 changed the way he was perceived and treated,

I'm proud to be a veteran. It was a good life, it was a good experience, and I'll never forget it, even with the negative at the end of it, you can't expect life to go by with everything good in it. Bad and good. I'd say, out of the 22 years, 20 was good.

Following 9/11, Basim reported being treated with suspicion and he was even asked to report to the base security office where he was questioned,

It wasn't bad 'til September 11th, then they start looking at us different. Generalizing everybody. Even the people who you care for and work with and know you all this time, they start looking at you in a different way, like suspicious. I noticed that a lot of times it seemed like we were watched, we were asked to report to the [security office] and they question us: what's your life, who you know, who you don't know, what do you know. A lot of things that make you feel like you're not part of the unit, not part of the [military]. I contacted other Muslims and they say they went through the same thing and that's why I was really upset then because I'd been in the [military] for almost 20 years, and some guy just been in the military for three years he questioned my integrity and my patriotism asking me question like that: do you know what is a sleeper cell? I'm familiar with that, I'm military, we study it. [...] so then I retired [...] because of the treatment. Prior to September 11th everything was outstanding, you feel like you're part of the country, part of the military, you're doing your job, you're doing your part, everybody like an intricate machine. Then on September 11th

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they start looking at us in a different light, even though they know me for almost 20 years, know my work, my integrity, everything I do for the country, and they start putting you in a questionable place.

In Basim's narrative we can see his sense of belonging crumble. Before 9/11 he reports, his service made him feel like a part of something bigger, a part of the nation. The suspicion with which he is treated following 9/11 erodes this sense of belonging, leaving him feeling like he no longer belongs. Basim's narrative also speaks to the expectation that military service will be understood to express citizenship. He is affronted at the temerity of questioning his loyalty in the face of his 20 years of service, suggesting that he might see questioning as acceptable under other conditions. He clearly sees his service as expressing his loyalty and when he is questioned despite this, he is insulted.

Despite the negative treatment, Basim found support among his colleagues,

But a lot of the people I worked with who've known me all these years, they stood up with me and they were ready to do anything possible to stop the interrogation and stop the questioning.

His long career prior to 9/11 may have contributed to a breakdown of prejudice through extended contact. Colleagues who had worked with him were less likely to accept the us/them suspicion of him; their personal knowledge of him trumped overriding ideas about the untrustworthiness of others.

Although Basim felt that the whole military atmosphere changed following 9/11, it was a change in leadership and the denial of religious accommodation that he was accustomed to that was the final straw. Having been granted permission to leave work to pray, especially to attend congregational prayers on Friday afternoons, throughout his career, Basim was shocked when a new commander denied his request,

[my commander] said 'No, I can't let you go to Friday prayer, and I can't allow you to do this and do that' so I continued praying but I had to hide it. I pray

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whenever he goes somewhere, I pray when he's not around [...] I felt like I'm not even a human being if you can prevent me from praying, and I had to hide myself behind the curtains just to do the prayer. I felt like this is not America, this is not the country I came to, the country I love, the country I respect and [it] made me have a negative tone about the whole thing. I mean it's not right. But I can't do anything because everybody's looking at us in a different light now.

More than just seeking privacy, Basim reports having to literally hide himself in order to pray. For Basim, being denied the right to pray was a blow against his sense of belonging. Beyond the questioning which he reported made him feel like he no longer belonged in the military, the denial of accommodations to pray makes him feel like he has been excluded from the nation, and denied his humanity, "I felt like I'm not even a human being". These experiences directly influenced Basim's decision to leave the military,

I was planning on staying to the end, 'til almost 30 years, whatever I can stay. Like I said, people who come in new, three years in, because of their job with the [security office] or something asking you about your integrity. I have a Master's Degree and it's like somebody coming first year in college question your job, how you teach or how something and it's not right, it's not what I expected from the military. Even though I love it so much, and I still do.

Despite his negative experiences at the end of his service, after leaving the military Basim recognized that the military provided a level of protection absent in civilian society,

it's a big time adjustment. Just like going from a controlled area, a fish bowl, to an open sea where you can be a target to anybody and you can't do anything about it. [If] Anybody in the military called me names I would have just go to unit commander and he would reprimand them. Here people scream at you in the streets, calling you names, but you can't do anything about it. If you call the police and say 'Hey this guy said, you know, called me names.' 'Well we can't do anything about it unless he threatened your life.' And that's an adjustment, yes. [...] It was hard for the first couple of years, and now I've adjusted to the people around you here, you know, say things to you. In the military nobody ever called you a 'Sandnigger' or anything, but here my kids in school, they are called names and stuff, whereas this is not in the military, it's not part of the military.

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The institutional protections offered by formal EO policies and a clear chain of command provided a protected environment (a fish bowl versus the open sea). While us/them clearly permeated Basim's unit following 9/11, there were still lines that were not crossed and a clear system of redress.

DISCUSSION

The cases presented here clearly demonstrate the difference leadership and institutional support can make in the experiences of individuals. The examples of positive experiences provided by Tarek, Najib, and Pervez are also examples where diversity is valued by leadership and actively supported. Tarek encounters a manifestation of us/them as he goes about his job; however the supportive response of leadership and his colleagues allows him to contextualize this incident as exceptional. Najib considers the way institutional support shaped his religious practice and also discusses an example of good leadership that is deeply invested in diversity. This leader is greatly respected by Najib. Pervez provides an example of diversity being seen as an asset. His ability to interact successfully with locals in Afghanistan makes it clear to his unit that diversity has practical value, and promotes a context where diversity is valued and because of this value supported.

On the other hand, Zafir, Sadia, and Basim all leave the military following negative experiences. As my respondents with the most negative experiences, it is interesting to note the central role specific leaders play in each case. Zafir feels targeted and singled out by a specific leader for intentionally negative treatment, including name calling. Sadia finds herself under formal investigation after her commander accepts accusations made against her by her ex-husband. Basim describes a situation where a

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change in leadership had dramatic effects on his experiences. After two decades of service in which his identity as a practicing Muslim had little effect on his experiences, a new commander and post-9/11 tensions lead Basim to feel that he is being unjustly targeted for questioning and surveillance. He takes this as a personal affront given his long and loyal service. When his new commander denies him religious accommodation he is accustomed to having, Basim decides it is time to leave the military.

CHAPTER 8: EXPRESSING AND NEGOTIATING CITIZENSHIP

Military service and citizenship are closely connected. I entered the project expecting to find that Muslims were using military service as a way to make citizenship claims as Japanese Americans did during World War II. However, this is not supported by the data. Few of my respondents made direct connections between their military service and citizenship. While my respondents are not using military service to make claims of citizenship, citizenship is still a relevant frame for understanding their narratives and deeply shapes their decisions to serve and the centrality of dialogue in their narratives.

My respondents are not serving in order to make citizenship claims, but a sense of patriotism and national belonging shapes the motivations of many to join. These institutional motivations speak to the central role of ideas of citizenship in the military service of my respondents. My respondents also actively negotiate space in which they are recognized as both Americans and Muslims in a context where these identities are often assumed to be in conflict. This can be seen in the frequency with which my respondents speak of engaging in dialogue and education and the explicit role of “bridge builder” taken on by some respondents.

These themes can be seen in many of the narratives already presented. In this chapter, I present three narratives that specifically illustrate this theme. Yusuf, a combat soldier, articulates institutional motives, engages in everyday negotiations and is valued by his unit for this and relates a story of his parents using his military service. Hakim sees it as a responsibility to engage in dialogue and takes his decision to educate those around him very seriously. He builds bridges both with other service members and with locals in

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Afghanistan and Iraq. Rahma is very clear in making the connection between valuing the United States and choosing to serve in the military. She also engages in active dialogue and education and sees herself explicitly as a bridge builder

YUSUF

Yusuf is one of several respondents who served in an active war zone. As a member of the infantry, Yusuf had the most direct combat experience of my respondents. Raised in South Asia, Yusuf immigrated to the United States as a teenager and joined the military out of high school. Yusuf decided to join the military for a variety of reasons, including the sense of service that I have already outlined,

It was a collection of factors. I wasn't sure what I wanted to do. I was always fascinated by the military. And thought as a Muslim I had something to contribute back.

As I have already discussed, the articulation of institutional motivations speaks to the ways my respondents see themselves as Americans. Yusuf serves because he feels he should "give back". He does not see the decision to join the military as a way to prove himself, rather it is a natural extension of his sense of citizenship.

Yusuf also mentions the role of media in his decision to join the military, speaking to his embeddedness in American popular culture,

I was like show me some videos, I was really motivated. I saw *Full Metal Jacket* [laughs]. That was it.

Yusuf felt that the context of the current conflicts made his Muslim identity visible,

You were certainly aware that you're Muslim, especially 'cause of the conflicts. But if the conflicts weren't happening it would not be an issue at all.

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Yusuf felt that his colleagues identified him as Muslim from his name, however, as with many other respondents, he felt that it didn't change how he was treated,

As soon as they saw my name tag [they knew I was Muslim], but it was just like being part of any unit, I never had a problem. [...] I think it's no matter who you are as long as you perform that's how you're gonna be known. You sleep with them, train with them, do almost everything with them. You become sort of a family. You don't feel like you're different.

This is another example of the power of strong leadership and unit cohesion to replace us/them identities with a strong sense of in-group membership. Yusuf identifies the unit as “sort of a family”, and because he is contributing his fair share, he is fully included. In this case, group identity overpowers other possible sources of identity. The context of being a combat unit may also shape the importance of actions in building trust. In the war zone, Yusuf's unit had a clear shared goal – stay alive. In the face of this overwhelming shared goal, differences in race, national origin, and religion lose importance. The group becomes highly cohesive not because members are similar to each other, but because they are working towards the same goals, and the more successful they are, the greater trust they have in each other. This trust and camaraderie makes meaningless abstract distinctions between us and them and increases Yusuf's sense of belonging.

Yusuf experienced times when his identity as a Muslim was verbally used against him, but he perceived this to be a part of hazing traditions and saw it as equivalent to the treatment received by his colleagues, and therefore as a sign of inclusion,⁴⁵

One time in bootcamp I did get hazed and the drill instructor was like ‘Are you part of al-Qaeda or something’ and he was going off on me. But he'd go off on other people you know, that you look funny. So I don't think he specifically did that to me but I remember that happening like once or twice when I was getting hazed, doing push-ups and they were shouting in my face. They try to break you down so they might have thought let's break him down this way.

⁴⁵ This is description is in line with observations that it is common in military basic training for recruits to be identified by unique physical characteristics (for example see Field 2006).

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Yusuf ties this experience into the process of becoming a soldier. In this context, the harassment is an indicator of full belonging. He was not treated differently, or excluded from this process of hazing that he sees as ultimately leading to being a member of this elite, cohesive group.

As a member of the infantry, Yusuf deployed multiple times to the combat theatre. His primary characterizations of combat are confusion and senselessness,

We would go into the city, different houses, just lost. At times getting frustrated, throwing things around, getting angry at the Iraqis. 'Cause there's [different] personalities within your unit, so you know some have a breaking point, a threshold for confusion, less than others. It was a different, I mean, I guess I'm trying to get at it's a, it was a very weird experience in its own right. I would not, if I had the option, go through it again.

Things happen for no reason, like your buddy gets blown up, dies in front of you. Like what the hell. One minute he's laughing, next minute he steps on an IED and he's dead.

When ordered to deploy again, Yusuf was reluctant, but expressed an institutional commitment to the ideas of service and duty,

I was reluctant to go back, but as a soldier I knew that I had a duty and I wanted to complete my duty to the best of my abilities. I didn't agree with it but it's politics and it's not the first war or the last war. I just try to keep my hands clean. You know don't shoot until you're shot at, no innocents, so I had my own moral ethics I tried to follow. And I think for the most part I did it and I'm proud of that.

Yusuf drew heavily on his faith to cope with the stress of combat,

I would pray a lot. But not physical like five time prayer. In my heart. Just say some of the common prayers, the small prayers in the Qur'an that I knew by heart, and God would always be on my mind going on missions, you know, don't let this man be killed on my hands, protect me and my unit too. Things like that.

Religious practice has long been recognized as a part of war and a response to stress. Military historian John Keegan (1976) discusses the role of prayer and religious preparation in medieval battle. For example, before the battle of Agincourt in 1415

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“[King] Henry himself heard Mass three times in succession before the battle, and took Communion, as presumably did most of his followers” (115). Keegan argues that religious observance is a vital part of preparation for battle. Watson (2006), who examined combat resilience among British and German troops in World War I, found that faith on the battlefield tends to have more to do with a sense of spiritual connection with divinity than formalized religious traditions. Yusuf articulates this in distinguishing his battlefield religious practice from the formal ritual of *salah* (five daily prayers).

In their study of American soldiers in World War II, Stouffer et al found that prayer was a common strategy for coping with combat (Stouffer et al 1949). While it is not always clear what was meant by “prayer”, the men regarded it as a “very important source of support” (173). Stouffer et al compare the frequency of respondents indicating prayer “helped a lot” with the perceived usefulness of four other adjustments (“couldn’t let the other men down”, “you had to finish the job in order to get home again”, “hatred for the enemy”, “what we are fighting for”). They find that the majority of respondents rate prayer as helping a lot. They argue, “Reliance on prayer obviously had other roots in addition to extreme stress – for instance, the beliefs to which the men had been educated. [...] But the data establish a definite relationship between stress and reliance on prayer” (184-5).

The role of religion in the reintegration and healing process of veterans has recently begun to be discussed as well. Bosworth (2008) argues that, “Religious traditions appear to be a valuable but underutilized resource in the treatment of veterans” (245). He argues that existing research on PTSD focuses on things done to or witnessed by the soldier, but disregards the psychological stress of killing and the effects of feelings of

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guilt for actions in combat. Bosworth uses the biblical term “bloodguilt” to describe this sense of post-combat guilt. Cook (2009) sees PTSD as an issue for psychology and psychiatry but also as a spiritual concern. He suggests the usefulness of considering the implications of military service spiritually and to bring “moral ambivalence, guilt, and post-traumatic stress explicitly into the spiritual conversation” (18).

Yusuf expresses some of this sense of ambivalence, and clearly sees his faith as relevant to his conduct during combat, and as an important component in processing his experiences,

When I look back, sometimes there’s a conflict as a Muslim, did I do something wrong, ‘cause I went and participated in this operation. But then I say if God truly is unbiased, and we’re judged on our intentions rather than what happened,⁴⁶ I see that my intention was not to hurt any innocents regardless of who they were. As far as I know I accomplished that, so I can be at peace with myself.

After leaving the military, Yusuf immediately returned to school, and credits the structure and support provided by his family and by his confidence in the morality of his own conduct with easing his reentry into civilian life,

Civilian life it wasn’t as hard ‘cause I came back to my parents, they supported me, I had a structure. But since I’ve gotten out, in the company five people have killed themselves. For me it wasn’t so bad when I think of them. I did struggle to make sense of what I want to do in life and sometimes it would just hit me what I had gone through. At that time when you’re going through you just think of staying alive, getting through the day, looking out for your back and for your buddy’s back. But when you’re back you think of, it seems like a movie, where you’ve been. I mean those thing will probably never happen to me again. The things I did, the things that happened. [...] But overall I would say it was not bad because the support structure was there for me. But if it wasn’t it probably would have been, I would have been a bitter guy.

His return from the war and his re-entry into the civilian world felt like a new start,

⁴⁶ In the Islamic worldview, intention is central; for example, a good deed done with ill-intention is understood to be an evil deed. Sincerity and intention are seen to be matters of which only Allah has full knowledge.

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I went right away to school, 'cause like I said I was very motivated, 'cause I thought I had a new life, a sort of new beginning. After we came back from deployment, the first thing when you touch ground you're like we made it! You know, fully intact we made it. [...] I took some preparatory classes 'cause my math skills had gone down. But I found that I had another set of skills, like I could concentrate better, on studies I could motivate myself, the discipline which I didn't have before in school. Also I had that drive to do well and make something out of myself. I didn't take things for granted.

Despite the trials of combat, Yusuf found his military service to be an extremely rewarding experience. When I asked him what the best thing about serving in the military was he responded immediately,

Discipline. They give you self-confidence. Friends that you made while you were in the service. Just camaraderie in general, even when you get out [the sense of belonging].

In part, Yusuf is describing healthy unit cohesion. He feels a sense of camaraderie and belonging to the group.

Yusuf felt like a full member of the unit, and did not feel singled out because he was Muslim. At the same time, he found that his background was useful to his unit in explaining cultural and religious issues that they encountered. Yusuf felt that his experience and advice was particularly valuable for his comrades because of the inadequacy of the pre-deployment cultural training that his unit received,

[Pre-deployment cultural training] was poor, I'd give it a poor rating. The guys would just warn you don't do this, don't do that, and that was what cultural training was. I mean simple things, like don't wave with your left hand, say *salaam aleikoum* to everyone. They would say it to everyone. What they don't get is it's good to say that, but after a little while they're just gonna think you're annoying. There's no point in the little Arabic you know to keep throwing it out. You know someone just comes and says 'Howdy, howdy' to an American you'd be like, 'What, is he an idiot?' That's what a lot of these Iraqis looked at us like. Who are these idiots? What are these idiots doing here?

Once on the ground, Yusuf served as an informal resource when members of his unit had questions,

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They would ask why is it bad to show the sole of the feet? Why is it bad to use your left hand? Why is it bad to say certain things or to handle the Qur'an? Why is it bad to come with your shoes on inside the house? Why are they so nice to us, the Iraqi people, even when we're searching their houses, turning the house upside down, there's shooting outside, why do they still offer us food? So I explained to them that it was the Arab culture, and more broadly the Islamic culture. Just give them some details so they have better understanding.

In one of the clearest examples of the connection between military service and first-class citizenship to come out of my interviews, Yusuf relates how his parents use his military service to negotiate anti-Muslim conversations at their workplaces,

[My parents] both have customers coming in and they talk. So like the average American would say like 'These damn Muslims are like ruining the world' or just 'What's wrong with them.' So they would say 'Oh I'm a Muslim and my son is serving in the military,' and then they'd say 'Oh we didn't mean it in that way, say thank you to your son.'

In these interactions, his parents have found a way to successfully reframe the conversation by asserting their membership in the group being generalized about, and then bringing up their son's military service. The connection between service and citizenship is such in the United States that this strategy shifts the conversation from one of us/them to one of congratulation and compliment.

HAKIM

Hakim is currently serving, and at the time of interview had put in 18 years. He does not have plans to retire anytime soon. Hakim has worked in various support specialties, and is currently furthering his education in preparation for his next post. Hakim has deployed to both Afghanistan and Iraq. An intellectually curious youth, Hakim had been studying Islam before joining the military, and converted soon after. Hakim is multi-racial and was born in the United States to immigrant parents.

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For Hakim, the decision to join the military was largely an institutional one stemming from the military service of his family.

Well, I'm a military child. My father [...] enlisted before I was even born. When he married my mother, she was living [in the town where he was stationed]. They eventually divorced but my mother remarried [and] my step father [was] also in the Army. So when it came time for me to decide what I wanted to do, for me it was I wanted to join the military. That's what I grew up with.

For Hakim, the military was a familiar environment and he derived comfort from the discipline of it. When he attended a civilian college he felt lost and decided to leave school and return to the military, this time as a service member,

I had just turned 17 when I went to college and I was just too young. [...] it wasn't an academic issue for me, I had gotten a scholarship. [...] It was the social aspect. All my life up until that point I had only dealt with military children and military schools, so going to a civilian public university was just complete culture shock. It was like 'What in the world? These people are wild! They don't have discipline and order in their lives'. I just couldn't deal with that so the military was the environment I needed to be in. [The military] allowed me to remain focused on my goals and objectives in life.

In a very common theme among my respondents, Hakim discusses the opportunities presented by the military and the way it has broadened his horizon,

I can't even imagine at this point doing something else. The United States military is a diverse organization. It's a microcosm of the reality of America. [...] It's an eye opener. [...] the experience has allowed me to go through life without the blinders, that tunnel vision. I've been able to see a bigger picture, the horizon's a lot wider, and I would say God's grace is a lot bigger than the limitations that people put on it. So I'm good with it, I enjoy it.

Hakim has experienced the effects of us/them, though he notes that it is not limited to a post-9/11 world. As a new convert in the 1990s, he felt that even at that time some people saw Muslims as "other",

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I'd just become a Muslim and [...] there were individuals that didn't take very well to the idea because of their misinformation, their ignorance, etc. [...] and so people had their preconceived notions, their stereotypes, their generalizations.

Although Hakim does not come from the Arab world or South Asia, Hakim's physical appearance could easily be interpreted as "brown". He also wears a *kufi*,⁴⁷ a form of religious headgear and so is easily visually identifiable as Muslim,

Ever since I joined the military I've always worn a *kufi* or a *taqiyah*, the religious headgear, because there's authorization for it. In civilian clothing I wear it, but in uniform I wear it as well. I see that it's allowed so I'm going to do it. [...] it's not a statement, it's just what I do as an expression of my faith, very similar to those that wear a cross around their neck, or when Jews [wear] the yarmulke, it's no different. It's an expression of faith.

Since 9/11, he has experienced many of the same symptoms of the re-activation of this boundary as my other respondents, including general comments, name calling, and occasional suspicion,

after 9/11 I do recall people making comments, you know you get the emails and things of that nature. But one guy he made a statement to me, I forget what exactly he asked me, but it was as though there was this assumption that all Muslims know one another. Like I have Osama bin Laden on my speed dial, and say hey you need to quit this nonsense. It was really ridiculous.

As with most of my other respondents, the incidents Hakim encountered were minor, and his reaction was to laugh them off and to engage in a dialogue. Hakim takes a very active role in claiming a space as an American Muslim service member. Of all my respondents, Hakim takes the most active role in negotiating everyday citizenship,

When I hear a comment being made I'm quick to address it. I'm pretty vocal. And I think I'm that way 'cause that's the only way people are gonna become educated. You have to address the ignorance; you can't just let it slide, like oh, they just don't know any better so I'm just not going to say anything.

⁴⁷ A *taqiyah* is a cap or hat worn by some Muslim men. In the United States it is generally referred to as a *kufi*. It may be worn all the time or just during prayer. Those who wear it generally do so to emulate the prophet Muhammad who, along with his 7th century followers, would have covered his head when in public.

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Hakim also engaged in formal education, providing, for example, presentations on Islam during which he directly addresses some stereotypes,

I've had wonderful, I can see them as learning experiences, learning opportunities when someone challenges me in a presentation 'Well you know, doesn't the Koran say to kill the infidel' I mean just remarkable, and you can tell they're just repeating what they've heard on the news or something they may have heard in a conversation with someone else, it's just repeated propaganda, and so the presentations I give I actually put that on a powerpoint presentation those few words: 'Kill the unbelievers wherever you find them' and then on the very next slide I show the entire context of the verses⁴⁸ and I say 'just read that'. And they're sitting there reading, and they're like wow. And I'm like, do you have a different impression now that you see the context of that verse? And they're like yeah it doesn't say that at all. It's like yes. So next time, just open the book up and read it for yourself and don't be spoon fed.

Hakim took a very active role in defending his rights. He sees this as a responsibility and emphasizes the importance of Muslims speaking up for themselves in order to define their experiences rather than be defined by others. He feels it is important to be outspoken in standing up for his rights and the rights of other Muslims in the military,

I'm outspoken, I definitely let my voice be heard. And I deal with whatever consequences may [be]. I know the Constitution, and I know the military regulations, and I know what I can say and what I cannot say [...] I would say that there is a responsibility for Muslims in the military to study up and find out what their rights are, to know what they can and cannot do.

Hakim explicitly sees it as a *responsibility* to be educated about his legal rights.

Hakim treats being knowledgeable about one's rights as a duty. Hakim does not wait for

⁴⁸ "They wish you to become disbelievers as they are, so that you should become like them. Therefore hold them not as friends until they go out of their homes in the way of God. If they do not, seize them wherever they are and do away with them. Do not make them your friends or allies, except those who take refuge with a people allied to you, or those who, weary of fighting you or their people, come over to you. If God had so willed He would surely have given them power over you, and they would have fought you. If they keep aloof and do not fight, and offer peace, God has left you no reason to fight them. You will also find persons who, while wishing to live in peace with you as well as with their own people, turn to civil war the moment they are called to it. If they do not keep away from you, nor offer you peace, nor restrain their hands, seize them and kill them wherever they are. We have given you a clear sanction against them." (4:89-91; A. Ali Translation)

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others to recognize his rights and give them to him, instead he actively pursues them. For Hakim, belonging is a matter of knowing and claiming rights rather than a process of assimilation. Hakim does not seek inclusion by changing his appearance or behaviors to blend in; instead he maintains practices that stand out, relying on his confidence in his rights and his own voice to claim a space in the national collective on his own terms.

Hakim also addresses the role of informed and strong leadership in implementing religious accommodation. While Hakim himself is well-versed in regulations regarding religious accommodation and is not shy about standing up for his rights, he observes that his right to wear a kufi in uniform has been repeatedly questioned by those unfamiliar with these policies,

people have had an issue with the religious headgear [I wear], and every single instance I've found out it's because they have not read the regulation. Every single time. And it's on page two. It's very clear, it says very clearly, it describes the religious headgear, it says that it's authorized. It says what the color has to be, the size of it. It gives all those descriptions and yet I've come across a number of senior-ranking officers and senior enlisted that are like 'Are you authorized to wear that?' I'm like wow have you not read the regulation, that's one of the most common regulations in the military, how could you not read that? [...] Seriously, it's just a matter of education.

Taking the time to read and understand the regulations regarding religious accommodation demonstrates an investment in diversity. It is, as Hakim observes, a matter of education, but it's also a matter of caring. Leadership that does not bother to familiarize themselves with these types of policies communicates that it is not worth knowing the rights of minority service members.

Hakim, similar to several other respondents, felt that being Muslim gave him particular insight,

It's one thing to learn about Islam academically and not experientially. [...] You may understand this [theology], but in the practical aspect, in the social aspect, in

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interacting with people and different interpretations and different responses, that takes on a whole other study in and of itself.

While Hakim gained this experience as a member of the group, it is not necessarily information that is only available to in-group members. What is important here is not just knowledge about the group, but experience with the complexities and humanity of the group as well. Hakim uses this cultural competence in his military tasks interacting with locals in Afghanistan and Iraq,

what has ended up happening both in Afghanistan and Iraq is [my commanders] see how I interact with locals and how they respond to me and it's like someone observes that and is like hey you know what, can we use you in a different capacity by talking to the locals, establishing rapport, interacting with local businesses, businessmen and other personnel? And so I'm like yes of course.

This ability to interact and build rapport with locals was a common one among my respondents who deployed to Afghanistan or Iraq. For example, Yusuf talked about this during his combat deployments, while Jamal used a shared language and a familiarity with traditions of storytelling in an extended interaction with a local man.

More than just being able to easily interact with locals, Hakim found that he was able to serve as representatives of the inclusiveness of American society,

Interacting with the locals I came to find out [they] didn't even know 9/11 happened. And that was so insightful. We were like wow, these people don't have a clue, they're just as ignorant as you can assume, obviously the literacy rate is quite low, but the fact that they didn't have access to radio, television, etc. They just saw us as an invading force. They were not aware of why we were there. [...] So for them to come across me, they were like what?! You're a Muslim? You look like an Afghani. and I'm like no I'm not, I'm an American, I was born and raised in America, I have no Afghani ancestral DNA that I'm aware of. But it was good 'cause they have been told up to that point that the foreign devils - Americans - are coming here and just like the Russians and British before them. They're against Islam; they're against Muslims and so on and so forth. So I'm sitting there explaining to these local Afghans and tribal leaders that no, that's not the case. I told them Islam is flourishing in the United States, we have mosques and Islamic institutions and charities and we're free to practice our faith. I'm explaining all of this and they're just looking at me in amazement, like are you

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serious?! Like this can't be possible [laughs]. I'm like no I have photos, I can show you. This is real.

In this situation, Hakim serves as a bridge builder – he not only negotiates a space to be Muslim American in the military but also negotiates what it means to be American with the locals he encounters. Similar to Jamal's narrative (Chapter 6), Hakim, as a Muslim American, finds himself engaged in discussions about the acceptance of Islam in the U.S. His ability to interact with the locals opens the way for this type of conversation to take place, something that anyone regardless of identity but with the right cultural competence could do. However, being Muslim American himself, he not only engages in this dialogue, but serves as living evidence of what he is saying. Just as he builds bridge with other service members, negotiating a space where his differentness is accepted, Hakim also builds bridges with the locals he encounters in the field. He negotiates with multiple clients his identity as Muslim American.

Having leadership that valued the skills and knowledge Hakim brought shaped his experiences for the better,

I've just taken every opportunity to try to engage in dialogue with people and fortunately I've been under the command of individuals who take advantage of that. They see that we have someone born and raised as an American, military child, is a Muslim as well, has been deployed, is involved with the local Muslim community, and I've been utilized to build bridges of mutual respect and understanding. And it's been fantastic.

Rather than treat him with suspicion, Hakim's leadership actively used his differentness to help them achieve their missions.

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RAHMA

Rahma is a veteran with a six year career in the military where she worked in a support position. Rahma converted to Islam while in the military. She decided to leave the military to be closer to her family and to start a family of her own. Rahma is white and was born in the United States.

Rahma joined the military for primarily institutional reasons. Family tradition played a large role in her decision,

Mainly because my family was all in it. For me it was kinda a carrying on tradition.

Rahma's family was generally happy with her decision to join the military, perhaps because of the family tradition. She did, however, feel that her gender made her decision particularly confusing for other Muslims.

The community that I frequented they were the whole 'Oh my gosh, but sister how are you in the military!?' They were all shocked about it, about the family aspect of it. They weren't shocked about me being a Muslim, they were more shocked how would you reconcile your family with your military work, you're gone for months on end.

Rahma found that being a service member transgressed expected roles of femininity within the civilian Muslim community,

if you [say] you're in the military the guys won't even give you a second chance. So it was sort of like a dating disaster and I wanted to settle down so I made a more conscious decision to settle in one place without the possibility of them shipping me out to the desert months after I've had my baby

A sense of service and loyalty to the United States was also a component of her decision. Although Rahma is native-born, she grew up abroad and much of her family currently lives abroad, so living in the United States is an active choice,

It was serving my country that I chose to be in, 'cause I could go but I chose to be here. I chose to live in the United States 'cause I think this is a better place to live.

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Rahma makes a clear connection between her service and ideas of citizenship. Rahma notes that it is a conscious choice for her to live in the United States. Organically, from this choice comes the decision to serve. It is an expression of the value she places on being American.

Rahma enjoyed her experiences in the military. As with most of my other respondents, she sees her service and broadening her horizons.

Just the opportunity to go to any place at any time. That was a great positive experience, and just the, when you join the military, if you put your mind to it you have so many open possibilities that you can be, [...]the possibilities and the opportunities that the military itself presents you are limitless if you put your mind to it. So just to have that I think that is one of the greatest positives you can get out of the military.

She also values the sense of community she felt in the military,

There's so many [positive experiences]. Being deployed and meeting so many new people you build such camaraderie with them. It's friendship and it's like brotherhood and sisterhood between all these different people, and in some instances you become closer than family. That was one of the greatest positive experiences that I've had in the military.

Since leaving the military, Rahma has found that she misses the camaraderie and competence of working with her military colleagues,

you miss the military camaraderie, the whole brotherhood and sisterhood that you get for people, you miss it. There were the deployments where you go out someplace and it is just you and a group of people and that's it, you guys have each other's back and you know nothing will happen to you because these people are competent in their jobs.

As with Yusuf, this emphasis on the sense of camaraderie in the military suggests that Rahma served under strong leaders who emphasized the development of military identification. Similar to Yusuf, she identifies her colleagues in family terms – brothers

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and sisters. She trusts that her colleagues “have each other’s back” and competence rather than racial, ethnic, or religious identification is the primary characteristic of this trust.

As a white convert, Rahma is not immediately externally identifiable as a Muslim. Her identity, however, was a matter of public knowledge and she informed her commander and colleagues following her conversion. As with most of my respondents, she did not think that her identity as a Muslim had any effect on her military career,

I never really had any major issues. I had some stupid comments here and there, you know ‘The Muslims, the Muslims’ but it wasn’t really anything directed completely towards me, it was more like a general statement that was being made in my hearing, but I never took it personally

As I found throughout my sample, this us/them boundary was present, she heard comments that use an us/them framework (“The Muslims”), but it was irrelevant to her day to day life and to her career. Also as with most of my respondents, Rahma was easily able to brush off these types of comments.

She takes an individualistic frame to her success/failure, and argues that her achievements are the product of her personal effort and not affected by her identity. She also recognizes the role of leadership,

I think if there would have been a disadvantage or anything that I missed out on it would’ve been more something that I didn’t achieve personally rather than something that was affected because I was Muslim. Again I was lucky with my team command because they really [cared about] my achievements personally rather than what my belief system was.

Rahma feels that she was lucky to have a good commander who judged her on her work rather than her identity, and this shaped her experiences. For Rahma, the lack of negative interactions reflected the protective nature of the military (and also American

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society as compared to western Europe). Her sister, who had also converted and who lived abroad, reported many negative interactions,

She's been physically attacked, prodded with umbrellas, prodded by old people with umbrellas just sitting at the bus station and yelling at her 'Go back to your own country' and she's like 'I'm born and raised here, I am in my country.' Her kids have been attacked. She's gotten discriminated against. So all the experiences that she's experienced, I'm glad to have not had that here, that's one of the reasons I choose to be here. That's one of the reasons why I'm glad in the military I really never got a whole lot of that; there'd be one or two incidences where somebody would mention something but that was not directed towards me.

Rahma's leadership was accepting of her conversion, and open to providing accommodations as needed. The command structure demonstrated an investment in diversity by reaching out to her to make sure her needs were being met,

as the only Muslim in the unit I was approached a few times by the chaplain, or even the command, asking me hey look are there certain special requirements that we need to give you guys for certain holidays, is there anything special that we need to do when we go overseas, we all have our briefings when we go but we want to hear it from you just to make sure is the right information.

That these interactions involved requests for confirmation of material received in briefings speaks to the value placed on having accurate information by the command structure. Similar to Najib's commander, this is a way of demonstrating respect, particularly in preparations for deployments to Middle Eastern countries, and a way of modeling the importance of cultural competence and preparation. This is another example of strong leadership that values diversity creating a unit atmosphere where my respondents had positive experiences.

Rahma regularly sought formal accommodation for religious practice and did not have any issues getting it. During Ramadan she sought accommodations to alter physical training requirements,

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We met at dawn to do PT, so not having any fluids or anything, it got hard. So I went to the commander at the time and I said look these are my requirements during this month and I would very much like to observe this, do you have any issues with it, or do you have any suggestions on how to get around the PT requirement.[...] So he [sent] me to the PT NCO and we came up with this plan that on the days that we're supposed to do PT in the mornings I would be there but I would be there as like a water person you know handing out water, I would assist with getting the times for their runs and everything, and make sure people are hydrated and all that, but I myself would do PT at night. [...] That's how we worked around that.

By not excusing her from dawn PT, this accommodation normalizes religious diversity in the unit. She is not absent from early morning trainings, which could become a source of resentment, and her altered presence (handing out water and writing down run times) makes the accommodation visible, normalizing the idea that diversity can be effectively accommodated.

Rahma is one of few respondents who reported praying publically. She shared a story of publically praying while her unit waited for directions,

So we went around the side of the building to pray, members of the unit, I guess some of them saw us praying so they came around and they all started coming around with their cameras and taking pictures. Yeah. Um yeah very awkward. And it was sort of a bit distracting.

This story provides another perspective on why it was so common among my respondents to hide prayer. Here there is no maliciousness associated with the actions of her colleagues, and Rahma herself acknowledges that because of where they were at the time, the view was gorgeous, and it is easy to imagine that the tableau of several service members praying in front of beautiful natural landscape would be tempting to record. However, the sense of being on display is uncomfortable for Rahma and takes her away from the spirituality of the act. It also speaks to the existence of us/them. Performing

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salah is seen as something exotic and worth documenting; that it draws such attention speaks to its “otherness”.

Rahma is proud of her military service,

[I: Are you proud to be a veteran?] Yes. I’m proud to be a veteran and I’m proud to be Muslim. And I’m actually going to be sworn into the VFW Post as an official member, and I’m going to be the first Muslim veteran at this VFW Post. [...]it’s not something I would have made note of ‘cause it’s just part of who I am, but they made a note of it and that’s how they announced it.

Her experiences with the VFW are yet another example of the presence but irrelevancy of the us/them boundary. We can see that Rahma being Muslim is a salient issue because the VFW post has noted that she is the first to join their post and sees this as important enough to announce. This marks her out as different or other. At the same time, this differentness is no barrier to her entry.

While she is proud of her service, she feels that it is “not something to brag about”,

but I don’t brag about it, it’s not something to brag about is just part of the service that you did for your country.

Rahma makes an explicit connection between her military service and her sense of citizenship,

I’ve had the whole people staring at me when I walk down the street if I have a scarf on my head or ‘Oh yeah, go back to your own country’, I can constantly just ignore it ‘cause I know I am in my own country, I’ve served for my country, and they most likely didn’t; though I don’t know their background just as much as they don’t know my background.

For Rahma, her military service is a way for her to dismiss activation of the us/them boundary in her everyday life that identifies her as “one of them”. She acknowledges experience such as stares and comments, but through her military service she is confident in her rights and belonging. She symbolically deploys her service to

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counter these processes of othering by redirecting the shame of not belonging back at the speakers, “I’ve served for my country, and they most likely didn’t.”

Rahma also sees herself very clearly as a bridge builder. She negotiates and educates others in the military about her faith, she has confidence in being Muslim American in the public sphere because of her service, and she works to carve out a space as a veteran in the civilian Muslim community. She takes on this role with confidence, and as with Hakim, a sense of responsibility,

I can be a liaison. Like in the mosque people talk about the military in Iraq or Afghanistan, I feel confident in my voice, ‘Hey look I was in the military and that’s not really how is, it’s more like this.’ And the same as when I was still in the military, [...] when they talk about oh the Muslims this, the Muslims that, I can be like, ‘Well hey, that’s a myth, that’s something that you see on TV that perpetrated [sic] by the media, not actually something that goes on in our everyday lives, that’s not something that we do.’ You know we don’t go around screaming *Allahu akhbar* with swords in our hands and burning the American flag. So I feel more confident in my voice talking to either one of the communities and dispelling myths or saying hey look this is the real deal, this is how it really is.

Being able to serve as a bridge, a source of information is an experience that Rahma greatly values,

I think that’s one of the greatest things about being Muslim in the military that you get the chance to get so many questions where you can answer, where you can set the record straight. We’re not all terrorists, no we’re not all crazy fanatics strapping bombs underneath our burqas [laughs]. Some of us are pretty good people, in fact majority of them are pretty good people.

DISCUSSION

Citizenship is a theme that flows throughout the narratives in this project. While few respondents use their military service to make direct claims on citizenship, the connection between service and citizenship is clear. Many respondents expressed institutional motivations to serve; they see joining the U.S. military as a way to express

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their sense of being American, as a way to “give back”, but not as a way to prove anything about themselves. They serve as an expression that they already belong. These institutional motives are clear in the narratives of Yusuf, Hakim, and Rahma. All see their military service as an expression of their deep-seated American-ness. For Yusuf it is a way to give back, for Hakim it is a continuation of family tradition, and for Rahma it is recognition that she chooses to live in the United States because she thinks it is a good place to be.

Citizenship can also be seen in the frequency with which my respondents engaged in dialogue and education. In spite of the us/them atmosphere which I have discussed at length, my respondents reject the idea that they must choose between being American and Muslim. They embrace both identities and when necessary engage in interactions both formal and informal to demonstrate this compatibility. Yusuf, as with many of my respondents, is seen as an asset by others in his unit because of his cultural competence. As part of a combat team, he does not have to engage in much discussion, his actions and the usefulness of his knowledge, demonstrate for him that he is both American and Muslim. Hakim and Rahma engage more directly in negotiation. Both see it as a responsibility, and a privilege, to engage in dialogue and education, explaining and demonstrating the compatibility of these identities. Hakim is quick to stand up for his rights, and literally engages in a display of uniformed difference as he wears religious headgear in uniform. He, as with several other respondents, also uses his position in the space between us and them to build rapport with locals. In the face of us/them pressures he redefines a world in which Muslim American is not just a possibility, but a reality. Rahma also engages in bridge building activities. A source of information for her unit,

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she also takes on the role of dispelling stereotypes about both Muslims and service members. She sees her combined identity as giving her a unique perspective which she is eager to share.

CHAPTER 9: DISCUSSION & CONCLUSION

From racial requirements for citizenship, to limits on immigration by national origin, to the civil rights movement and voting rights, U.S. society has long struggled to define who should be included in the nation. The events of 9/11 and the subsequent invasions of Afghanistan and Iraq reinvigorated a boundary that defined Muslims as a dangerous “other”. Although the official rhetoric was that it was not a war of religion, the boundaries that were being activated distinguished between an “us” who was Judeo-Christian and a “them” who was Muslim. Mosques were monitored by the FBI, individuals with Muslim names were put on watch lists, and over a thousand Muslims were detained (Murray 2004). Processes of othering have been well documented in the civilian world; in this project I add to the literatures on the post-9/11 experiences of Muslims in the United States and diversity in the military by exploring the experiences of Muslims in the U.S. military.

The military is a powerful social institution. It is central to the symbolic construction of nationhood. As the primary agent of legitimate violence, sociologists see the military as a fundamental element of the modern nation-state. In addition to symbolic significance, the military is the physical defender of state interests, and is a primary means by which the power of the state is measured. The military is a social institution deeply intertwined with conceptualizations of nationhood and definitions of who “we” are. It is therefore an important context in which to examine issues of diversity and processes of othering.

The purpose of this project is to explore the experiences of Muslims serving in the U.S. military. Since 9/11, the dominant discourse in American society has been one that

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others Muslims, treating the identities of Muslim and American as being mutually exclusive. Within this time period, thousands of Muslims chose to serve in the U.S. military. Using in-depth interviews with 15 respondents and qualitative analysis of the resulting narratives, this project considers the experiences of Muslim service members and veterans. In particular it examines how the context of the military shapes the effects of this us/them discourse.

In addition to answering questions about the experiences of Muslim service members, this project also speaks to broader sociological issues of inclusion and exclusion. It contributes to a greater understanding of processes of othering by extending the analyses of experiences of inclusion and exclusion from the civilian world to the military. As a distinct and powerful social institution, the consideration of the processes of othering within the military is an important contribution to the understanding of these processes both theoretically and empirically. I examine ways in which the structure of the military can form a protective environment. I also consider the connections between military service and citizenship, extending traditional arguments that focus on the role of military service in claiming citizenship by exploring the ways in which military service itself can be an expression of citizenship and how the military can be a place where questions of identity and belonging are negotiated.

Although my findings are not generalizable, the results of this project show that the us/them atmosphere found in civilian society is also found in the military, though whether or not it meaningfully affects the experiences of Muslim service members seems to depend on unit-level factors, most notably leadership. In this chapter I outline a theory of mitigating factors that shape experiences of othering.

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I also explore themes of citizenship that emerge from my data. Based on the narratives of my respondents, I connect serving in the military with feeling American. The conceptualization of the relationship between military service and citizenship has often been one that sees military service as a way for minority groups to prove their loyalty and their worthiness to belong. In this conceptualization, military service is a route to citizenship, or a way to make citizenship claims. While conceptually the role of military service in communicating citizenship has also been acknowledged, this has not been the focus of these arguments. My respondents by and large do not see their military service as a way to claim citizenship rights. Rather, military service emerges as an organic expression of citizenship. That is, because my respondents feel American, they express institutional motives to serve in the military, often describing their decisions in terms of patriotism, dedication, and a sense of service. In this project, it is this conceptualization of the relationships between citizenship and military service that is illuminated.

In addition to the relationship between military service and citizenship, my respondents engage in everyday practices of citizenship during their service. My respondents engage in active negotiation with us/them discourses. Through discussion, dialogue, and formal education, my respondents actively counter claims that being Muslim and being American are mutually exclusive. They address misconceptions and stereotypes, while demonstrating in everyday ways that these identities can be fully integrated.

In this chapter I discuss the contributions of the project focusing on theoretical contributions to complexity of theories of othering as well as substantive contributions in

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the form of empirical data on an understudied population. I then address the key findings surrounding my research question: What are the experiences of Muslims serving in the U.S. military? I consider the overall experiences of my respondents and the effects of the us/them atmosphere on these experiences. I also consider themes of citizenship that emerged in the data. I then discuss the limitations of this study and areas for further research.

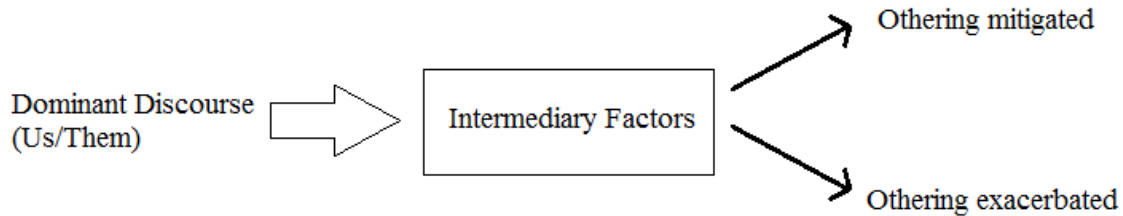
THEORETICAL CONTRIBUTIONS

In this study, I began with a dichotomous conceptualization of us-versus-them. In the introductory material I discussed the centrality of this framework in investigations of the experiences of Muslim Americans following 9/11. Processes of othering that distinguish in-group from out-group are intensified by periods of conflict which can exacerbate a sense of competition or threat between the groups, leading to situation of us-versus-them. Frameworks of othering and us/them have dominated the literature on Muslim Americans. This is quite clear in scholarship since 9/11; however, reliance on this frame when studying this group is not new. Said's (1978) seminal conceptualization of "Orientalism" which underlies most projects examining Muslims from a Western perspective, is a theory of othering and us/them. The use of this frame is not inappropriate. There exists much evidence of the activation of specific us/them boundaries, particularly following 9/11 and ideas and expectations of inherent competition, fundamental incompatibility, and the mutual exclusivity of identities of American and Muslim are quite clear and well documented.

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However, these processes have often been treated as a given, a foregone conclusion. There has been little discussion of the factors that shape these processes. This is a contribution made by this study. While I use the us/them framework, it is not a perfect fit for the experiences of all of my respondents. These areas of ill-fit alert us to the complexities in processes of othering. While us/them has been the dominant discourse in society following 9/11, my data makes it clear that the effects of these processes are not uniform nor universal. The effects of othering (and perhaps even the very processes by which othering occurs) are shaped by intermediary factors. These intermediary factors may mitigate the effects of othering or they may exacerbate them.

Figure 3: Process of Othering



This conceptualization is also consistent with the data in the existing literature which often finds multiple outcomes but has not actively theorized what shapes these different outcomes. For example, in their studies of the experiences of Muslim youth following 9/11, Ewing and Hoyler (2008) and Peek (2003) both find a variety of experience. Some of their respondents receive stares or odd look, some received comments and insults, and a few were targets of violence. Considering the data from the FBI (Chapter 2), we can also observe this diversity of experience. While anti-Muslim

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violence has increased dramatically overall, with only 481 incidents at the highest, it is clear that violence, while a part of the experience of this community, is not the only, nor even the primary, response. These leads us to query what factors shape these different outcomes. My data cannot to speak to these specific questions, but it can help illuminate some of the intermediary factors that shape experiences of othering.

Throughout this study I have drawn the reader's attention to the existence of narratives of us/them and processes of othering. I maintain that these processes are relevant to the experiences of my respondents; however, it is also clear from these narratives that these processes are complex and fluid. In this section, I will explore some of the dimensions of these intermediary factors.

Institutional Discrimination

The absence of official policies excluding Muslims for the U.S. military is a crucial characteristic that makes this group quite different from Japanese Americans during World War II and likely largely explains the difference in outcomes for these groups.

In the civilian context, the negative treatment of the Nisei was much more formalized (and more extreme) than the treatment of Muslims since 9/11. On February 19, 1942 President Roosevelt signed Executive Order 9066 which granted the War Department control of enemy aliens and the distinction between citizen and alien lost meaning (Shibutani 1978). Japanese Americans on the west coast were evacuated and interned. Over 100,000 individuals, many of these U.S. citizens, were forced to leave their homes.

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Although there were early fears that something similar would happen to Muslims following 9/11, it did not. There are some parallels, for example the class action lawsuit *Turkmen v. Ashcroft* alleges that male Muslim non-citizens in the U.S. were targeted following 9/11, subjected to unnecessarily long detentions, and kept in harsh conditions, prevented from seeking legal help, and subjected to physical violence. Another example would be the policy from 2001 until 2011 requiring the registration of young men from certain countries. However, these policies and practices are distinct from the experiences of Japanese Americans during World War II. While the registration policy was publicly known and mandated by the government, it did not force relocation of individuals, nor did it target the entire Muslim community, focusing instead on a specific sub-population of non-citizens. The alleged situation of non-citizen detainees, was not public knowledge, and the culpability of the government remains an issue the courts are debating. As with registration, it also did not target the entire Muslim community. These policies and practices, disruptive as they were to many families, did not include the wholesale rounding up of the Muslim community and relocation. In addition, the official rhetoric of the War on Terror sought to distinguish the enemy (terrorist) from Muslims. Though as I discuss in Chapter 2, this did not fully work, this is a very different institutional context than World War II when Japanese and Japanese Americans were explicitly and officially associated with the enemy, and even citizens of Japanese descent were treated as “enemy aliens”.

Japanese Americans in the military were also subjected to official discrimination. In June 1942, all Nisei were classified as 4-C, “aliens ineligible for military service (Moore 2003a; Shibutani 1978). In 1943, Nisei were again permitted to serve, but in

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segregated all-Nisei units. Unlike this, Muslims have never been formally prohibited from joining the military, nor has their service been segregated.

The absence of formal policies of exclusion and othering makes the case of Muslim since 9/11 quite distinct from Japanese Americans in World War II, making it no surprise that these groups would have different outcomes. Japanese Americans employed a narrative of citizenship, they used their military service to claim citizenship for themselves, their parents and their children. This does not form a salient part of the narratives of most of my respondents, probably because their citizenship was not threatened in the same way the Nisei's was. There have been no formal call to strip Muslims of their citizenship, no policies that treat citizens as non-citizens because of their identity. Muslim Americans have many paths to citizenship. There are no formal barriers on the naturalization of the parents of my respondents as there were for the Nisei.

My respondents' narratives are that they serve because they feel American. Inclusion is empirically much different for this group than for the Nisei. They feel like citizens because they are (or they have access to be). Formal policies that exclude the group being othered matter for the process of othering. These policies shape the experiences and opportunities of the group, and as my data demonstrate, shape the narratives respondents tell about their decisions to join the military.

External Labeling (Name & Appearance)

Being physically distinct can contribute to othering. Again, this is an area where World War II is instructive. While Japanese Americans were easily identifiable, Italians and Germans could "pass". Other markers, such as name and language, were used to

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identify these groups. Unlike Japanese Americans, Muslims are not necessarily physically identifiable, and the markers of Muslim-ness include phenotype, attire, name, and other factors. .

As I discussed in Chapter 2, Muslims are difficult to accurately identify based on a shared phenotype, though the social construction of this group in the U.S. often assumes that Muslims share a “brown” phenotype (and that all “brown” people are Muslim). Both are factually inaccurate but powerful conceptualizations in the contemporary period. There are Muslims of all races and all phenotypes.

Most of my respondents either identified as “brown” or could be read this way. Most of my respondents were South Asian or Arab, ethnicities often associated in popular imagination with Islam. Two respondents were multi-racial, and could certainly be read as “brown” if an observer was so inclined. In addition there were three white respondents in my sample. Although my sample does not reflect the diversity of the entire Muslim American community, there is some room for analysis/comparison.

The experiences of one of the white converts, Dani, illuminates the role of being externally identifiable in processes of othering. As a white man with a typical American name, Dani provides an interesting opportunity to explore how people are recognized or identified by others as Muslim. While many of my respondents discuss being identified as Muslim due to their name or appearance, Dani had neither external marker. Perhaps because of this, when his commander was asked about the status of Muslims in his unit, he reported that they did not have any despite the active role Dani played in the Muslim military community.

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Dress is an additional marker in the U.S. The military context shapes the applicability of using this marker to label someone as there is uniformity of dress. Only one of my respondents, Hakim, wore religiously identifiable attire while in uniform and he does note that elicited responses from people about his identity. Rahma, one of my women respondents, wears hijab (a headscarf) but only when she is not in uniform. Her discussion of this decision speaks to the role of external labeling,

I never wore hijab while I was in uniform but [my leadership] did say if I wanted to I could fill out the forms and everything and they would support me in that decision. I just never took that step cause I felt that if there was some type of comments being made, even if it wasn't directed towards me, I didn't want to aggravate or instigate or whatnot.

Rahma recognizes that wearing hijab in uniform will mark her as different, and perhaps open her up to comments that have previously not been directed towards her. Since Rahma does wear hijab when she is dressed as a civilian, she has had experience with the way this marker of Muslim-ness can shape interactions and processes of othering,

Outside of the military [...] I've had the whole people staring at me when I walk down the street if I have as scarf on my head or 'Oh yeah, go back to your own country'

Name is also another marker of Muslim-ness that may shape processes of othering. I asked my respondents how their colleagues knew they were Muslim, and name was the most common response: Ahmed, Pervez, Tarek, and Yusuf all mentioned the role their names played in being identified as Muslim by others.

I have a very common [Muslim] name, very popular name, and obviously the way I look, so most people are like where are you from? (Tarek)

[The patient] looked at my name badge, she was friendly, she wasn't angry towards me at all, and she's like 'Oh are you Muslim?' So I said 'Yeah I am.' (Tarek)

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I mean they recognized my name, me being Muslim (Pervez)

As soon as they saw my name tag [they knew I was Muslim] (Yusuf)

The Muslim American community presents a complex case for understanding the role of external labeling on processes of othering. Being “brown” is often associated in popular culture with being Muslim, but this measure is often inaccurate providing both false positives and false negatives. Attire and name are also used as ways to identify Muslims. Some members of this community may find themselves identified by a combination of all of these characteristics, while other members can “pass” on all of these markers. In addition, unlike ethnic categories, such as German and Italians in World War II, being Muslim is a more fluid identity. Some individuals may find themselves given this label even if they don’t self-identify with it, while other will rarely if ever be assumed by others to have this identity.

Due to the set up of this study, external labeling and internal labeling was consistent for my respondents. They self-identified as Muslim, so when others identified them thusly based on external markers, this was consistent with their self-identification. How processes of othering play out in the case when self and external identification differ is beyond the scope of this study, but an area for further research.

Geographic Location

Location and culture of the local geographic area is also a factor that may shape processes of othering. This is not something that my data provides much leverage on, but comments from a few respondents suggest that this is a factor that should be included in theorizing these processes.

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Geographic location will shape the diversity of the civilian community the military base is in and can also shape the acceptance of Muslims off-post. For example, when I spoke with Kareem he was stationed in the Deep South and noted the effect this had on his sense of belonging,

I'm in the sticks of Georgia right now so there is nothing but white or black around me, everywhere I look is either white or black, no Hispanics, no Italian-Americans, definitely no Middle Easterns [sic] [...] I've got another month left here and I can't wait. The lack of diversity here is killing me.

On a broader scale, Rahma, discusses the differences between her experiences in the United States and those of her sister in Europe,

She's been physically attacked, prodded with umbrellas, prodded by old people with umbrellas just sitting at the bus station and yelling at her 'Go back to your own country' [...] Her kids have been attacked. She's gotten discriminated against. So all the experiences that she's experienced, I'm glad to have not had that here, that's one of the reasons I choose to be here.

Whether the setting is military or not can also have an influence, making this case study particularly interesting. Basim provides one of the clearest examples of the way the military can be a protective environment. After leaving the military Basim recognized that the military provided a level of protection absent in civilian society,

it's a big time adjustment. Just like going from a controlled area, a fish bowl, to an open sea where you can be a target to anybody and you can't do anything about it. [If] Anybody in the military called me names I would have just go to unit commander and he would reprimand them. Here people scream at you in the streets, calling you names, but you can't do anything about it.

Another aspect of location specific to the military context is distance from combat. My negative cases were concentrated in language units stateside, while my respondents who had seen combat had some of the most positive things to say about their

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experiences. Perhaps this is due to seeing practical value of diversity in the combat zone as several respondents spoke of. Likely it also a product of the different nature of in- and out-groups under combat conditions. In theater, in-group is very viscerally defined as those not potentially trying to kill you. The importance of trusting unit members under these conditions will override other possible schisms. On the other hand, most of the negative cases state-side were in office-like contexts. This perhaps encouraged peers to engage in office gossip and politics and to constantly be negotiating in- and out-groups within the office.

Leadership

Leader shapes the atmosphere of a unit for all members and can play a central role in experiences of othering. This is one of the elements that is most clearly expressed in my data. Some leadership is invested in diversity and provides support in a variety of forms that successfully mitigates the potential negative effects of us/them discourses. In these cases, my respondents are able to easily dismiss the examples of othering they experienced. Leadership that is supportive of diversity may arise out of abstract ideological commitments, but in my sample it also seems to occur commonly in units where the practical value of diversity is clear. For example, my respondents who served in Afghanistan and Iraq often noted that their language and/or culture skills were valued by team members who saw the practical value of working with other service members who could communicate effectively with locals. In cases such as these, diversity is a clear advantage for the unit, and so there is a practical reason to value and support inclusion.

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On the other hand, leadership that is not supportive of diversity or actively works against it can exacerbate us/them tensions. In these situations, us/them divisions are reified. These leaders privilege us/them identities over possible shared unit identities. In these cases, my respondents felt singled out for being Muslim, their Muslim identity became a source of suspicion and a lightning rod for negative treatment and experiences. In these cases, not only is leadership failing to be supportive of diversity, but often it is actively reinforcing discourse of us/them communicating in a variety of ways that this division is real and important. In doing this, these leaders create weak unit cohesion, there is no shared unit identity, and these units are marked by cultures of gossip and suspicion. Interestingly, all of these cases occurred in stateside posts. In these situations, leaders may see little value to this type of diversity and so existing discourses gain power. In addition, unlike combat units that are separated from civilian society, these units may be in closer contact with civilian society and so be more susceptible to this discourse.

Peer Relations

In addition to vertical relationships with leaders, horizontal relationships between peers also shaped the experiences of my respondents. Tarek speaks to the importance of peer relationships in shaping his sense of inclusion, even in the face of behaviors that could have left him feeling excluded,

There's times where you feel uncomfortable but I think a lot of that was associated with people making remarks [...] For example someone making a remark about terrorists or someone making a remark about al-Qaeda. All those negative things you hear on the news. It was never targeted towards me. I was always **peer side by side**. [emphasis mine]

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The role of peer relationships in changing experiences from potentially othering to inclusive was also clear in Yusuf's discussion of name calling as a form of hazing. While being called "al-Qaeda" during training could have been an othering experience, Yusuf ties this experience into the process of becoming a soldier. In this context, the harassment is an indicator of full belonging. He was not treated differently, or excluded from this process of hazing that he sees as ultimately leading to being a member of this elite, cohesive group. In this case, not being insulted would have indicated he did not belong. Similarly, Mahmood saw teasing and joking between peers as a sign of strong group cohesion. This speaks to the importance of peer relationships. In those cases where peers are supportive and inclusive, this sort of experience becomes a sign of inclusion. However, when these peer relationships are weak or exclusive then this same treatment means something very different.

Drinking off-duty was another example of the role of peer relationship. While Mahmood, who as we've seen was in a strong peer network, did not think abstaining from alcohol would lead to being othered, Omar, who was in much weaker peer networks, saw not drinking as something that led his peers to avoid spending time with him,

They know that I'm not going to go drinking with them so I had less friends 'cause he's not gonna do anything cool.

Omar's characterization of socialization with his colleagues is very different from Mahmood who argues that although he did drink alcohol, abstaining would likely have little impact on off-duty socialization. While there are several possible reasons for this, the nature of their peer relationships were quite different, and the comfort level of being

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different around your peers speaks to the importance of considering peer relations as an aspect of a full theory of othering.

FLUIDITY OF US/THEM

I found examples of processes of othering and us/them throughout my interviews; however, they were complex and fluid. Leaders, peers and other factors shape who is seen as in-group and who is out-group. Group membership changes as individuals move within institutions and social networks.

The very framework of us/them requires recognition of this fluidity. Using a frame of us/them, even purely as an academic tool to describe processes of othering, requires the implicit use of a specific perspective. In identifying one group as associated with “us” and another with “them”, the researcher by necessity takes on the perspective of the dominant group. For example, in my discussions of discourses that pose Muslims as “them”, I must implicitly speak from the perspective of dominant American society. While this frame provides leverage on the experiences of being othered, it also limits. A few of my respondents, most notably Jamal, encountered experiences that made the usually implicit perspective clear. Jamal found himself framed as “them” by two very divergent perspectives. As a “brown” Muslim man, he recognized that he was seen as “other” by many Americans. He expected this to shape his military experiences, though it largely did not; though he did discover the visceral power of these divisions when a young guard almost shot him late one night while in Iraq. While Jamal was “them” from this perspective, he was also framed as “them” by al-Qaeda. As a result he was personally threatened, and members of his family were physically targeted by agents of al-Qaeda,

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who murdered both his uncle and his father. For Jamal, both aspects of his “them-ness” shape his experiences fundamentally. His case clearly illustrates the existence of a multiplicity of us’s and them’s. Who is us and who is them is largely a matter of perspective, and every individual has the potential to be both “us” and “them” at the same time from different perspectives.

EMPIRICAL CONTRIBUTIONS

This research makes several substantive contributions to sociological knowledge. This project provides empirical data on an understudied and difficult to access population. I also contribute to the discussion of Muslim American identity. Most notably I add additional support to the idea that “Muslim” has become a salient label since 9/11, and that it is used in the contemporary period in ways that transcend differences in ethnicity, nationality, and even religiosity. My respondents all accepted the label of “Muslim”, unlike De Angelis (2012) who encountered resistance from her respondents to her use of the label “Mexican American”, none of my respondents questioned my use of the category “Muslim” or what I meant by it. Additionally, despite differences in ethnicity, nationality, and religious history and practice, I found many similarities across the narratives of my respondents. My respondents are ethnically diverse, and my sample included individuals who identified as Arab, South Asian, white and multi-racial. In terms of religious practice, I had respondents who were born into Muslim families and others who converted. Some of my respondents were pious and practiced regularly, other practiced only during the holidays, and a few were non-practicing, including one respondent who actively identified as an atheist. Despite this heterogeneity, these

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individuals all recognized that they “counted” as Muslim and self-identified with the label in deciding to contact me. In line with current literature on the American Muslim population, this is a population that is quite diverse, and one that identifies along complex axes of religious practice, family history, and labeling by others. There is no monolithic experience of being Muslim, but my respondents did share a common understanding of what “being Muslim” meant to others, and many had common experiences with being identified as Muslim by others.

Another contribution that this study makes is to refute common claims of mutually exclusivity of Muslim and American identities. In the activation of us/them boundaries in the United States follow 9/11, the idea that being a “good” Muslim and a “good” American are impossible at the same time has become very common. Based on the data from this project, the expectation that Muslim and American identities are incompatible is utterly unfounded. This expectation arises from processes of othering and has its roots in particular histories of conquest and colonialism. This assumption is articulated throughout American society. From the variously expressed sentiment that Muslims “go back to their own country”, to formal congressional hearings on the radicalization of Muslim Americans, to Huntington’s Clash of Civilizations model, the idea that it is impossible to be American and Muslim is pervasive. This idea can even be found reproduced in publications seeking to demonstrate the integration of American Muslims. Pew (2011) in their report on Muslim Americans, reproduces this idea of mutual exclusivity when they ask respondents whether they think of themselves first as an American or first as a Muslim. This question forces the respondent to pick one identity

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over the other in a way that does not seem to actually represent the experiences of many American Muslims.

I do not find support for the idea that Muslim Americans must select between being Muslim and being American. Following the advice of Sirin and Fine, I avoided any questions that forced respondents to select between identities. That my respondents identify as Muslim is a given due to recruiting methods; however in their narratives none suggested a sense of tension between being Muslim and being American. Even when confronted with us/them attitudes, my respondents engage in dialogue and negotiation. They seem to see themselves quite naturally as both Muslim and American. They express strong senses of belonging, of being American. In the course of 16 hours of discussions, which covered a wide range of experiences, opinions, and memories, the idea that they must choose or prioritize being Muslim or being American never once came up.

An additional contribution of this study is the data on the value of institutional diversity it provides. While the data is not generalizable, and I can only speak to the perceptions of my respondents, consistent themes of seeing oneself as an asset to the military mission provides an avenue for further research and investigation. Many scholars have noted the ways in which the natures of the conflicts in Iraq and Afghanistan have differed from wars such as World War II. Whether it is characterized as “unconventional”, “asymmetrical”, or “fourth generation”, the nature of these conflicts shapes the need for quality training and investment in developing culturally competent troops. Cultural training and cultural competency have become components to successful mission accomplishment. Beyond classroom training, personal contact with diverse colleagues is crucial to developing cross-cultural competency. Cross-cultural competency

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takes time and experience to develop. Within a setting such as the military where units may be insulated and tightly cohesive, there can be a tendency to mimic peers and leaders (O'Connor 2010). If you are surrounded by homogeneous peers and leaders it is more likely that a certain set of biases will be internalized. In cultural training sessions studied by O'Connor, she noted that soldiers felt that personal experience had the greatest impact and that "Having the opportunity to independently interact with someone for the targeted culture is the greatest element to learning a specific culture and reducing anxieties associated with uncertainty." (196). This requires that the military itself be composed of diverse individuals.

In addition to serving as diverse contact for their colleagues, many of my respondents also felt they contributed to military missions through their language and culture skills. It is important to acknowledge that language skills in particular are in no way inherently tied to ethnic or religious identity. Non-Muslims are capable of learning languages and cultures associated with Islam, just as many Muslims have no linguistic or cultural fluency in these areas. However, within the current educational and social culture of the United States, many of these skills are concentrated in particular communities. Languages spoken by my respondents included Arabic, Urdu and other South Asian languages. While language and culture can be learned by anyone, several respondents also discussed the subtleties of language, dress, and behavior that they are attuned to through growing up in Muslim communities. My respondents served as both formal and informal teachers.

This project also contributes to the Institutional/Occupational theory in military sociology. I use this frame to understand the motivations of my respondents and to link

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these narratives with ideas of citizenship. I found both institutional and occupational themes, sometimes expressed by the same respondent. This finding runs counter to the original model described by Moskos which conceptualizes institutional and occupational motivations as opposite ends of a spectrum. In the original conceptualization, to become more occupational was to become less institutional. This aspect of the theory has since been strongly critiqued, and my data add to the literature that argues that institutional and occupational are better conceptualized separately.

In the process of completing this research, I also provide some methodological insight. An unexpected finding of this study is that there are several substantial barriers to accessing this population and there appears to be a lack of social network connecting this population. Other scholars engaged in work with this community should be aware of these barriers and plan accordingly. Working within personal networks provided some leverage on this issue. Other researchers may benefit from institutional support; however, my experiences suggest that this may be difficult for an outsider to obtain. Additionally, discussions with researchers within the military attempting work with this population suggests that even with institutional support of the military this population may remain difficult to access. Researchers should take into consideration the small size of this population and the degree of surveillance this population may feel subject to between media inquiries and the over-surveilling of military populations generally.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

Most of my respondents had positive experiences that reflected their own personality, their fit with the military lifestyle and their willingness to pursue

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opportunities presented by military service. As with the general population, experiences were varied. Just as it would be foolish to speak about “the Lutheran military experience”, it is similarly useless to speak of a monolithic shared experience for Muslim service members. Some loved the discipline, for example Hakim who left civilian school to join the military, other hated it as in Omar who felt the military lifestyle was akin to fictional soul-sucking creatures.

My analysis of the narratives of my respondents is structured by three central themes: us/them, leadership, and citizenship. In my consideration of us/them, which occurred primarily in Chapter 6, I consider whether or not the us/them discourse that is so common in civilian society can also be found in the military. Finding that it is present in the military, I turned to leadership in Chapter 7 to determine how leadership shapes us/them tensions. Leadership had varied effects, in some cases it mitigated us/them tensions, in others it exacerbated them. Finally, in Chapter 8, I considered themes of citizenship in my respondents’ narratives; I focus on the idea of military service as an expression of citizenship and the ways in which many of my respondents engaged in negotiation of their identities and bridge building between communities.

Us/Them is in the Military

Us/them attitudes similar to those in the civilian sphere can be found throughout the military. This is consistent with discussions of the permeability of the military/civilian boundary in American society. In general, my respondents articulated a sense that being Muslim set them apart to some degree. Many of my respondents spoke of hearing jokes or stereotyped comments about Muslims. Mahmood and Yusuf both

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discuss epithets such as “al-Qaeda” being directed towards them during basic training. While these examples are generally minor, they do demonstrate that us/them can be found throughout the military. Additionally, many respondents reported being identified as Muslim because of their name and/or appearance. The respondents I spoke with recognized that a distinction between American and Muslim was being drawn. Although many of my respondents acknowledged the presence of this boundary, the relevance was less clear.

Most felt that while they were aware of this boundary, and often expected it to have negative results, it rarely did. For example, Ahmed anticipated that his name would negatively impact his chance at promotion, but was happily surprised to find that it did not. Similarly, Jamal remains surprised that his background never came up. Rahma is publically recognized as the first Muslim member at a local VFW post; her identity is singled out as salient, but it poses no barrier to her membership. I characterize this as the presence but irrelevance of us/them in the military. While the idea that Muslim and American are mutually exclusive categories is identified by my respondents in the military, for most it has no practical effect.

The irrelevance of this boundary may be attributable to certain characteristics of the military that have facilitated integration of other groups, such as the hierarchy of the organization and formal EO policies and procedures. For several, formalized EO procedures made the military a particularly protective environment in the face of this attitude. Several respondents utilized military equal opportunity offices to address instances where us/them attitudes did affect their military careers, and most were successful. Basim even notes the difference between the military where hate speech can

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be directly addressed versus the civilian world where there is little accountability for such behavior.

As another way to establish the existence of the us/them discourse in the military I briefly considered the role of Islam in military education. Using the narratives of Omar and Dani I was able to discuss the absence of Islam in language training at the Defense Language Institute (DLI). I consider this a facet of us/them in the military as this lacuna seemed to stem from concerns about teaching about “them” even in courses that are dedicated to learning language and culture. In addition, this void seemed to foster the development and maintenance of negative stereotypes and misconceptions among students. The absence of nuanced discussion of issues such as the use of religious texts by insurgents allowed students to grow more convinced in their own perceptions, potentially reinforcing attitudes that perpetuate and reify the differences between “us” and “them” in primarily religious terms.

While most of my respondents articulated a recognition of this us/them boundary, for most it was not seen to have a practical effect on their experiences of their career. With a few exceptions, my respondents acknowledged the us/them boundary but declared it irrelevant. As Yusuf puts it, “I think it’s no matter who you are as long as you perform”. Most of my respondents felt that being Muslim had no effect on their military careers or experiences. For the most part, these respondents felt like full members of their units. They worked towards shared goals with their colleagues, and felt that their abilities were respected by others.

The experiences of Kareem and Jamal also added depth to the analysis by illuminating the ways in which conceptualizations of us/them may problematically

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oversimplify the issues. Kareem discusses the ways in which who is “us” and who is “them” depends on perspective, discussing the way in which al-Qaeda’s ideological view categorizes us/them differently. Jamal’s experiences demonstrate this clearly.

Leadership

The idea of us/them appeared in almost all of my interviews. However, for some respondents this discourse had little effect while for others it fundamentally shaped their experiences. A theme that emerged in exploring this dichotomy of experience was the role of leadership. Leadership involves using social influence to get a group of people to accomplish a goal. Leadership is a central component of U.S. military culture, and plays a crucial role in the success or failure of efforts to integrate diversity in the force. Leaders shape both behavior and atmosphere of the unit as it relates to diversity, tolerance, and integration. Leaders serve as role models, shaping the behavior of other members. They also directly shape behavior through the enforcement (or non-enforcement) of anti-discrimination and equal opportunity policies. Leadership that saw value in diversity and was invested in supporting it, mitigated negative effects of othering, making this an irrelevant frame. However, leadership that repeated stereotypes or fears reinforced this tension, creating toxic environments in which Muslim service members felt excluded.

I presented three cases of strong leadership and three cases of weak leadership. For Tarek, leadership sets an example of support. Following a troubling encounter with us/them, his colleagues rally around him allowing him to contextualize the experience as minor and exceptional. Despite its presence, us/them does not come to characterize his military experiences. Najib experiences the benefits of institutionalized religious

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accommodation during Ramadan at a military academy. The normalization of this accommodation makes Najib feel included and like a valued member of the team. Later in his career, Najib serves with a leader who models the value of cultural competence. Although Najib does not serve in a unit with a language, culture, or intelligence mission, his commander values cultural competence and even holds himself up to this standard by learning Arabic and engaging in dialogue with locals to improve his cultural understanding. In this way he is not just paying lip service to the importance of diversity but is demonstrating the value he sees in diversity through his own actions. Pervez finds that his particular skill set makes him useful on the ground in Afghanistan, and the clear practical value of diversity serves to shape a context in which diversity is valued and supported.

On the other hand, for those few respondents who had negative experiences related to being Muslim, leadership played a central role in exacerbating tensions. Zafir spent a short career consistently at odds with a commander who called him names, accused him of supporting the insurgents, and singled him out of harassing treatment. Sadia spent two years under formal investigation after her ex-husband made unfounded accusations against her following a domestic quarrel. Basim felt that his previously positive experiences soured following 9/11. Questioned by security and denied religious accommodation, Basim felt insulted and degraded. In all three cases, the respondents left the military earlier than planned and with negative impressions. In all three cases unit-level factors, particularly leadership seemed to play a crucial role.

That both Zafir and Sadia reported that other minority service members were negatively treated in their units (Zafir notes racism against black service members, Sadia

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notes abuse of LDS service members) suggests that the poor leadership may be creating a generally toxic environment. At the same time that these cases may both be products of generally toxic unit cultures fostered by weak leadership, it is clear that us/them informed the particular treatment Zafir and Sadia received. Among other things, Zafir is called “Taliban” and is accused of supporting insurgents. Sadia is accused of being a “terrorist”. The generally destructive leadership in both cases suggests that us/them was simply the form this mistreatment took for these service members rather than us/them being the source of the mistreatment. Omar observed the general tendency to find an “other” in the military. While Muslims are an obvious choice following 9/11, he was convinced that military culture (and perhaps human nature) would always lead to finding some group to treat with suspicion,

They do that against, even if there’s no Muslims, or any minority religion, or even race in the military, they do it against themselves. Like the ones who are just so Republican are constantly bashing the ones they see as Democrats. And it’s like what’s the point? There is no point. You’re still like 1% of America, like the military is like 1%, and you have more in common than opposite. It was frustrating. But even if you weren’t there, they’d still be at each other’s necks. They needed us to pick on, and they were united at that.

Zafir and Sadia are visually very different, Zafir is a quintessential “other”; a recent immigrant, Zafir identifies as brown and speaks with an accent. Sadia, however, appears to be “one of us”, she is white, speaks fluent American English, and does not wear hijab. That such dissimilar individuals have experiences so flavored by us/them supports my argument that it is Muslim identity that is salient here.

The cases presented here, both positive and negative, clearly demonstrate the difference leadership and institutional support can make in the experiences of individuals.

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Citizenship

I began this project with the expectation that citizenship would be a central narrative for Muslim service members, as it was for Japanese Americans in World War II. However, the respondents in my sample rarely use their military service to directly make claims on citizenship. Some of the difference may be due to historical experience. The right to serve in the military has not been seriously threatened for Muslims, nor have they been systematically interned as Japanese Americans were. My respondents serve for a myriad of reasons, but they all take their ability to serve for granted.

I argue that rather than seeing military service as a way to fight for rights, my respondents take their rights for granted, and in so doing, military service become a symbolic performance of citizenship. My respondents don't feel that they need to serve to prove their loyalty or their American-ness. They don't serve to become Americans; because they see themselves as Americans, they serve. Additionally, many respondents spoke about the importance of being outspoken and standing up for their rights and correcting anti-Islamic sentiments when they encountered them. Opportunities to engage in dialogue with non-Muslim colleagues and build bridges were also common motifs. Many of my respondents also recognized that they were in unique positions to break down barriers/stereotypes within the military and within Muslim communities in a clear illustration of the contact hypothesis.

Themes of citizenship flow throughout the narratives I collected. Most of my respondents are not using their military service to make direct claiming to citizenship, but the connection between service and citizenship remains clear. These themes included the repeated articulation of institutional motivations to join the military. For many of my

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respondents, serving in the U.S. military is a way to express their sense of being American. They frame their service as a way to “give back”, not as a way to prove themselves.

Citizenship can also be seen in the frequency with which my respondents engaged in dialogue and education. In spite of the us/them atmosphere which I have discussed at length, my respondents reject the idea that they must choose between being American and Muslim. They embrace both identities and when necessary engage in interactions both formal and informal to demonstrate this compatibility. Yusuf, as with many of my respondents, is seen as an asset by others in his unit because of his cultural competence. As part of a combat team, he does not have to engage in much discussion, his actions and the usefulness of his knowledge, demonstrate for him that he is both American and Muslim. Hakim and Rahma engage more directly in negotiation. Both see it as a responsibility, and a privilege, to engage in dialogue and education, explaining and demonstrating the compatibility of these identities. Hakim is quick to stand up for his rights, and literally engages in a display of uniformed difference as he wears religious headgear in uniform. He, as with several other respondents, also uses his position in the space between us and them to build rapport with locals. In the face of us/them pressures he redefines a world in which Muslim American is not just a possibility, but a reality. Rahma also engages in bridge building activities. A source of information for her unit, she also takes on the role of dispelling stereotypes about both Muslims and service members. She sees her combined identity as giving her a unique perspective which she is eager to share.

LIMITATIONS OF THIS STUDY

Although this study provides some very interesting information and insight into the experiences of Muslim service members, there are some limitations that must be acknowledged. Most importantly, I would like to remind the readers that these data are not generalizable. Due to the nature of the research question and the nascence of this field of research, this project was not designed to be generalizable, but rather to provide a starting point for examining themes. The data used in this study comes from a small sample (15 respondents) that was selected non-randomly. Although I believe the data used in this project to be of high quality, the composition of the sample certainly shaped the themes I identified and the conclusions I draw.

I faced several challenges in finding willing respondents. The sample that I ended up with produced some coherent themes; however, there is reason to suspect that there may be bias in the sample. Given the nature of my research announcement, Muslim identity was highlighted in the recruitment process and framed the narratives of my respondents. I did not have access to respondents who were “passing” as non-Muslims, though I do have information from respondents that indicates that some Muslim service members do engage in this practice. My sample only reflects the experiences of service members who were openly known to be Muslim. This likely does have an effect both on experience and perspective. My sample also does not include any Black Muslim service members. Whether or not being black and Muslim would shape military experience in a different way is unknowable from this study.

Additionally, although leadership is a central theme that came out of my data, it was not one of the original framing concepts of this project and so the interviews were

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not designed to elicit detailed information about leadership styles and experiences. As such, I can speak only in a very general way about the role of leadership. Themes in my data suggest that it is a relevant characteristic, but my data is not able to provide comparisons of styles or answer many questions about the role of leadership.

AREAS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

The primary avenue for further research is confirming the patterns and themes I have identified here with other sources of data. My sample is small, and although some fascinating themes and patterns are suggested, it is impossible to establish the existence of these patterns at a larger level from these data. The value of this project has been in opening the door of this research and suggesting a framework for understanding the experiences of Muslim service members serving in the post-9/11 U.S. military.

In addition to confirmation of patterns I have outlined, research that was designed to elicit data about differences in leadership style and effectiveness of different styles would also contribute to this topic.

Several respondents discuss feeling that they were assets to their units and helped achieve the mission; it would be valuable to empirically establish if having Muslim service members and leadership that supports them has facilitated the mission of winning hearts and minds in Afghanistan and Iraq.

APPENDIX A: RESEARCH ANNOUNCEMENT

Research Study on Muslims Serving in the Military

Salaam Aleikoum!

I am a PhD student in Sociology at the University of Maryland and I am writing my dissertation on the experiences of Muslims serving in the U.S. military. I am seeking volunteers who are either currently serving in the U.S. military or who have served in the military in the last 10 years for interviews.

The interview will take about an hour and includes questions about personal experiences in the military. The names of people participating in the interviews will be kept confidential. Interviews will be summarized and quoted in ways that protect each individual's identity.

For more information or to set up an interview please email **Michelle Sandhoff** at **msandhof@umd.edu**.

Jazakallahu Khairan!

APPENDIX B: INTERVIEW GUIDE

- Could you tell me a little bit about your military service [probe for when served, branch, significant events, such as deployments, and MOS]
- What made you decide to join the military?
- How did your family react? [probe for community reaction if applicable]
- What would you say was the most positive experience you had in the military?
- What would you say was the most negative experience you had in the military?
- Did/Do your colleagues or commanders know you are Muslim?
- How did they become aware that you are Muslim?
- Could you give me an example of a situation where being Muslim might come up?
- Could you tell me about a situation where you found being Muslim was helpful?
- Could you tell me about a situation where you found being Muslim was a disadvantage?
- Tell me about your relationship with other members of the unit? Your commander? The chaplain?
- Did/Do you practice Islam while serving? In what ways? [probe for specific examples like prayer and fasting]
- Could you describe what it was/is like [praying/fasting/etc] in the military?
- Overall, what was/is it like being a Muslim serving in the military?
- [veterans] Why did you leave the military? [active duty in first tour] Do you plan to stay beyond this term? [active duty career] Why did you decide to make the military a career?
- Do you identify with the label “veteran”? Are you proud of your service?
- [veterans] If you had the chance, would you do it again?
- Do you talk about your experiences in the military with other Muslims?
- I have visited communities that are both supportive and unsupportive of military service. How do you think this community treats the idea of military service?
- In what situations with other Muslims will you bring up the fact that you are a veteran/soldier?
- In what situation with non-Muslims will you bring up the fact that you are a veteran/soldier?
- Could you tell me a little about your family background? (probe for ethnicity, immigrant status, citizenship status if not already addressed)
- Are you a member of any veterans’ organizations?
- Are you a member of any other Muslim organizations?
- Do you know other Muslim veterans or soldiers who might be interested in participating in this project? [leave information about project for them to pass along]

Thanks.

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