

MUSLIM AMERICAN DOUBLE CONSCIOUSNESS

Inaash Islam

Department of Sociology at Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University, Blacksburg

Abstract

This article engages in a theoretical discussion and application of Du Boisian double consciousness to understand the formation of the Muslim American self. Du Boisian double consciousness, and its three elements (the Veil, Twoness, and Second Sight) are used to understand phenomenological processes of Muslim American self-formation as being situated within and conditioned by structural contexts of racialization. By drawing on critical scholarship that highlights the operation of the Muslim racial project in contemporary U.S. contexts, I show how double consciousness emerges through the Othering of Muslim Americans at the macro, meso, and micro levels of society, which then defines them as outside of the U.S. national imaginary, and denies them their equal civic status as citizens of the state. By utilizing double consciousness to understand the Muslim American self as it is embedded in racialized U.S. contexts, this article fills a crucial gap in the literature by theoretically expanding on racialized processes of Muslim American identity formation in the racialized contexts of the United States.

Keywords: Double Consciousness, Racialization, Civic Status, Nationalism, Muslim American, Identity

INTRODUCTION

Scholarship that situates the Muslim experience within the field of race and racism is not new in the post-9/11 era (Meer and Modood, 2009; Said 1979). Yet, in the past two decades, we have undoubtedly witnessed a significant rise in sociological works that understand and describe the Muslim experience as being *racial* (Cainkar and Selod, 2018; Garner and Selod, 2015; Modood 2005; Selod 2018). These works have elucidated the processes of racialization that inscribe race on what were previously understood as non-racial bodies (Cainkar 2009; Galonnier 2015; Moosavi 2015; Selod and Embrick, 2013; Selod 2015). The Muslim racial project (Bayoumi 2015; Omi and Winant, 1994) has highlighted how a global racist system, heavily influenced by a western discourse of the ‘War on Terror,’ has structured the collective phenomenological racial experience of Muslims on a global scale (Cainkar 2009; Meer 2010). It is precisely this experience that

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has created the conditions of racialization which contemporarily form the nature of the Muslim group-identity as it is embedded in modern racialized society. Critical scholarship on the Muslim racial project has alluded to the formation of the Muslim self as being embedded within the social, political, and cultural contexts of racialized societies, but has overlooked the need to elaborate on how this self-formation process takes place (Beydoun 2018; Selod 2018). This article seeks to address this oversight by applying Du Boisian double consciousness to understand and situate the processes of self-formation of Muslim Americans in the subfields of race and racism.

Du Boisian scholarship has only just begun to receive its due recognition, particularly in the past few decades—albeit much of this work has still not engaged in a thorough revision of the overwhelmingly White sociological canon that pervades mainstream sociology in the United States and Europe (Meer 2019). Nevertheless, contemporary works that theorize minority consciousness have found Du Boisian double consciousness to be invaluable in unpacking the positionality and lived experiences of minority populations in racialized societies (Haider 2018), particularly because this concept allows us to understand phenomenological processes of self-formation as being situated within and conditioned by structural contexts of racialization (Du Bois 1903; Itzigsohn and Brown, 2015). Of particular note among the works that focus on racialized *Muslim* consciousness is Nasar Meer's (2010) book *Citizenship, Identity and Multiculturalism: Rise of Muslim Consciousness*. In this critical piece, Meer studies the racial experience of Muslims in Britain to make a powerful case for Muslim inclusion and political mobilization in British society. He draws on the notion of double consciousness and second sight as theorized by Du Bois, and as situated within racialized contexts of the United Kingdom, to show that British Muslims use their religious identification to develop a Muslim consciousness, in order to mobilize against and resist their marginalization and make claims for the full benefits of British citizenship. While Meer's seminal work establishes context for Muslim (double) consciousness in the UK, arguing for ways in which we can better conceptualize British Muslim identity formation and inclusion, we are still missing adequate theorization of Muslim double consciousness in the United States. Thus, with scholarship on Muslim American racialization on the rise, and the works of W. E. B. Du Bois finally receiving due recognition within the discipline of sociology, this article attends to how Muslim American double consciousness emerges and is embedded in racialized U.S. contexts.

I preface my discussion by attending to an important terminological nuance. Who qualifies as 'Muslim American'? I recognize that the term 'Muslim American,' much like the term 'Muslim,' is simply a socially constructed racial category used to simplify and define a diverse number of racial and ethnic groups with an Islamic association, including, but not limited to South Asians, Middle Easterners, and North Africans. This simplified term, while useful in many ways, is also significantly limiting in that it is vague, homogenizes a vast number of racial and ethnic groups, and ignores multiple subjectivities. However, despite the limitation of this term, it is the Muslim racial project that necessitates the use of the monolithic term 'Muslim American' for the purposes of this article. Commenting on the use of this term, Louise Cainkar and Saher Selod (2018) state:

The racial project of the Muslim as terrorist is “grounded in the politics of empire” (Ho 2004), and because its emergence was layered upon earlier racial and gender projects, its racialized subjects are positioned and identified in multiple intersecting ways, including by geography, skin color, clothing, gender, religion and beliefs. There is one single racial naming of this made-up group of people, except that they are understood by the state and the public to be threats: terrorists and potential terrorists (p. 166).

Thus, while I recognize both the limitations of the term, and the many intersecting racial and ethnic identities that may be a part of Muslim American self-formation processes, I will be using the term ‘Muslim American’ to encapsulate the racialized process of self-formation that emerges as a result of the Muslim-as-terrorist (or -as-potential-terrorist) racial project that has shaped and informed the racialized position of Muslim Americans in the racial hierarchy of the United States.

I begin by exploring the Muslim racial project to provide background on the kinds of racialized conditions that undergird the Muslim American experience of double consciousness. I focus on key works of the past two decades that have situated the Muslim racial project within processes of racialization. Then, using José Itzigsohn and Karida Brown’s (2015) analysis of Du Bois’s theory of double consciousness, I engage in a theoretical discussion that applies this theory (the Veil, Twoness, and Second Sight) to understand the racialized conditions that shape Muslim American self-formation.

RACE, RACISMS, AND THE MUSLIM RACIAL PROJECT

The racial experience of Muslims in a post-9/11 context can be viewed as part of a “racial project” (Omi and Winant, 1994, p. 56) that entails notions of citizenship, nationalism, sexism, and racism (among others) in order to define Muslims as Other (Said 1979). This racial project is key to contemporary Muslim American self-formation; however, it is not new to the twenty-first century, nor did it begin post-9/11 (Cainkar 2009). In fact, several scholars have argued that it is an ongoing project since before colonial times (Cainkar and Selod, 2018; Grosfoguel and Mielants, 2006; Meer and Modood, 2009; Said 1979). At the end of the fifteenth century, religious difference marking Otherness in the pre-modern world transformed into racial/ethnic difference in the colonial world, producing a global racial/ethnic hierarchy that continues to demarcate the Muslim world as ‘racially Other’ from the Christian world (Grosfoguel and Mielants, 2006). Consequently, this historical racial imaginary has not only allowed us to conceptualize the Muslim racial project as being based on religious difference, but has also situated this project within racial discourse as it unfolds in contemporary times. Theories of race and ethnicity that acknowledge the roots of this historical project allow us to better understand the racialized processes undergirding the Muslim racial project, and give us a better understanding of the phenomenological experience of what it means to be a Muslim American during times of rampant American Islamophobia (Beydoun 2018).

In this section, I highlight how extant theoretical apparatuses of race, racism, racialization, and racial ideologies help us understand the Muslim racial project and its critical role in the process of Muslim American self-formation. Understanding racialization and the Muslim racial project is critical if we are to engage in the application of Du Boisian double consciousness to the formation of the Muslim American self. The reason for this is that, according to Du Bois’s theory of double consciousness, racialized groups’ self-formation is influenced by how these groups are positioned in the racial hierarchy of modern racialized societies (Itzigsohn and Brown, 2015). As a result, the process of racialization is central to understanding the position and experiences of Muslim Americans in the racialized hierarchy of the United States.

Racialization and the Muslim Racial Project

A repertoire of scholarship dating back to the 1970s has understood the Muslim racial project as being undergirded by religion and culture and has accounted for how this project has foundations in western-Muslim relations in the colonial empire. This

scholarship has proven critical in conceptualizing how Muslims are ‘raced’ and come to acquire racial meaning on the basis of their religious affiliation. For example, Edward Said’s (1979) theory of Orientalism provides us with a framework with which we can understand how colonial relations have created an imagined Muslim world that is inherently conflated with backwardness and anti-modernism, and is thus a threat to the hegemony of the west, Christians, and Whites. Tariq Modood’s (2005) formulations of cultural racism helped to establish the characterization of race as not simply a form of biological determinism, but one that also encapsulates culture. Arguably, Modood’s framework of cultural racism has fundamentally enabled us to pivot from conceptualizing Islamophobia as being anti-religion, to being about race and anti-Muslim racism. Furthermore, Michael Omi and Howard Winant’s (1994 [2015]). theory of racial formation and subsequent concept of racialization has succinctly given us the language and the process by which we can adequately describe how the Muslim experience becomes explicitly racial.

Omi and Winant’s concept of racialization allows us to understand the Muslim American experience with discrimination as being racial and thus not solely based on religious difference, although religion plays a key role in the ‘racing’ of Muslims. Omi and Winant (1994 [2015]) elucidate how religion can be raced through this process: “The concept of racialization signifies the extension of racial meaning to a previously racially unclassified relationship, social practice, or group” (p. 111). In other words, through racialization, cultural and religious aspects with attributed racial meanings become inscribed on the body, which then determines the kinds of treatment that racialized bodies receive (Garner and Selod, 2015; Modood 2005). We can see how religion becomes raced through the particular example of religious signifiers. Religious signifiers can acquire racial meaning when they become treated as being inherent to an individual or group (Cainkar 2009; Selod 2018). For example, as one of the most visible markers of Islam, the hijab signifies meaning in that it is associated with Islam, and its female wearers are viewed as cultural threats and therefore unassimilable (Cainkar 2009) and in need of saving by the west (Abu-Lughod 2013). Muslim men (or brown men in general) who sport beards or have Muslim sounding names are seen as potential terrorists and a threat to homeland security (Cainkar 2009; Selod 2018). Notably, these signifiers are gendered and culminate in gendered racialization (Selod 2018). For example, as a result of being visibly Muslim, hijabi Muslim women are ascribed racial meanings of ‘oppressed,’ ‘backwards,’ ‘foreign,’ or ‘dangerous,’ and thus tend to be more vulnerable to anti-Muslim racism (e.g. violent hate crimes, hijab pulling, name calling) as compared to Muslim men (Razack 2007; Selod 2019). Although Muslims as a group have not typically been understood in racial terms, racialized contexts, racial discourses of anti-Semitism, and post-9/11 era politics have certainly opened up the possibility for scholars to approach an understanding of Muslims as a group that has come to acquire racial meaning, much like the Jewish population (Bonilla-Silva 2006; Meer and Modood, 2009; Said 1979). However, while this is accepted in academic circles, there is undoubtedly still some contention on the acceptance of Islamophobia as anti-Muslim racism in western publics and mainstream media (Meer and Modood, 2009).

While the repertoire of aforementioned works helps to conceptualize the Muslim racial project as being borne out of processes of racialization, it is imperative to situate Muslim American racialization within the conditions of the racialized social system of the United States before we can unpack how Muslim American double consciousness is formulated. For this purpose, I will be using Tanya Golash-Boza’s (2016) comprehensive theory of race and racism to articulate the interactional and dialectical process through which post-9/11 racial ideologies are embedded in the racialized social system of the United States and give shape to Muslim American self-formation.

Muslim Racial Ideologies in the Contemporary Racialized Social System

While Omi and Winant's (1994 [2015]) theory of racial formation serves as an exceptional starting point for theorizing the Muslim racial project, it fails to adequately encapsulate the interactional process of how anti-Muslim racisms are sustained long enough to produce a context in which Muslim American double consciousness can be born. Golash-Boza (2016) addresses this gap through her comprehensive theory of race and racisms, which brings together Omi and Winant's theory of racial formation, Joe Feagin's (2006) theory of systemic racism, and Eduardo Bonilla-Silva's (1997) concept of "racialized social systems" (p. 469). Golash-Boza (2016) argues that race and racisms operate in a dialectical process, in which race, racial ideologies, racist practices, and racial structures work within a racialized social system to produce racism and racial inequalities. In other words, racist structures are influenced by and require justification through racial ideologies, which are then reinforced through racist practices to reproduce racist structures. It is primarily this system that affects and constrains the racial experience and identity formation processes of Muslim Americans. Moreover, it is this system that produces the contextualized racial ideologies that are responsible for the meanings inscribed on Muslim bodies in the process of the Muslim racial project. Thus, the Muslim (American) racial project's process of racialization interacts in rather critical ways with the racialized social system of contemporary U.S. society by creating and reiterating racial ideologies that position Muslims essentially as Others.

With racial and racist ideologies emerging out of social, political, and economic contexts (Omi and Winant, 1994 [2015]), these ideologies are constantly fluid and continue to form and transform racial categories which they then target with social, political, or economic agendas. In Omi and Winant's racial formation theory, racial categories are constantly changing, depending on the ideologies that emerge out of historical contexts. For Muslims, the post-9/11 context has significantly shaped the kind of racial ideologies that determine their racial experience. For example, after 9/11, the discourse of 'war on terror' has conflated the Muslim (and Arab) identity with 'terrorist,' thereby implying that all Muslims are terrorists, or have the potential of being a terrorist. Thus, Muslims become posited in this racial ideology as anti-western, anti-American, as threats to democracy and freedom, and thus as "anti-citizens" (Glenn 2009, p. 33). Similarly, contemporary anti-immigrant sentiments have prevented Muslim refugees from seeking asylum, have portrayed both American Muslims and non-American Muslims as threats to the national imaginary, with immigrant Muslims in particular being viewed as harboring ill-will against the democratic ideals of the United States (Ayoub and Beydoun, 2017; Maira 2009; Waikar 2018; Zopf 2018). According to Bradley Zopf (2018), the Muslim ban of 2017 has reiterated these sentiments, racializing Arab and Middle Eastern Americans "as anti-American whose allegiance to the United States is not possible because of religion" (p. 181). These sentiments have consequently prevented the acceptance and integration of Muslims in the United States (Zopf 2018). Thus, the racial category of Muslims shaped by the racial ideologies dominant in the post-9/11 context, is steeped in notions of nationalism, belonging, democracy, racism, and sexism, paralleling the double consciousness and racial placement of the internally colonized—much like the experience of Black Americans (Blauner 1972; Glenn 2009; Massey and Sanchez, 2010).

Having now established that the racial ideologies, racialization, and the racialized social system of the United States systematically characterize Muslims as Other, we can better understand the conditions in which Muslim American racialized subjectivities are formed. In the next section, I draw on Du Bois's seminal work of double consciousness, as well as on Itzigsohn and Brown's (2015) analysis of Du Boisian double consciousness, to conceptualize Muslim American processes of self-formation.

DOUBLE CONSCIOUSNESS

Double Consciousness is introduced to us in “Of Our Spiritual Strivings” which is the first essay in Du Bois’s work *The Souls of Black Folk* (1903). In this piece, Du Bois describes the Black American consciousness and experience of racialization, stating:

[A] sort of seventh son, born with a Veil, and gifted with second-sight in this American world—a world which yields him no true self-consciousness, but only lets him see himself through the revelation of the other world. It is a peculiar sensation, this double-consciousness, this sense of always looking at one’s self through the eyes of others, of measuring one’s soul by the tape of a world that looks on in amused contempt and pity. One ever feels his two-ness—an American, a Negro; two souls, two thoughts, two unreconciled strivings; two warring ideals in one dark body (Du Bois 1903, p. 2).

Emerging through the process of racialization, double consciousness is a way to describe Black Americans’ conscious awareness of their status, position, and perception in society. Double consciousness is an awareness of one’s duality as a minority group—a distinct awareness that one’s minority group is simultaneously located inside and outside of the dominant society. Through this dual position, minority groups come to develop a sense of self through experiencing both the familiarity and peculiarity of what it is to be a “stranger in mine own house” (Du Bois 1903, p. 10). This is experienced through the dominant society’s accounting of the minority group’s existence in society, but also their denial that the minority group is part of dominant society. Consequently, minority groups’ experiences, subjectivities, and identities are shaping, and being shaped by, their dual position in society, and emerge as a result of simultaneously being “intimately part of a polity while excluded from its public culture” (Meer 2010, p. 40). Du Boisian double consciousness provides the conceptual tools and theoretical language with which we can describe how minority groups, and Black Americans in particular, understand and conceptualize their identities and experiences as part of racialized social systems.

The foundation, and perhaps the beauty, of Du Boisian double consciousness is that it acknowledges and illustrates how racialized groups’ sense of self is constructed in social contexts that are embedded in and subject to implicit and explicit power relations. For Black Americans—the racial group for which this theory was envisioned—such awareness involves seeing the self as ‘Other,’ and as a problem uniquely embedded in racialized social, cultural, and political contexts. Due to being culturally, socially, and politically situated and mediated, double consciousness serves as *the* novel theory that can adequately explain minority group identity and experience in contemporary contexts in the United States. As for conceptualizing Muslim American self-formation, double consciousness helps to account for how Muslims are embroiled in post-9/11 era politics and how they experience dualities in facing racialization, othering, hostility, and contempt on the one hand, and having their full civic status and identity as Muslim American recognized on the other.

For Itzigsohn and Brown (2015), double consciousness is a truly significant theory in the fields of race, racism, and racial identity. In their work, they unpack double consciousness in a way that allows for the concept to be applicable to other racialized groups’ self-formation. I find their analysis of the theory to be particularly useful in understanding Muslim American self-formation for two reasons. First, they recognize the significance of this theory in understanding the position and self-formation processes of the racialized in our modern racialized societies. Second, they show how double consciousness makes evident the link between phenomenological experiences of the

racialized and the macro structural processes of the racialized world, which then give rise to the self-formations of racialized subjects. In unpacking double consciousness in these crucial ways, Itzigsohn and Brown (2015) show how this theory can be used as a theoretical tool to see how and why minorities and racialized groups possess impaired civic status, are defined as being outside of the idea of the nation, and are made to feel as if they are a ‘problem’ in America’s racialized society. In the next section, I will unpack double consciousness further, by examining and outlining the three elements that form double consciousness and construct the Muslim American sense of racialized insider-outsider: the Veil, Twoness, and Second Sight.

The Veil

The Veil plays a crucial role as a critical interactional interface for both the racializing and the racialized, in that it structures how both the racializing and the racialized see, experience, and understand their social worlds. The Veil is foundational for contributing to double consciousness, as the awareness of double consciousness emerges through racialized groups’ recognition (and later internalization) of White society’s (henceforth termed *the racializing*) distorted perceptions of the racialized (racial and ethnic minority groups) as mediated through the Veil. Put simply, the Veil is a one-way mirror that allows the racialized to account for, acknowledge, and internalize aspects of their identity as they are perceived by the majority (the racializing). Due to being a one-way mirror, the Veil prevents the racializing from viewing and acknowledging critical aspects of the racialized’s identity, and only shows the racializing a reflection of their own dominance over, and perceptions of, the racialized. In this way, the Veil serves as “an intangible boundary that affects the perceptions of and relations between racializing and racialized subjects” (Itzigsohn and Brown, 2015, p. 235). Too often, the Veil is understood as the color line that divides and separates the races. However, reducing the Veil to a line that simply divides the races not only obscures its significance as a structural element of modern racialized societies, but also obscures its functional complexity in the lived experiences of both the racializing and the racialized.

In Du Bois’s eyes, the Veil both benefits and incapacitates the racializing and the racialized (Thomas 2020). For the racializing, the Veil offers them the power to create and project their constructions of the racialized on to the Veil, thereby determining their own privileged positions in the racial hierarchy. This is evident in Du Bois’s conception of the Veil, particularly in terms of Black-White relations, where racializing subjects (i.e. the White world) project their own constructions of the racialized onto the Veil. In doing so, the racializing are endowed with significant power to engage in their own self-formation. By creating projections that ascribe meanings of Otherness to the racialized groups, the racializing are able to define themselves as not-Other, thereby structuring their own privileged position within the racialized social system. Furthermore, due to the social, political, and cultural power of the racializing, the overwhelming presence of these projections are accepted as the truth and reality of the racialized by the racializing. Thus, while the racializing see nothing of the racialized save their own projections of racialized subjects, these same projections are accessed by the racialized, becoming the reality of the racialized as well. In other words, when Black folks access the projections of themselves that are created by the White world through the Veil, these projections are internalized and processed as part of the formation of the Black American racialized self: “(B)lack folk’ developed a double consciousness where they have a sense ‘of always looking at one’s self through the eyes of others’. This is because negative disapproval in the form of presenting African-Americans as possessing degraded cultural heritage or

limited contribution to American life creates an internal echo of white America's racist judgements." (Meer 2007, p. 47).

Due to being created by the racializing, the projections of the racialized are inaccurate, dehumanizing, and distorted. Du Bois argues that if the racialized respond to these projections by articulating themselves, emphasizing their own humanity, and representing their own subjectivities, these renditions will not be recognized by the racializing, due to the fact that the Veil makes invisible all projections of the racialized other than those created by the racializing. The systematic ignorance of the racializing via the Veil results in the racialized becoming imprisoned in and cut off from the dominant world of the racializing. Du Bois (1938) succinctly remarks on the Veil's incapacitation of the racialized, stating:

They can conceive of no future world which is not dominated by present white nations and thoroughly shot through with their ideals, their method of government, their echoic organization, their literature, their art; or in other words their throttling of democracy, their exploitation of labor, their industrial imperialism and their color hate (p. 15).

It is thus that the Veil significantly incapacitates the racialized, rendering them powerless against the racializing and the overbearing presence of the Veil (until, of course, they can access second sight—a gift given to the racialized through their experience of the Veil).

While benefitting the racializing subjects with privilege and power, the Veil simultaneously incapacitates the racializing by forcing them to contend with the harsh reality that they support a discernable contradiction which emerges when they compare their vision of a true democracy to the version of democracy that contemporarily manifests in actuality. As James M. Thomas (2020) articulates, for the racializing, there is an "irreconcilable contradiction between *what is* (American racism) and what *ought to be* (American democracy), and [this] prevents the realization of a unified national 'spirit'" (p. 1348). Rather ironically, while incapacitating the racializing, it is primarily this contradiction of the Veil that privileges the racialized, offering them the insight and the opportunity to contend with the hypocrisy of the racializing. However, as this paper will demonstrate, the apparent complexities of the Veil and the position of the racialized in the racialized social system significantly complicate the ability of the racialized to pierce through the Veil and assert their humanity to the racializing. This is particularly evident in the experience of Muslim Americans with the Veil in contemporary U.S. society.

Muslim Americans and the Veil

Rather than operating as a 'color line' that separates American society (the racializing) from Muslim Americans (the racialized), the Veil separates the two groups on the basis of racial meanings that emerge from racialization, nationalism, and Islamophobia. Racial meanings of Otherness, nationalism, boundary making, denial of citizenship, and a denial of belonging are all inscribed onto the Veil, thereby shaping the relations of the racializing with Muslim Americans, dominant society's perceptions of Muslim Americans, and the internalization of these perceptions by the racialized. But, as mediated by the Veil, what do these perceptions look like, and how do these racial meanings manifest?

Studies of racialization have detailed how perceptions of Muslims at macro, meso, and micro levels of society result in the kinds of racialized experiences that Muslim Americans have (Cainkar and Selod, 2018; Razack 2007; Selod 2018). These studies have

shown that the Veil facilitates the perception that Muslim Americans are incompatible with values of the west, anti-citizens, threats to western democracy, terrorists, potential security threats, essential foreigners, and 'Other.' Consequently, by accessing the Veil as the racialized, Muslim Americans must contend with the reality constructed by the racializing: that Muslims (American or not) are not viewed as belonging to the United States, and are instead located outside of the American national imaginary.

The nature of the Veil as experienced by Muslim Americans is evident through policy and organizational changes in the United States. For example, projections of Muslims and their communities as dangerous and deserving of suspicion are evident in policies and practices like The National Security Entry-Exit Registration System (NSEERS), the Patriot Act, the 2019 Muslim ban, the surveillance of Muslim communities, and the creation of the Department of Homeland Security (Bayoumi 2008; Byng 2012; Naber 2006). The Muslim ban, in particular, communicates to Muslims that they will not be accepted as part of the nation, due to the racialized meanings attributed to their Muslim identity. Titled 'Protecting the Nation from Foreign Terrorist Entry into the United States,' the Trump Administration's Executive Order 13769 was posed as a travel ban that suspended the entry of Syrian refugees indefinitely, as well as individuals from seven countries (all of which are Muslim majority) that did not meet adjudication standards under U.S. immigration law (Office of the Foreign Register 2017). Through President Trump's executive order, the notion that Muslims pose a threat to the "Nation" as a result of being "Foreign Terrorist[s]" reinforces the Veil by attaching racialized meanings to the identity of Muslims which position Muslims as being foreign, Other, and a visceral threat to the U.S. imaginary. Thus, policies created by the racializing project an image onto Muslims that reinforces a social construction of reality based on racialized meanings of Otherness that are attached to the Muslim identity and deny Muslims all the rights entailed to U.S. citizenship.

However, policy changes alone do not structure the Veil. Mass mediated projections constructed by the racializing of the racialized serve to construct a social reality of the Veil that supports and validates legislation and policy. Media are crucial for maintaining and reinforcing the socially acceptable meanings attached to racialized identities, in that they operate to proliferate preconceived conceptualizations and day to day images of racial difference that validate policy agendas and their accompanying social constructions of reality. In doing so, these mass mediated images socialize the U.S. public to view and treat Muslims as dangerous, thereby shaping the prejudicial behaviors of the racializing and ultimately culminating in heightened levels of discrimination, hate crimes, and even murder of Muslims (Beydoun 2018).

Furthermore, the Veil as reinforced by mass mediated messages, not only reinforces the racializing's projections of Muslim Americans as Other and always-deserving of suspicion, but also reinforces *within* Muslims, an internalization of the acknowledgment that this is how the racializing see them. We see evidence of the power of the Veil and the role of mass media in structuring discursive legitimation of Muslim Otherness particularly after 9/11 (Haider 2020). Michelle D. Byng (2012) suggests that the phrase "the war on terror" was so commonplace post-9/11 that it became "the nomenclature of presidential speeches, news reports, the 9/11 Commission Report and Congressional hearings about the threat of homegrown Islamic terrorism" (p. 711). By validating America's war on terror, the media sought to construct a societal morality that not only reinforced the structure of the Veil, thereby demarcating the boundary between good and evil (locating 'America' on one side and Muslims on the other), but it also sought to justify all policies and practices produced in response to 9/11.

Faced by the realities of the Veil, the racialized have to contend with a particular conundrum produced by the Veil: the 'Good'/'Bad' Muslim paradigm (Maira 2009). In

this paradigm, good and bad Muslims are distinguishable in their commitment as “defenders of freedom” or “enemies” (p. 633). In order to be considered a good Muslim, or a Muslim who performs “good citizenship” (p. 634), Muslim Americans must pierce the Veil by testifying their loyalty to the nation, asserting their faith in democracy, and publicly emphasizing that Muslims are loyal U.S. citizens and patriots. Good Muslim citizens help to justify the war on terror, “affirm the humanitarian premise of U.S. invasions that presumably liberate oppressed peoples around the world” (p. 634), and perpetuate the democratic success of the United States. Bad Muslims, on the other hand, are ominous subjects who “speak in foreign accents and pose a threat” (p. 636) to the national imaginary. Paradoxically, however, should Muslim Americans attempt to pierce the Veil by representing their own subjectivities as American (read: as ‘Good’ Muslims), these renditions will not be recognized by dominant society since the overwhelming obfuscation of the Veil renders Muslim subjectivities invisible to the racializing. Due to the power of the Veil, racialized stereotypes, discourse, and policies, in addition to the government’s surveillance of Muslims—both the ‘good’ and the ‘bad’—demonstrate that “unless proven to be ‘good’, every Muslim was presumed to be ‘bad’” (Mamdani 2004, p. 15). Thus, Muslim Americans are left with no option but to internalize the projections of the racializing and acknowledge that even if they perform good Muslim citizenship, they will never be accepted as legitimate citizens of the United States. In this way, the projections of the racializing become the reality of Muslim Americans, which must then be processed in Muslim American self-formation.

Lastly, it must be acknowledged that the Veil serves as a critical interactional interface for the racializing as well, in that it has a significant part to play in the racializing’s self-formation. Due to the overbearing presence of the Veil, the racializing do not see beyond it, nor do they see their own actions and projections as Islamophobic or racist—rather, they view their actions as being in the interest of national security (Beydoun 2018; Mamdani 2004). By defining Muslims as outside of the national imaginary, the racializing are able to (1) define themselves within this imaginary, (2) retain social, cultural, and political power, and (3) reinforce their privileged position within society’s racialized structures, as well as their groups’ position in the racialized structures characteristic of modern societies today. As such, the Veil structures the social realities of the racializing, by allowing them to define who they are, by defining who they are not (Said 1979).

Through the Veil, the racializing are thus able to structure the system of racialized societies, ensuring their own privilege by oppressing the racialized. Du Bois shows that one significant consequence of the Veil is that, as a result of being racialized subjects who lack recognition from the racializing, it is likely for the racialized to enter into a state of despair. Itzigsohn and Brown (2015) describe this state as a symptom of being a racialized subject in American society. However, for the racialized, the Veil need not be a total mechanism of oppression for the racialized, rather, as Du Bois notes, such racialized social systems can also offer the racialized significant potential to thrive. The racialized can do so by creatively asserting themselves through ‘strivings’. For Du Bois, the duality of agency within an oppressive system allows for the racialized to engage in strivings despite their systematic oppression. In this lies a critical tension within Du Bois’s work, which is elucidated in the multiple dualities he describes as being part of the second element of double consciousness: Twoness.

Twoness

Du Bois defines Twoness as a condition whereby Black Americans have “two souls, two thoughts, two unreconciled strivings; two warring ideals in one dark body” (Du Bois

1903). In other words, Twoness is an internal conflict within the self, in which one makes two identity claims that are deemed to be in constant contradiction to each other. For Black Americans, Twoness is experienced as feeling and being both American and Black, and thus, simultaneously inside and outside of mainstream society. As part of the Black American identity, Twoness is “the phenomenological description of the condition of self-formation behind the Veil” (Itzigsohn and Brown, 2015, p. 239) which entails processing internal identity-based complexities and external contextual positionalities for the purpose of identity formation. Thus, Twoness (and reconciling Twoness) is, in large part, central to the experience of double consciousness and the formation of the racialized self. In experiencing Twoness, Black Americans and other racialized groups experience a number of dualities which define their racialized positionalities and social realities which constitute their double consciousness. For the purposes of unpacking and applying Twoness as it is experienced by Muslim Americans, I will examine three specific dualities that I view constituting Twoness: duality of identity, duality of community, and duality of agency and oppression.

Duality of Identity

Black Americans experience a duality of identity in that their identities are split into two: as American, and as Black. While on the one hand, one of their identities claims to be part of the American society, their other identity represents their claim to their racialized group (Black). While both identities are treated as separate, each has connotations of belonging, (in)compatibility, marginalization, and oppression. Most critically, as a result of these connotations, the two identities remain in paradox—whereas one’s Americanness may offer an individual the claim to citizenship and full civic status, one’s Blackness may revoke said claim, as a result of his/her/their racialized group’s position in the American racial hierarchy. Du Bois’s double consciousness illustrates this critical paradox, by showing that the racial dualism in American society “denies [Black] Americans the same degree of civil liberties afforded to their white American counterparts” (Meer 2007, p. 49). At the same time however, the same racial dualism that denies Black Americans their civil liberties, also expects the same degree of civic duty expected of an ideal (i.e. White) American citizen. Thus, while Black Americans are not beneficiaries of their legal civic status, they are still required to fulfill the obligations of those with legal status.

In a similar manner to Black Americans, Muslim Americans also experience duality of identity, in that their identities are split into two: as American and as Muslim. Like Black Americans, each of their identities also has connotations of citizenship, belonging, marginalization, and oppression. And, like Black Americans, Muslim Americans experience the racial dualism of America, in that they are not afforded the legal civic status they qualify for, but are still expected to participate and engage in the duties of democratic citizenship. For example, Meer (2010) shows that in the United Kingdom, Muslims are not beneficiaries of anti-discrimination legislation, but remain full recipients of its obligations. Similarly, Muslim Americans occupy an impaired civic experience in the United States, which is strongly influenced by the paradox underlying their dual identities. Frameworks of racialization have posited that these two identities are viewed by the American state and public as being incompatible, as a result of Islam’s presumed antithetical stance to western democracy (Cainkar and Selod, 2018; Maira 2009). However, despite the presumed incompatibility of their identities, Muslim Americans experience a crucial paradox that ultimately constrains their every action. Told to ‘integrate’ and ‘assimilate’ into U.S. culture and American democracy by the state and

general public, Muslim Americans experience extreme pushback by the racializing for even attempting to engage in civic activities (Karam 2020).

One clarifying example of this paradox is the recent political representation of freshmen U.S. congresswomen Ilhan Omar and Rashida Tlaib. Both have faced inordinate amounts of Islamophobia during their time in office, in that they have been criticized by the public for being outsiders, for imposing values of a ‘demonic’ faith on Americans, and for bringing sharia law to American politics (Pintak et al., 2018). In this critique lies the distinct paradox embedded in the duality of the Muslim American identity—one is expected to integrate, but because you are *Muslim*, you will never be integrated. Thus, the Twoness experienced by Muslim Americans, the power of the racializing, and their ability to define who gets to claim and benefit from equal civic status remain unmistakably evident. Herein lies the critical failure of America’s claim to democratic citizenship.

Duality of Community

As a result of their duality of identity, Black Americans also experience a duality of community. They simultaneously belong to the mainstream which seeks to offer its members the benefits of American citizenship, and to a community that is systematically marginalized by and made invisible to the mainstream—the Black community. Nasar Meer (2007) states that according to Du Bois, “self recognition is a form of cultural recognition which, necessarily, sees one’s cultural identity in connection with the cultural identities of other members of one’s community. Hence, the injuries suffered from prejudice are not only due to the overt hostility from the majority but also come from minority invisibility” (p. 47). The paradox of this duality is that while the mainstream dehumanizes and excludes Black Americans, their own marginalized community offers them support, agency, and recognition. Du Bois’s (1903) essay “Of the Faith of the Fathers” serves as a critical piece that demonstrates the role of the Black Church—a central facet of Black life and community—in offering Black Americans recognition, respite from marginalization, and a source of communal and spiritual support. Du Bois states that the Black Church is “the social center of Negro life in the United States and the most characteristic expression of African character” (Du Bois 1903, p. 123). However, due to the invisibilizing characteristic of the Veil, the rich cultural and social Black world, of which the Black Church is integral, continues to remain invisible to the dominant world, resulting in communal marginalization of the collective Black identity.

In much the same way, Muslim Americans also experience a duality of community. Although they make claims of belonging to mainstream American society, this same community is responsible for dehumanizing and marginalizing their Muslim communities (Beydoun 2018; Selod 2018). Of course, the term “Muslim” is a generalization that erases the diversity and difference of the many ethnic communities that make up the U.S. Muslim community, and obscures how some ethnic and racial Muslim communities experience more marginalization in American society than others (Maghbouleh 2020; Zopf 2018). However, by and large, Muslim communities, irrespective of ethnic and cultural differentiation, experience a collectively racialized experience of duality as a result of their collective racialization as Muslims (Maghbouleh 2020; Selod 2018). In other words, collectively, Muslims across the United States experience othering on the basis of their Muslim identities. In this way, the mainstream American community, of which many Muslim Americans feel like they are part as a result of their American identities, actively participates in the marginalization of the Muslim community as a whole.

Furthermore, in the same way that the Black Church is a significant source of agency and support to Black Americans, mosques and Muslim communities also offer Muslim Americans a sense of belonging, support, and agency. In fact, a study conducted by David R. Hodge and colleagues (2018) shows that Muslims who frequently attended mosque were more likely to feel supported and receive expressions of support by their family and community members. The findings of this study suggest that encouragement by such communities provides relief and support to Muslim Americans in “challenging circumstances in the United States” (Hodge et al., 2018, p. 158). A similar study by Ann W. Nguyen and colleagues (2013) shows that across a multi-racial and ethnic sample of Muslims in Michigan, “mosque attendance and level of congregational involvement positively predicted receiving, giving, and anticipated emotional support from congregants” (p. 535). The findings of both studies demonstrate that such support is indeed integral to the functioning and belonging of marginalized communities in the United States. And, considering that for Muslim Americans, their Muslim identities are most under threat of racializing processes, their identification with and support from their religion and religious communities can offer them some respite and support when faced with the harsh realities of the Veil.

Duality of Agency and Oppression

As part of the experience of Twoness, Black Americans, Muslim Americans, and arguably other racialized groups in the United States experience a duality of agency and oppression. Via the mainstream, they experience multiple oppressions: the racializing’s projections of the racialized are dehumanizing and incorrect, but are forced upon the Veil for the racialized to view and internalize; the racialized are marginalized by the mainstream and prevented from achieving and benefitting from full civic status; and the racialized’s self-expressions, truths, and diversities are rendered invisible in the eyes of the racializing. In these ways, the racialized are incapacitated, marginalized, and made voiceless by the racializing. However, the silver lining of experiencing these oppressions, at least as Du Bois sees it, is that oppression equips the racialized with agency that is molded through the harsh conditions of racialization. But, what does this agency look like, if the racialized are truly left voiceless by the Veil?

According to Du Bois (1903), agency for the racialized manifests as responses to Twoness and the Veil. Du Bois suggests that there are three specific responses that Black Americans have had to the Veil—(1) revolt and revenge, (2) adaptation through assimilation, and (3) strivings—all of which involve agency that is shaped out of oppression:

But when to earth and brute is added an environment of men and ideas, then the attitude of the imprisoned group may take three main forms, --a feeling of revolt and revenge, an attempt to adjust all thought and action to the will of the greater group; or finally, a determined effort at self-realization and self-development despite environing opinion” (Du Bois 1903, p. 30).

Via these three modes, Black Americans and other racialized groups can respond to their multiple oppressions in ways they see fit. In *Dusk of Dawn* (1940), Du Bois notes that young educated Black Americans responded to their Twoness by either assimilating into White worlds and avoiding contact with Black organizations, or by practicing separatism and distancing themselves from the White world as much as possible.

Similarly, Muslim Americans have experienced and negotiated their Twoness in multiple ways. For example, in their study on gendered identity formation, Selcuk

R. Sirin and Michelle Fine (2007) find that Muslim American men are more likely than Muslim American women to perceive their dual identities as fractured and to feel incapable of integrating one identity with another. “Even when they may have experienced less discrimination by integrating in both worlds, they seemed to still feel ‘split’ between immersing in their home culture and integrating in both cultures” (Sirin and Fine, 2007, p. 159). Alternatively, in her study on Muslim men and women’s negotiations with anti-Muslim racism, Baljit Nagra (2011) finds that both genders are likely to reaffirm their Muslim identities and increase identification with their marginalized group in order to respond to the discrimination they face on the basis of their marginalized identities. Similarly, in her study on second-generation Muslim American parents, Rebecca A. Karam (2020) uses in-depth interviews to show that Muslim-Americans respond to racialization through strategic assimilation—navigating their Twoness by selectively maintaining ties to their minority community while assimilating into mainstream society. Finally, in her comprehensive study of female Muslim American college students’ identity formation, Shabana Mir (2011) finds that depending on their individual personalities, phenotypical characteristics, and levels of religiosity, Muslim American women are likely to engage in several strategies of negotiation with their Twoness, including passing as non-Muslim by distancing the self from religious affiliation, choosing liminality by socializing only with other Muslims, or assimilating into American pluralism through the “immoderate assertion of difference” (p. 558). Keeping in mind the vast diversity of Muslim American experience with the Veil, some strategies of negotiation with Twoness benefit some Muslim Americans more than others. In recognition of this complicated diversity, Du Bois offers the racialized with what he sees to be a more empowering alternative response to the tensions of dualities and twoness — strivings. Strivings manifest as agentic efforts towards “self-realization and self-development” (Du Bois 1903, p. 30), and are the key element leading to internal and external change in the plight of the racialized. However, for Du Bois, strivings can only be critically achieved through his third element of double consciousness: Second Sight.

Second Sight

According to Du Bois (1903), Second Sight is both a gift and a burden for the racialized, in that it shows them the overbearing presence of the Veil, while also allowing them to see through and beyond it. As a burden, Second Sight is what the racialized use to access the projections of the racializing, recognize the overwhelming power of the Veil and its influence on their lives, and acknowledge the racialized structures that constrain them. The ability to see the Veil and its awesome power is one of the reasons why racialized groups are likely to enter into a state of despair.

However, as a gift, Second Sight offers those who are racialized with certain opportunities whereby they can contend with, strategize, and rearticulate the constructions of themselves that are imposed onto the Veil by racializing subjects. The racialized can only take advantage of these opportunities by seeing through and beyond the Veil, thereby accessing the White world and gaining a better understanding of it. By accessing a view of the White world, the racialized can also understand the operation of the racialized structures that constrain them. This knowledge is crucial if the racialized are to ever reshape American social structures (Bonilla-Silva 2006). Thus, while the racialized see their distorted images reflected back at them, they are gaining a better understanding of the racializing, the racialized structures that constrain them, and the new possibilities of self-representation and organization of their worlds. This understanding opens up the possibilities of their emancipation and equality.

Most critically perhaps, Second Sight offers the racialized the opportunity to see and remark on the fallacy of democratic ideals as espoused by the racializing. By critiquing the distance between “democratic ideals and the practice of racial exclusion” (Meer 2007, p. 48) the racialized can offer insight into how the United States can conceptualize true democratic citizenship. As a result of simultaneously being inside and outside of mainstream society, the racialized are the most gifted at conceiving of ways to advocate for the equal civic status of the racialized, thereby improving the manifestation of a true democracy. Du Bois (1926) suggests that it is for this reason that Second Sight is truly a gift to the racialized, since, “once in a while through all of us there flashes some clairvoyance, some clear idea of what America really is. We who are dark can see America in a way that Americans cannot” (p. 290). It is the experience of oppression that allows racialized groups to conceptualize, understand, and strive towards the promises of democratic freedom and full civic status in ways that White Americans cannot. It is the racialized who have the experience, perspective, and the drive to contradict their racialized experience and advocate for transformative change.

However, given the nature of the Veil, one final question manifests as the ultimate conundrum of double consciousness: is there a limit to the attempts of the racialized to use their Second Sight to self-represent or make real these representations in the eyes of the racializing? Or, as Meer (2010) more eloquently posits, “How can one achieve a mature self-consciousness and an integrity or wholeness of self in an alienating environment? If, in the eyes of another, your humanity is perceived as lacking self-evidential qualities, how do you go about showing its existence?” (p. 45). According to Du Bois (1903), the answer to this question is that self-realization and recognition can be achieved through (1) the reconciliation of Twoness, and (2) the efforts of the racialized to strive.

For the racialized, the first step to be taken to attain self-realization is simply to merge “the double self into a better and truer self” (Du Bois 1903, p. 10). For Black Americans, this reconciliation often manifests as accepting the enduring hyphenation of ‘Black-American’. Similarly, for Muslim Americans, their reconciliation of Twoness manifests in the hyphenation of ‘Muslim-American’. Often understood as synthesized identities, sometimes as hybrid identities, and most commonly as hyphenated identities, the merging of the double self allows for the racialized to accept and own their double consciousness, while utilizing it for their own sociopolitical benefit (Meer 2010).

Hybrid Muslim identities have been particularly well theorized by identity and immigration scholars, especially in terms of western Muslim hybridity. For example, Baljit Nagra’s (2017) book on Canadian Muslims’ identity formation after 9/11 provides a stellar analysis of how Muslim Canadians have asserted their Canadian and Muslim identities in order to negotiate their experiences as second-class citizens in Canada. Similarly, Smeeta Mishra and Faegheh Shirazi (2010) use Homi Bhabha’s theorization of hybridity to demonstrate how Muslim American women perform and inhabit their hybrid identities through the contextual interpretation of Islam for the purpose of negotiating their everyday lived experiences as immigrant women in a post-9/11 context. While these works and others have been foundational in conceptualizing hybridity, they have missed the opportunity to adequately engage with the Du Boisian concepts of Twoness and double consciousness, which account for a critical element of the double self that hybridity does not: refusal to assimilate or adapt to the norms of the White/dominant world.

For Du Bois, assimilation is a loss of one’s true identity; it implies accepting or adopting an identity that one is not. Furthermore, in Du Boisian terms, it is not assimilation that Muslim Americans and other racialized groups should strive for. Iris Marion Young (1990) argues that “When participation is taken to imply assimilation, the

oppressed person is caught in an irresolvable dilemma: to participate means to accept or adopt an identity one is not, to try to participate means to be reminded by oneself and others of the identity one is" (p. 165). Thus, the true solution is to reconcile one's dual identities, and adopt a truer self. On this ingenious Du Boisian solution, David L. Lewis (1993) remarks: "The genius of *The Souls of Black Folk* was that it transcended this dialectic in the most obvious way—by affirming it in a permanent tension. Henceforth the destiny of the race could be conceived as leading neither to assimilation nor separatism but to proud, enduring hyphenation" (p. 281). It is by owning and embracing their Twoness, that Muslim Americans and other racialized groups can contend with the power of the Veil, and make claims to equal civic status, democratic citizenship, and belonging in the nation they call home.

Strivings

Of course, as a solution to the permanent tensions of double consciousness, the merging of the self into a better truer self opens up multiple avenues for the racialized to engage in strivings. For Black Americans, the possibilities of strivings manifest as movements to advance Black literature and art, the pursuit of higher education, the organization of demands for Black health, the launch of community oriented economic development ventures that increase the purchasing power of Black American communities, among many others (Itzigsohn and Brown, 2015). All of these initiatives "embody the constant striving of African Americans for recognition, the ability to shape their selves and their world—in other words, for full emancipation and equality" (Itzigsohn and Brown, 2015, p. 240).

For Muslim Americans, the possibilities of strivings are similar to those of Black Americans. For many, rearticulating media representations is often the first step to addressing the inaccurate and racialized projections of the racializing (Hirji 2011; Islam 2019; Kerboua 2016). As a result of the proliferation of distorted media images, Muslims have begun with an increasing tendency to "represent themselves through the proliferation of Muslim media sources. These Muslim media sources have simultaneously sought to pluralize the mainstream in reaching beyond Muslim audiences" (Meer 2007, p. 128). It is hoped that, with the popularity of social media and the increasing presence of Muslims in mainstream media forms like film and television, distorted representations of Muslims and Muslim Americans will transform into more accurate and 'truer' renditions of Muslims (Islam 2019).

Muslim American strivings also manifest as increased community service and political participation. Rosemary R. Corbett (2016) finds that Muslim American community leaders regard community service and engagement as being key acts of service that will help Muslims overcome Islamophobia and discrimination. As Corbett notes, their hope is that by engaging in these acts of service, Muslim Americans can demonstrate to the American community that they also make vital contributions to the United States. A large number of Muslim Americans are active members of chapters of the Islamic Society of North America (ISNA), which serves as the largest Muslim American organization in the United States. As a critical organization for the North American Muslim community, ISNA emphasizes community service in its chapters by developing outreach and welfare programs and by collaborating with civic and service organizations in order to contribute to Muslim communities and the American community at large. In recent years, other Muslim American organizations have also flourished in participation as a result of Muslim Americans seeking ways in which to engage with the larger community. Some of these organizations include the Council of American-Islamic Relations (CAIR), the Islamic Circle of North America (ICNA), Muslim American

Society (MAS), and Muslim Legal Fund of America (MLFA). These organizations and their members are also active in allying with progressive causes such as the Black Lives Matter movement and the Women's March (Chouhoud et al., 2019; Mogahed and Chouhoud, 2017). In fact, the findings of a study conducted by Youssef Chouhoud and colleagues (2019) complement previous research suggesting that minority status serves as one of the "core determinants of political participation" (p. 736). As a result of their double consciousness and racialized identities, Muslim Americans seek to engage in community service and political participation in order to emphasize their equal civic status and engagement as members of American society, whose religious values are compatible with the values of a society with true democratic citizenship.

Lastly, by engaging in advocacy politics and demonstrating that their group identities and democratic citizenship are not mutually exclusive, Muslim Americans can engage in strivings to ensure their voices pierce through the Veil. According to Young (1990), "a democratic public should provide mechanisms for the effective recognition and representation of the distinct voices and perspectives of those of its constituent groups that are oppressed or disadvantaged" (p. 184). These mechanisms are public and institutional, and support racialized groups and those denied their full civic status with resources to organize so that they can "achieve collective empowerment and a reflective understanding of their collective experience and interests in the context of society" (Young 1990, p. 184). Perhaps if the marginalized overwhelm the senses of the racializing, and assert their visibility and experience by piercing through the Veil via community organization and advocacy politics, they may succeed in being acknowledged as integral to the concept of democratic citizenship.

In true Du Boisian optimism, it is hoped that through these avenues of strivings, not only can Muslim Americans and other racialized groups pierce the Veil to achieve the recognition they deserve, but they might also open up the possibility of achieving self-realization and self-development—true characteristics of one who is liberated and who rightfully benefits from full citizenship in a democracy. By striving despite oppressive circumstances and racialized social structures, and reconciling their Twoness, Muslim Americans can show the vitality of the Muslim American experience, and the value of the Muslim American identity and civic participation in America's democracy.

CONCLUSION

The purpose of this article has been to unpack and apply Du Boisian double consciousness to the Muslim American experience of identity formation in a post-9/11 context. My work engages with theories of race and racism to establish how double consciousness informs the Muslim American identity and underlies their interactions with, and claim of belonging to, both Muslim and American communities. At a time when Muslim Americans are constantly bombarded with messages of Othering at micro, meso, and macro levels of society, gaining a deeper appreciation for how Muslim Americans are navigating racialized contexts has certain implications for their transformative potential, particularly as it involves their political participation and social integration. On the one hand, Muslim American double consciousness contributes to theories of racialization by allowing us to grasp the intricacies of Muslim American racialization by demonstrating how their identities are subject to ascription by the dominant majority. On the other, this theory captures the potentials of minority subjectivity by showing how self-realization and the self-defined identities of Muslim Americans can be mobilized for social and political advancement, culminating in recognition and the rightful claim to inclusion as

citizens of the United States. In so doing, double consciousness illuminates the future trajectory of Muslim American identities and their rightful claims to citizenship.

Future sociological scholarship on Muslims—broadly speaking—could benefit from revisiting classical Du Boisian theory in order to contextualize the phenomenological racial experience of Muslims on a global scale. Since Du Bois's theory of double consciousness is based in an understanding of racialization as being a part of modern society, this theory is translatable in other, non-U.S. contexts as well. In fact, with global Islamophobia on the rise, future research could attempt to utilize the same framework to understand and analyze Muslim self-formation in the UK, India, China, France, and other critical contexts where Islamophobia currently manifests (Meer 2010). Additionally, in acknowledging that the term 'Muslim American' overlooks and simplifies the diverse racial and ethnic identities that belong within this category, it would also be a worthy endeavor for future research to examine the specific ways in which racial and ethnic identities intersect in the formation of Muslim double consciousness. More specifically, Black Muslim Americans experience race, racialization, and Islamophobia in incredibly nuanced and intersectional ways, and yet they are severely undertheorized within the discipline. Considering that Du Boisian double consciousness is used to explain the experience of being Black and American, examining double consciousness as it applies to Black Muslim Americans would be an incredibly valuable endeavor for future research.

Corresponding author: Inaash Islam, Department of Sociology, Virginia Tech, 560 McBryde Hall (0137), 225 Stanger Street, Blacksburg, VA 24061. E-mail: inaashi1@vt.edu

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