

A FAMILY AFFAIR

A FAMILY AFFAIR: EXAMINING CANADIAN ENGLISH-LANGUAGE NEWS
MEDIA PORTRAYALS OF MUSLIM FAMILIES IN THE POST-9/11 ERA

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LAY ABSTRACT

In the wake of 9/11, many Canadian English-language news media have framed Muslim men as violent and Muslim women as oppressed. This dissertation analyzes the shifting Canadian news media portrayals of the Muslim family. Muslim homes in Canada are often portrayed as spaces for the perpetuation of violence that threatens the Canadian nation. Simultaneously, news media also portray some Muslim homes as spaces of purportedly “good” Canadian citizens, if these Muslim families are able to conform to Canadian “values.” I examine how Canadian news media mobilize heteronormativity, middle-class status, productive citizenship, among others, to portray some Muslims as ascribing to Canadian values, and therefore worthy of the rights of citizenship. Drawing on the news media coverage of the cases of Maher Arar and Monia Mazigh, Ahmed and Omar Khadr and Maha Elsamnah, and Mohammed Shafia, Rona Mohammed, and Tooba Yahya, I analyze how Muslims who are viewed as not assimilating to Western ideals of family are deemed as undeserving of the rights of citizenship, and, in addition, may even deserve violence.

ABSTRACT

This dissertation intervenes in debates in Media Studies, Gender and Sexuality Studies, Canadian Immigration Studies, and Critical Race Studies to explore how shifting news media and political representations of Muslim families reflect the complexities of what it means to be Canadian beyond holding citizenship. In the post-9/11 era, the Muslim family has re-emerged in Canadian English-language news media and Canadian political debates as a site of inherent violence. Drawing on orientalist narratives of the Muslim family, news media and political conversations tend to frame these homes as being headed by patriarchal fathers and oppressed mothers, and children seeking to break from families and traditions, yet always holding the potential to become violent themselves. Even though Canada identifies as a multicultural nation, Muslim families are often presented in media as undeserving of the rights of Canadian citizenship, and even deserving of state violence. While news media play a key role in reproducing orientalist framings of Muslim families, news media can also take the government to task when it comes to the violation of immigrant and racialized Canadians' rights as citizens. Some news media coverage counter orientalist narratives by producing "positive" representations of Muslim families, however, these "positive" representations frequently frame Muslims who are worthy of the rights of citizenship as adhering to heteronormative family dynamics, productive citizenship, and normative Western gender roles and kinship formations. These "positive" portrayals produce varying representations of Muslim families, but such framings can also labour in the way of reifying Canada's multicultural ideals and Canada's idea of itself as "civilized." Drawing on the news media coverage of

the family of Maher Arar, the Khadr, and the Shafiqs, I argue that such representations still produce the norms of the settler-colonial Canadian nation, where some racialized bodies, in this case Muslim families, can be granted the rights of Canadian citizenship if they are able to proximate normative Canadian kinship formations.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION - “Like Me, Like Us”: Framing Canadian Families.....	1
<i>What is Normative about being Canadian?.....</i>	<i>6</i>
<i>Framing the Family.....</i>	<i>14</i>
<i>Orientalized Masculinities and Femininities: Reframing Families in the Age of Terror..</i>	<i>20</i>
<i>Canadian News Media: Exposing the Frames.....</i>	<i>30</i>
<i>Recognition Politics and Disciplining Racialized Bodies.....</i>	<i>41</i>
CHAPTER ONE - (Un)worthy of the Rights of Citizenship?: Framing the Case of Maher Arar and Monia Mazigh	53
<i>Troubling Media Framings: The Limits of Recognition.....</i>	<i>57</i>
<i>Overview of Arar’s Case.....</i>	<i>64</i>
<i>The Boundaries of Multiculturalism: Contextualizing the Arar Case.....</i>	<i>71</i>
<i>The National Post and The Globe and Mail Archive.....</i>	<i>76</i>
<i>Defying Stereotypes.....</i>	<i>80</i>
<i>Model Minorities and Successful Immigrants.....</i>	<i>95</i>
<i>The Tax-Paying Immigrant.....</i>	<i>103</i>
<i>Conclusion.....</i>	<i>107</i>
CHAPTER TWO – “Civilizing” the “Barbaric” Child: The Case of the Khadr...110	110
<i>Ahmed Khadr: Framing the Muslim Patriarch.....</i>	<i>114</i>
<i>Connecting Father to Son.....</i>	<i>120</i>
<i>Maha Elsamnah: Framing the “Mother of Terror”.....</i>	<i>124</i>
<i>Omar Khadr: The Image of the “Terrorist Child”</i>	<i>130</i>
<i>Disturbed Muslim Families.....</i>	<i>142</i>
<i>Conclusion.....</i>	<i>153</i>
CHAPTER THREE - Framing the “Violent” Polygamous Family: The Case of Mohammed Shafia, Rona Mohammed, and Tooba Yahya.....	156
<i>Settler-Colonialism, Ethnic Framing, and the Polygamy Reference.....</i>	<i>159</i>
<i>Framing Immigration: The Limits of Canadian “Tolerance”.....</i>	<i>169</i>
<i>Framing Muslim/Afghan Patriarchy: The Father and the State.....</i>	<i>178</i>
<i>Rival Wives and Budding Romances: Rona, Yahya, and the Shafia Sisters.....</i>	<i>190</i>
<i>The Zero Tolerance for Barbaric Cultural Practices Act and the Shafia Case.....</i>	<i>200</i>
<i>Conclusion.....</i>	<i>207</i>
CONCLUSION - Reimagining the Present.....	209
WORKS CITED.....	217

Introduction: “Like Me, Like Us”: Framing Canadian Families

As a Muslim coming of age in the post-9/11 era in Toronto, Canada, it was commonplace for me to have to explain, usually to non-Muslims, that there was nothing inherently violent about Muslim men, even if broader media representations of Muslim communities often suggested this to be so (Karim 26). With the trial for the Shafia family murders consuming news media through the early 2010s, my interest in how discourses of violence and Islam were being mobilized in media to suggest violence was an innate characteristic of Muslim men developed further. As I conducted research on Canadian English language news media representations of Muslim men, I discovered that the idea that Muslim men are violent was buttressed by many news media outlets explicitly, as well as *implicitly*. However, when Muslim men were represented as being able to fit the norms of Canadianness, they were disassociated from their supposed “innate violence.” In exploring media representations of Muslim men in Canada for my doctoral research, I was led to three popular cases in the post-9/11 era: the cases of Maher Arar, Ahmed and Omar Khadr, and Mohammed Shafia. Each case draws on different, and yet similar, narratives of what it means to exhibit “proper” Canadian masculinity, and each case clearly indicates that there are temporal shifts in how Muslim male bodies are placed within the confines of what is deemed as properly Canadian.

While I was working on my doctoral project, news reports appeared of six Muslim men who were shot and killed in a Quebec City Mosque on 29 January 2017 in a hate crime. Both the Prime Minister of Canada, Justin Trudeau, and the then Premier of Quebec, Philippe Couillard, attended the funeral held for three of the six victims and

spoke about the tragic events. Portions of Trudeau and Couillard’s speeches at the funeral made their way into many mainstream media outlets, and there was one article in particular that was reproduced in various facets of *The Canadian Press* online on February 2, 2017. The article, written by Sidhartha Banerjee, was published under various titles, and, for the most part, focused on Canadian unity and tolerance. The first portion of the article focused on the victims as Canadian Muslim men who belonged to families, who were working, taxpaying citizens, and who had immigrated to Canada hoping for a better life: “Abdelkrim Hassane, Khaled Belkacemi and Aboubaker Thabti were devoted fathers who worked hard to ensure their families had a bright future — a dream Canadians across the country have known and shared for generations, [Justin] Trudeau said.” Couillard is then quoted stating that all of the men were fathers: “like me, like us... They were sons and brothers and uncles — like me, like us. Friends, co-workers, like us. They were us. They were loved, appreciated, respected, and they always will be. We won’t forget them” (“Canada Shaken”; “Couillard”; “Quebec Mosque Attack”; “Trudeau says all of Canada Shaken”; “Trudeau says Canada”; “We will rise from this darkness”).

These widely circulated portions of Couillard and Trudeau’s speeches emphasize the similarities between Canadians of various racial, ethnic, and religious backgrounds. They suggest that Canada has endured a loss because these Muslim Canadians were similar to other Canadians; they were “like me, like us.” If these men are to be “like us” in Couillard’s speech, there is an “us” that is not them. In the naming of an “us” Couillard demarcates these men’s inherent difference: *they are not us, but they can be like us*. In drawing upon the commonalities between Canadians of various backgrounds, Trudeau

and Couillard seem to be bringing these men into close proximity to who is perceived to be at the core of the Canadian nation, those who are hetero/homonormative (fathers), a part of families (sons, brothers, and uncles), and who work (co-workers), but they are still not “us.” This introduction explores who, exactly, constitutes this “us.”

The national register of these men’s loss is predicated on their model minority status that signifies their proximity to Canadian values as working, taxpaying, “good” citizens. In order for these men to be portrayed as “worthy victims” (Jiwani, “Trapped in the Carceral Net” 21-22) deserving to be mourned, they needed to appear “like us,” hardworking fathers and family members. These Muslim men were represented as loved family members, they were not portrayed as violent or repressive patriarchs such as media representations of Ahmed Khadr and Mohammed Shafia. Such a framing that draws upon good and loving fatherhood, familial bonds, and their role as providers for their family, made me reflect on those Muslim Canadians who are not *similar*, who are not like the collective “us,” whose embodiments and actions are *uncommon*, and whose practices of kinship do not fall within conventional Western kinship structures, or do not fall within heteronormative families and relationships.

From reading Trudeau and Couillard’s speeches about immigrant and racialized Canadians who are “like me, like us,” I was drawn to broader questions of who the “us” encompasses in conversation with Canadian racialized masculinities and fatherhood. What does it mean to be a “good” Canadian father? What does it mean to be a “good” family member? How is “good” fatherhood linked to Canadian citizenship? It became clear that I could not understand media framings of Muslim masculinities and fatherhood

in Canada without exploring representations of the Muslim family more generally. Therefore, this dissertation explores the families of Maher Arar and Monia Mazigh; Ahmed Khadr and Maha Elsannah, and their son Omar Khadr; and the family of Mohammed Shafia, Rona Mohammed and Tooba Yahya to explore how Canadian news media shape nationalist discourses around Muslim families in Canada.

A number of scholars have pointed out that Muslims in Canada are often represented within dichotomies of the “dangerous” Muslim man (always framed as heterosexual or perversely queer [Puar, *Terrorist Assemblages*]) and the “imperiled” Muslim woman (Razack, “A Typical Month” *Casting Out* par. 4), the independent male sponsor and the dependent female being sponsored (Thobani 109), or the hypermasculine terrorist and the female suicide bomber (who is implicated in her own subjugation) (Jiwani, “Trapped in the Carceral Net” 22-24). Through this research, I hope to further explore these gendered stereotypes in Canadian news media to analyze how the Muslim family is reproduced as a space of violence that must be civilized. I am interested in how, in state and media discourses, the nuclear family, as a building block of Canadian nationhood (Dua 240-241; Iacovetta, “Making ‘New Canadians’”; Thobani 113), becomes necessary for the production of the myths of “good” Canadian families.¹ The Canadian nation positions itself as not just a nation that *accepts* immigrants of various races and religions, but once in Canada, the nation also *civilizes* them.² Building on the

¹ The nuclear family has also been marked as necessary for the social order. For example, non-nuclear Black family formations in the Caribbean and the U.S. have often been regarded as disorganized and deviant (Besson 279).

² Though not all Muslims in Canada are immigrants, they are often assumed to be.

histories of justifying Western colonialisms in Africa, the Caribbean, Asia, and the Americas as philanthropic “civilizing missions,” this dissertation illustrates how the Canadian state attempts to “civilize” immigrants to Canada through the rhetoric of Canadian “values.”³ If the nation is unable to “civilize” immigrants, they cannot align with Canadianness and are said to be simply too “barbaric” to be considered Canadians. Some of the questions that this dissertation attempts to address are: What is required of Muslim families in order to be recognized as a “properly” Canadian family? How does the Canadian nation shape the Muslim family, and in what ways do these families shape themselves, to fit within the contours of Canadian norms? How do these families defy normativity, foreclosing their access to the benefits of Canadian citizenship (even if they are citizens) and in what ways do they adhere to normativity, accessing some of the benefits of citizenship, and at whose expense? Is there a way to critique the patriarchy within many Muslim families, without feeding into racist tropes and without such criticisms being used to further anti-immigration and islamophobic agendas? Finally, what characteristics make Muslim parents recognizable as “good” Canadian parents?

³ My use of the word “Western” throughout this dissertation relies heavily on Stuart Hall’s exploration of the term in “The West and the Rest: Discourse and Power.” Hall explains that “the West” is more than a geographic construct, it is a concept that is often used to describe societies that are “developed, industrialized, urbanized, capitalist, secular, and modern.” The West has become a term defined by comparison, and a standard by which other societies are ranked (186-187). Hall states: “the West’s sense of itself—its identity—was formed not only by the internal process that gradually molded Western European countries into a distinct type of society, but also through Europe’s sense of difference from other worlds—how it came to represent itself in relation to these ‘others’” (188). The West currently encompasses many nations outside of western Europe such as Canada, the United States, and Australia.

What is Normative about being Canadian?

This research project made me grapple with the question of what the normative Canadian family is, and which bodies are encompassed within the realm of Canadian normativity. Beyond the human body, I also discovered how certain cultural practices, languages, family structures, gender performances, and sexualities are incorporated into what is considered normative in a Canadian context. I have given a great deal of thought to which bodies become recognized as “Canadian” beyond the holding of citizenship status, for as Muneer Ahmed argues, citizenship is a contested notion that is often mediated by race (339). In the case of Maher Arar (Chapter One) and Omar Khadr (Chapter Two), who were both citizens, holding Canadian citizenship did not prevent the violence they experienced. The case of the Shafia sisters and Rona Mohammed (Chapter Three), conversely, complicate how race and the rights of citizenship interweave, as media highlighted their Canadianness even though they were recent immigrants to Canada. Thus, this dissertation asks: Who is given the rights of citizenship, and what do those rights signify?

Judith Butler’s work on gender, sex, and the heteronormative imperative has been helpful in thinking about the norms that are imposed on racialized, immigrant bodies in Canada or that help to define a properly “Canadian family.” Butler discusses how bodies materialize through the reiteration of regulatory norms (*Bodies that Matter* xii). Sex, in Butler’s analysis, is a norm that qualifies a body “for life within the domain of cultural intelligibility” (xii). The production of norms emerges through performativity, where performativity is not a “singular or deliberate ‘act’” but a reiterative practice produced by

discourse (Butler xii). The reiteration of norms through discourse regulates bodies into performing what is considered normative. Norms, however, also operate within the “exclusionary matrix;” it is through abjection that the normative body becomes intelligible. The “exclusionary matrix” requires the “production of a domain of abject beings, those who are not yet ‘subjects,’ but who form the constitutive outside to the domain of the subject” (Butler xiii). The abject encompasses zones of social life that are “unlivable” and “uninhabitable,” where those who “do not enjoy the status of the subject” live and “circumscribe the domain of the subject” (Butler xiii). It is through the identification with the normative that the domain of abjection is produced, “without which the subject cannot emerge” (Butler xiii). Butler’s work provides a helpful framework for my theorizing of normative Canadianness, and perhaps the formation of *de facto* Canadian citizenship. Butler’s claim that performativity emerges through the reiteration of the norm (in ways that are often beyond the subject’s agency) is important to this analysis because the performance of Canadian norms is essential for the production of the “Canadian subject.” But what are these Canadian norms and how are these norms reproduced?

According to Daniel Coleman, many of the norms that have come to be established in Canada were set against those who did not embody civility (or, those who could be deemed “barbaric”). “Civility,” for Coleman, is “a mode of internal management,” where subjects “discipline their conduct in order to participate in the civil realm, and they themselves gain or lose legitimacy in an internally striated civil society depending on the degree to which they conform to its ideals” (11). British civility, for

Coleman, is central to shaping the Canadian subject. Coleman explores how civility in “English Canada” is a specific formulation of whiteness that is based in British civility (5). He notes that whiteness has been conflated with civility and is “naturalized as the norm for English Canadian cultural identity” (Coleman 5). Canadians from various backgrounds have acquired or lost social status based on their ability to replicate British civility (Coleman 27). Civility, as a white cultural practice, also demarcates the civil from those deemed “uncivil,” and as result, simultaneously operates as a mode of “external management” because it provides a mandate for civil subjects to manage those perceived to be “uncivil” (12-13).

While there are numerous examples of how marginalized groups have been omitted from definitions of civility in a Canadian context, fundamental to differentiating white civil bodies from the “uncivilized” (or the “abject”) was the legislation that viewed Indigenous people as uncivilized humans, whose culture was deemed inferior to British culture (Coleman 13-14). Coleman draws on the *Act for the Gradual Civilization of the Indian Tribes*, the *Civilization and Enfranchisement Act*, and the *Indian Act* as examples (13-14). Civility in Coleman’s analysis follows Butler’s theoretical frameworks in so far as civility entails performative aspects that are repeated. Civility emphasizes a connection to Enlightenment discourse and modernity, as it necessitates the repetitive mimicking or performing of learned British manners and behaviours (Ahmed, *The Promise* 129-130; Coleman 21). Civility then refers not only to “something a person or culture *had*” but also to what a “person or culture *did*” (Coleman 12; emphasis in original). In this sense, Canadian citizenship is performative because civility discourses work to shape or

discipline people through “repeated *performances of citizenship*” (Coleman 40; emphasis in original), such as polite and orderly behaviour commonly represented by the image of the bourgeois gentleman (Coleman 10).

Though there are surely remnants of Britishness in contemporary Canadian norms and their connection to civility, what is often difficult about pinpointing the norms of civility and the norms of Canadianness presently are their variances over time, location, and socio-political circumstances. The Western norms that I explore throughout this dissertation, such as hetero/homonormativity, gender performance, or kinship ties, are not uniquely “Canadian,” but aspects of Canadian national identity function to distinguish what is “Canadian” from other Western nations, specifically the United States and Britain. For example, much of “Canadian identity” and Canadian nationalisms, though connected to British civility, also rely on being differentiated from American and British nationalisms. According to Coleman, Canadian civility was seen as a purified form of British civility, where Canadians worked hard in an unrelenting climate; British civility, on the contrary, was defined by aristocratic sophistication (24-25). Canadian histories of violence, too, were redefined in contrast to the United States, notes Coleman, for example, the supposedly “lenient” treatment of the French after British conquest (24), the “humane” treatment of Indigenous people in comparison to Indigenous people in the United States (Coleman 24; E. Mackey 51, 99), and the abolition of slavery in Upper Canada in 1793 compared to the later date of 1865 in the United States (Coleman 24). Such obfuscations in national recollections of Canada’s participation in Britain’s colonial project, Sherene Razack argues, often prompt white Canadians to consider themselves as

free from a colonial, racial past (121). More contemporarily, Canada's multiculturalism policy as a marker of Canadian "tolerance" is set against the United States as a "melting pot" (E. Mackey 78), and Canada is often represented as "peaceful" in comparison to the militaristic United States (E. Mackey 99). So while Canadian nationalism is linked to the United States and Britain through shared Western civilizational discourses, there are important differences in Canada's national myths. Canada's attempts to differentiate itself from the United States help to consolidate narratives around who Canadians are imagined to be: less violent, hardworking, tolerant, civil, and white.

Both Eva Mackey and Sunera Thobani argue that immigration to Canada has historically been based on the construction of racial hierarchies, where some immigrant bodies were deemed more desirable than others. Historically, "preferred races" in Canada were the white settlers who would become nationals; they were "worthy of citizenship *and* membership in the nation," while "non-preferred races" were marked as strangers and intruders "whose lack of Christian faith, inherent deviant tendencies, and unchecked fecundity all threatened the nation's survival" (Thobani 75). Thus, whiteness came to embody legitimate citizenship in Canada (Thobani 75). However, as Eva Mackey argues, after World War II Canada began to distance itself from public displays of racism and anti-Semitism (64) because "one of the effects of the war was that nations gave up talk of the 'right stock' and its racial overtones" (66). In the wake of decolonization and civil rights movements, and to fulfill labour shortages (Thobani 146-147), Canada moved towards discourses of multiculturalism in the 1960s. Multiculturalism in Canada was initiated in the 1960s with the introduction of the point system in Canada's immigration

policy, and in 1971 Canada began to integrate multiculturalism policy into its identity as a nation.⁴ The institutionalization of multiculturalism occurred throughout the 1980s with multiculturalism being recognized in Canada's *Charter of Rights and Freedoms*, and in 1988, Canada established the *Multiculturalism Act*. Even though the Canadian state began to distance itself from discourses of racial purity in the 1960s, and multiculturalism has now come to signify Canadian national identity, ideologies of what characterizes "good" Canadian citizens, continue to be attached to whiteness.

Multiculturalism is touted as one of the most positive attributes of Canada's nationalism, yet many theorists express their skepticism of multiculturalism as state policy in Canada. The adoption of multiculturalism helped to redefine, according to Thobani, the "nation's characterization of itself" as "urbane, cosmopolitan and at the cutting edge of promoting racial and ethnic tolerance among western nations" (145). The definition of the Canadian nation, however, remains primarily bilingual and bicultural, betraying the racialized constructs that position the British and French as the "real" Canadian subjects (Thobani 145). While multiculturalism appears to incorporate multiethnic bodies into who is defined as Canadian, Anglo-Canadian culture is still the "ethnic core" of the Canadian nation while "tolerating" as well as creating a hierarchy of other bodies as its "multiculture" (Bannerji 78). Even though Canada attempts to define its nationalism against the violent histories of the United States, there are numerous examples of how Canada has attempted to maintain the whiteness of its population, such

⁴ The point system in Canada is used to assess eligibility of immigrants to come to Canada through the Federal Skilled Worker Program, the Federal Skilled Trades Program, and the Canadian Experience Class.

as through the decimation of Indigenous peoples, marking Indigenous peoples for cultural extinction, sequestering Indigenous peoples to reserves, the violence of residential schools, the Chinese Head Tax from 1885-1923, the turning away of the Komagata Maru in 1914, and the Japanese internment during WWII.

Unlike these explicit racist acts in Canadian history, in contemporary times, the racialized bodies that the nation previously deemed to be a threat can be considered “legitimate” Canadians if they perform their citizenship in ways that can be managed by the state. Multiculturalism requires that immigrant and racialized Canadians exhibit happiness with, and within, the nation and refrain from displaying their loss, pain, anger, frustration, and racial grief in an effort to show that they are “civil subjects” (Chakraborty 213). As a result, immigrant and racialized Canadians are hierarchized, where model minorities perform their civility and prove “Canada’s multicultural ideal” by leaving their pasts behind them and refraining from displaying frustrations with the Canadian state (Chakraborty 212). Those who do not “move on” from their pasts or exhibit anger and frustrations (particularly with the state) are not representative of, or represented in, state discourses on multiculturalism because they have failed to adhere to the state’s ideals, and they are marked as threatening to the state order (Chakraborty 212-213).

Sara Ahmed notes, that in the case of Australia, too, a nation that has also adopted a multicultural framework into its nationalist projects, managing the citizenry requires incorporating “difference” into the nationalist rhetoric that demands that particular bodies *be* conceptualized as cultural difference (*Strange Encounters* 96). She argues that multiculturalism “can involve a double and contradictory process of incorporation and

expulsion” where the “difference” of some bodies can be claimed by the nation while others, whom she deems “stranger strangers” to the nation, can be expelled, as their “difference” is said to be “dangerous to the well-being of even the most heterogeneous of nations” (97). Ahmed’s point is exemplified in Eva Mackey’s ethnographic work where she cites interviews with Canadians who understood Canadian multiculturalism to be what C. Mullard refers to as “saris, samosas, and steel bands” (quoted in E. Mackey 161), but once difference is mobilized politically for minorities in Canada they “are seen to threaten and fragment the unity and progress of the nation” (E. Mackey 165). Some Muslims’ Canadianness and their ability to access the rights of citizenship are grounded in if they are represented as performing what is deemed proper Canadian gender norms, such as being marked as a “good” husband or father (Arar). These Muslims tend to be differentiated in media from the figure of the Muslim patriarch who can produce terrorist children (the Khadr), or the patriarch who terrorizes the women and children in his family (Shafia). As Ahmed argues, and this dissertation demonstrates, the multicultural nation is predicated on its ability to differentiate between these different images of Muslim men, between the “stranger” and the “stranger stranger” (107).

Rita Dhamoon and Yasmeen Abu-Laban argue that there are always those who are deemed the “internal dangerous foreigner” who is “both an insider who *legally* belongs to the state and simultaneously deemed an outsider/Other who does not *substantively* belong within the nation” (169; emphasis in original). The fear of the “internal dangerous foreigner” who is “too strange” illustrates Himani Bannerji’s point that “citizenship does not provide automatic membership into the nation’s community” (66). This means that

those who wish to be accepted as Canadian and receive the rights of citizenship must demonstrate their ability to adhere to Canadian norms, distancing themselves from the “stranger stranger” or the “internal dangerous foreigner.” Racialized bodies can at times be recognized as “Canadian” and even reproduce the norms of Canadianness, particularly within the framework of multiculturalism, while at other moments, they can encompass the “abject” that Butler explores. Thus, while the cultural and ethnic makeup of Canada might be shifting and changing, the imperial machinery continues, permitting immigrants and racialized Canadians to enter into Canada for strategic reasons such as fulfilling labour shortages and maintaining an employed taxable population.

Framing the Family

Drawing on Coleman and Eva Mackey’s work, this research addresses how Canada’s core whiteness manifests presently in the context of normative Canadian family dynamics. British civility and whiteness reemerge in familial spaces in multicultural Canada in ways that differentiate “good” Canadian families from “bad” racialized families, and for the purpose of this dissertation, Muslim families. The state shapes the rhetoric around family and ties it to nation building (Beaman 13), and deciphers which families are named as worthy of the rights of Canadian citizenship because they are presented as conforming to Canadian family “values,” such as those who are heteronormative and middle-class (Chapter One), produce non-violent and neo-liberal children (Chapter Two), and adhere to dominant marriage and kinship norms (Chapter Three). For Western nations, citizens are often considered “good,” if they maintain family

values that center (hetero/homo)normative kinship formations. In a Canadian context, one can cite numerous examples of how the nation reproduces images of the “good family,” even if these ideals are not consistently performed by Canada’s citizenry. Franca Iacovetta’s work on the International Institute of Metropolitan Toronto illustrates that this Institute operated in the post-WWII years into the 1970s to help assimilate new immigrants to Canada. The Institute was part of a complex system of public and private support services that worked to integrate new immigrants in Canada through various services such as charity, family counselling, and community programs (Iacovetta 269). Iacovetta argues that Canadianizing new immigrants was seen as a victory against the Soviet Union through the Cold War years and illustrated the superiority of Western democracy (270). While the Institute supported cultural pluralism in some respects, the ultimate goal was assimilation (Iacovetta 270); adapting the domestic and private lives of families deemed “foreign” and “deviant” to North American and middle-class customs was key to this process of assimilation (Iacovetta 263). The institute counsellors encouraged clients to pursue a “stable family environment,” which ideally consisted of working husbands, and moral and loving mothers who kept house (Iacovetta 272). “Financial success” and “happy family life” were viewed by the Institute’s director as necessary for immigrants to adjust in Canada (Iacovetta 272).

Sunera Thobani argues, too, that in the post-WWII era, the emergence of the welfare state facilitated the reconstitution of Canadians as compassionate and caring citizens, and their families, by extension, were constructed as egalitarian despite the existence of classism and heterosexism within them (108). Thobani tracks how the

traditional, white heteronormative nuclear family has been ingrained as the “right” kind of family formation in Canada. Up until the mid-twentieth century white immigrants were encouraged to immigrate with their families, writes Thobani, while “[n]on-preferred race families were defined as having the potential to overwhelm the whiteness of the nation and they were thus marked for exclusion except in a few circumstances” (130). Jasbir Puar notes, in the context of the United States, sponsorship and immigration policies focused on family reunification, and until recently, were heteronormative (“The Ascendancy of Whiteness” par. 8-9). Puar argues that multiculturalism and heteronormativity operate together, where heteronormativity may be the most important attribute for the purportedly “good ethnic” to be accepted into the nation (par. 2). Puar explores how access to capital provides both ethnic communities and homonormative communities (but not necessarily those within their intersections) with a sense of national belonging. Multiculturalism and homonormativity are actually bound to whiteness and heteronormativity through the manufacturing of the “good” heteronormative ethnic (and also the white homonormative subject) (par. 5). Class privileges among minority groups allow for alliances with white citizens under the guise of inclusion, producing economic alliances that support market individualism, while enabling the deterioration of social services for economically disadvantaged minorities (par. 3).

The traditional, nuclear, middle-class family ideal is central to the formation of the Canadian nation, which necessarily differentiated the experiences of Indigenous families and families of colour (Thobani 113). These family ideals necessitated heteronormative marriages, and more recently, homonormative marriages. Nancy F. Cott states, “By

incriminating some marriages and encouraging others, marital regulations have drawn lines among the citizenry and defined what kinds of sexual relations and which families will be legitimate” (4). Often, encouraging normative Western marriage practices operated alongside subjugating the marital practices of Indigenous communities (Cott 26) and other racialized groups, which is obvious in more recent debates about polygamy in Canada under the *Zero Tolerance for Barbaric Cultural Practices Act* that I explore in Chapter Three. The *Zero Tolerance Act* (2015) amends the *Immigration and Refugee Protection Act*, the *Civil Marriage Act*, and the Criminal Code, and targets foreign nationals and permanent residents, specifying that they are inadmissible to Canada if they practice polygamy. In other words, the state dictates which family formations are legitimate, and which types of families are healthy for children, that is, which families will foster children’s growth as future neo-liberal citizens? In Puar’s analysis of homonationalism, she argues that the nation disciplines and normalizes queer bodies to make a hetero/homonormative nation which results in the nation being productive as well as repressive of non-normative sexualities (“Hetero-and Homonationalisms” par. 18). Accepting homonormative relationships into the nation results in relationships that are “unmanageable” by the nation, such as racialized polygamous marriage (often associated with Muslims), to be reified as deviant and even violent, a threat to the nation itself. There are certain queer relationships that are “domesticatable” to the nation, such as middle-class white monogamous gay marriage which can come under the purview of acceptable marital unions because they “mimic and recenter liberal subjecthood,” implying that other queer relationships might be interpreted as “untetherable queerness”

(Puar, par. 10).

Not only is the family unit and marriage connected to projects of nation building and whiteness in Canada, in addition, adhering to ideals around motherhood and fatherhood are necessary for the imagery of what constitutes a “good” Canadian family. Studies reveal that white women, in particular, were key to ensuring that the nation remained white. Mariana Valverde argues that “Women did not merely have babies: they reproduced ‘the race.’ Women did not merely have just enough babies or too much sex: through their childbearing they either helped or hindered the forward march of (Anglo-Saxon) Civilization” (4). Valverde traces how feminist ideologies in Canada, particularly first wave feminism, were based in the eugenics movement and ensured that the “mothers of the race” were racially pure (Anglo-Saxon and Protestant), but she also argues that often race was not specifically named. Valverde explains that rather than naming race as a physical characteristic that made women of colour less suited for motherhood, it was suggested that they came from cultures that made them less fit as mothers (20). Canada, for example, prevented racialized immigrant women from entering the country, as was the case for Chinese immigrants in the 19th and 20th centuries.⁵ The Canadian government

⁵ There are still strategies in place to keep non-white immigrant women from accessing citizenship. Sedef Arat-Koç explains that after Canada introduced the point system in 1967, employment was rated by demand value. With this in mind, domestic workers should always receive high points, as not many Canadians enter this field of work, since demand for domestic work usually exceeds supply (Arat-Koç 216). In the late 1960s and early 1970s, many middle-class women took up occupations in the public sphere, and the demand for domestic workers increased (Arat-Koç 217). In 1968, however, and several times after, the occupation demand rating for various types of domestic work decreased (Arat-Koç 217). Another example of this is live-in caregivers from the Philippines or migrant workers from Mexico and the Caribbean, who come to Canada as temporary workers, but are not permitted to bring their families.

also attempted to regulate the sexuality and fertility of women from “non-preferred” races because they were said to pose a threat to the “nation’s purity” (Thobani 109). To restrict the fertility of women that supposedly threatened the state’s “purity,” sterilization of economically disadvantaged women, Indigenous women, and people with disabilities were conducted so that they would not reproduce citizens who were thought to be “unfit” (Stote 125).⁶ Kim Rygiel argues that controlling women’s bodies was perceived as necessary for protecting the nation and national identity which posits the Western (white) male citizen as the protector of citizen women and children, and maintains men’s control of women’s bodies (151).

Nationalist scripts in Canada have also carved out the ideals of “good” fatherhood. Historically, Canadian fathers were expected to be hardworking husbands, authoritative, as well as just (Iacovetta 285). The breadwinning father is deeply tied to Western understandings of masculinity (Davies 35). The “breadwinner” is important to nation building because when fathers are breadwinners they are not only working to support their family financially, but the father also becomes a role-model for his children (39). If a father cannot succeed as a breadwinner, he is not only a failure to his family, but also to the nation (39). The breadwinner ideal remains closely linked to Canadian nationalism today. *Discover Canada* states: “Taking responsibility for oneself and one’s family — Getting a job, taking care of one’s family and working hard in keeping with one’s abilities are important Canadian values. Work contributes to personal dignity and self-respect, and

⁶ There have been accounts of Indigenous women in Canada experiencing forced sterilization as recently as 2018 (Zingel, “Indigenous Women Come Forward”).

to Canada's prosperity." Here, taking financial responsibility for one's family is a Canadian value that also functions as a method of nation building (i.e. "Canada's prosperity"). But, if as Thobani argues, that even after the shifts in Canadian citizenship legislation in the 1960s and 1970s immigrant women were still constituted primarily as caregivers and economic dependents of men (109), "taking care of one's self and one's family" remains gendered as a characteristic of masculinity. Effectively, then, the nation demands that "good" Canadian families are economically self-sufficient to ensure that they do not rely on the government for financial support, but this can also cause immigrant women to be bound to abusive homes because of their economic dependence on their partner.

Orientalized Masculinities and Femininities: Reframing Families in the Age of Terror

Leti Volpp argues that in the post-9/11 era nationalist discourses have reinscribed Western gender roles (which are linked to traditional Canadian family formations) through the masculine citizen-soldier, the patriotic wife and mother, and the properly reproductive family (1590). Catherine Scott, too, explains that media narratives in the post-9/11 era depicted the Taliban and Saddam Hussein as using their power to indoctrinate youth, while media depicted U.S. soldiers as "restoring kids' worlds in ways that look similar to US kids" (102). Scott explores the varying media portrayals of U.S. soldiers in Afghanistan and Iraq helping children, particularly in regard to getting children to school or helping them get an education (102). She states that, even though women served in the U.S. military in record numbers after 9/11, media narratives still

focused on male soldiers protecting families in the U.S. and a domestic sphere mostly made up of women and children back home (Scott 110). In this way, the War on Terror was also depicted as a fight to maintain the traditional family structure, where protecting domestic life seemed natural (Scott 110). This image of the Western (white) father as protective and heroic relies on images of Western (white) men as protective citizens. Thus, the War on Terror secured Western (white) male identity as it (re)asserted the male citizen as the protector of women and their bodies (Rygiel 151).⁷

While this dissertation focuses on the post-9/11 era and Canadian English news media framings of Muslim families in a contemporary context, how such framings come to be produced is rooted in colonial constructions of the “other.” Edward Said’s seminal work *Orientalism* provides the historical context for which the East/West and civilized/barbaric divides take root in contemporary Canadian politics and media. Images of the “good” Canadian family rely on gendered framings of motherhood and fatherhood, and their differentiation from Muslim motherhood and fatherhood is, in many ways, rooted in orientalist depictions of Muslim gender roles. Said argues that, “The Orient was almost a European invention” (*Orientalism* 1), in that Europe constructed representations of the Orient (through Orientalist scholarship) in ways that informed the Occident of the Orient. Said elaborates that the “Orient” as a European “invention” does not only refer to myths about the Orient, but how these myths about the Orient came to inform the West

⁷ In a specifically Canadian context, the glorification of white male heroism is evident in sporting events, such as at Canadian hockey events, where it is often white male military personnel who perform the puck drop. On 2 February 2019 at a Toronto Maple Leaf game, there was a segment that focused on the return of a (white) military father who surprised his wife and daughter at the game.

about the Orient for many generations (6). How the Orient came to be understood in European scholarship illustrates Europe's power to reduce the dynamic and complex cultures of the East to the simplistic representations reproduced through Western institutions and conventions (Said 22). Said notes that the constructions of the Orient were necessary to Europe's understanding of itself (1), and the differentiation between "East" and "West" was indeed an invention that facilitated the purported distinction between Europeans as superior to non-European "backwardness" (7). Orientalist histories form what Yasmin Jiwani calls a "sedimented stock of knowledge," which is utilized to make meaning of representations of specific bodies, particularly in media (*Discourses of Denial* 36).

The East/West distinction reemerged and intensified following September 11, 2001, after the United States experienced four terrorist attacks by Islamic extremists. In the post-9/11 era, we can see Canadian politics and media focus significantly on the fear of Muslims, particularly Muslim men, and how their "culture" and religion pose a threat to Canadian "morals" and "values." Karim H. Karim argues that coverage of Muslims, specifically Muslim men, often follows "dramaturgical journalism": "dramaturgical portrayal constructs scenarios in which those who wield 'good violence' fight with the perpetrators of 'bad violence' so as to re-establish order in the universe" (26). Though there are deviations, mainstream media facilitate in producing the moral order that upholds the status quo by dramaturgically depicting representatives of the state as "heroes," terrorists as "villains," and citizens as "victims" (Karim 26-27). Though there can be some shifts in these portrayals, Karim argues that the "villain/terrorist" cannot

become a “hero/worthy victim” (27). There are some limitations to Karim’s analysis. In the era of Donald Trump, representatives of the state are not necessarily depicted as “heroes.” It should also be noted that both Arar and Omar Khadr’s cases, exemplify a “villain” to “victim” shift once news media began to draw on details that made their lives appear as fitting the norms of Canadianness. In order for representations of Khadr to make this shift in *some* news media portrayals, he must be represented as dis severing from his supposedly “bad” natal Muslim family. In Arar’s case, in Canadian media coverage of Mazigh, she mobilized an image of Arar that countered the image of him as a terrorist. We see elements of Karim’s analysis in representations of the villainous Muslim or “brown” man who is often juxtaposed in popular media against white male heroes, particularly in narratives where the violence of war needs to be justified.⁸ This juxtaposition arises through depictions of Western masculinity as tied to military endeavors “for peace.” Violence committed by Muslims, conversely, is associated with religious fundamentalism, and generally emerges in media without a narrative of how violence comes to be produced. Muslim military masculinity is usually depoliticized and viewed as war for the purpose of indoctrinating the whole world into a repressive

⁸ Numerous films released in the decades following 9/11 focused on white male heroism during military endeavors in Afghanistan and Iraq in the post-9/11 years, such as *I 2 Strong* (2018), *American Sniper* (2015), *The Hurt-Locker* (2008), *In the Valley of Elah* (2007), and *Stop-Loss* (2008). The main characters in all of these films are white males, and most, if not all of the films, parallel fatherhood and love for the family (children and white women) with love for the nation. It should be noted too, that many of these films are critical of some of the elements of war through their depictions of PTSD. Another example of white militarism being paralleled with good fatherhood was *The National Post*’s article on Christopher Speer (the U.S. military personnel Omar Khadr was accused of murdering). The article focuses on Speer as a devoted father and loving husband who left love notes around the house for his wife (Schmidt A3).

religion, exemplified in George Bush’s statements that those who commit acts of terror simply “hate our freedoms” (“President Bush Addresses the Nation”). White violence, conversely, finds justification when rendered through the lens of a “just war” (Tidy 9-10). For example, Canadian politicians and media presented the U.S. invasion of Afghanistan as “war-as-peacekeeping,” where Western military were seen to be “helping” people in Afghanistan (Tidy 9-10).

The narrative of “offering help,” and the violence that is said to be inherent to Muslim men, goes beyond the violence of terror, and ostensibly permeates Muslim homes where Muslim men are categorized as “dangerous” and Muslim women “imperiled” (Razack, *Casting Out* “A Typical Month” par. 4).⁹ Many academics in the post-September 11 period argue that orientalist discourses construct Muslim “culture” and religion as “barbaric” and incompatible with apparently progressive and civilized Western “values” (Jiwani, *Discourses of Denial*; Razack, *Casting Out*; Thobani, *Exalted Subjects*). Importantly, the East/West and civilized/barbaric divides have come to bear on perceptions of gender. The rhetoric of “saving brown women from brown men” (Spivak 101) casts racialized men as overly patriarchal and misogynistic, and therefore a *threat* to the domestic realm in Western nations, particularly because Canada frames itself as a nation that is committed to gender equality.¹⁰

⁹ Or, Muslim women are portrayed as accomplices in their own subjugation figured as the female suicide bomber (Jiwani, “Trapped in the Carceral Net” 22-24).

¹⁰ Canada’s current Prime Minister, Justin Trudeau, for example, is a self-proclaimed feminist (“Justin Trudeau”). Moreover, after his election in 2015, Trudeau was asked why it was important to him to have a cabinet that was gender balanced, and Trudeau responded, “because it is 2015” (Ditchburn, “Because it’s 2015”).

Narratives of “dangerous” Muslim men and “oppressed” Muslim women were recentered after 9/11 when then First Lady Laura Bush addressed the American public and justified the invasion of Afghanistan as a mission to “liberate” Afghan women from their oppressors (the men of the Taliban). Laura Bush made a clear distinction between “civilized” people and Afghan men when she stated, “civilized people[’s] ... hearts break for the women and children in Afghanistan” and they are horrified because “in Afghanistan we see the world the terrorists would like to impose on the rest of us” (“Radio Address by Mrs. Bush”). Within this speech Bush reified Afghan men as able to disrupt Western national projects, which are presumed to be based in gender equality, by performing horrific acts of violence against women and children in the West. Bush continues, “Fighting brutality against women and children is not the expression of a specific culture; it is the acceptance of our *common humanity*— a commitment shared by people of good will on every continent” (“Radio Address by Mrs. Bush”; emphasis added). Bush locates outside of “common humanity” non-Western men who commit acts of gender-based violence, framing the violence in Afghan communities as distinctly different than the violence that occurs in the West. Religious extremism, debates around honour killing, and the understanding that the Muslim male body is inherently violent towards women as well as queer communities all carry remnants of orientalism. Canadian politics and media draw on such orientalist discourses to frame discussions of Muslim communities, and often utilize these framings as justification to close Canadian borders (all three case studies examined in this dissertation demonstrate different ways through which “closing off” borders can occur).

Jasmin Zine argues that “‘fear’ provides the rationale for many repressive policies and practices that are easily legitimized by the public out of ‘rational’ concerns for safety and security” (“Muslim Cultural Politics” 14). Post-9/11 hate violence, for example, points to how the Western eye homogenizes “brown” and Arab looking men as Muslim, resulting not only in violence against Muslim men, but also violence against Hindus, Sikhs, and Christians who are mistaken to be Muslim (M. Ahmed 338; Razack, *Casting Out* “A Typical Month” par. 4; Thobani 221; Volpp 1583). Fears of Muslim families who are portrayed as producing violent children, fostering violence against women, and are headed by patriarchal fathers, emerge as having the ability to disrupt Canada’s national fabric. Such portrayals can help to justify Muslims being kept out of Canada’s borders. Sherene Razack argues that images of the “dangerous” Muslim man expose how “the state must protect itself from those who do not share its values, ideals of beauty, and middle-class virtues”; it is the foreigner’s supposed inherent difference such as appearance, cultural and religious practices, and accents, that mark their “inferiority” and threaten an imaginative homogenous citizenry resulting in exceptional measures towards these bodies that ostensibly threaten the state (Razack, *Casting Out* “Race Thinking” par. 6). For example, Tariq Madood argues in the case of Britain that the racialization of Asians in a multicultural state is not necessarily linked only to physical appearance, but rather culture, language, religion and family structure (7-8). Such framings of the “dangerous” Muslim man permit the suspension of their rights in the interests of national security and demarcate an “us” and “them” in ways that become integrated into law and bureaucracy so that when rights are suspended, the suspension of those rights does not

appear as violence, but as law itself (Razack, *Casting Out* “Race Thinking” par. 3). In this way, many Muslims are not just framed as un-Canadian, but they are also evicted from the “human community” through detainment and incarceration in order to protect Canada’s national image of itself as “civilized,” exemplified in the Arar, Khadr, and Shafia cases.

Muslim women who wear the hijab or veil, too, have become the center of intense debate. For immigrants and Muslims in Canada, reproducing what the Canadian state defines as gender equality becomes a marker of their ability to assimilate. For Muslim women to be read as “good” Muslims, they must reproduce the ideologies of the Canadian nation. Zine argues that women covering their heads or faces are not only seen as undesirable immigrants and citizens, but they are also a threat to the nation itself (“Unsettling the Nation” 147). Those Muslim women who are anti-hijabi and publicly express their gratitude for the West’s attempts to “liberate” Muslim women are portrayed as “good” Muslim women, while purportedly “bad” Muslim women continue to veil themselves (Thobani 237), and resist the West’s philanthropic interventions to “save” them. “Bad” Muslim women are viewed as being oblivious to the male dominance in Muslim communities, and they are seen to embrace Islam without simultaneously embracing Western norms and values (Thobani 237).

Images of violent Muslim men and oppressed Muslim women bleed into the private sphere and inform framings of supposedly violent Muslim families. Theories around the home as a space that is conceptually safe and comforting informs myths about normative Canadian families, even though feminist analyses of the “home” illustrate that

this space rarely meets this ideal (Hill Collins 68). The image of the “bad” Muslim family is measured against the image of the “good” Canadian family: while the “bad” Muslim family is constituted as patriarchal, polygamous, prone to domestic violence, and encourages children to put culture and religion first, the “good” Canadian family is egalitarian, monogamous, safe, and allows children to be individuals. The image in popular media of the Western father (which is closely linked to how white Canadian fathers are conceptualized) as heroic, protective, self-sacrificing, and never violent towards his partner and children emerges in opposition to images of the Eastern father (always heterosexual), who is authoritarian, hostile, a patriarch, and who rules his home employing violence against his wife and children. With that said, the imagined “good” Canadian family can also include Muslim Canadian families if they reproduce the dominant ideologies of the nation and do not push the boundaries of multiculturalism. The Eastern home in many representations is associated with “custom” and “tradition,” a space rife with generational conflict, where children must reproduce the ideologies that their parents supposedly impose on them (Ahmed, *The Promise* 134-135). Even prior to 9/11, media tended to focus on women of colour specifically if they discussed the abuse they experienced at the hands of those in their communities (Jiwani, “On the Outskirts” 60). Thobani explores in depth how the immigrant family (with whom the Muslim family is often associated) is “constituted as hyperpatriarchal at best, and pathologically dysfunctional at worst” (109). Disassociating the normative “egalitarian” Western home from the purportedly violent and “despotic” Eastern home that forces (violent) “culture” and/or religion on children, works to reaffirm the “goodness” of white Canadian parents

and the Canadian state, as well as affirm the “goodness” of ethnic bodies that adhere to normative family dynamics through processes of assimilation that leave traditions “behind.” In many popular depictions of immigrant families, we see how breaking from their family and tradition helps to align immigrant women and children with the Western nation (Ahmed, *The Promise of Happiness* 148).

Orientalist explanations trace violence committed by Muslims as individuals to dysfunctional families and sexual repression, where the Muslim home exists as a space of domestic violence and perverse sexualities, such as polygamy (Puar, “Genealogies of Terrorism” par. 3-11), that are said to be justified through religious doctrine. Children are either figured as violent subjects in the making (Razack “The Manufacture”), or desperately seeking a break from their religions and cultures in order to take up Western lives (Ahmed, *Strange Encounters* 137). Affirming orientalist framings of the “dysfunctional” Muslim family (assumed to be immigrants) helps to consolidate the white Canadian family in political and media narratives as the “good” family, that is nuclear, hetero/homonormative, and nonviolent, where children are able to be individuals who can choose who they want to be and are not attached to tradition or religion.

The image of the violent Muslim home also relies on orientalist perceptions of Muslim motherhood and fatherhood. The purportedly “bad” Muslim family is the reproductive site of “terrorist pathology” (Bhattacharyya 56-57; Puar, “Genealogies of Terrorism” par. 4; Razack, “The Manufacture” 63-64), and is associated with images of the “terrorist” father who is an “Oriental despot” (Razack, *Casting Out “Monster Terrorist”* par. 1). Muslim women, too, are read as threats to the white nation because

their fecundity is said to have the ability to change the ethnic makeup of Canadian society, and, in addition, their style of upbringing is said to have the potential to produce terrorists. As Dhamoon and Abu-Laban note, the fear of the figure of the “female dangerous foreigner” is associated with reproduction, and the concern that she may “reproduce an undesirable and unfit population, both literally and socially” (169). Gargi Bhattacharyya argues that the “extremist mother” emerges as a figure who “conflate[s] motherly love and filial duty with celebrations of violence,” and is willing to sacrifice her children in the name of culture and/or religion (53). The figure of the “extremist mother” is said to facilitate in reproducing terrorist violence that finds its roots in failed parenting, which is evidenced in the lack of “affective family relations” that purportedly produce balanced citizens in the West (Bhattacharyya 53). Muslim women’s supposed capacity to reproduce children that will pursue extremist Muslim religious ideologies and violence means that the figure of the “bad” Muslim woman can literally give life to the terrorist. Therefore, immigrant women (with whom Muslim women are often associated) have historically garnered state attention for their pivotal role in ensuring that their children assimilate and become “productive” members in Canadian society.

Canadian News Media: Exposing the Frames

This dissertation seeks to disrupt caricatures of Muslim bodies in Canadian media representations and the relational image that manufactures both figures of the “good” Canadian and the “bad” Muslim. While representations of “bad” Canadian families are not limited to particular racialized groups and emerge frequently in news media, violence

and patriarchy are not portrayed as inherent to the white Canadian home as they are in Muslim homes. That Canada's national identity is built on Anglo-Protestant values, institutionalized and reproduced by white European settlers who initiated the ongoing colonization of these lands, and that its national identity and laws emerged out of a specific historical context, are often ignored by news media in Canada, thus reproducing "Canadian culture" and "values" as ahistorical and without religious western European origins (Mosurinjohn 246). I draw on the concepts of "good" Muslims and "bad" Muslims, and further, "good" immigrants and "bad" immigrants, from Mahmood Mamdani's work; Mamdani argues all Muslims are assumed to be "bad" until proven to be "good" (15). Mamdani explains that "good Muslims are modern, secular, and Westernized, but bad Muslims are doctrinal, anti-modern, and virulent" (24). Mamdani explores how, in the wake of 9/11, then President George W. Bush told Americans that not all Muslims should be blamed for 9/11 and that there were indeed "good" Muslims who wished to clear their names and support the war against the "bad" Muslims (15). Mamdani notes, however, that "unless proved to be 'good,' every Muslim was presumed to be 'bad.' All Muslims were now under obligation to prove their credentials by joining in a war against 'bad Muslims'" (15). In *Covering Islam*, Edward Said had similarly pointed out that in the past, leaders such as Hosni Mubarak and Yasir Arafat were considered "good" Muslim men in dominant media portrayals because of their views on free market economies (118). In the Canadian context too, "good" Muslims are "modern, secular, and Westernized" and as "good" immigrants they contribute to the Canadian economy.

The three case studies that inform this dissertation suggest that Canada's national narratives are, at times, inconsistent. While race, class, sexuality, and gender are threaded into the Canadian national narratives of family and familial relationships, how race, class, gender, and sexuality are discussed are not always marshalled in the same or in similar ways in media or political conversations. As a result, Muslims do not always fit neatly into the rigid categories of the "good" or "bad" Muslim in media framings, and as my case studies demonstrate, representations of the same subject can move from one category to the next over a time period. Consider, for example, Omar Khadr, discussed in Chapter Two, who was deemed a terrorist by most Canadian media, but more recently has received some sympathetic media coverage. Building on Said and Mamdani, my examination of the three case studies of Muslim families illustrates that Muslims are typically portrayed as "good" if they are middle-class and reproduce neo-liberal ideologies, adhere to heteronormativity, do not have "too many" children, speak (unaccented) English or French in public spaces, and importantly, do not pass "too much" of their religious and cultural ideologies on to their children. I analyze how Muslims who adhere to neo-liberalism, and Western definitions of freedom and democracy are read as "good," as long as they also adhere to normative standards of Western masculinity and femininity. All of these characteristics work simultaneously, as well as independently, to create the image of the "good" Muslim in different contexts.

In order for particular racialized bodies more generally to be framed as "deserving" of Canadian benevolence by the media and the state, media must communicate and make visible how racialized bodies adhere to normativity through all of

these various registers. Media therefore play an important role in determining and shaping how racialized bodies will be portrayed to their audiences.¹¹ There are numerous examples of “positive” representations of Muslim families within news coverage, such as the later coverage of Maher Arar, some of the extended members of the Shafia family, and even within Canadian television such as the show *Little Mosque on the Prairie*.¹² Media, then, do not always negatively portray racialized bodies; indeed, in the cases that I analyze in this dissertation there are numerous examples of news media “positively” representing some members of the families that I examine, but “positive” representations often encompass Muslim communities and families who ascribe to aspects of Western normativity, and heteronormativity in particular. These “positive” representations aid the white Canadian state which works to discipline nonnormative bodies into following dominant norms and values. Therefore, in this dissertation, I examine the shifting media representations of Muslim families in Canada that at times portray them as “good” and at other moments portray them as “bad.” From an examination of the case studies—Arars in Chapter One, Khadr in Chapter Two, and Shafias in Chapter Three—it seems that even the purportedly “good” Muslim is *only* precariously good, and can quite easily slip into the category of the “bad” Muslim in Canadian media framings.

In order to nuance my analysis of framings of Muslim families in Canada, I focus

¹¹ Though Islam is a religion, those who are read as Muslim are often racialized even if they are white.

¹² Faiza Hirji notes, however, that, though *Little Mosque on the Prairie* has made “strides in offering rounded, entertaining Muslim characters, including a strong and appealing female at the core of the series” and “expanded the discourse available around the figure of the Muslim woman” (43), it still has limitations “in terms of [its] ability to expand the spectrum of existing discourse about Muslim women” (44).

my attention on statements and speeches by political leaders by examining House of Commons debates in Canada as well as English language Canadian news media outlets. I examine various national English language media in Canada because the ideas that they reproduce are widely disseminated and shared, and in all three of the case studies that I explore, news media and political conversations informed one another. For example, Arar's case was subjected to media leaks, one of which was likely provided by a senior Canadian intelligence source (O'Connor, *Analysis and Recommendations* 260), and in the Khadr's case, Razack explores how media stories made their way into the House of Commons and a parliamentary subcommittee, and shaped their discussions ("The Manufacture" 68-69). Jiwani's analysis of the connection between news media and the state illustrates that dominant media are able to define particular bodies as threats and the state works to manage the threat ("Colluding Hegemonies" 116). Further, dominant media illustrate "how the nation perceives itself and the groups within it" (*Discourses of Denial* 38).

This study reveals how media were simultaneously responsible for producing negative images of Muslim communities, as well as keeping the Canadian public informed about the injustices that Muslims faced in the wake of 9/11. For instance, some media were critical of the government's handling of the cases of Arar and Khadr and "positive" media representations did help to eventually shift some public opinions in favour of Arar and Khadr, which, at the very least, *helped* to produce more just outcomes for them as individuals. While news media, for example, at various points demonized both Arar and Khadr, they also interviewed Arar and Mazigh on numerous occasions,

published articles on why a public inquiry was necessary for Arar, and published the footage of Khadr's CSIS interrogation.¹³ Such coverage provided varying representations of Arar and Khadr which countered the dominant portrayals that attempted to frame them as terror suspects deserving of violence. In the Arar case, it is difficult to conclude the extent of the role media played in securing a public inquiry for Arar, but, as I explore, that media outlets eventually called on the Canadian government to hold a public inquiry at least contributed to a public debate about the effects of the War on Terror on racialized subjects.

In the chapters that follow, for the most part, I analyze national news media, *The Globe and Mail*, *The National Post*, Canadian Broadcast Corporation (CBC), including documentaries produced by their flagship programming *The Fifth Estate* and *The National*), and *Maclean's*, for their reach across Canada, in varying social and political geographies. In Chapter Three, I have also included for analysis the *Toronto Star* because they produced a compilation of their news coverage of the Shafia case in a novella of sorts (similar to the *Maclean's* coverage, which is also examined in Chapter Three). *The Star* made the Shafia family's complex narrative easily accessible to a wide range of readers. News media representations can vary, even within each news outlet, and by journalist, so it is often difficult to place coverage on the "left/right" political spectrum. At times, various journalists can provide coverage that deviates from the general leanings of the news media outlet for which they write, and journalist themselves can help reshape

¹³ It is difficult to determine if the footage of Khadr's interrogation actually helped to sway public opinion in his favour.

some media narratives (as we see in Chapter One with Jeff Sallot). Broadly, however, the CBC coverage is usually categorized as left of center (Walker et. al. 5). There are mixed opinions on *The Globe and Mail*; it has been categorized as right of center (Carney et. al. 65; Walker et. al. 5) and centrist (Rauhala et. al. 97; Walker et. al. 5). There are also mixed opinions on *Macleans*' coverage, and it is categorized as both left of center (Janz and Hayward 171) and right of center (Gilbert and Viswanathan 190).¹⁴ *The National Post* is characterized as right of center (Rauhala et. al. 97; Walker et. al. 5) to right (Carney et. al. 65; Walker et. al. 5), and *The Toronto Star*'s coverage is generally characterized as left of center (Carney et. al. 65; Rauhala et. al. 97; Walker et. al. 5).

By tracing various media threads in my case study of the Arars, Khadrs, and Shafias, this dissertation examines how media narratives differ and overlap. Though there are similarities in how these different Muslim families were portrayed in media, this dissertation also highlights the important differences. It explores the various ways in which news media use the lens of multiculturalism and Canadian nationalism when (re)producing stories about racialized Muslim and immigrant families. News media help to determine how particular stories, and particular bodies, can be discussed and what meanings get attached to these bodies. Stuart Hall argues that with regard to racialization, media are central to ideological production, as media produce representations of how the world operates (“The Whites of their Eyes” 31). Hall uses the word “ideology” to refer to

¹⁴ *Macleans*'s, too, has garnered significant attention in respect to some of its racist publications such as an article originally titled, “Too Asian: Some Frosh Don’t Want to Study at an Asian University” (renamed “The Enrollment Controversy”) by Stephanie Findlay and Nicholas Köhler, and Mark Steyn’s article, “The Future Belongs to Islam,” an excerpt from his book *America Alone*.

“images, concepts and premises which provide the framework to represent, interpret, understand and ‘make sense’ of some aspect of social existence” (31). Ideologies, according to Hall, operate through a “set or chain of meanings” (31), which are repeated and appear as “naturalized” or truths, but are actually socially constructed (32). These “meanings” can attach themselves to racialized bodies (depending on how the body is racialized), and frequent negative media representations of the racialized body can have implications for how they come to be understood, recognized, viewed, and treated in daily social interactions. Carol Tator and Frances Henry (109-110), as well as Hall, point to a larger trend in media, arguing that dominant media often represent racialized bodies negatively, but what Hall points to specifically are the ways in which negative portrayals of racialized bodies can operate insidiously in media. Defining the racialized body as a threat does not simply occur through overt forms of racism in media. Hall’s arguments about the differences between “overt” and “inferential” racism in dominant media are particularly helpful because he illustrates that though there are media that focus on overtly racist arguments, there are also media that utilize seemingly “naturalized representations” pertaining to race which are advanced as “unquestioned assumptions” about racialized bodies (36). Many of the media portrayals of the Muslim family that I study in the following chapters are based upon “unquestioned assumptions” that attach gender-based violence and terrorist violence to culture and religion.

Jiwani argues that dominant media consist of the “long-lasting power of representation” and that media images frequently demonstrate whiteness as dominance, thus reproducing relations of superiority and inferiority (36). Tator and Henry argue that

racism in dominant Canadian media facilitates defining the “in-group” as superior by representing them as possessing characteristics that are not possessed by “others” or the “out-group” (110). Racialized discourse, in Tator and Henry’s analysis of immigration discourse, functions to identify groups which the in-group deems “threatening,” and therefore part of the “out-group” in a way that justifies discrimination against these communities (110).

Though the circumstances of Muslim communities in Canada are complex, Karim argues that media connect violence in Muslim communities to matters of “tribalism” or religion (158). This connection, he argues, “does not require much ideological labour” for viewers and readers of dominant Canadian media “due to the primacy in the North of the core image of Muslims as a people generally prone to fanatical impulses” (158). It is then not difficult for audiences of dominant media to connect Muslim homes to spaces of violence because the dominant gaze has already established Muslims as prone to violence. The media’s repetitive coverage of crimes supposedly committed by particular racialized communities creates a “moral panic” that suggests that anyone who resembles members of these communities has an inclination to crime (Jiwani, *Discourses of Denial* 47). Recurring images of the Arab terrorist stereotype (or Muslim, Afghan, or Syrian terrorist stereotype) in popular media, and the frequent reproduction of these bodies as “threats,” are often mobilized to justify their criminalization because of their easy association with violence (Jiwani 36). Clips of Muslim men participating in acts of violence, and for the purpose of this dissertation, violence against women and within the home specifically, help to associate Muslims, Arabs, Afghans, and Syrians with domestic

violence as there are few varying media representations of these men. As Jiwani argues, being underrepresented can cause minimal and stereotypical representations of the racialized body (41). This contributes to damaging representations and negative assumptions about racialized bodies. This dissertation therefore explores both the importance and the limitations of people of colour being “positively” portrayed in media (especially because positive portrayals often mean aligning their actions with Canadian nationalist ideals). It is also important to recognize that news media offered a platform for some of the individuals who I explore in this dissertation to produce alternative and counter narratives, which actually challenged the frequent depictions of violent Muslim families.

The recurrent portrayals of violent Muslim homes within media and political discourses confine Muslim families within the frame of violence: an always heterosexual family, with a violent patriarchal father, oppressed mother (or complicit in her own subjugation and the subjugation of her children), and children wishing to Westernize (but always holding the potential to reproduce religious and cultural violence through acts of extremism). For Muslim families to break from this frame requires that they align with Canadian ideals and heteronormativity, and be reframed as “good” Muslims. However, even when they are reframed as “good,” there is always the potential to be pulled back into the frame of the “bad” Muslim. They can be pulled back into the frame of the “bad” Muslim as a result of their embodiment, but also for apparently failing to perform Canadian cultural norms. When I discuss media “framing” in this dissertation, I am very much drawing on Butler’s analysis of the “frame” as “an editorial embellishment of the

image, if not a self-commentary on the history of the frame itself” (*Frames of War* 8), where the frame exists around the image, to set it up, but the frame itself, its parameters, and what exists within it and why, is frequently taken as a given. Butler explains that when we begin to call the frame into question we expose what may be already outside the frame, and it is what is outside the frame that makes what is within the frame recognizable (12). Butler pushes further and states, “What happens when a frame breaks with itself is that a taken-for-granted reality is called into question, exposing the orchestrating designs of the authority who sought to control the frame” (12).

Within the various media narratives that I explore in this dissertation, I seek to expose the frame that makes some subjects recognizable as racialized Muslim family members deserving of the rights of Canadian citizenship, such as Monia Mazigh and Maher Arar after Arar’s return home and their vigorous efforts to secure an inquiry for him (Chapter One), Rona Mohammed and the Shafia sisters (Chapter Three), and even Omar Khadr (to a degree) after his return to Canada (Chapter Two). Frames have the ability to determine how a given story is understood by the general public by limiting the terms within which the story can be discussed and debated (Smolash 22). In so doing, dominant discourses, both implicitly and explicitly, determine who is to blame, propose solutions, and dictate the possible realities that can even be imagined (Smolash 22). Though media can present particular frames to the Canadian public, the public also has the ability to resist and question these frames. People are influenced by the media they encounter, but they can also challenge news sources and develop their own opinions relying on previous knowledge of ideologies and their personal experiences (van Dijk

15), and social media, too, has made disseminating counter-narratives even more accessible. Shortly after Arar was detained, for example, Sheema Khan published an article in *The Globe* in defense of Arar (“An Outrage Against Canada” A17), and *The Post* published an article by Mazigh where she asked why her husband was “being put on trial in the media” (A17). Maha Elsamnah, the mother of Omar Khadr, too, tried to counter media portrayals of terrorist violence in her notorious interview with the CBC. By drawing on Canadian English language news media, I explore the cases of Maher Arar and Monia Mazigh; Maha Elsamnah, Ahmed and Omar Khadr; and Mohammed Shafia, Rona Mohammed, and Tooba Yahya to expose the media frames that produce “good” Canadian Muslim families and “bad” Muslim families. In exploring media representations of Canadian Muslim families, I hope to expose not only the violence of the frame itself, but also expose the violence that is masked by the national myths around “good” Canadian families.

Recognition Politics and Disciplining Racialized Bodies

Central to the following chapters then are questions around recognition and recognition politics. It is paradoxical that Indigenous peoples in Canada, racialized immigrants, and racialized people more broadly continue to seek recognition from a colonial state that continues the colonization of Indigenous people and their land, and economic and political endeavors in other parts of the world that rely on the subjugation of people in the Global South. There are some who conform to certain norms in the interest of survival, and while there is a degree of agency in conformity or resistance, as

Butler points out, reproducing norms is not always, or even usually, voluntary and this includes how one is read as normative or non-normative in different contexts. Simultaneously, being read as normative (through the lens of gender, sexuality, race etc.) can provide some marginalized individuals with an escape, even temporarily, from various forms of violence; as Jiwani argues, conforming to dominant social norms can facilitate non-normative bodies escaping the “carceral net” (“Trapped in the Carceral Net” 15-16). Recognition as Canadian citizens often requires particular bodies to be read as conforming to Canadian norms and practices in order for them to be deemed worthy of the rights of citizenship. Butler argues that “The problem is not merely how to include more people within existing norms, but to consider how existing norms allocate recognition differentially” (*Frames of War* 6), and to this I add further, at whose expense? The aspects of subjectivity that defy normativity must always be managed, subjugated, and always already be differentiated from normativity (Butler 12). So, while I critique the talking points that claim Muslim communities threaten “Canadian values,” I also argue throughout this dissertation that perhaps those “values” *should be* called into question.¹⁵ What are those “values” predicated upon? What substance do “Canadian values,” such as multiculturalism or supposed gender equality, have when there are few active steps being taken to comprehensively address gender-based violence (particularly against Indigenous, racialized, immigrant, and trans communities)? What my analysis of media representations of the families of Maher Arar and Monia Mazigh, Maha Elsamnah and

¹⁵ For example, I critique hetero/homonormative monogamy in Chapter Three as a Canadian “value.”

Ahmed Khadr, and Mohammed Shafia, Rona Mohammed and Tooba Yahya exposes are how ideas about normative Canadian families' supposed connections to non-violence and innocence should be disrupted, dismantled, and reworked so that “good” Canadian families are not simply framed within the terms defined by the state, but the frame of the “good family” is dismantled to expose the violence that can exist within the frame. The supposed lack of violence within normative Canadian families produces the frame of the apparently violent non-normative (non-monogamous, racialized, and/or immigrant) family so that the racialized and immigrant family is continually tethered to violence.

In order to break from orientalist framings, some Muslims attempt to distance themselves from the actions of other Muslims to prove they are “good” (Jiwani, “Colluding Hegemonies” 130). Despite diverse Muslim identities, some Muslims who proximate Canadian norms and perform Canadian values can be read and framed as a “good” family. Thus, in both the Khadr and the Shafia cases, some members of the Muslim community spoke to Canadian media to clearly illustrate that these families' actions were not a part of the culture or religion of their community. In the case of Maher Arar, too, he discussed in a report by Stephen Toope how many in the Muslim community did not want to associate with him upon his return to Canada (““If he could have”” A13). Evidently, this was an attempt for those in the Muslim, Afghan, Arab, and Syrian communities to distance themselves from the individuals who were accused of crimes and ensure that they themselves are not associated with these alleged acts of violence (and the retaliatory violence that might ensue as a result).

Just as Franz Fanon highlights how the “white man...had woven [him] out of a

thousand details, anecdotes, stories” (84), this may have been an attempt by many in Muslim communities to break from orientalist histories and the embodiment of barbarity that the white gaze imposes on them. Fanon states that, in regard to Antillean society, “The Martinican does not compare himself with the white man *qua* father, leader, God; he compares himself with his fellow against the pattern of the white man” (167). Fanon explores attempts by the colonized to refute their inferiority, not by disrupting the dichotomous regimes of superior/inferior and white/black, but by asserting their superiority over other colonized people by aligning themselves with whiteness. Fanon’s theoretical framework is helpful to my analysis in this dissertation as it demonstrates the divides (or, perhaps, the overlaps) between images of white Canadian citizens and some people of colour. Fanon’s work also helps me to explore the divisions that are fostered between and within racialized communities that help to reproduce and perpetuate the Canadian state’s power.

Fanon’s work is integral to understanding how multiculturalism in Canada has made processes of assimilation more insidious. There are Muslim families that help to reproduce the multicultural nation, and perhaps can be incorporated into it, because they project heteronormative, middle-class, and neo-liberal ideals of the nation. What reproducing these norms can do is allow for those who do not reproduce the norms to be cast as defiant of Canadian ideals. Canada, hypothetically, does not allow open acts of discrimination, such as barring racialized immigration, and prohibits discrimination in housing, employment, and educational institutions, but Glen Coulthard argues in the context of Indigenous people in Canada, that “colonial relations of power are no longer

reproduced primarily through overtly coercive means, but rather through the asymmetrical exchange of mediated forms of state recognition and accommodation” (22). Drawing on Fanon, Coulthard’s work explores how recognition politics have come to bear on colonial relationships between the colonized and colonizer; state recognition of Indigenous people (and colonized people, more broadly) that is “granted” or “accorded” fails to disrupt colonial relationships (30-31). Recognition from the Canadian state allows the state to mask the fact that it was founded upon Indigenous land and resources, and that the state continues to benefit from that land and those resources. Recognition functions as a method of obscuring how the Canadian state continues to reproduce ideologies that are predicated on the subjugation of Indigenous people, culture, thought, and spirituality, while touting Western cultural superiority. It should be noted, however, that recognition in terms of the rights of citizenship by the Canadian state is complicated. For non-Indigenous women of colour, who continue to fight for equal access to the benefits of Canadian citizenship (which relies on the displacement of Indigenous peoples [Thobani 174]), recognition through citizenship can mean accessing healthcare, employment, and escaping domestic violence (Razack, Smith, Thobani 5). Citizenship for Indigenous people, conversely, often marks the end to land claims and sovereignty (Razack, Smith, Thobani 5).

How does one become recognized by the state? Who does the state recognize? How are some recognized as “good” citizens deserving of the rights of citizenship, while others remain “stranger strangers” or “internal dangerous foreigners”? Butler asks, “what is it precisely that would be ‘recognized’?” (*Frames of War* 141). Butler argues that

recognition itself is a way of ordering and regulating subjects through defining norms, where subjects are recognized by their adherence to pre-established understandings of what they must be in order to be recognized as non/normative bodies (141). Butler states that “recognition becomes part of the very practice of ordering and regulating subjects according to pre-established norms” (141), where identities become defined through their requirements (143), but what then, happens when these identities fall outside of frames of recognizability? What happens when the Muslim family, for example, does not fall into orientalist framings? What happens when media images emerge of Muslims who do not conform to stereotypical framings, adhere to hetero/homonormative family dynamics and are middle-class, and who do not appear “too” religious? Media coverage of such families might suggest that these Muslims “are not like the others.” These families may then be granted some of the rights of citizenship. In this way, recognition, whether as the “violent Muslim,” or as the “good” Muslim, relies on the nation’s, media’s, and state’s framing. According to Butler, there is no subject recognition without differentiation (141-142): the ethnic body is always differentiated from the white citizen, and the image of the “bad” Muslims and the “good” Muslims continue to be differentiated, never seen as subjects on their own terms, but always a product of differentiation. Coulthard builds on Fanon to argue that at times the colonized will eventually come to align with “white liberty and white justice,” and will fail to reestablish their recognizability on their own terms, values, and conditions (39). Coulthard, however, draws on Taiaiake Alfred and Leanne Simpson to argue that in order to break from the dialectic of recognizability, Indigenous people can, instead, pursue Indigenous resurgence through a “revitalization of ‘traditional’

political values and practices” (154).

Framings of Muslim families in Canadian media fall into these categories of recognition: the “good” nuclear, middle-class and heteronormative family, or the “bad” foreign, polygamous, and dysfunctional family. In the following chapters, I approach the cases of Maher Arar and Monia Mazigh; Maha Elsamnah, Ahmed and Omar Khadr; and Mohammed Shafia, Rona Mohammed and Tooba Yahya through their interconnections in terms of their recognizability as Muslim families, but I also highlight how these three cases, and how the media portray them at various moments, are different from one another and must be studied as such, overlapping yet distinct.

In Chapter One, “(Un)worthy of the Rights of Citizenship?: The Case of Maher Arar and Monia Mazigh,” I examine the great deal of media attention afforded to Maher Arar. Though Arar is a Canadian citizen, he was stopped in 2002 by U.S. officials while transiting in New York and deported to Syria, the country of his birth, where he was subjected to torture. Arar was eventually returned to Canada, where a national inquiry was held, and finally received a public apology and settlement. The news media coverage of Arar’s case illustrates that though he was initially deemed a threat based on his Muslim embodiment and connection to the Syrian community, some news media eventually drew on an image of Arar that transgressed stereotypical representations of the Muslim man. Media attention to his wife, Monia Mazigh, too, eventually helped to shift Arar’s framing in some media and state discourses as a good father, taxpayer, and hardworking Canadian— all characteristics that produced the image of Arar as an innocent father and “good” immigrant. Mazigh, and the media attention afforded to her, mobilized an image

of an educated and “modern” Muslim woman. Taken together, media representations eventually framed Arar as worthy of his rights as a Canadian citizen, not only because he was innocent, but also because he was represented as able to adhere to Canadian ideals.

I analyze the extensive media attention on Maher Arar and Monia Mazigh to explore how Arar’s innocence was situated within a narrative of Canadian commonality. This commonality is often tethered to notions of the heteronormative family, being middle-class, and having “respectable” employment. Media frequently referenced his middle-class background, having a wife and two small children, holding a Master’s degree, and having a job as an engineer. It was not just Arar’s innocence and Canadian citizenship then that made him worthy of Canadian benevolence, but also news media representing him as able to proximate Canadian notions of fatherhood and citizenship, which was bolstered by Mazigh’s self-representation as an educated and liberal Muslim woman that also suggested to Canadians that Arar was a “good”/modern husband. The ability of the Arar family to fit into the “good” Canadian family framing in media coverage shaped understandings of his innocence and secured his return to Canada. His Muslim embodiment, however, is of the utmost importance in his case because Arar was not initially read as a Canadian worthy of the rights of citizenship, which exposes how the rights of citizenship are bound to the white body, despite multiculturalist policies. The federal government’s subsequent apology to Arar and Mazigh reinscribed an image of Canada as a benevolent nation that accepts its past wrongdoings, even though the state failed to uphold Canada’s multicultural ideals (Chakraborty 212). What happened to Mazigh and Arar was discussed as if it was an isolated incident (Chakraborty 196), and

the apology attempted to conceal that Arar's and Mazigh's experiences were a part of a long history of state violence directed towards racialized communities in Canada that continues to this day.

Chapter Two, “‘Civilizing’ the ‘Barbaric’ Child: The Case of the Khadr,” examines how media represented the cases of Ahmed Khadr and Maha Elsamnah in connection to one of their sons, Omar Khadr. I analyze Canadian media coverage of the Khadr parents to demonstrate how images of extremist Muslim parents shaped the Canadian government's and the general public's understanding of Omar Khadr. In 2002, news broke that U.S. military forces had detained Ahmed Khadr's second youngest son, Omar Khadr. Omar Khadr was detained at the age of 15 for allegedly throwing a grenade that killed a member of the U.S. military, Sergeant Speer, in Afghanistan. Khadr was held in Guantanamo Bay for ten years, where he was subjected to various methods of torture and interrogated by CSIS. In 2010, Omar Khadr accepted a plea bargain, and in 2012 he was moved to a Canadian maximum-security prison. He was released on bail in Spring 2015. Upon his release he lived with his lawyer, Dennis Edney, and in 2017 it was leaked to the public that the Canadian government quietly offered Omar Khadr an apology and a \$10.5 million settlement.

This chapter focuses on the media framings of Ahmed Khadr and Elsamnah that suggest that bad Muslim parenting produced Omar Khadr, first said to be a violent terrorist child who was unworthy of Canadian protection, and later, a child soldier worthy of Canadian benevolence. I interrogate both portrayals by illustrating how media attach Omar Khadr's acts of violence to orientalist images of the violent (terrorist) Muslim

family. Media portrayed how Elsamnah and Ahmed Khadr, framed as foreign and un-Canadian, produced and nurtured children who were prone to violence. They exemplified for the Canadian public how the children of Muslims might become violent against the Canadian state if they are brought up in purportedly deviant Muslim families. In the latter half of the chapter, drawing on the case of Omar Khadr, I explore how the Canadian state becomes the saviour of Muslim children who are socialized in supposedly “bad” Muslim homes.

Chapter Three, the final chapter of this dissertation, “Framing the ‘Violent’ Polygamous Family: The Case of Mohammed Shafia, Rona Mohammed, and Tooba Yahya,” explores Canadian political and media discourses of the Shafia family murders. On 30 June, 2009, the bodies of sisters Zainab, Sahar, and Geeti Shafia along with their father’s first wife, and the sisters’ surrogate mother, Rona Mohammed, were found in a vehicle immersed in water in Kingston, Ontario. Eventually it was revealed that they were killed by their father, Mohammed Shafia, his second wife and the sisters’ biological mother, Tooba Yahya, and their brother Hamed Shafia, who were all found guilty of their murder in 2012.

Canadian media broadly named this act of violence an “honour killing” and the focus of many analyses on the Shafia case centered around honour killing and honour-based violence. My chapter, however, explores media framings of Shafia’s polygamous relationship with Rona Mohammed and Tooba Yahya. Drawing on the House of Commons debates about the *Zero Tolerance for Barbaric Cultural Practices Act*, I illustrate how the Shafia case has been a factor in the recentering of the polygamy debate

around immigration, and dissevering polygamy from normative Canadian families. I examine how media and political debates have drawn on Shafia's polygamous marriage and the gender-based violence within the Shafia home to justify anti-polygamy immigration policies. I also analyze how the Shafia case works to frame homo/heteronormative monogamous Canadian homes as a non-violent space, while polygamous homes associated with the Eastern family and kinship ties emerge as prone to domestic violence. What is often unaccounted for are the ways in which the state is implicated in violence within immigrant Muslim homes, reducing violence in these homes to matters of culture and "foreign" family structures.

Through these three chapters, this dissertation illustrates that in state and media portrayals, Muslim families do not emerge as sites of complex social interactions, where Muslim parents and children negotiate their place within Canada as a settler-colonial state alongside their own individual thoughts, culture, religion, kinship, politics, and family formations. The Muslim family is represented in Canadian news media as the site where Muslim bodies can reproduce Canadian nationalist ideals, and therefore, assist in reproducing the settler-colonial state order. The Muslim family, conversely, can also be a space where Muslim bodies become marked as "deviant," emerging from a purportedly "bad" Muslim home that is a threat to the Canadian nation. I seek to intervene in Media Studies, Canadian Immigration Studies, Critical Race Studies, and Gender and Sexuality Studies by exploring how Canadian English-language news media representations of Muslim families reflect the complexities of what it means to be Canadian beyond citizenship. By exploring Canadian news media portrayals of Muslim families, I address

some of the intricacies in these representations that at once contribute to the racist depictions of Muslim families, but are also responsible for exposing and publishing stories on some of the injustices of the Canadian government and the acts of racism and violence that Muslims experience. News media play a key role in reproducing orientalist framings of Muslim families, but news media can also take the government to task when it comes to the violation of immigrant and racialized Canadians' rights as citizens. Muslim communities have a complex relationship with Canadian news media, because Muslim communities are comprised of multiple and intersectional identities. Muslims are not just framed, but also frame themselves within Canadian media. In this sense, media can situate certain Muslims within the Canadian nation, but through Canadian media, some Muslims also carve out a space for themselves within the Canadian nation.

Chapter One: (Un)worthy of the Rights of Citizenship?: Framing the Case of Maher Arar and Monia Mazigh

Gender relations have become central to media representations of Muslim communities and their assimilation into Canadian society, particularly in the post-September 11 era. Many scholars have explored how the Muslim woman's body is imagined to be oppressed by Muslim men (Jiwani, *Discourses of Denial* 52; Razack, *Casting Out* "Gender and the Camp" par. 1; Thobani 218; Zine, "Muslim Cultural Politics" 12), and this is pivotal to how gender relations in Muslim communities come to be represented in Canadian media and politics. Muslims' ability to defy these stereotypes becomes a marker of their "modernization" and ability to assimilate into Canadian society. Sherene Razack points out that there are three stereotypical figures that have emerged from the "war on terror:" "the 'dangerous' Muslim man, the 'imperiled' Muslim woman, and the 'civilized' European" (*Casting Out* "A Typical Month" par. 4) or, for the purpose of this particular analysis, the "civilized" (white) Canadian, who has a historical connection to the "civilized" European. As discussed in the Introduction, European nations often justified the colonization of Africa, the Caribbean, Asia, and the Americas as philanthropic "civilizing missions." Building on these historical justifications, the Canadian state, today, attempts to "civilize" immigrants to Canada through the rhetoric of Canadian "values." Contemporary colonial endeavors, therefore, are not just about access to land and resources, but about colonizing bodies as well.

Mainstream representations of the Muslim man connect him to figures that are prone to violence, particularly violence against women. The "dangerous" Muslim man and the "civilized" Canadian are two figures that emerge in opposition to one another

(Razack, *Casting Out* “A Typical Month” par. 4): The “civilized” Canadian cannot be the “dangerous” Muslim man, and the “dangerous” Muslim man cannot be the “civilized” Canadian, even if he is a Canadian citizen. Canadian citizenship seems to necessarily require upholding norms of British civility (Coleman, *White Civility* 27). The image of the “imperiled” Muslim woman, on the other hand, suggests a figure that must be protected from the violence ingrained in her community. She is different from the “extremist mother” (Bhattacharyya 51), another stereotypical figure that I analyze in the next chapter. The figure of the “imperiled” Muslim woman is contrasted with the Western woman, in this case the Canadian woman, who is imagined to be liberated from patriarchy and is not bound to her community or customs. Purportedly, Muslim women must be saved from the patriarchy in their communities while Western women, by contrast, are portrayed as (already) liberated (Razack, *Casting Out* “Modern Women as Imperialists” par. 4).

This chapter explores how Maher Arar and his wife Monia Mazigh defy framings of the “dangerous” Muslim man and the “imperiled” Muslim in shifting Canadian news media portrayals and state discourses, such as House of Commons debates. Arar was stopped in 2002 by U.S. customs officials while transiting in New York on suspicions of terrorism. Though he and Mazigh are Canadian citizens, he was deported to Syria, the country of his birth, where he was subjected to torture while Mazigh continued to press the Canadian government and human rights organizations for his release. What the Arar and Mazigh case illustrates is that though their Muslim embodiments suggested that they were a supposed threat to the wider Canadian public, the media often bound the couple’s

innocence to their ability to adhere to Canadian heteronormativity and productive citizenship. I analyze the complex, multilayered, and often contradictory media attention to Arar and Mazigh in *The Globe and Mail* and *The National Post* to examine how the discourses around Arar's innocence were frequently situated within Canadian commonality and the heteronormative middle-class family.

Much of the news media coverage of Arar and Mazigh analyzed in this chapter illustrates how their lifestyles had to be portrayed as congruent with the figure of the “civilized” Canadian, in order for them to be read as innocent. Therefore, as the details of their lives were made public, they were not read as “dangerous” Muslims – at least, not consistently. The focus of this chapter is predominantly on the media coverage of Arar, but I also focus on how his image relies on how Mazigh was framed in news media, and Mazigh's framing of herself and her husband, as normative Canadians. Though many news media outlets demonized Arar, the representations shifted in some news media to frame Arar as transgressing the image of the “dangerous” Muslim man. Representations of the “dangerous” Muslim men are potent because they can appear as “a naturalized representation” (see Hall, and Tator and Henry in my Introduction pp. 37). Even though Arar is Muslim, his ability to defy the framing of dangerousness hinged on Mazigh being read as a “liberated” Muslim woman; taken together, they became a representation of a “good” Muslim family in Canada. Mazigh facilitated readings of Arar as “civilized” in news media by speaking publicly and eloquently about her husband's circumstances, mobilizing language that illustrated her family's heteronormativity, and transgressing framings of the “imperiled” Muslim woman. In the media coverage, Mazigh appears as

an empowered Muslim woman who is able to take control of her family. Arar's innocence and his rights to a fair trial specifically in *The Post* and *The Globe* were tied to conceptions of normative Western gender roles and heteronormative family dynamics. These gendered discourses frame Arar as a "family man" whose loving wife fought for him to come home, and legitimize Arar as a non-violent husband and father, and "worthy" Canadian (Muslim) citizen.

The importance of the framings of Arar and Mazigh as heteronormative and productive citizens in Canadian news media in the post-9/11 era cannot be overstated. That is to say, the political climate in which many of the news articles that I explore were written, and the climate in which Maher Arar was detained, was an era where Muslims in Canada were often encouraged to demonstrate their allegiance to Canada (if not the West more generally). Muslims often needed to perform their Canadian citizenship in ways that differentiated them from the figure of the "bad" Muslim. While I critique the idea that Muslims must adhere to the norms of Canadian citizenship in order to be read as undeserving of violence in various historical moments, I also do not want to downplay the importance of how producing images of Arar and Mazigh that fit them into the frame of normative Canadian citizenship might have been necessary for them to receive due process from the Canadian government. Being represented outside of the stereotypical frames in the years after 9/11 was actually quite transgressive.

I begin with outlining some of the limitations of shaping discussions of Arar around recognition and empathy. I then move on to an overview of Arar's case, and my methodology for this chapter. Within my analysis of *The Post* and *The Globe's* newspaper

coverage, I map out how Arar’s case comes to be understood through frames of gendered discourses surrounding the “War on Terror,” Canadian multiculturalism, and the image of the “good” Muslim/immigrant and heteronormativity. I analyze the coverage generally as well as perform close readings of selected articles, focusing on key moments in the Arar case, beginning with the coverage of his deportation (extraordinary rendition) and imprisonment, his return home, and the months leading up to Canada’s national inquiry.

Troubling Media Framings: The Limits of Recognition

Though there was significant media attention to the Arar case, only Yasmeen Abu-Laban and Nisha Nath have focused their attention specifically on media portrayals of Arar’s guilt and innocence in connection to his citizenship.¹⁶ In order to build on Abu-Laban and Nath’s study, and the ways in which media coverage of Arar has both attempted to discredit Arar’s experiences as well as place him within a framework of innocence or guilt, I examine *The National Post* and *The Globe and Mail*’s coverage of the Arar case. I work through how portrayals of his innocence and/or his guilt, as well as his right to access a fair trial and due process, are tied to characteristics of heteronormative and productive citizenship, and Western norms of masculinity. Rather than focus only on how Arar’s Canadian citizenship was called into question because he was a Syrian Muslim who was a perceived threat (Thobani, “Nationality in the Age of Global Terror”; Abu-Laban and Nath, “From Deportation to Apology”), this chapter

¹⁶ There are other works that discuss the media attention on the Arar case, but Abu-Laban and Nath published the only full-length article focusing specifically on the media attention.

explores how portrayals of Mazigh and Arar suggested to the wider Canadian public that *these* Muslims were not the stereotypical Muslims who are perceived to be a threat to Canadian society. I focus my attention on how Arar's innocence and rights to due process are bound to notions of not only citizenship, but also heteronormativity. Arar's "Muslim-looking" embodiment (M. Ahmed 338; Razack, *Casting Out* "A Typical Month" par. 4; Thobani 221; Volpp 1583) suggested to authorities that he was a threat, but Abu-Laban and Nath also argue that politicians drew on the fact that Arar was a dual citizen of both Syria and Canada as their reason for being unable to intervene on his behalf (84).

Abu-Laban and Nath track the shifts in media coverage and parliamentary debates, noting that during Arar's deportation and homecoming there was a correlation between "guilt/dual citizenship and innocence/Canadian citizenship" (85). From his homecoming to Canada's official apology, however, parliamentary debates no longer overtly portrayed Arar as a terrorist and the phrase "Canadian citizen" was used to describe Arar's "potential innocence, right to due process of the law, and deservedness of Canada's protection" (85). The focus on Arar's Canadian citizenship shifted the attention from his dual citizenship (which connoted Otherness and lack of loyalty) to his stake in Canadian protection and equality of citizenship (86). Abu-Laban and Nath argue that buttressing Arar's Canadian citizenship also meant erasing Arar's Syrian, Arab, and Muslim identity which were the aspects of his identity that marked him as suspicious (86). These aspects of his identity, however, may not have ever been fully erased in Canadian news media, albeit, at times, they were not highlighted. Instead, they were reframed within the context of inclusion and multiculturalism. The naming of Arar as a

Canadian citizen is certainly of great importance, but how Arar and Mazigh became represented as “legitimate” Canadian citizens (despite dual citizenship) is predicated on how they were framed as maintaining the normative characteristics of Canadian citizens even though they are Arab/Muslim. As Chapter Two also illustrates in regard to the Khadr family, holding Canadian citizenship and being named as a Canadian citizen are not enough for immigrants and people of colour; it is also necessary for them to be publicly associated with “Canadian values.” In Arar and Mazigh’s case, their Canadian citizenship did not save Arar from rendition. Media focused on whether or not Arar was deserving of violent treatment, and therefore framed the conversation around Arar’s guilt or innocence. While the focus of this chapter is very much on how framings of Arar and Mazigh’s Canadianness helped to align Arar with innocence, the point that his innocence and guilt should not have been the main focus of broader conversations about Arar’s circumstances remains important. Sunera Thobani makes this argument when she states,

...the media have largely refrained from publicly examining their own role in the initial demonization of Mr. Arar, nor have they reviewed their own conduct in the highly sensationalized reporting of “terror” suspects arrested and detained subsequent to the Arar detention. In other words, the Arar case was treated as problematic only because the RCMP got the ‘wrong’ man, not for the profound restructuring of Canadian citizenship that it pointed to. (246)

By focusing on Arar’s access to due process, the structural violence that led many (Muslims) to be deported, detained, or experience extraordinary rendition is elided.

The frequent references to Arar and Mazigh’s family, as well as their professional

credentials, particularly in the early coverage in *The Globe*, place them within the frames of heteronormativity. Thus, the reader can see that Arar, despite being considered a terror suspect, does not fall into the usual framing of terrorist bodies as born into “abnormal family dynamics” (Razack, *Casting Out “Monster Terrorists”* par. 1). Contrary to the dominant images of the terror suspect who is an unattached male (Camarota 7-9), media emphasis on Arar’s position as a family man with two young children and a determined wife frame Arar not as a threat to Canadian society, but rather as a loved father and a husband who is deserving of the rights of a Canadian citizen. So while Arar and Mazigh were profiled based on their embodiments, they defied gendered stereotypes of Muslims by often being described as middle-class, and as having “respectable” occupations. While these discourses provided more sympathetic, and perhaps even empathetic, readings of Arar and Mazigh as a “good” Canadian immigrant family, the shifting discourses around Arar and Mazigh did not result in substantial policy changes in how terror suspects were, and are, treated in Canada. These readings of Arar and Mazigh did not significantly change Canada’s role in how terrorism comes to be defined and how the Canadian state and Canadians profile racialized bodies.

Razack asks, “How do we give up racial power? By naming it *as our own* (we who consume the narratives) and by understanding that power has a material base” (“Stealing the Pain of Others” 391; emphasis in original). Razack illustrates how we can empathize with, or humanize, victims but we often do not rethink how we contribute economically and politically to the oppression of these victims. In this way, Canadians can feel empathy for Arar because he is eventually depicted as “like us,” not part of

Canada's white core, but a productive and heteronormative immigrant to Canada. The Canadian state can claim they have righted the wrong against him, but the political and economic machinery of anti-terror legislation and global imperial projects that facilitate the production of terrorism continue to operate. For example, even though *The Globe* often provided more comprehensive coverage of Arar's case, it is important to note that neither *The Globe* nor *The Post* significantly addressed the Canadian security policies that allowed Arar to be deported. While Arar, Mazigh, and their family received compensation, an apology and an inquiry, there were no meaningful discussions in the media about how racial violence is reproduced in the Canadian landscape, or how their case illustrates the limitations of rights-based approaches to justice. Arar's and Mazigh's tireless efforts allowed them to receive access to some semblance of justice through rights-based approaches, but they had to demand those rights, and the rights that they were eventually granted did not generate transformative change more generally. Some policies have actually become more stringent, particularly in terms of the amendments made to the *Anti-terrorism Act* in 2015.¹⁷

Due process itself in this case is about state recognition and the state determining how justice can and should be served. That is to say, Arar's "due process" came through the legal and political apparatus of the Canadian state which has the power to deem some

¹⁷ For example, the *Act* enacts the *Secure Air Travel Act* to identify people who the Minister *suspects* will "engage or attempt to engage in an act that poses a threat to transportation security or who may travel by air for the purpose of committing a terrorism offence" (part 4, sec. 8). The *Act* also amends the *Immigration and Refugee Protection Act*, by allowing the Minister to withhold evidence if the Minister deems such information to be harmful to national security (part 5, sec. 52).

bodies as free to access Canadian lands, resources, and “rights,” and others as undeserving of Canadian benevolence. What constitutes due process is set out by the Canadian state. In this particular case, the Canadian state eventually attempted to rectify its wrongdoings because of Mazigh’s and Arar’s labour to ensure that he would be viewed as a “real” Canadian citizen who had been a victim of rendition. The Canadian government publicized how it was righting its wrongs for a worthy Canadian immigrant (different from Omar Khadr whose settlement occurred quietly and news of the payout was leaked to the public). Canadians and Canadian policy could deflect accusations of racism because Arar received an inquiry, settlement, and apology. However, the power to deem some bodies as a threat and worthy of violence (in this case racialized bodies) remains, at least in part, in the hands of the Canadian government.

Arar and Mazigh had to prove that the events surrounding his deportation and torture were worthy of a public inquiry by speaking to the press frequently and giving media statements. He and Mazigh buttressed an image of the “good” immigrant father/husband and mother/wife in Canadian news media in order to prove his innocence to the Canadian public and offset his association with terrorism. Media coverage of Arar at times emphasized his place in Canadian society as a successful and educated father of two who worked as an engineer, supposedly the embodiment of a “good” Muslim (Mamdani, *Good Muslim, Bad Muslim*). I will focus on these particular portions of news articles to illustrate that in order for Arar to be framed as innocent and worthy of due process, certain characteristics about his life were mobilized to *suggest* his innocence, and I consider how such suggestions help discipline non-normative bodies, particularly

racialized bodies, into Western normativity. What is the significance of frequently mentioning Arar as a father of two and an engineer? Why are there numerous articles that mention Arar's children and his relationship with them? What kind of work do such articles do? I seek to add to Thobani's and Abu-Laban and Nath's analyses by addressing how Arar's case became a stain on Canadian history only because an innocent father of a middle-class family of Canadian citizens was the victim of extraordinary rendition, and what this might mean for broader Canadian discourses about Muslim and Arab bodies in the post-9/11 context.

The coverage of Arar in newspapers varied at times: *The Post's* stories were often apprehensive of Arar, raising doubts about his innocence; *The Globe's* coverage, though sympathetic at times and far more comprehensive, also included stories that were ambivalent towards Arar or even skeptical of his innocence. Both *The Globe* and *The Post* released articles explaining their coverage of the Arar case. *The Post* released an article just before the O'Connor inquiry stating that they were "conflicted over the case of Maher Arar" and in it they called on the government to launch an inquiry ("An Inquiry is Needed" A19). *The Post* also stated that they have been "cautious" in their coverage, unlike other news outlets (they name *The Globe and Mail* and others) who they claim have portrayed Arar as an innocent victim (A19). After the results of the inquiry were made public, *The Globe* released an article with the following explanation of their coverage: "We took up the case of Maher Arar initially, not because we thought he was an innocent man... Rather, we felt he had been denied due process in being suddenly whisked off to Syria and thrown into a prison notorious as a torture centre" ("Points of

Pride, but some Regrets” A2). Though both these news outlets included varying representations of Arar, their “positive” portrayals tied Arar’s innocence to his Canadianness and fatherhood, suggesting these characteristics made him worthy of due process.¹⁸

Overview of Arar’s Case

On 26 September 2002 Syrian-born Canadian citizen Maher Arar was transiting in John F. Kennedy airport in New York between Zurich and Montreal. Arar was travelling alone, returning from a family vacation in Tunisia where his wife, Monia Mazigh, and two children remained for an extended vacation. Arar, who was carrying a Canadian passport, was stopped at the airport based on suspicions that he was linked to al-Qaeda. He was subjected to lengthy interrogations by U.S. officials, detained for twelve days in the U.S., and then flown to Jordan where he was driven to the Jordanian-Syrian border. After being handed over to Syrian officials, Arar was imprisoned and tortured in Syria for

¹⁸ We see this rhetoric also mobilized in political conversations. One of the only MPs who was particularly vocal in the House of Commons about Arar’s circumstances in the first few months of his imprisonment was Alexa McDonough. In one of her statements about Arar, she mobilizes the language of fatherhood and familial ties to make her point about Arar’s right to due process: “Seventy-six days ago, 32-year-old Canadian citizen Maher Arar, husband and father of two young children, was returning to Canada through the U.S. from a family vacation. He was apprehended, interrogated and deported without legal counsel first to Jordan and then to Syria, a country he left at the age of 17. These actions violate international law and they violate his rights as a Canadian citizen. Still there is no explanation for Arar’s plight, not from the American government, the Syrian government nor our own government. When can the wife and kids of Maher Arar expect him home in Canada?” (Canada, House of Commons Debates, no. 044, 1425).

almost one year. He was released on 5 October 2003 and returned to Canada. While Canadian officials did eventually advocate for Arar, it was Mazigh who led a tireless campaign on his behalf until he was brought back to Canada. Mazigh was able to get the attention of Canadian politicians and human rights organizations such as Amnesty International. Calls for an inquiry into Canada's role in Arar's deportation began in the summer of 2003, and Arar and Mazigh continued to press the Canadian government to conduct a public inquiry after Arar's return. This public inquiry was finally announced in January 2004 under the Liberal government.

The commission of inquiry led by Justice Denis R. O'Connor published its findings in 2006 in a two-volume report which concluded with twenty-three recommendations for the RCMP's national security measures. The first volume focuses on the factual background of the Arar case and the second volume offers an analysis of the actions of Canadian officials as well as recommendations for how the RCMP national security services could avoid such circumstances in the future. This inquiry drew on the testimonies of over seventy government officials and approximately 6,500 government documents were entered as exhibits (O'Connor, *Factual Inquiry* 11). It concluded that there was no evidence that Arar belonged to a terrorist organization, and that the RCMP had mishandled classified information and disseminated raw intelligence to U.S. officials without placing proper restrictions and caveats on how the information could be used (O'Connor, *Analysis and Recommendations* 143-146). Some of the information that the RCMP passed on to American officials, moreover, was incorrect or misleading and portrayed Arar negatively (O'Connor, *Analysis and Recommendations* 143-144).

According to the O'Connor report, Arar was only a person of interest in an investigation of Abdullah Almalki who was suspected of “conducting activities for al-Qaeda” (*Analysis and Recommendations* 113).¹⁹ Arar was originally sought for questioning as a potential witness because of his association with Almalki and others (such as Ahmad El Maati) (113). Although Arar was only acquainted with Almalki, at times he was named in the investigation as “a person with an ‘important connection’ to Mr. Almalki,” “a person linked to Mr. Almalki in a diagram titled ‘Bin Laden’s Associates: Al Qaeda Organization in Ottawa,’” and “a business associate or close associate of Mr. Almalki” (113). These descriptions, according to O'Connor, were either inaccurate or exaggerated (25). So it is not just that Arar was read as a threat, but it was also his association with particular members of the Syrian/Muslim community that made him a suspect. The inquiry also reveals that Mazigh was unnecessarily profiled. The RCMP requested that Canada and U.S. customs set up border lookouts for “terrorism” for *both* Arar and Mazigh as well as their vehicles (O'Connor 115). The letters sent requesting these lookouts named both Arar and Mazigh as “Islamic extremist individuals suspected of being linked to the Al Qaeda terrorist movement” (115), but, the O'Connor inquiry states, there was no evidence to support this suspicion and the RCMP did not have any information regarding Arar and Mazigh's religious beliefs, let alone any extremist beliefs (116). Because Arar was a person of interest in the case, O'Connor argues that it

¹⁹ Abdullah Almalki was held at the same time in the same prison as Arar for two years. In 2017, Almalki, Ahmad El Maati, and Muayyed Nureddin (who were also imprisoned abroad) received a formal apology and an undisclosed financial settlement from the Canadian government.

was reasonable to have a lookout placed on Arar, however, there was no reason for Mazigh to be the subject of a lookout which would result in her undergoing a secondary examination by Canadian customs on 14 November 2002 (92).²⁰

Customs uploaded Mazigh and Arar and Mazigh's daughter and son's profiles, aged 5 years and 9 months respectively at the time, into the Intelligence Management System, which O'Connor explains is an "automated facility for reporting and compiling intelligence information on targets 'known or suspected to be a potential border risk'"; Mazigh and their children did not fall into this category (*Analysis and Recommendations* 98). Furthermore, Mazigh's only connection to the RCMP's investigation was her marriage to Arar who, by the time she had undergone the secondary examination on 14 November 2002, was already detained in Syria (97). I focus here on the RCMP's profile of Mazigh and their children to point out how Muslim communities generally, including children, can become labelled as threatening, through the stereotype of the extremist/fundamentalist family. When asked about why there was also a lookout placed on Mazigh, the inspector heading the investigation responded that many of those involved with al-Qaeda used their partners to move information and materials across borders (O'Connor, *Factual Background* 289). Though the O'Connor inquiry concludes that this is completely unreasonable, such procedures illustrate how Muslims, and Arar and his

²⁰ O'Connor states that anyone entering Canada can be subjected to a secondary examination, but if there is a lookout, such as in the case of Mazigh, the secondary examination is mandatory every time this person crosses the border (*Analysis and Recommendations* 85). The secondary examination, moreover, "may be minimally intrusive, with questions only, or may involve a full search of the traveler's luggage, and in some circumstances, the traveler's person" (*Analysis and Recommendations* 80).

family as a whole, including the young children, became perceived as threats through their status as a family. In this sense, the heteronormative/reproductive family has a double and contradictory function in stereotypical imaginings: at once it can be the site of extremism and fundamentalism, and therefore a threat, and it can also be framed as the productive site of “good” immigrant/Muslims. Neither Mazigh nor her children were immune to being explicitly labelled as terrorist border threats. It is, however, in the imaginings of good Canadian heteronormative families where media framings of Mazigh and Arar later shift their narratives to fit the contours of “good” immigrants/Muslims.

Following the inquiry, the RCMP commissioner Giuliano Zacardelli not only apologized to Arar and Mazigh’s family but also offered his resignation. The family was also issued a public apology from the Canadian government under then Prime Minister Stephen Harper “for any role Canadian officials may have played in the terrible ordeal that [they] experienced in 2002 and 2003” (Harper, “Prime Minister Releases Letter”). In Harper’s use of the phrase “may have” he still deflects blame, despite the O’Connor inquiry detailing Canada’s responsibility for Arar’s wrongful treatment, and the Canadian government’s payment of \$10.5 million in one of the largest settlements in Canadian history. It is noteworthy that Harper stated in his apology, “Although these events occurred under the last government, please rest assured that this government will do everything in its power to ensure that the issues raised by Commissioner O’Connor are addressed” (Harper). This is significant because according to Canadian House of Commons debates during the first few months of Arar’s imprisonment in Syria, Harper and the Canadian Alliance criticized the then Liberal government for “defend[ing] a

suspected terrorist” (Canada, no. 026, 1415). Member of the Conservative Party of Canada, Diane Ablonczy, argued:

It is time Liberals told the truth: that their system of screening and security checks is pathetic. Arar was given dual Syrian and Canadian citizenship by the government. It did not pick up on his terrorist links and the U.S. had to clue it in. How is it that the U.S. could uncover this man’s background so quickly when the government’s screening system failed to find his al-Qaeda links? (Canada, House of Commons no. 026, 1415)

Harper’s apology suggests that Arar’s circumstances were produced only by the Liberal government. It fails to address how officials and politicians, both in the Liberal and Conservative parties, were often conflicted about whether or not Arar should return to Canada, regardless of whether or not he was guilty. This point was cited in multiple newspaper articles quoting the American ambassador to Canada, Paul Celucci, who stated, “Mr. Arar is very well known to Canadian law enforcement, they understand our handling of the case. They wouldn’t be happy to see him come back to Canada” (Knox A19; “The Questions Raised by Maher Arar’s Case” A26; “Troubling Questions in the Arar Case” A24). Reynald Doiron, spokesperson for the Canadian Department of Foreign Affairs, too, stated that previously Canadian officials had “differences of opinion” about the Arar case (Sallot, “PM Vows Help for Canadian Held in Syria” A4), suggesting that some Canadian officials did not want to bring Arar back to Canada. What is at stake here is not whether or not Arar was guilty or innocent of being connected to al-Qaeda, but rather that he was denied due process as a result of being allegedly connected to a terrorist

organization. The government apology, furthermore, does not account for the racial profiling that took place and that is necessary for upholding anti-terrorism laws and legislation. So while the government issued an apology, Harper implied that this apology was only needed because Arar was actually innocent, and not because he was a victim of extraordinary rendition and racially profiled.

The Canadian media covered Arar's case widely and circulated various political conversations and questions that many asked while Arar was imprisoned in Syria. There were questions about why Arar had been sent to Syria rather than Canada, and what role Canadian officials played in Arar's deportation and rendition to Syria. Even after Arar returned to Canada, his ordeal was not yet over, nor were the questions that were asked during his imprisonment thoroughly addressed. Within days of Arar's return, Canadian media reported that officials denied Arar was tortured (LeBlanc A4), and within weeks there were media leaks in a CTV News report asserting that Arar had provided information about al-Qaeda to Syrian officials while imprisoned (O'Connor, *Analysis and Recommendations* 260). In response, Arar held a news conference where he spoke publicly about his experiences, explaining what had occurred, and the physical and psychological torture that he had experienced during his imprisonment in Syria. He stated that he had provided information to Syrian officials under duress from torture and that he had made these statements in hopes of stopping the torture. Even after Arar had spoken publicly about his experiences, he was still subjected to news reports and leaks connecting him to al-Qaeda. The most well-known of these leaks was Juliette O'Neill's story for the *Ottawa Citizen*, "Canada's dossier on Maher Arar: The existence of a group

of Ottawa men with alleged ties to Al Qaeda is at the root of why the government opposes an inquiry into the case,” which led to O’Neill’s office and house being raided by the RCMP.²¹ Some have argued that these leaks were released specifically to discredit Arar to the Canadian public (Thobani 246; Wakeham 289). The O’Connor inquiry noted that one of the final media leaks on 30 December 2003 occurred when “the public pressure to call a public inquiry was intensifying” and that some of the comments “attributed to the ‘senior Canadian intelligence source’ were obviously intended to sway public opinion against Mr. Arar” (*Analysis and Recommendations* 260). Based on O’Connor’s analysis, it seems that public opinion about Arar and how media presented Arar to the Canadian public may have, in part, played a role in Arar being able to receive an inquiry.

The Boundaries of Multiculturalism: Contextualizing the Arar Case

National belonging, citizenship, and multiculturalism as tenets of Canadian nationalism are central to understanding the Arar case. Arar’s case cannot be divorced from Canada’s history of racist immigration policies, where immigrant and racialized Canadians were often denied their rights as citizens. The Arar case points to the limitations of Canadian multiculturalism that scholars such as Himani Bannerji, Rita Dhamoon and Yasmeen Abu-Laban, Eva Mackey, and Sunera Thobani have noted. These scholars argue that Canadian multiculturalism masks some of the more insidious elements

²¹ There was significant coverage of the RCMP raids on O’Neill’s office and home as well as the charges laid against her. Though it is beyond the scope of this chapter, it is noteworthy that these raids raised serious concerns about the negative consequences of the *Anti-Terror Act* and the policing of Canadian media and journalists.

of Canadian policy and Canadian society. Bannerji argues that Canada's white population is characterized as "Canadian" and immigrant populations are characterized as "other," and the constant stereotyping of "Third World immigrants" as "criminals, terrorists, and fundamentalists" betrays the state's supposed commitments to multiculturalism (77). The multicultural state is able to obscure systemic racism, and Arar's case actually illustrates that when Canadians are not white, even if they perform what is deemed normative in a Canadian context, not only can their rights as Canadian citizens be called into question, but they can be subjected to various acts of violence. Abu-Laban and Nath note that political discourse framed Arar's case as a justice issue, but his case was not framed as a justice issue for a group of racialized citizens (93).

Arar's dual Canadian and Syrian citizenship extends the conversation on some of the limitations of Canadian multiculturalism and citizenship, particularly for racialized immigrants in Canada. That Arar was sent to Syria, and not Canada, demonstrates how Canadian citizenship cannot always protect dual Canadian citizens from extraordinary rendition. In fact, dual Canadian citizens have been rendered more vulnerable to deportation by the passing of Bill C-24 in 2014, which permits dual Canadian citizens convicted of serious crimes to have their Canadian citizenship revoked.²² This bill garnered extensive criticism because it creates a two-tier system where Canadians who only hold Canadian citizenship cannot be subjected to deportation, while dual Canadian

²² It should be noted, however, that there are Canadian citizens who are not dual citizens who are subjected to the violence of the Canadian state within Canada. This is particularly the case for Indigenous, racialized, queer, transient, and disabled bodies living under Canadian statehood.

citizens are vulnerable to deportation to countries that they may have fled.²³ Arar's case brought this question to the fore, even before Bill C-24 was passed. One U.S. official quoted in a *Globe and Mail* article about Arar stated, "citizenship is in the eye of the beholder" ("The Alarming Case of Maher Arar" A24), suggesting that any Canadian dual citizen in the U.S. (even before Bill C-24) could technically be sent to the country of their other citizenship, as Arar was. This makes dual Canadian citizens particularly vulnerable if they left their natal country for political reasons. Canadian multiculturalism relies on people of various ethnicities coming to Canada (many of whom would conceivably hold dual citizenship, which in many instances could also be passed on to their children), yet, the Arar case illustrates that dual Canadian citizens might not actually be able to access the legal rights of Canadian citizens when they are outside of Canada. In other words, Canadian citizenship does not function the same way for all Canadian citizens, even when the nation allows dual citizenship.

Beyond the intricacies of how Canadian citizenship might function differently for dual Canadian citizens, particularly racialized immigrants, there are also perceived differences between racialized or immigrant Canadians and white Canadians born in Canada. Drawing upon examples such as Japanese internment, the Quebec crisis, and the Oka crisis, Dhamoon and Abu-Laban exemplify how Canadian multiculturalism conceals a fear of "dangerous internal foreigners," and how this fear has (re)emerged in Canadian history. Through nationalist narratives of multiculturalism, Canada is constructed as a

²³ There are other reasons deportation can put dual Canadian citizens in danger. For example, in Arar's case he was concerned about the repercussions he could face in Syria for having never completed his military duties.

place where Canadians appreciate diversity, but Dhamoon and Abu Laban argue that lurking beneath this narrative of diversity is the fear of the “dangerous internal foreigner” who could potentially threaten “‘our’ national identity... ‘our’ familial, legal, symbolic, ideological, and economic values; ‘our’ economic agenda and employment opportunities; ‘our’ property rights as well as control of the land and its resources” (169).

Canadian media have played a pivotal role in contributing to this fear of the “dangerous internal foreigner” through discussing “sleeper cells.” “Sleeper cells” are supposed terrorists who often appear assimilated, and who may have lived in Canada for long periods of time, but should be viewed with suspicion: “Sleeper cells might remain dormant for up to twenty years, experts hurried to explain [after 9/11], thus extending suspicion to all Muslim communities, most of whose members have entered the country since the liberalization of immigration and citizenship policies in the 1970s” (Thobani 242). Thus, allegiances to Canada by Canadian Muslims and those who “look” Muslim can be questioned (Zine, “Muslim Cultural Politics” 7). Both Thobani (221) and Jasmin Zine (1) argue that discourses of terrorism in media have played key roles in linking Muslim bodies and bodies that look Muslim to acts of terror, therefore constructing Muslims and those who are mistaken to be Muslim as undesirable citizens who are threats to public safety and civil liberties. Zine posits that racially and religiously marginalized Canadian citizens can (arguably) have access to legal rights, but this does not actually provide these communities with a sense of inclusion into the nation (44). What Arar’s case points to is that, conceptually, perceived terrorist bodies cannot have access to all the rights of Canadian citizenship, regardless of whether or not they actually hold Canadian

citizenship. At times, those who are Muslim or who “look” Muslim become associated with terrorist aspirations or linkages; once “identified as terrorists”, they are “dis-identified as citizens” (Puar, “The Sexuality of Terrorism” par. 2). As a result, Abu-Laban and Nath argue that “Arar’s *Syrian* citizenship and *Muslim* faith are central to his having been marked as suspicious or risky. Consequently, it is not the case that what happened to Arar is likely to happen to all Canadian citizens equally (whether native born or naturalized, or whether singular, dual or multiple citizenship holders)” (22-23; my emphasis).

Notions of inclusion and exclusion from the nation are far more complicated than some embodying “difference,” regardless of citizenship. In the context of Arar it is important to realize how his embodiment was initially perceived as “terrorist” and therefore an outsider to the nation, but it is also important to note how media coverage of Arar and Mazigh also at times constructed a narrative of Arar and Mazigh as “regular” Canadians and therefore worthy of all the rights of Canadian citizenship. Jasbir Puar argues that, “Part of the trappings of [the] exceptional citizen, ethnic or not, is the careful management of difference: of difference within sameness, and of difference containing sameness” (“The Ascendency of Whiteness” par. 2). In order for the “exceptional citizen” to be acceptable, they must continue to be “different,” but the same. So what is key in the findings of this chapter is that beyond portrayals of Arar’s guilt or innocence, Arar and Mazigh are initially read as threats as a result of their racialization and connection to the Syrian community; however, Canadian media also bound Arar’s innocence and rights of Canadian citizenship to his and Mazigh’s ability to defy stereotypical framings of

Muslims. Arar became portrayed as deserving of his rights in media narratives not only because he was innocent, but also because media highlighted that he is a heteronormative father of two, he and Mazigh are educated and employed, and this facilitated their eventual characterization as “exceptional [Canadian] citizens.”

The National Post and The Globe and Mail Archive

I initially began my archival research to explore how *The National Post* and *The Globe and Mail*, as two major national Canadian news outlets, portrayed Maher Arar. I was interested in understanding if there were similarities and differences between the two news outlets as well as exploring how Arar, who is contemporarily portrayed mostly as a victim of Canadian policy and mismanagement by government agencies, was originally framed in Canadian media.²⁴ Differences between *The Globe* and *The Post* coverage were evident immediately. There is a striking difference between the total number of *Globe* articles where “Maher Arar” is mentioned compared to *The Post* articles. This is actually an issue that is mentioned in one of *The Post*’s Letters to the Editor, written by Shahram Heydari on 15 March 2003, almost seven months after Arar had been detained in New

²⁴ I began my research by using “Maher Arar” as the keywords in searches in both *The National Post* and *The Globe and Mail* from the time of Arar’s detention on 26 September 2002 until the present. This turned up 1,058 articles for *The Globe* (not including Breaking News articles, of which there were 277) and 690 articles for *The Post* in total. This sample was far too large for the scope of this chapter, so I sorted the articles chronologically, and focused on the first hundred articles from each major newspaper to get an idea of how Arar was portrayed initially in Canadian print media. I narrowed this search further by removing Letters to the Editor, advertisements, and table of contents, and ended the search in 2009 as all subsequent years had less than fifty articles published with “Maher Arar” being mentioned at all.

York. In this letter Heydari makes a point about the amount of coverage provided to Bill Sampson (a Canadian citizen who was detained in Saudi Arabia around the same time as Arar), compared to the amount of coverage *The Post* had afforded to Arar. Heydari states:

I ran a search in National Post archives and found that in the past six months, the Post has run 40 stories on Mr. Sampson, including eight editorials, almost all in his support. In the case of Mr. Arar, who is held without communication in Syria, not a single editorial was published. A total of eight news stories on Mr. Arar appeared in your paper, in which he was always referred to as a suspected al-Qaeda terrorist. (A19)

This statement is not entirely true. In the second article that *The Post* released about Arar, neither terrorism nor al-Qaeda are mentioned. Heydari, however, is accurate in his assessment that there were only a total of eight articles that mentioned Arar, two of which mentioned him only in passing. By 15 March 2003 *The Globe* had released double that number, compared to the *Post*: sixteen articles on Arar, eleven of which were published in the first month of Arar's detention. Another striking difference between *The Post*'s and *The Globe*'s initial coverage of Arar is the length of the articles themselves. The first two articles that *The Post* released were less than sixty words in length ("Ontario: United States Deports Suspected Terrorist to Syria" A9; "Ontario: U.S. Deported Man to Syria without Counsel, Official Says" A10), while the first of *The Globe*'s articles on Arar was 519 words in length and had a space on the front page, and continued into the newspaper (Cheney, "Canadian's Deportation Causes Furor" A1+). As a result, *The Globe*'s coverage created a more comprehensive narrative of Arar's circumstances, including

details of a working Canadian immigrant, father with two children, with a loving wife.

While *The Post* and *The Globe*, at times, focused on similar stories of the Arar case and often used similar language to describe Arar, the details they provided were quite different. Further analysis of the first hundred articles of each newspaper illustrated other differences between *The Post* and *The Globe* that were less obvious. It became apparent quite quickly that there were frequent references to Arar's employment, his family, and him being a father of two young children in both papers. Because these statements occurred quite often, I narrowed the search by using the keywords "Maher Arar" and "father" or "husband" or "family" or "daughter" or "children" or "child." Using these keywords turned up 287 articles in *The Globe* (approximately 36% of the articles published between 2002 and 2009). I conducted a similar search in *The National Post* which turned up 197 articles (excluding letters) (this also worked out to approximately 36% of the articles). Very early coverage of the Arar case by these two major newspapers suggested, at first glance at least, that there was a particular framing of Arar as a father and "family man." Closer readings of these two newspapers, however, made it clear that there are stark differences in terms of how Arar was initially framed.

The Globe's coverage of the Arar case was more comprehensive, not only in the amount of articles published, but also in the quality and detail offered by the articles. *The Globe's* initial coverage, however, still functioned within particular gendered, patriarchal, and nationalistic readings of the case. In this coverage, Arar is described as an immigrant attempting to establish a successful life in Canada, which he had done quite well according to many of these articles. Thirteen of fifteen articles on Arar that appeared in

The Globe in 2002 mentioned him in relation to his family in some way. Because I was working with a smaller number of articles in *The Post*, it is more difficult to establish the correlation between Arar and his position as “father” and “family man,” but four out of the eight articles in 2002 mention Arar in connection to his family in some way. It should be noted that mentioning his family in these articles does not necessarily indicate that Arar was being framed as a “family man” or “father” in broader coverage. After all, his wife, Monia Mazigh, was conducting a vigorous campaign to get Arar back in Canada so the mention of him as “husband” or “father” may not initially seem extraordinary. A close reading of the initial coverage of *The Post* and *Globe*, however, illustrates that *The Globe* began to build a narrative (although inconsistently) of Arar as a “father,” “family man” and even “good citizen,” and his potential association with terrorism and Islamic extremism was, at times, elided. Because there was more coverage of Arar’s circumstances in *The Globe*, the narrativization of Arar as a father and working Canadian citizen was more apparent in *The Globe*.

The quality of the coverage about Arar’s place as a working and well-educated father is important to mention because, though the same keywords are often included in *The Post*, the coverage does not operate in the same capacity as in *The Globe*; *The Globe*’s articles tend to include interviews and are generally longer in length. The very first article in *The Post* that mentions Arar, “Ontario: United States Deports Suspected Terrorist to Syria,” makes no reference to his family or his occupation, so from the beginning there are some differences between how references to his family and employment operate. The article refers to Arar as a “Syrian-born Canadian citizen with

suspected ties to al-Qaeda,” and the article describes Arar as a Montreal resident who is 32, with no further information on his personal life (“Ontario: United States Deports Suspected Terrorist to Syria” A9). The second article states, “A Canadian engineer was deported by the United States to his native Syria without the benefit of a lawyer” (“Ontario: U.S. Deported Man to Syria without Counsel, Official Says” A10), but there is still no reference to Arar’s family and the article does not include any conversations with people who are actually acquainted with Arar. Subsequent coverage in *The Post* does go on to describe Arar using similar terms as *The Globe*, such as “engineer” and “father of two (young) children,” but it does not do so in a way that provides extensive descriptions of Arar’s life and circumstances.

Defying Stereotypes

Sunera Thobani argues that media have played a key role in how the figure of the Muslim terrorist (always imagined to be male, hypermisogynist, and “medieval fanatic”) has become a justified enemy (221). Thobani continues that it is the imagining of the terror suspect through these gendered frames, reproduced in Canadian media, that construct Canada as civilized and progressive, making it a target of terror (221). The terrorist is imagined to be someone who does not adhere to heteronormative family dynamics, and whose sexuality and masculinity are somehow rogue, unconventional, and always dangerous to the women he encounters. The terrorist body is often framed as an unattached male who is not tied to a family, and is perceived as more dangerous than family men. For example, a paper published on the Center for Immigration Studies

website states that “several terrorists” who committed the terror attacks of 9/11, should probably have been denied temporary visas because they had characteristics that made it likely that they would overstay their visa and try to live in the United States illegally. Under Section 214(b) of immigration law, individuals who are young, unmarried, have little income, or otherwise lack strong attachment to a residence overseas are to be denied temporary visas. Several of the 9/11 hijackers, including the plot’s leader Mohammed Atta, fit these criteria. (Camarota 7)

This quote points to the ways in which Muslim men—and immigrant and racialized men more generally—become perceived as dangerous or threatening to the nation-state. This characterization is especially the case when they are not a part of a family, are economically disadvantaged, and are perhaps transient. As a result, under their Policy Recommendations section, the Center for Immigration Studies states:

Strict enforcement of Section 214(b) of the immigration law would likely have prevented a number of terrorists from getting temporary visas, because terrorists and those who are likely to overstay their visas have much in common. Both groups tend to be young and unattached as were at least three of the 9/11 hijackers. (Camarota 9)

These statements illustrate that there are characteristics that become attached to terrorist bodies that disaggregate them from families and permanent residences.

Though Arar was traveling alone when he was detained, after his detention some Canadian media emphasized Arar’s ties to his family. The very first article in *The Globe*

establishes that Arar was subjected to a nine-hour interrogation without a lawyer and accused of knowing a terror suspect in the Ottawa area (Cheney, “Canadian's Deportation Causes Furor” A1+). The article states that Mazigh had gone to Tunisia on an extended holiday with “Mr. Arar and their two children” (Cheney A1+). Mazigh is quoted as saying, “the whole thing is insane. My *husband* is a *father*. He *works*. He isn't a terrorist” (Cheney A1+; my emphasis). Mazigh, in this article, strategically appropriates language around heteronormativity and productive citizenship and establishes exactly why her husband could not be a terrorist. He does what is expected of a normative man: he is a father and he works. Arar is described as a “32-year-old Canadian citizen” who was deported to Syria, “where he had lived until the age of 17” (Cheney A1+). Arar is first established as a Canadian citizen, and his current age as well as the age he left Syria are both mentioned, illustrating that his length of residence in Canada is almost the same amount of time as he resided in Syria. What is more telling, is that *The Globe* included interviews with people who knew Arar personally. This article includes an interview with Michael Edelson, a lawyer who is acquainted with Arar. Edelson states: “You have to ask yourself what's going on when the U.S. is able to take a Canadian citizen and send him to Syria without any kind of representation... We are talking about a very *respected, solid citizen* here” (Cheney A1+; my emphasis). Again, Arar is situated within a frame of the “good” citizen who works and is respected in his field. The article also states that Arar is a “highly regarded telecommunications engineer who had recently set himself up as an independent engineering consultant after a career with large firms” (Cheney A1+). Being a citizen, it seems, was not enough to guarantee Arar the right to due process; he must

also be “respected” and well employed to be *deserving* of due process. The necessity to frame Arar as a “solid citizen” (whatever that really means) exposes how the state or media might justify the violence he experienced if he did not adhere to heteronormative and productive citizenship, as well as normative masculinity.

Though Arar does not embody whiteness, media coverage of Mazigh and Edelson’s comments align Arar’s lifestyle with the characteristics of whiteness and the purportedly “civilized” Canadian. Sara Ahmed describes whiteness both “as a straightening device” that “gets reproduced through acts of alignment, which are forgotten when we receive its line” (*Queer Phenomenology* 121) and as “a matter of what is behind bodies” such as their genealogy (137). Ahmed continues,

Becoming white as an institutional line is closely related to the vertical promise of class mobility: you can move up only by approximating the habits of the white bourgeois body. Moving ‘up’ requires inhabiting such a body, or at least approximating its style, while your capacity to inhabit such a body depends upon what is behind you. (Ahmed 138)

If we consider how those who are portrayed as “civilized” are those who “move forward” and progress, and those who are “uncivilized” are those who are represented as “backward,” Arar does not embody whiteness but he is characterized in this coverage as a body that is able to “move up,” and also as a body that has “progressed.” He is not portrayed as the stereotypical, traditional, “backward” and “unprogressive” Muslim man; rather, he is represented as exhibiting the qualities of the “civilized” Canadian. Arar’s innocence and rights to the benefits of Canadian citizenship in news media, then, are

implicit in the language used by Mazigh and his various acquaintances to describe him as progressive and modern. Because he is a husband, a father, a “solid citizen,” and is employed, he is less likely to be associated with the imagined hypermasculine terrorist body who is unattached and violent (and therefore deserving of violence), and he can then stake a claim to the rights of Canadian citizenship.

The emphasis in media coverage on Arar as a husband and father distances him not only from the terrorist body, but also from the supposed excessive/undisciplined sexuality of the unattached male. Lee Edelman points out how sinister “unmarried men” in many literary creations have come to embody “a wish, a will, or a drive toward death that entails the destruction of the Child” (21). This concern about unattached men in Canada, however, also derives from fears of racialized and immigrant men specifically, and centers around the concern that immigrant and racialized men may not only take employment opportunities from white Canadians, but could also be dangerous to white Canadian women and children. Nayan Shah explores how this fear manifested historically in North America when mobs of white Canadians and Americans would attack immigrants and non-white Americans and Canadians on the West Coast. Shah explores one instance on 4 September 1907 where South Asian men in Bellingham Bay, Washington were chased out of their homes, some beaten, and many attacked. Shah indicates that many newspapers across Canada and the U.S. “underline[d] fears of male strangers and the threat they posed to the public good” (11). Unattached men, who had no wives or children, were perceived as a “sexualized menace to working class men, women, and children” in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century in western Canada and the

U.S. (Shah 11). Shah notes that the fear of South Asian men in public spaces in particular was very much based on the concern that these men may have sexual contact with white women, and became a justification for the Bellingham race riots (11). There was a similar fear in Saskatchewan in the early 1900s when the population of Chinese Canadians increased significantly in the province. Because of Canada's immigration laws, hostility towards immigrants, and gendered cultural values, Chinese immigration to Canada was mostly male (Backhouse 321). In both Saskatchewan and British Columbia, the reason for the *Act to Prevent the Employment of Female Labour in Certain Capacities* was two-fold: to limit Chinese immigrants and Chinese Canadians from accessing cheap white female labour, but also, as Alison Marshall argues, because of the fear of single Chinese men having sexual contact with white women (13).

Fears of the sinister and dangerous unattached male have also reemerged in contemporary times. Soon after Justin Trudeau became Prime Minister of Canada in 2015, the Canadian government allowed 25,000 Syrian refugees into the country. The government gave preference to women, children, and men with families. While there are a number of reasons why women and children in conflict zones may be (perceived as) more vulnerable than single men, as well as the aim to keep families together (which also relies on an assumption of heteronormative kinship), there is an inherent framing of single men within this policy that relies on not only a gendered perception of danger and vulnerability, but also a framing of single men as risky.²⁵ Thus, media portrayals of Arar

²⁵ What the next chapter examines in the case of Omar Khadr, is that children of colour are still often deemed dangerous and threatening. Making security certificates for Arar's

as a father, husband, and an employed Canadian produce an image that counters stereotypical imaginings of a “dangerous” brown/foreign/Muslim/immigrant man. Framing Arar in this way produced an alternative narrative through which Arar was able to be portrayed as a worthy Canadian rather than a risk to Canadians.

During the months of January 2003 to about April 2003, coverage on the Arar case was sparse in both *The Globe* and *The Post*. The Arar case was mentioned more after April because of news that the Syrian government intended to charge him. Coverage increased significantly after Arar’s release in October 2003 and in the months after his release, leading up to the call for a national inquiry. On 29 April 2003 both *The Post* and *The Globe* released articles that focused on Syria’s intentions to charge Arar. The difference between how these articles covered the case is striking. *The Post* released an article that was under sixty words in length. It reads:

Syrian authorities have indicated charges may soon be laid against Maher Arar, a dual Canadian and Syrian citizen imprisoned since October for suspected terrorist links. Marlene Catterall, a Liberal MP who visited Mr. Arar last week in Damascus, said yesterday military officials told her “they do intend to charge him.” (“Ontario: Terrorism Suspect may be Charged Soon, Liberal MP Says” A10)

While this article does not explicitly link Arar to a criminal act, there is no mention of the injustice he faced as a result of being profiled, presumed guilty, and then subjected to

children (one of whom was an infant) also points to how children of colour are not always considered “innocent victims.”

extraordinary rendition. Without offering any further information about the Arar case, the reporting that Arar will be charged might actually suggest to readers that he is guilty of having terrorist links. Further, it successfully elides questions about how Arar got to Syria in the first place and how he has been denied due process.

The Globe's coverage on this issue, on the other hand, is much more thorough, and the article quotes Catterall at length. The article states:

Ms. Catterall said Syrian officials refused to spell out their case against Mr. Arar, a respected software engineer who lived in Ottawa with his wife and two young children. Ms. Catterall said a Syrian military court may try Mr. Arar behind closed doors, making it impossible for his family or the Canadian government to monitor the case. (Cheney, “Syria Intends to Charge Ottawa Man” A9)

Again, we see a reference to Arar as an engineer with a wife and two *young* children, but in this quote there is also something else at play, and that is that the trial will likely occur outside the reach of both Arar's family and the Canadian government. What this article argues is that not only is Arar a hardworking Canadian father and husband imprisoned in Syria, but he is also facing a grave injustice. *The Globe's* framing of Arar's situation as unjust encourages the Canadian public to read what might occur as an injustice. This is quite different from *The Post's* description of an incident of a “dual Canadian and Syrian citizen... suspected of terrorist links” being charged by Syrian authorities. *The Globe* alerts the reader that Canada will not be able to ensure that one of its citizens, Arar, is granted due process. The article does not point to the Canadian government as the cause

of the injustice Arar experienced. Thus, the Canadian government and vicariously Canadian readers can relinquish responsibility for Arar facing injustice. While there is some recognition that Arar is being treated unfairly, blame in this article remains on the Syrian military court that “refused to spell out their case against Mr. Arar.”

Canadians often view themselves as humanitarians that only get involved in conflicts as “peace-keepers.”²⁶ Because the Canadian nation constructs itself against the more militaristic United States, Canadians envision themselves as part of “a good nation overwhelmed by the brutalities of the New World Order,” and they are both depicted and come to understand themselves as compassionate and as staking a claim to the role of the “uninvolved observer” (Razack, “Stealing the Pain of Others” 381). While *The Globe*’s article provides a sympathetic, and even empathetic reading of Arar, the Canadian government is distanced from its complicity in Arar’s circumstances, and instead seems to be concerned that they cannot “monitor” his case. Here Canada becomes the benevolent country that, if permitted to monitor the case against Arar, could in some way assist him, while Syria is the country that is attempting to try Arar without stating their case against him. While this *Globe* article does suggest that Arar is suspected of being linked to al-Qaeda, the writer elaborates, “Ms. Catterall said Syrian intelligence officials believe Mr. Arar was a member of al-Qaeda, but refused to say what evidence they have to support the pending charges” (Cheney, “Syria Intends to Charge Ottawa Man” A9). Again, the article insinuates that we should be skeptical of these charges, given that

²⁶ See Sherene Razack’s *Dark Threats White Knights: The Somalia Affair, Peacekeeping, and the New Imperialism*.

Syrian officials have not provided any evidence of these claims. What is at stake here, however, is that Arar should not have been deported regardless of whether or not the general public believed he was guilty. Without acknowledging this initial Canadian “injustice,” a narrative is built to suggest Arar’s innocence and his rights to due process.

The article builds the reader’s sympathy for Arar when it states, “Ms. Catterall said Mr. Arar broke into tears when she gave him photographs of his family and a drawing made by his six-year-old daughter” (Cheney, “Syria Intends to Charge Ottawa Man” A9). Not only does this article mention Arar is a father, it also describes Arar’s emotion when he saw the photographs and drawings, and this helps to not only humanize Arar, but also align him with a universalized idea of kinship. The article, too, outlines Arar’s success as a Syrian immigrant who has been in Canada since 1987 and became a Canadian citizen in 1991. And finally, it draws attention to the repercussions of this imprisonment on a Canadian family when the article quotes Mazigh:

My husband is not Saddam Hussein or Osama bin Laden...He is an ordinary person. What has been done to him is criminal. They've taken him away for no reason, and shut the door. What will my children think when they grow up—what kind of government is it that steals away a father and husband who has never done anything wrong? (Cheney A9)

In this article, Mazigh suggests that if such an injustice could be done to her husband then perhaps it could happen to any Canadian. The word “criminal” here points to the criminality of systemic injustice and the lack of due process that Arar received. Mazigh associates Arar with the everyday Canadian citizen (i.e. “ordinary person”), and distances

him from other Muslim men who are associated with terrorism, criminality, and violence (for example, Hussein and bin Laden). Mazigh strategically uses language that would make Arar intelligible as a Canadian citizen, and in so doing she works with this narrative to ensure that more members of the Canadian public would associate Arar with heteronormativity and normative Western gender roles. Mazigh could not disrupt these narratives of normativity and simultaneously ensure her husband's safety. Though there are limitations to mobilizing the frame of normativity, there is a very narrow understanding of legitimate Canadian citizenship and Canadianness on which Mazigh could draw. Because of Arar's racialized embodiment and his association with terrorism, Mazigh had to illustrate how Arar did not fit the Muslim stereotype and she highlighted the aspects of his life that would most likely allow him to be read within a framework of "good" citizenship. After Mazigh gained the attention of human rights organizations and a number of Canadian politicians, there was significant pressure put on the Syrian government to release Arar.

Centering Arar's family in *The Globe*, ties Arar's innocence to his ability to integrate in Canada, and Canadians' ability to empathize with him relies significantly on this framing of Arar. Razack argues that race thinking denies "a common bond of humanity between people of European descent and those who are not" (*Casting Out* "A Typical Month" par. 7). In Arar's case, this "common humanity" is somewhat restored through bringing Arar in closer proximity to Canadianness in media framings. In order for Arar's experiences to be framed as unjust, media had to portray Arar's circumstances through the lens of empathy; Arar had to be "like" other Canadians. Megan Boler

questions, and is critical of, the relationship between empathy and justice and empathy's ability to disrupt existing power relations (255). Boler states that Western multiculturalism touts empathy as a "bridge between differences" (255). Bringing Arar and Mazigh closer to the heteronormative Canadian family and productive citizenship allows some Canadians to empathize with Arar and Mazigh, leaving white civility intact.

The "empathetic" responses attempt to, and perhaps successfully do, "humanize" Arar, Mazigh, and their family to the Canadian public. But, passive empathy does not require action toward justice and allows readers to align themselves with victims, rather than the oppressor, never having to question their places in systems of oppression (Boler 259-260). Boler argues that "passive empathy absolves the reader through the denial of power relations" (261), for example, readers are encouraged to see Syria as the aggressive state that will not allow the Canadian government access to one of its citizens. Boler states, "At stake is not only the ability to empathize with the very distant other, but to recognize oneself as implicated in the social forces that create the climate of obstacles the other must confront" (257). While empathy here is structured around Arar's narrative, how Canadians are implicated in the injustice he faced is ignored. Empathizing with Arar's circumstances does not come through Canadians putting themselves "in his shoes" but rather through putting Arar in "the shoes" of the heteronormative Canadian body; Canadians do not have to imagine themselves in Arar's position, they must view Arar through the lens of normativity. Moreover, empathizing with Arar exemplifies the limitations of empathy outlined in Boler's analysis, where empathy falls short of justice and substantial change (255). It should be noted that empathetic responses in Arar's case,

however, may have helped him to receive justice, even if it did not result in transformative change more broadly. The articles “Syria Intends to Charge Ottawa Man” and “Canadian's Deportation Causes Furor” do not confront the linkages between Arar’s case and how prioritizing fears about terrorism, immigration, and maintaining Canadian “values” facilitates in the displacement of those that face incarceration, detention, and torture.

Mazigh builds on this project of normalizing Arar in “Syria Intends to Charge Ottawa Man” by suggesting that what happened is not just an affront to her husband, but to her children who may grow up feeling betrayed by their government, and vicariously the Canadian nation. Mazigh’s focus on futurity centered around children is important to consider, for as Lee Edelman argues, social consensus suggests that appeals on behalf of children are impossible to refuse (2). While there are a number of articles that mention Arar’s children, Mazigh’s statement emphasizes what her children might lose if their father is not returned to Canada. We see a similar narrative around children after Arar’s release in *The Globe*. The focus on children, too, was a major difference between *The Post* and *The Globe*. Both covered Arar’s homecoming extensively, but in addition to an article that focused more on the political conversations that occurred just before and during Arar’s release, *The Globe* also featured an article that focused on Arar’s family and their excitement about his homecoming. This article discusses Mazigh being busy with many family members and visitors coming in and out of the home, and focuses considerably on Arar’s children:

Amid the confusion of ringing phones and fresh arrivals at the door, the

couple's oldest child, daughter Baraa, 6, showed off a picture she had drawn of herself with her parents and little brother.

The baby brother, Houd, 19 months, looked wide-eyed with wonder at his grandmother...

"[Houd] doesn't understand what's happening," Ms. Mazigh said. But Baraa couldn't contain her excitement at the prospect of showing her father her schoolwork and her pictures.

Ms. Mazigh said it was 374 days since she had last spoken with her husband...

And the last time she is certain her husband received any mail or pictures of the children was in February... (Sallot and Fagan A1)

Edelman argues that centering the child in political debates privileges heteronormativity, and "Politics... remains, at its core, conservative insofar as it works to affirm a structure, to authenticate social order, which it then intends to transmit to the future in the form of its inner Child" (2). "The Child," Edelman suggests, marks a "fixation on heteronormativity: an erotically charged investment in the rigid sameness of identity that is central to the compulsory narrative of reproductive futurism" (22). What I want to take from Edelman here is the way in which the idea of the child beckons a particular politics around "doing it for the children" and mobilizes a political discourse that is centered around heteronormativity and conformity (and as Edelman's wider arguments suggest, homonormativity as well).

Situated within media frames of Arar and Mazigh's heteronormativity, the emphasis on the children becomes a central reason why Arar should be brought home (so his children will not grow up without a father, and possibly become disgruntled with the nation and the government for stealing their father).²⁷ Here we can see how the *figure* of the child, as Edelman suggests, works politically. The figure of the child becomes the *reason* why Arar should be brought back to Canada, and operates strategically to secure Mazigh and Arar's position as "good" heteronormative Canadian citizens who will reproduce children who will not grow up as angry, disaffected future citizens (and potential terrorists). José Muñoz critiques Edelman's work and argues that,

all children are not the privileged white babies to whom contemporary society caters... The future is only the stuff of *some* kids. Racialized kids, queer kids, are not the sovereign princes of futurity. While Edelman does indicate that the future of the child as futurity is different from the future of actual children, his framing nonetheless accepts and reproduces this monolithic figure of the child that is indeed always already white. (363-364)

Muñoz's point resonates here, as the O'Connor inquiry revealed that during Mazigh's secondary examination their children's information was stored in the Intelligence Management System as targets for known and suspected border risks, and this information could remain in the IMS for ten years. Mazigh and Arar's children were

²⁷ In an article Arar wrote for *The Globe* he also states in regard to his children, "I am very worried that they will grow up with bitterness in their hearts if they find out what happened to their father without getting real answers. It is for their sake that the inquiry must answer these questions and it is for their sake that I must be able to clear my name" ("I want my life back" F3).

branded as border threats and were certainly not the figure of “The Child” that is deserving of protection. We see two different responses: the media narratives’ attempt to align Arar and his family with heteronormativity centered around their children, and the state interests that are willing to mark racialized children as border threats, and more specifically in this case, terror threats. The fear of Muslim children who are terror threats, or bound to become terror threats, works with Muñoz’s arguments that children of colour are not the children of the future. They are not only children without futures (since they are already deemed terrorists), they will also hinder the nation’s future as well. The shift to framing children of colour *as* futurity in the case of the Arar children, eventually surpasses their framing as terror threats, but only once their parents are reframed as good immigrants. The heterosexual Muslim family then becomes a space that is constituted as productive of terrorist bodies, but can also be a space of salvation if the family can be read as “properly” Canadian.

Model Minorities and Successful Immigrants

It is important to note that media framings that distance Arar from the notions of the terrorist also rely on how his family is portrayed more generally. Throughout the time leading up to the O’Connor inquiry, as well as during the inquiry, *The Globe* continued this trend of including articles, every so often, that focused on Arar and his family. All of these articles detail how the family is coping. While *The Post* mentions the family repeatedly, they do not cover the family as often or as extensively as *The Globe*. In November 2003, a few months prior to a call for an inquiry, *The Globe* published an

article about Arar attempting to regain a “normal life” (Sallot, “At Home, Arar Still Haunted by Anger and Fear” A1). In January 2003, a few weeks before the inquiry was called, *The Globe* ran another article with a large picture of Arar and his children, again stating how difficult it has been for him to adjust back into his life (Sallot, “I feel Like I’m Still in Prison” F3).²⁸ *The Globe* released articles that focused just on Arar or his family throughout the inquiry as well (Arar, “I want my life back” F3; “Listening to Arar” A16; Sallot, “B.C. Community Helping Arar Family to Build a New Life” A4; Salutin A15).

How media portrayed Mazigh, moreover, was crucial to how Arar himself would be viewed. While Arar was imprisoned, it was Mazigh who spoke to media, and even upon Arar’s return, Mazigh was with him during his widely covered press conference in November 2003. Arar emerges in many Canadian media representations having all the characteristics of the “good ethnic” who adheres to heteronormativity, as a father and husband. Jasbir Puar has done extensive work on the ways in which the figure of the terrorist emerges through a certain “Orientalist queerness” and improper heterosexuality (“The Ascendancy of Whiteness” par. 2). Puar explains the framings of the “good ethnic” versus the “terror suspect”:

The ethnic is usually straight, usually has access to material and cultural capital (both as a consumer and as an owner), and is in fact often male. These would be the tentative attributes that would distinguish a tolerable ethnic (an

²⁸ The use of images of Arar and his family is certainly significant but researching how Arar and his family are portrayed through the images in national Canadian English language news media is beyond the scope of this analysis.

exceptional patriot, for example) from an intolerable ethnic (a terrorist suspect). In many cases, heteronormativity might be the most pivotal of these attributes, as certain Orientalist queernesses (failed heteronormativity, as signaled by polygamy, pathological homosociality) are a priori ascribed to terrorist bodies. (par. 2)

Puar illustrates that there are very rigid boundaries on tolerable differences, particularly for ethnic bodies within multicultural states. It is the “good (straight) ethnic,” Puar argues, that has been “a recipient of ‘measures of benevolence’” (par. 16). Mazigh’s portrayals in media became necessary to readings of Arar because it is their heteronormative and middle-class image that helps to produce the reading of them as the “good ethnic.”

Gayatri Spivak argues that imperialism’s image is constructed as “the establisher of the good society” where brown women are the “object” of protection, who need to be saved from those in their communities, and particularly the patriarchy within their communities (94). She traces this argument to colonial rule in India where the British made the cultural practice of *sati* (where a widowed woman immersed herself in her late husband’s funeral pyre) illegal, and names this as a case of “white men, seeking to save brown women from brown men” (Spivak 101). The supposed protection of the mute *sati* (since the widow is a *sati* only once she is dead) or the silenced “third-world woman” today continues the image of the liberal West and becomes an indication of a “good” society (Spivak 101). Spivak’s emphasis on this colonial legacy illustrates how such colonial framings help to inform contemporary imaginings of racialized men broadly, and Muslim men specifically. That the Muslim male body is perceived to be violent towards

women only serves to further legitimize violence against his body. Razack explains that the bodies of Muslim women are inscribed in the normative Western imaginary as “confined, mutilated, and sometimes murdered in the name of culture,” and this underpins the Muslim man as a threat to Western nations (*Casting Out* “Racism in the Name of Feminism” par. 1). In addition, framing Muslim women as oppressed seeks to legitimize extraordinary acts of violence, surveillance, and discipline toward Muslim men and Muslim communities more generally (par. 1). While Muslim women are framed as being able to bring their communities into modernity if they deviate from their culture or religion, Muslim men are perceived to be overly patriarchal and misogynistic, unable to progress into modernity and accept gender equality (par. 1).

Mazigh is able to distance herself, and Arar, from such framings in Canadian media. Initially the Canadian government saw Mazigh and Arar’s family as Muslims that needed to be monitored, particularly around border crossings, but Mazigh’s frequent media appearances facilitated a different reading of her and Arar as a family. As Thobani argues, for purportedly “good” Muslim men and women, their gratitude to the nation and their embrace of Western civilizational norms matter little under the anti-terrorism measures that mark them as just as suspicious as those read as “bad” Muslims (238). While Mazigh and Arar’s supposedly “good” Muslim lifestyle could not save Arar from rendition, it did help to align him with Canadianness in media readings that explored his innocence. Mazigh was not a stereotypically quiet or silenced Muslim woman and her vocalization of her experiences helped to shift perceptions of the Arar family from

“dangerous foreigners” to Canadians of foreign origin who had been misjudged.²⁹

Thobani posits that the worst of the purportedly “bad” Muslim women are those who keep themselves veiled and who are seen as fanatics, unaware of male domination (237). Thobani continues, “Their embrace of Islam is seen as an affront to the freedoms enjoyed by western women. Such an embrace of Islam is only tolerable to the nation of civilized subjects if it is accompanied with the simultaneous, but more ardent, embrace of superior western values and norms” (237). Though Mazigh wears a hijab, she is clearly a Muslim woman who is well-spoken and assertive, as later media coverage frequently mentions her education and her run for office. The media’s focus on Mazigh and her place as a Muslim mother in Canada frames her as the modern Muslim woman, and much of this framing also relies on coverage of Arar as an educated and modern Muslim man. Through her media interviews and statements, Mazigh ensured that the public’s attention remained on Arar’s everyday Canadianness, and she also went on to become a public figure. Mazigh’s ability to garner public attention not only helped to overturn stereotypes of Muslim women, but also ensured that her husband’s image would defy framings of the patriarchal Muslim man. Making sense of how and why the image of Arar emerged in Canadian media as, at times, a guilty Syrian terrorist, or innocent Canadian father and engineer, relies on how these representations of the “good” heteronormative ethnic come to be produced in the wider Canadian imaginary. Though Arar’s embodiment and links to

²⁹ For example, Donald Trump said about the speech of Khizr Khan, the father of an American Muslim soldier killed in Iraq: “If you look at his wife, she was standing there. She had nothing to say. She probably—maybe she wasn’t allowed to have anything to say. You tell me” (Turnham, “Donald Trump to Father of Fallen Soldier”).

the Syrian community suggested that he was a terrorist in Canadian media and political conversations, as Mazigh made the details of their life public in Canadian media, they began to contradict what the “terror suspect” is imagined to be.

An article in *The Globe* dedicated to Arar states that he is, “by all accounts, a Canadian success story”; having finished his Masters degree, he is considered an “expert in the field of communication engineering” (Khan, “An Outrage” A17). The point about Arar having a Master’s degree comes up several times in *The Globe*’s coverage (Arar, “I am not a Terrorist” A23; Cheney, “Graham Takes on U.S.” A1; “Hold an Inquiry” A24; Khan, “An Outrage” A17). Through the repeated reminder to the reader of this educational qualification, Arar is portrayed as an educated Canadian, and, therefore, “enlightened” and Westernized. Khan’s article also provides more information about Mazigh, who is “also a Muslim, [with] a PhD in mathematics from McGill,” and, again, Arar is described as a father of “two young children” (A17). In this article, we learn more about Mazigh, who also becomes associated with “immigrant success,” with a PhD from a Canadian university.

Upon Arar’s return to Canada, *The Globe* released an article that focused exclusively on Mazigh’s fight to bring her husband home (Sallot, “Wife Lobbied Aggressively for Release of Husband” A4). This article illustrates Mazigh’s heroism, her tireless efforts at lobbying the government, and her success at getting the attention of government officials, in Canada and internationally. Though the article describes her as “soft-spoken and diminutive” it also mentions that “waiting passively” was not her “style.” The article mentions her doctoral degree and that “her husband had a good job as

a software engineer with one of Ottawa’s high-tech startups.” The article elaborates that, “They had a quiet and comfortable family life in a suburban apartment building until 13 months ago, when Mr. Arar was arrested...” (Sallot A4). Thus, *The Globe* builds a story of “normal” middle-class immigrant Canadian life. Offering broader coverage of Mazigh in general (*The Globe* and *The Post* included several articles that focused on Mazigh’s run for office), in addition, allows the image of Mazigh to overturn stereotypical notions of the oppressed or silenced Muslim woman. She is described as an “unlikely political activist,” but she proves otherwise, working tirelessly and heroically on Arar’s campaign, defying normative understandings of what Muslim women are and what they are capable of. Mazigh appearing in public as a supportive spouse who was critical of her husband’s treatment demonstrates to the Canadian public that she is not an oppressed and compliant wife, and this in effect bolsters Arar’s status as a modern Canadian man who treats his wife as an equal.

Mazigh and Arar’s media framing demonstrated to a wider Canadian public that they are not “stranger strangers” (Ahmed, *Strange Encounters* 97) who cannot be successful in multicultural societies. They are framed, and they also frame themselves, as acceptable and successful immigrants to Canada, who should be granted the rights of citizenship. Articles on Arar’s children and wife convey his innocence through his place as a loving father and husband, but Mazigh’s activism also does similar work. The work of journalists in the Arar case, too, cannot be understated. While each news outlet has its own political leanings, these outlets also have journalists who did important work on shifting the media portrayals of Arar, and, as a result, garnered media attention in such a

way that public opinions about Arar might shift. There were numerous journalists who leaked false information about Arar, but there were also some, as this chapter illustrates, that reframed the conversation around the injustice Arar experienced (such as Khan and Heydari). Jeff Sallot, for example, followed Arar's case, and while he initially, too, downplayed Arar's experiences ("Arar was not Tortured, Officials Say" A4), he eventually became an advocate for Arar and Mazigh. He not only published numerous articles that attempted to frame them as a "good" Canadian Muslim family, but he also organized a conference at Carleton University that focused on the Arar case, where Arar and Mazigh spoke. Sallot in his articles, redirected the conversation around Arar and Mazigh and their experiences as a family upon Arar's return home. Though Sallot works within a confined frame of "the family man" such a narrative did work, or at least help, to successfully secure an inquiry for Arar and shift public opinion about him. Such work cannot be underestimated.

While it was necessary for Mazigh to represent Arar within acceptable and legible frames in order for him to be recognized as a "legitimate" Canadian and thereby worthy of being brought back to Canada, that particular bodies must seek recognition within these frames of normativity is problematic. Glen Coulthard argues in regard to Indigenous peoples in Canada that "the politics of recognition in its contemporary liberal form promises to produce the very configurations of colonialist, racist, patriarchal state power that Indigenous peoples' demands for recognition have historically sought to transcend" (13). In this way recognition politics reaffirm the colonial state. Furthermore, Coulthard states, "that 'recognition' is conceived as something that is ultimately 'granted' or

‘accorded’ to a subaltern group or entity by a dominant group or entity—prefigures its failure to significantly modify, let alone transcend, the breadth of power at play in colonial relationships” (31). In order to be brought back to Canada, Arar and Mazigh had to seek acceptance through narratives of normativity that accord with the same state that violated them, and many others, in the first place. The assimilation, or perhaps acceptance, of people of colour and immigrants by the state does not disrupt state violence and power relations, but rather encourages these populations to continue the state order and disciplines them into normativity.

The Tax-Paying Immigrant

I emphasize how *The Globe* describes Arar and Mazigh in their initial coverage because it helps to build a particular image of the Arar family.³⁰ Arar is not only framed in some media as a working Canadian citizen, but the status of “engineer” and an “expert” connotes immigrant success. Immigrant Canadians are told that in order to have self-respect and dignity, they must be responsible for their families by finding employment and working hard (*Discover Canada*). From the onset, then, productivity and contributions to the Canadian state become important elements of Canadian citizenship. Sedef Arat-Koç argues that immigrants to Canada have become commodified in that they are evaluated based on their place in the labour market (209), and Arar’s contribution to

³⁰ In another article Arar is described as an “Ottawa communications engineer” (his position as an engineer is mentioned twice in this article), a “Canadian citizen born in Syria,” and the article explains that “Mr. Arar left his wife and two young children vacationing in Tunisia with in-laws and they have not heard from him since” (Honey A9).

Canadian society through his employment is highlighted through various articles. Furthermore, the focus on Arar's skills and employment direct our attention to his economic contributions rather than his cultural or religious background; in other words, we are not encouraged to think about how Arar's culture or religion might disrupt Canadian "values," as is the case for the Khadr family and the Shafia family who I examine in the next chapters, and this is key to Canadians of "foreign origin" being legible as "legitimate" Canadians.

Arar's living in Canada for a significant duration of time helps to concretize his Canadianness in media representations. There were, however, attempts to portray Arar otherwise. For example, after Arar's return to Canada, *The Globe* reported on Solicitor General Wayne Easter's statement: "Nobody has raised the question: Was Mr. Arar a resident of Canada at the time?" (Chase A1). The article continues that Arar's lawyer stated that Arar was living in Canada, but this information was irrelevant because all Canadians deserve equal protection under the law (Chase A1). The article, however, reiterates that a government source suggested that Arar was not a resident: "Mr Arar had a garage sale; they [his family] moved out of their place, Mr. Arar was out of the country, his wife was out of the country...His only connection to Canada was his mother-in-law... He had already left [Canada]" (Chase A1). Easter and the unnamed Canadian government source suggest Arar is a Canadian citizen without a legitimate connection to Canada, and they draw on concerns about Canadian immigrants who only use Canada as a hub for social services or to have children. This is a familiar concern raised against immigrant and racialized Canadians, whose allegiances to the Canadian state can be called into

question when they spend significant amounts of time outside of Canada, in ways that the allegiances of white Canadian expatriates are not. Many articles stressed Arar’s long-time residence and employment in Canada which helped to overturn the narratives that Easter and the unnamed source attempted to bolster.

After Arar returned to Canada he was unable to find work, and many articles mention this, or mention that the family has been on social assistance since his return (Arar, “I want my life back” F3; “If He could have Figured Out some Way to Kill Himself” A13; Sallot, “At Home, Arar Still Haunted by Anger and Fear” A1; Sallot, “B.C. Community Helping Arar Family to Build a New Life” A4; Sallot, “How Canada Failed Citizen Maher Arar” A1; Sallot, “Judicial inquiry set into Arar affair” A13; Sallot, “Ottawa Calls on Syria to Jail Arar’s Torturers” A1). While the image of the welfare-receiving immigrant aligns Arar with stereotypical framings of “bad” immigrants in Canada, reading the coverage of Arar as a narrative actually produces a different image of Arar. He is not portrayed in this coverage through the stereotype of the “welfare case” but as a “good” immigrant who has been wronged; for example, one of the articles is titled, “How Canada Failed Citizen Maher Arar” (Sallot A1). First covering Arar as a respected engineer and then covering how this incident affected his career establishes Arar as a tax-paying immigrant whose social status has taken a downward turn and he now must rely on government assistance. There is often the assumption that immigrants have a greater reliance on welfare, and welfare recipients are generally portrayed as threats to the well-being of taxpayers rather than people to whom we are collectively responsible to provide security (Mosher 63). The figure of the tax-paying immigrant is important because this

figure emerges as one that is worthy of rights as a Canadian citizen who has paid into the system.

The tax-paying immigrant citizen is often constructed as more worthy of the rights of citizenship than welfare-receiving citizens. Media framings of Arar suggest that not only is he a citizen who is a hardworking immigrant father and husband, but also a Canadian citizen who has a stake in the Canadian state because he contributed to the Canadian economy. He is framed as a father who was once successful and who is now “down and out,” which works to create a more sympathetic figure. References to Arar’s inability to secure stable employment and the family’s reliance on social assistance occur twice in *The Post*’s coverage of Arar, and both of these articles appeared during the inquiry. One of the articles was published a few days before the government released the inquiry report. It states, “In an in-depth interview, Mr. Arar explained it will likely be his last chance to return to a ‘normal’ life,” and that he is “hopeful the report will allow him to return to work” (Gordon A4).³¹ Arar’s desire to earn a living and not remain reliant on government support, emphasized particularly in *The Globe*’s coverage of Arar, continues to demonstrate how Arar is placed within the frames of productive citizenship. A once successful and respected engineer who made a middle-class life for himself in Canada is now unable to find work in his field. This point is demonstrated in an article Arar wrote for *The Globe*: “I used to be very respected in my field. Now, no one knows me for my work... I really want my life back. I want to be known as an engineer again, and not just

³¹ Two other articles were published within a few weeks of the inquiry’s release (Alberts, “Redgrave Demands U.S. Clear Arar’s Name” A18, and Martin, “Off the Hook” A6)

as the guy who was sent to torture in Syria” (“I want my life back” F3). The trauma of Arar’s experiences, compounded by the connotations of terrorism that followed his name, made him unable to secure work, and unable to support his family as he once did, and media coverage generally held the government responsible for Arar’s changed circumstance in the months leading up to the inquiry. Stressing Arar’s position as unemployed, unemployable, and unable to support his family again structures his narrative around heteropatriarchal frames, but also helps to concretize public sympathy for Arar.

Conclusion

The coverage of Arar in both *The National Post* and *The Globe and Mail* was often multilayered and contradictory. Portrayals of Arar varied at different moments between the time of his deportation and when the results of the O’Connor Inquiry were revealed. Both news outlets took part in discrediting and demonizing Arar on multiple occasions. There is, however, a narrative that eventually emerges within this coverage that suggests that because Arar was a father, a husband, and a hardworking middle-class immigrant, he is worthy of the wider Canadian public’s concern and should be provided with the right to due process. Arar and Mazigh were read as “wronged” not only because Arar was innocent, but also because they did not adhere to the gendered framings of the “dangerous” Muslim man and the “imperiled” Muslim woman. Mazigh in particular was able to utilize the language of normative citizenship to try and secure her husband’s release. *The Globe* and *The Post* included coverage of Arar and Mazigh that framed them

as a normal family, who were hardworking immigrants and Canadian citizens. *The Globe* provided more comprehensive coverage of Arar and Mazigh that allowed the Canadian public to see Arar as more than a “terror suspect,” and representations of his Canadianness were connected to his status as a middle-class father and husband. *The Post* was far more critical of Arar’s circumstances and rights as a Canadian citizen, but *The Globe*’s framing of Arar, though more positive, was still problematic. *The Globe*’s framing suggest that Arar is only worthy of due process (and was only wronged) because he was a innocent and a “legitimate” Canadian citizen in so far as he adhered to heteronormative, civilized, and productive standards of citizenship.

The Arar case brings up issues of racial profiling because of the initial reading of Arar and Mazigh’s embodiments as dangerous and suspect. Arar and Mazigh were able to articulate their concerns to the government, human rights organizations, and media, often eloquently, and this also helped to solidify their image as worthy Canadian citizens. Canadian multiculturalism discourse suggests that Canadian citizens vary in race, ethnicity, and cultural and religious backgrounds; however, the case of Maher Arar illustrates how racialized Canadians are susceptible to state violence in ways that white normative Canadians are not. Because of Arar’s embodiment and ties to the Syrian community in Canada, he had to prove that he was not only innocent but that he had a legal right to due process. Politicians, too, attempted to discredit Arar, and, because he was accused of terrorism, the injustice he faced was somehow legitimized and he was portrayed as deserving of violence. Arar and Mazigh’s status as “good” immigrant Canadians helped Arar appear worthy of his rights, and media portrayals of his family

helped to frame him as innocent and worthy of Canadian benevolence. Arar's case, however, also points to the ways in which state recognition of immigrant and racialized Canadians can actually facilitate in reaffirming the power of the state, and it does little to challenge how state violence is reproduced. Arar and Mazigh and their family received a settlement and an inquiry, but the system that allowed Arar to be deported still remains in place and has become more invasive. Arar's case opens up further conversations about how innocence is interpreted and what this might mean for those who do not proximate Canadian civility.

Chapter Two: “Civilizing” the “Barbaric” Child: The Case of the Khadr

On 11 October 2001 *The Globe and Mail* published an article titled, “Muslim Militant or Family Man: Terrorist Suspect has Many Faces” (Stackhouse A4). The article is about Omar Khadr’s father Ahmed Said Khadr, whom media frequently describe as the “patriarch” of the “first family of terrorism in Canada” (Blatchford, “The Rule of Law, Upheld” A21; Blatchford, “Sitting Down for the Judge” A6; Greenberg A16; “Unleashing CSIS” A11; Ziyaad D8). What is striking about this article’s title is the word “or,” as if fatherhood and violence are mutually exclusive. That the senior Khadr could be a Muslim man involved in militancy and have a family is newsworthy.³² What exactly makes fatherhood and violence incongruent with one another? Terrorists and violence are somehow disconnected from family relationships, suggesting that accused terrorists (usually conceptualized as men) cannot be both family men and terrorists, or men who have the “same” relationships with their families as “everyone else.” There seems to be a leap in popular media where Muslim fathers who are accused of terrorism are connected to violence within the home, producing the image of the “bad” Muslim family; that is to say, the framing of the terrorist does not overlap with the framing of the “good” father. In order to delve into how family and parenting are conceptualized in connection to

³² Another example is when *CBC’s The National* interviewed the Khadr family in 2004. The *Washington Post* published an article soon after titled, “TV Film Portrays Bin Laden as Father.” The article states, “A Canadian television documentary about a family closely linked to Osama bin Laden portrays the al Qaeda chief as a family man who banned ice in drinks, loves volleyball and has trouble controlling his children” (Ljunggren). In the *CBC’s The National’s* interview, Zaynab Khadr and Abdurahman emphasized that bin Laden was a “normal human being,” a “father,” and “a person,” and that he made time to read poetry with his children, and played sports and games with the children in the communities (McKenna, “Al Qaeda’s Family”).

portrayals of Muslim families in Canada, I examine Canadian news media's shifting representations of Omar Khadr and his parents, Maha Elsamnah and Ahmed Khadr, to explore how they came to be framed as a "bad" Muslim family as a result of supposed failed (Muslim) parenting.

In Chapter One I explored how the later Canadian news media coverage of Maher Arar, Monia Mazigh, and their children drew upon heteronormative framings of familial relations in order to present an image of a "good" immigrant/Muslim Canadian family (and therefore helped to disconnect Arar from being labelled as a "terrorist"). Arar was portrayed as a "family man" rather than an "unattached" terrorist body. In Ahmed Khadr's case, media addressed his place in the family along with his potential terrorist ties. In this chapter I examine how the shifting media representations of the Khadrs draw on the family's incongruences with normative Western familial relationships to demonstrate the limits of Canadian multiculturalism. Canadian media portrayals raise doubts about Ahmed Khadr and Maha Elsamnah's parenting which open up questions about Muslim familial belonging in Canada. Representations of normative "safe" homes and normative motherhood and fatherhood are central to understanding how Elsamnah and Ahmed Khadr were represented as parents who were threats to Canada, and the West more generally, through their social and biological reproduction.

My analysis in this chapter relies on gendered and heterosexual (but not necessarily heteronormative) framings of "bad" Muslim fathers and mothers, as many news media portrayals illustrate how Ahmed Khadr's place in the family unit as "terrorist father" disconnect him from Canadianness. Elsamnah is often similarly positioned as a

terrorist or “extremist” mother (Bhattacharyya 51-52). Media portrayals reify the Khadrs as “barbaric” Muslims, and risk implying that Muslim families are dysfunctional, patriarchal, and reproduce violence.³³ The focus on the Khadrs’ deviant parenting and the Khadrs’ connection to terrorism frames them as parents who are a threat to the Canadian state and Canadian values, and who, because of their extremist ideologies, will also produce children who could pose a threat to Canada. As a result, the Khadr children are configured as children whose acts of violence, and alleged acts of violence, stem from their religious upbringing and the effects of how they were parented. This configuration renders the Canadian state as the savior of (Muslim) children of colour, suggesting that racialized children require state intervention and exposure to Western parenting styles in order to be “saved” from conceptually incompetent and extremist parents, and from becoming extremists themselves. The focus of this chapter is not necessarily on the Muslim parents’ physical acts of gender-based violence which often come to encompass media representations of the figure of the “bad” Muslim father (such as in the Shafia case, see Chapter Three), but it is rather on the media’s attention to the supposed psychological violence inflicted on the Khadr children by both parents through fundamentalist teachings of Islam and religious ideologies that are said to be reproduced in “bad” Muslim homes.

³³ One article in *The National Post* titled, “Khadrs at the Gate” explicitly connects the Khadrs to “Barbarians,” drawing on the book title, *Barbarians at the Gate*. The article calls the Khadrs “real Barbarians inside the gates” and states that “Mrs. Khadr [sic], who has praised the perpetrators of 9/11 and spoken warmly of suicide bombers, has returned to Canada to obtain better (not to mention “free”) health care for her son Karim, who was paralyzed in the gunfight with Pakistani authorities in which her husband managed to martyr himself” (Foster FP19).

The treatment meted to Omar Khadr by the Canadian government, how media covered his story, and the general public's response to it, provide entry points into an analysis of how portrayals of "bad" Muslim families inform notions of "good" normative Canadian parents. In this chapter, I establish how the image of the "bad" Muslim family emerges against the "good" Canadian family. I then move on to shifting news media portrayals of Ahmed Khadr, who is eventually established in news media and political conversations as a "terrorist father" who encouraged Omar to also be violent. I analyze news coverage of Elsammah as a "bad" Muslim mother, and finally I examine the shifting news media portrayals of Omar Khadr as the "terrorist child" who is reintegrated into Canadian society through a purportedly "good" Canadian family.

Drawing on the shifting news media portrayals of the Khadrs, I explore how certain characteristics come to inform configurations of the "bad" Muslim family. Since Omar Khadr's incarceration in 2002, he has garnered intense media attention. I searched national Canadian news media by using "Omar Khadr" as the keywords in both *The Globe and Mail* and *The National Post* and sorted the articles chronologically. It became evident quickly that the coverage of Omar Khadr frequently referenced his father. I then decided to shift my attention to how news media discussed Ahmed Khadr both prior to and post-September 11 by changing the keyword search to "Ahmed Khadr." While Ahmed Khadr was not discussed significantly in *The Post* before September 11, there were some *Globe* articles that illustrate shifts in their representations of fatherhood in regards to the Khadr family. I also chose to include an analysis of the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation's (CBC)'s documentaries "Al Qaeda's Family" and "Out of the

Shadows” because so much of what is written about the Khadr, both within news media and academic analyses, include references to the former documentary. “Out of the Shadows” was Omar Khadr’s first public interview after his release from Canadian prison. Though “Out of the Shadows” is seemingly sympathetic to Omar, the documentary illustrates how the Canadian state disciplines racialized bodies into adhering to the state order, and it is through this adherence that portrayals of Omar shift from the “terrorist child” of a “fundamentalist family” who should be evicted from the nation, to the misguided child soldier who should be saved by the nation under the supervision of his lawyer Dennis Edney (and the heteronormative white Canadian family).

Ahmed Khadr: Framing the Muslim Patriarch

Ahmed Said Khadr immigrated to Canada from Egypt in 1975. He married Maha Elsamnah, a Canadian citizen from Palestine, and the couple had seven children, one of whom died of heart complications in early childhood. In 1985, during the Soviet occupation of Afghanistan, the Khadr moved to Peshawar, Pakistan, and Ahmed Khadr worked for Human Concern International, a Canadian charity that helped Afghan refugees. The family travelled back and forth between Pakistan and Canada, sometimes making more than one visit a year.³⁴ In 1995, Ahmed Khadr began to appear in Canadian media when he was accused of financing the November 1995 bombing of the Egyptian embassy in Islamabad. While the Khadr were living in Pakistan, Pakistani police took

³⁴ The details on Ahmed Khadr’s life, including his links to terrorist organizations, are murky. For further information about Ahmed Khadr’s life see *Guantanamo’s Child: The Untold Story of Omar Khadr* by Michelle Shephard.

Ahmed Khadr into custody that December. There, he was interrogated for five days by both Egyptian and Pakistani officials, and was blindfolded, threatened, and had his hair pulled (Shephard 48-49). Pakistani authorities held Khadr without charges, and Khadr underwent a hunger strike while Elsamnah sought the help of the Canadian High Commission in Islamabad. In January 1996, then Prime Minister Jean Chrétien and Team Canada went on a trade mission to four countries, one of which was Pakistan, and it was there that Elsamnah pursued Team Canada, held a press conference, and met with Chrétien. Chrétien took up Khadr's case with the Bhutto government, and he was assured that Khadr would be granted a fair trial (Shephard 54). Pakistani authorities ended up charging Khadr, but, within three months of Chrétien's visit, he was released on bail and the charges eventually dropped.

The Globe and Mail's coverage of Ahmed Khadr's detention in Pakistan appeared first on 16 December 1995 and continued until 17 January 1996. Khadr's name reemerged in *The Globe* in 1998 when his association with Osama bin Laden came to the fore. Khadr's identity as a father comes up regularly because many of these articles mention that he and Elsamnah have six children, all of whom are Canadian citizens. One 1996 article that covers Ahmed Khadr's detention in Pakistan is particularly noteworthy because the journalist, John Stackhouse, covered the Khadr family again in 2001, and includes very different descriptions of Ahmed Khadr as a father and the Khadr family in the later coverage. Stackhouse's 1996 article is somewhat ambiguous in terms of its framing of Khadr's guilt or innocence, but it does portray Khadr as an affectionate father who defies normative framings of Eastern/Muslim fatherhood. Stackhouse explains that one of

Khadr's sons, Abdurahman, stated, "When they [Pakistani police] first robbed the house, one man just picked me up by the shirt and put me in the car"; the article also explains that Abdurahman sleeps on the floor of his father's hospital room ("Canadian Bombing Suspect in Limbo" A10). Abdurahman continues, "This doesn't happen in Canada," and that he has "had it," and "want[s] to go back to Canada" (Stackhouse A10). Abdurahman makes a clear distinction between justice in Canada and justice in Pakistan. The article's emphasis on the Khadr children being victims of Pakistani state violence is noteworthy as they are not afforded such characterizations in later news coverage. Quoting Abdurahman has a particular function in this article; his statements illustrate an affectionate relationship between father and son, but they also point to the purportedly proper functioning of the Canadian legal system. Stackhouse's article further establishes connections between the Khadr family and Canada, stating that the Khadr children return to Canada once a year to visit relatives. Stackhouse then moves on to Ahmed Khadr's suspicious relationship with a suspect who is linked to a militant Egyptian group. The article states that Ahmed Khadr "arranged a marriage" between the suspect and his 16-year-old daughter, Zaynab Khadr. Stackhouse states, "Mr. Khadr said the engagement was a trial to see if the two got along," but Zaynab Khadr said that this man lived in their home for two months and that she kept her "bedroom door locked...[she] didn't really get along with him. [She] kept crying and fighting" (A10). Zaynab Khadr states that her father pressed her, "He's a good man. Try it" (Stackhouse A10). Stackhouse, however, stops short of referring to this marriage as a "forced marriage."

The representation of the Khadr children in Stackhouse's 1996 article is quite different from the coverage of the Khadr children after Omar's detention in 2001. In Stackhouse's 2001 article, Ahmed Khadr is represented in a manner consistent with a narrative of patriarchal indoctrination, a father who forces his daughter into marriage and prevents his children from attending school. Stackhouse recalls his meeting with the Khadr family in 1996 in his 2001 article: "[Ahmed Khadr's] wife sat dutifully at his side. His children were not so comfortable with their fundamentalist father" ("Muslim Militant or Family Man" A4), even though, as stated above, Stackhouse's descriptions of Abdurahman in 1996 actually depicted an affectionate relationship between father and son. Stackhouse's 1996 article also states, "Since Mr. Khadr's detention, his six children have dropped out of school and not returned to Peshawar," which connects the children's inability to attend school to Ahmed Khadr's detention (as a result of Pakistani injustice), rather than as a situation caused by the actions of Ahmed Khadr ("Canadian Bombing Suspect in Limbo" A10). In 2001, however, Stackhouse explains that Zaynab Khadr could not "understand why [her father] had *pulled* her and her siblings out of school in Ottawa and moved them to the border of Afghanistan" ("Muslim Militant or Family Man" A4; my emphasis), which suggests that the children had not attended school since they left Canada as a result of their father's actions. Stackhouse describes Zaynab Khadr's circumstances, too, quite differently. In 2001 he states that Zaynab Khadr, "[spoke] angrily" about her marriage, explaining that, "She didn't understand why her father was *forcing* her to marry him" (Stackhouse, "Muslim Militant or Family Man" A4; my emphasis), while in 1996, Stackhouse described the marriage as "arranged." Using the

phrase “forced marriage” in the post-9/11 context has a certain potency given that the War on Terror was framed as a mission to liberate Muslim women from Muslim men. Stackhouse’s descriptions of Khadr’s relationship to his children and his place as father changed significantly from 1996 to 2001. While in 1996 Stackhouse portrays Ahmed Khadr as a Canadian father who appears to have a loving relationship with his children, and might even be wrongfully accused, in 2001, he is unequivocally the fundamentalist father who denies his children an education and marries off his daughter without her consent.

News media representations of Ahmed Khadr after 1996 buttressed his image as a fundamentalist father, as revelations about his seedy background came to the fore. What the media chose to include in stories about Ahmed Khadr is of central importance to this analysis. That certain aspects of Ahmed Khadr’s life were repeatedly stated in Canadian media while other aspects of his life were not mentioned helped to construct Ahmed Khadr as a father who is a “Canadian of convenience” (Friscolanti, “Lawsuit to Target Khadr” A1; Greenberg A16; Martin, “Khadr Wave their Flag” A14), and helped to disconnect him from Canadianness, and therefore, Canadian fatherhood. For example, Canadian media frequently mention that he and his family used the Canadian healthcare system while living abroad, but, while *The National Post* and *The Globe and Mail* mention that Ahmed Khadr went to the University of Ottawa, not once do they state that he held a master’s degree in Engineering from the University, a characteristic that was

repeatedly mentioned in coverage of Maher Arar. The silence around Ahmed Khadr's education frames him as backward, uneducated, and unenlightened.³⁵

Media reports often note that the Khadrs went long periods of time without living in Canada, which indicates to readers that they did not contribute to the Canadian state through taxes, nor did they attempt to Canadianize.³⁶ Instead, politicians and media, throughout Omar Khadr's detention, excavated Ahmed Khadr and Elsamnah's history of accessing Canadian healthcare services. This is particularly important in discussions of the connection between the "breadwinner" and fatherhood, and breadwinners purportedly being "good" male citizens. For example, in 2002, *The Globe* ran a story where they interviewed a family friend of the Khadrs. The article states that the Khadrs "gave up their quiet, middle-class existence after the Russian army invaded Afghanistan." The friend recalls "that the family returned to Ottawa a few years later to take advantage of Canadian health care" because Ahmed Khadr hurt his arm during a bombing (Freeze and Boyd A1).³⁷ That Ahmed Khadr, once a middle-class father, moved his family from

³⁵ The question of education also comes up in Canadian media portrayals of Omar Khadr and Karim Khadr. Allison Mackey in "Troublesome Indigestion" explores the problematic portrayals of Omar Khadr's education during his time in Guantanamo Bay. Mackey argues that portrayals of Khadr's education frame him as an individual that has been re-educated and disassociated from his family and religion which is necessary for him to be incorporated into the Canadian nation. These portrayals, Mackey argues, link him to being a Canadian and distance him from his familial ties (120-121).

³⁶ It is unclear if Ahmed Khadr actually paid taxes, but he is certainly portrayed as though he did not.

³⁷ There are differing explanations as to why Ahmed Khadr had to return to Canada for treatment. The most common explanation was that he stepped on a landmine; however, others suggest that he was actually wounded in a battle.

Canada, suggests that even those who appear to be “good” immigrants can be influenced by extremist Islamic ideology.

The Khadr family appears as Canadian in citizenship *only*, and not Canadian in terms of values or lifestyle choices. A *Globe and Mail* article online also states that Ahmed Khadr is the father of a “viperous clan” and that he “long exploited his Canadian citizenship and CIDA [Canadian International Development Agency] funding to support al-Qaeda's global jihad, only returning to Canada for free health care and to raise money in the mosques” (Grady, “From far and wide, O Canada, terrorist killers come to thee”). In this article, Ahmed Khadr is represented as having abused the Canadian healthcare system and Canadian charity funds and exploiting the goodwill of Canadians. Khadr is not portrayed as a father who makes an honest living, pays his taxes, and raises a “respectable” family; rather he is portrayed as taking advantage of Canadian generosity. As a result, in these depictions, Canadians emerge as generous and kind, and the “bad” Muslim family emerges as abusing the system and the kindness of fellow citizens.

Connecting Father to Son

In 2002, news broke that U.S. military forces had detained Ahmed Khadr's second youngest son, Omar Khadr. Omar was detained at the age of 15 for allegedly throwing a grenade that killed a member of the U.S. military, Sergeant Speer, in Afghanistan. He was held in Guantanamo Bay for ten years where he was subjected to various methods of torture and interrogated by CSIS. In 2010, Omar accepted a plea bargain; he pled guilty to war crimes before a military commission so that he would be moved to a Canadian

facility to continue an eight-year prison sentence. In 2012 he was moved to a Canadian maximum security prison and was released in Spring 2015 on bail, after which he lived with his lawyer, Dennis Edney. In 2017, the Canadian government quietly offered Khadr an apology and a \$10.5 million settlement for violating Khadr's human rights under the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms.

Since Khadr's detention in Guantanamo Bay, numerous media outlets have debated Khadr's case, not only because it is still unclear whether he was actually responsible for the death of the U.S. soldier, but also because he underwent torture and was incarcerated at such a young age.³⁸ While in Guantanamo Bay, CSIS officials interrogated Omar Khadr, a child at the time, without legal counsel. In addition, these agents knew that he had been subjected to sleep deprivation, and that the information gained would be shared with the U.S. However, when news leaked of the settlement and apology there was a frenzy of media attention debating whether or not Khadr was "deserving" of an apology and settlement, and what alternatives the government could have pursued. Omar Khadr was the last Western national left in Guantanamo Bay, and many argued that he should have been treated as a child soldier. Furthermore, he was not permitted to access a lawyer during the first few years of his detention, and additionally, many questions were asked about Canada's treatment of his case, as well as the legality of his treatment.

³⁸ For example, there are changes in the battle report that originally state that the person who threw the grenade had died. See Shephard, "At Omar Khadr Hearing, U.S. Officer Explains Changing Battle Report" and Williamson (10-12).

Publicity about Ahmed Khadr's connection to Osama bin Laden in 1998, and further news media reports about this connection in 2001, would help to create what is now known as the "Khadr Effect": the reluctance of many politicians to advocate for Omar Khadr because of Jean Chrétien's intervention for Ahmed Khadr, who turned out to be potentially involved in terrorism. Many argue that the "Khadr Effect" had great consequences for how Canadian officials, particularly then Prime Minister Jean Chrétien, handled Omar Khadr's case (Khan, "Politics Over Principles" 54; Kielburger 88; Macklin 222). James Bartleman, Chrétien's chief political advisor at the time, states, however, that Ahmed Khadr's case was not particularly newsworthy, as Chrétien met with other Canadians abroad who were experiencing political hardships as well (229). Chrétien made no promises to Elsamnah other than that he would ask that Ahmed Khadr's case be held in accordance with Pakistani laws, which he did, and Bartleman claims that Bhutto did not respond (229). According to Bartleman, the Khadr family provided media with "the scandal they had been searching for, complete with photogenic wife, cute children, and brave Canadian husband suffering in a prison hospital" (229).

When Ahmed Khadr's name appeared on a terrorist watch list in 2001, *The Globe* reported that Canada's former High Commissioner to Pakistan, Marie Andrée Beauchemin, stated, "Mr. Chrétien raised the Khadr case only after Canadian journalists made it a cause célèbre. But she added that his intervention did not result in Mr. Khadr's release" (McCarthy A10). While these officials have political reasons to make such comments, their comments illustrate that Canadian media did in fact focus on the family elements of the Khadr case. It was a narrative of a *Canadian* father mistreated by the

Pakistani state that actually anchored Ahmed Khadr and the Khadr family to Canadianness. The media narrative, however, shifts after Omar Khadr's detention, when a new emphasis on a patriarchal family dynamic actually works to disconnect the Khadr family from Canadianness.

Gar Pardy, former diplomat and head of Consular Affairs at the Canadian Department of Foreign Affairs during the first year of Omar Khadr's detention, claims that explanations such as the "Khadr Effect" oversimplify the complicated political reasons that Bhutto may have pushed for Khadr's release (70).³⁹ Many Canadian media discussions in 2002 (when Omar Khadr's detention was made public) raised the issue that Chrétien mentioned Ahmed Khadr to Bhutto. That this intervention led to the elder Khadr's release was either directly stated or, at least, implied. For example, one *National Post* article states, "in a highly unusual move, Jean Chrétien, the Prime Minister, intervened in the case and Mr. Khadr was released" (Bell, "Ottawa Impedes War on Terror" A4). Yet another notes, "The Egyptian-born Canadian, who studied and worked in Ottawa before moving to Pakistan in 1985, was released two weeks after Jean Chrétien, the Prime Minister, raised his case during a state visit with Benazir Bhutto" (Bell, "U.S. Embassy Bombers had Canadian Ties" A1). This article is particularly misleading because it states that Ahmed Khadr was released two weeks after Chrétien's visit, when he was actually released three months later. Some coverage openly vilifies Chrétien for

³⁹ Pardy states, "for Canadians to believe that [Bhutto] took specific action to help Ahmed Khadr strains credulity. It also ignores the interests that parts of the Pakistani government had in supporting Khadr's work, which indirectly was helpful to the Pakistani proxy, the Taliban, in the Afghan civil war that was coming to a close" (70).

speaking about Khadr to Bhutto (MacKinnon A1; Alberts, “Ottawa Seeks Access to Canadian Teenager” A4; Bell, “U.S. Denies Ottawa Access to Khadr Teen” A1), even though politicians repeatedly stated that it was a common gesture. Others admitted that it would be difficult to conclude that Chrétien’s actions had any effect on Ahmed Khadr’s circumstances (Freeze and Boyd A1; MacKinnon and Freeze A9). The fact that media made the association between Ahmed Khadr and Omar Khadr so often, even when they gave Chrétien the benefit of the doubt, ensured that there was always a connection between Ahmed Khadr’s alleged act of terrorism and his son Omar Khadr’s circumstances. When Omar Khadr’s alleged violence becomes tethered to Ahmed Khadr’s alleged violence, it buttresses the narrative that Omar Khadr’s actions are a result of his family, upbringing, and, as Razack argues, his bloodline (“The Manufacture”). The media’s frequent attempts to connect our understanding of Omar Khadr to his father’s actions ensured that the son would be framed as violent in these representations, which would come to overwrite how he was violated by the state, and the state’s culpability for the violence he experienced.

Maha Elsamnah: Framing the “Mother of Terror”

Elsamnah too is a key figure in the imagining of the “bad” Muslim family that does not assimilate and will reproduce children who will not assimilate. In the case of the Khadrs, Elsamnah is portrayed as a mother who is complicit in the Muslim religious patriarchal order. Elsamnah as a mother and a mother figure, one who is a racialized immigrant with Canadian citizenship, is portrayed as particularly frightening in the

context of Canadian nationalism. Historical narratives of “good” mothers in Canada inform media framings of Elsamnah as a mother who has led her children to the violence of terrorism. In the previous chapter I discussed how some media present Arar and Mazigh through a “good” immigrant narrative because they appear within the heteronormative frames of the nuclear family and productive citizenship, having only two children, and being educated and employed. The Khadrs, conversely, are portrayed as having too many children, a strain on the Canadian healthcare system, rarely spending time in Canada, denying their children adequate education, and passing on anti-West ideology to their children. Frequent references to the number of Khadr children is noteworthy as concerns about immigrant women’s fertility are heavily connected to ideologies around racial purity.⁴⁰ The media represent Elsamnah and Ahmed Khadr as not only reproducing “terrorist children,” but also reproducing many “terrorist children,” who are all represented as a threat to the Canadian nation and nationalist ideals. Elsamnah’s fecundity is also portrayed as troubling because she is represented as having instilled a hypermisogynist Muslim culture in her children.

As Dua reminds us, white middle and upper-class women were not just responsible for biological reproduction, but also the social reproduction of the next generation of empire-builders (252). Therefore, representations of “good” mothers involve socialization of their children into Canadian “values,” such as neo-liberal

⁴⁰ There are also increasing concerns about so-called “anchor babies” in Canada where non-citizens give birth in Canada. The children are automatically Canadian citizens, and therefore can access certain Canadian services, but their parents may not pay taxes, which is a point of contention that often exposes fears of the foreign “other” who is a supposed drain on Canadian social services.

ideologies, and the Canadian state's narrow definitions of gender equality. Valverde argues that women of colour in Canada were seen as “less moral and maternal and more corrupted by their culture” (20). They were said to be so victimized by their culture that they could not be considered “real mothers” (Valverde 11), who were “moral teachers of children... whose cultural and racial background marked them as more adult, more evolved, more moral, and better ‘mothers of the race’” (Valverde 20). Though Elsamnah defied normative framings of the “imperiled Muslim woman” (Razack, “A Typical Month” *Casting Out* par. 4) through her media presence, she defied these framings differently than Monia Mazigh. Elsamnah's autonomy is presented as far more sinister and disruptive to national narratives of womanhood, where the state encourages women to become part of the imperial machinery.⁴¹ In Mazigh's case, being outspoken and supporting the plight of her husband was portrayed as heroic, particularly because she speaks eloquently, and, importantly, her husband was proven innocent. Conversely, Elsamnah is framed by media, and also frames herself, quite differently, but she, too, becomes an extension of her husband's character in news media coverage. She is represented as willing to submit to patriarchal Islamic ideologies, corrupted by culture, and willing to accept her own subordination and the subordination of her daughters. Such

⁴¹ An example of this is the praise Prime Minister Justin Trudeau received for ensuring the cabinet was composed of half women. It should also be noted that he included an Indigenous woman (a descendent of the Musgamagw Tsawataineuk and Laich-Kwil-Tach peoples), and an immigrant woman from Afghanistan. Arguments about racial, gendered, and sexual representation in state spaces are most definitely important to consider, but my argument here is about the ways in which “progress” is often measured by representation rather than how systems of injustice can remain in place even with greater representation. Canada still remains a state that occupies Indigenous land and benefits from Indigenous resources even with this diversity.

media framings invariably invoke narratives of Canadian benevolence in understanding Elsamnah, as it presents Canada as a place where Muslim women are freed from their “patriarchal cultures.” But, instead of seeking a “better life,” Elsamnah appears to squander the opportunities that Canada so generously offered her.

What also makes Elsamnah frightening in news media framings is that Elsamnah made it clear that she did not reproduce the ideologies of Canadian nationalism, nor did she instill those ideologies in her six children, when in 2004 she appeared in the CBC documentary, “Al Qaeda’s Family” (which aired on their flagship news program *The National* and was also taken up by *PBS Frontline* using the title, “Son of al-Qaeda”). Elsamnah’s criticism of Western interventions in the Middle East in this segment, particularly in the immediate post-9/11 climate, framed her as anti-Canadian because politicians and many media presented the invasion of Afghanistan as a mission to save Afghan women from the horrors of the Taliban’s patriarchy. Elsamnah appeared with her eldest daughter Zaynab Khadr in the documentary, both wearing the niqab. When asked about their reactions to September 11 by reporter Terence McKenna, Elsamnah stated, “To be honest with you, since I’m Palestine [sic] and I know the Americans are helping the Israelis so much, I said, let them have it. It’s time that they pay....” While Zaynab Khadr attempted to clarify her mother’s sentiments by stating, “Not the people themselves,” her mother continued, “I feel sorry for the innocent people in the building, but I want to hurt that person whoever give the order [sic] to the Israeli to kill the Palestinian [sic]. But, you know, innocent people pay the price. Even in Afghanistan,

innocent people have to pay” (McKenna, “Al Qaeda’s Family”). Zaynab Khadr then states,

[Osama bin-Laden] really wanted to hit the American government where it will hurt it, not the people... But sometimes innocent people pay the price. You don’t want to feel happy, but you just sort of think, well, they deserve it, they’ve been doing it for such a long time. Why shouldn’t they feel it once in a while? (McKenna)

While Elsamnah and Zaynab Khadr attempted to contextualize their position within a wider system of global politics, their statements were often interpreted as suggesting 9/11 victims deserved violence. These statements were frequently referenced in media reports as proof of the Khadr’s disloyalty to the West, and Canada specifically.

In her analysis of this segment, Yasmin Jiwani explains that Elsamnah appears here as the “extremist mother” (a term she borrows from Bhattacharyya 51-52) or the “female fanatic” (“Trapped in the Carceral Net” 22). She explains that Zaynab Khadr and Elsamnah do not adhere to the mute and oppressed Muslim woman stereotype (Jiwani 23), and that Elsamnah, particularly, comes to be perceived as a dangerous Muslim woman such as the “female suicide bomber” or, more pointedly in this case, as a mother figure who is “regarded as inept, fostering irrational hatred in her offspring” (Jiwani 22). Elsamnah is viewed as a threat by the Canadian public because she is represented as indoctrinated by the Muslim (read: patriarchal) religion and willing to reproduce these ideologies, rather than resist a culture of misogyny and terrorist violence. Elsamnah was not represented as a grieving mother whose child was detained in Guantanamo Bay, or as

a Muslim woman who is the victim of patriarchal violence and a patriarchal religion and culture, and therefore was not portrayed as a victim “worthy” of the viewer’s compassion (Jiwani 378). As a supporter, or even an active participant, in a religion, culture, and family that is deemed hyper-misogynist and supportive of terrorism, she emerges as the extremist mother, and, like her children, she is seen as someone who must be contained (Jiwani 378). Razack explores how, even during Omar Khadr’s trial, his military lawyer, Bill Kuebler, brought up Elsamnah and Zaynab Khadr’s comments in “Al Qaeda’s Family,” stating that “Canadians were right to be offended by the remarks” (“The Manufacture” 69). Razack explains that Kuebler took up the argument that the Khadr family should be held responsible for Omar Khadr’s circumstances; it was not the justice system that had wronged Omar Khadr, it was his family (69). Omar Khadr’s alleged acts of violence were framed as connected to his mother’s comments and as something for which he should be held responsible. Omar Khadr was unable to be disaggregated from his parents’ actions.

Numerous Canadian media drew on Elsamnah’s comments in “Al Qaeda’s Family” as a clear example of why Elsamnah should be denied citizenship, refused entry into Canada, or at least be denied access to Canadian social services, suggesting that she is a Canadian citizen who should not have a stake in the Canadian nation. One *National Post* article states in their coverage of “Al Qaeda’s Family”: “she told us that the Americans got what ‘they deserved’ on Sept. 11, 2001, that she would be proud to see her sons become suicide bombers, and that she preferred they attend al-Qaeda camps than Canadian schools, which are infested with ‘homosexual’ influences” (Bell, “White House

was Warned” A15). Elsamnah was presented, and in some respects presented herself, as everything a purportedly “good” Canadian mother should not be: a strain on social services, homophobic, against Western interventions (particularly to “save” women), and the mother of many overly violent and hypermasculine children. Canadian media and politicians ensured that Elsamnah’s statements would remain at the fore of Omar Khadr’s case. Media reference this footage repeatedly when reporting on Omar Khadr, so that some have argued that Elsamnah and Zaynab Khadr’s interview definitely affected Omar Khadr’s circumstances (Kielburger 88; Macklin 222). It is worth noting that in response to this interview, an online petition emerged requesting that the Khadr family be stripped of their Canadian citizenship and Conservative Party Foreign Affairs Critic at the time, Stockwell Day, stated, “Canadian citizenship is diminished when we allow it to be extended to people like the Khadr” (quoted in Gorham 311; Khan, “Politics Over Principles” 55).⁴²

Omar Khadr: The Image of the “Terrorist Child”

Representations of the Khadr family rely on orientalist framings of Arab and Muslim families as dysfunctional and hyperpatriarchal, and make assumptions about the repercussions that growing up in an Arab or Muslim family have on the psychological state of Arab and Muslim children. Many of those who are sympathetic to Omar Khadr’s case argue that Ahmed Khadr’s actions played a key role in Omar Khadr’s circumstances,

⁴² Another petition emerged to keep Omar Khadr out of Canada in 2012 when his return to Canada became imminent.

such as in the narratives put forth by Andy Knight and John McCoy in Janice Williamson's *Omar Khadr, Oh Canada*; Knight and McCoy state that Ahmed Khadr "brought his children into the world of militancy and fed them an ideology of hate. He recruited his children to take part in the Afghan conflict" (294). Deborah Gorham's piece in *Omar Khadr, Oh Canada* also states that Ahmed Khadr's treatment of his sons was akin to child abuse (311). The focus on Ahmed Khadr as a father and the ways in which he exposed his children to conflict is particularly problematic because it shifts our focus to the individual family. We are often encouraged to see Omar Khadr as a victim of his upbringing rather than a victim of Western injustice, such as his imprisonment without trial as a teenager in Guantanamo Bay. Such analyses contain remnants of orientalist framings of Muslim and Arab families and ignore how the West is complicit in exposing children more generally to war and conflicts, or, as Razack illustrates in *Dark Threats and White Knights*, directly involved in the mistreatment and torture of children.⁴³ There are studies that focus on terrorist pathologies and some connect the terrorist psyche to abnormal (Muslim) family dynamics,⁴⁴ while others suggest that Arab and Muslim families help produce terrorist psyches through specific child-rearing practices.⁴⁵

⁴³ For example, youth in Ontario in Secure Treatment Programs can still be kept in secure "de-escalation rooms" (segregation) for periods longer than 24 hours with provincial director's approval (*Child, Youth and Family Service Act*, sec. 174, par. 9, sub. sec. 5).

⁴⁴ One study is "The Sociology and Psychology of Terrorism: Who Becomes a Terrorist and Why?" by Rex. A. Hudson, which Puar analyzes in "Genealogies of Terrorism" in *Terrorist Assemblages*.

⁴⁵ For example, "The Childhood Origins of Terrorism" in *The Emotional Life of Nations* by Lloyd deMause.

There is a desire in broader media to pathologize those who commit acts of terror in an attempt to understand why so many participate in terrorist organizations. Judith Butler claims that these attempts to explain acts of terror through psychology encourage us to only examine an individual's pathology rather than understand how the individual is shaped by broader political, social, and economic circumstances ("Explanation and Exoneration" 179). Mahmood Mamdani also explores how terrorism must be analyzed with consideration for the political, social, and historical remnants of the Cold War (*Good Muslim, Bad Muslim*). Individuals must be held responsible for their actions, but we also must consider the conditions that help to produce terrorism and terrorist organizations. Media narratives focus on the terrorist psyche and seldom provide a context for the simplistic and extremist religious ideologies of the Khadr family (Razack, "The Manufacture" 66). While I think it is important to understand Omar Khadr's situation as being both a victim of his social circumstances (including the influences of his family) as well as holding Omar Khadr responsible for his own actions, what is troubling is how the focus on his father and mother, and (Muslim) family dynamics, draw on a history and narrative of terrorist "pathologies." For example, the *Arab Mind*, an analysis of Arab culture and psychology that Jasbir Puar states many pro-War conservatives in Washington cite, serves as a reference to orientalist knowledge production (Puar, "The Production of the Muslim" par. 1). This book includes a whole chapter on Arab child rearing practices that characterize Arab families as hyperpatriarchal with severe authoritarian fathers and loving and compassionate mothers (Patai 26). The chapter also makes very few attempts to differentiate between Arab societies, and makes sweeping

statements about Arab families, stating that Arab mothers give in to all young boys' demands (Patai 32), and young girls are married off before puberty (Patai 34-35).⁴⁶ The emphasis on the dominance of fathers (physical dominance over male children specifically) appears throughout the chapter. Patai names Arab fathers, particularly Sunni Muslim fathers, as disciplinarians (39), and states that male children are subservient to fathers and are subjected to harsh physical punishments (34).⁴⁷ Constituting Arab fathers (who are conflated with Muslim fathers) as violent towards children informs how many come to understand Arab and Muslim families generally, and it is within these frames that Ahmed Khadr and the Khadr family are placed.

Media coverage name Khadr as a father who led his children into militant Islam (religious ideology is important in these narratives) and media frequently name Khadr as a “patriarch.”⁴⁸ These framings resonated in a Canadian context where men in immigrant families (Muslims are often associated with immigrant Canadians) are seen as particularly patriarchal (Thobani 109). Naming Ahmed Khadr as a “patriarch” within a framework that holds immigrant, Arab, and Muslim men as excessively violent, reproduced this understanding of dysfunctional (foreign) Arab and Muslim families who produce terrorist

⁴⁶ Patai does make a distinction at the end of his chapter between Sunni Muslims, Greek Orthodox and Gregorian children in Lebanon (since he names Lebanon as “The most advanced of the Arab countries”) (37): “...Sunni Muslim Arab mothers reward successful accomplishments relatively infrequently, use the threat of punishment more frequently (although they often fail to carry out their threats), foster independence less frequently, and let the father predominate over the child. It is in these practices that we must see as contributing factors to the development of the specific character that the Lebanese Sunni Muslim Arabs exhibit in childhood as well as adult life” (Patai 40).

⁴⁷ It should be noted that Sunni Muslims are not only Arab.

⁴⁸ Elsamnah too is named as a “matriarch” in some media.

children. Naming is important here as “good” fathers are not patriarchs. What the orientalist framing of the “bad” Muslim family suggests is that hypermasculine Arab and Muslim fathers (assumed to be immigrants) who reproduce Muslim ideologies, create terrorists, terrorist organizations, terrorist psyches, and the social context that helps to turn young boys and men into threats to the West, and Canada specifically.

Broader Canadian media representations of the Khadr family focused on images of a terrorist Muslim father and fundamentalist mother who produce children who are configured as “psychologically unfit.” Razack traces how these representations were shored up during Omar Khadr’s trials. Narratives of Muslim pathologies often negate the violence of the West, facilitating the West’s claim to innocence (“The Manufacture” 68). One of the psychologists who interviewed Omar Khadr, for example, was heavily influenced by media representations of the Khadr family (Razack 65). He argued that the Khadr family’s interviews illustrated that the “Khadr clan” was committed to Jihad and “looked to Omar to realize their dreams” (Razack 65). Sonia D’Angelo argues that in Canadian media there is a narrative that “employs the Khadr family history as evidence of [Omar] Khadr’s dangerousness” and Omar Khadr’s circumstances worked to confirm that Ahmed Khadr “really was a terrorist” who trained his sons “as soldiers for *jihad*” (627; emphasis in original).

Psychologists attempted to place Omar Khadr within an orientalist narrative: Omar Khadr is a product of a dysfunctional and violent Muslim family and this had a detrimental effect on his psychology. Dr. Welner, one of the prosecutor’s psychiatrists responsible for evaluating Omar Khadr during his trial, stated Omar was unfit to return to

Canada because of his relationship with his family. Welner's testimony in the Omar Khadr case was crucial to how the broader Canadian public understood Omar Khadr because numerous media quoted Welner's analysis of Khadr.⁴⁹ Coverage of Welner's words linked Omar Khadr to a terrorist pathology that was rooted in his father's dedication to violent Islamic extremism. While there were also those in various media outlets who were critical of Welner's psychological evaluation, and quoted the defense's evaluation of Omar Khadr's psychological state, Khadr's family was at the fore in media coverage of both the defense and prosecutor's psychiatric evaluations.

Many criticize Dr. Welner for being anti-Muslim; he consulted with Dr. Nicolai Sennels, whose article on Muslim inbreeding has now been widely criticized (Razack, "The Manufacture" 64). Sennels' article, "Muslim Inbreeding: Impact on Intelligence, Sanity, Health and Society," attributes poor test results, strains on healthcare systems, psychological disorders, limited social skills and understanding, high rates of unemployment, and low literacy rates among immigrant children, to inbreeding in Muslim communities. He even suggests that inbreeding is a factor in why only nine Muslims have ever received the Nobel Prize (Sennels, "Muslim Inbreeding"). Though Sennel studies European immigrant Muslim children, taken with the media coverage of Welner's evaluation of Khadr, the incompatibility of purportedly "bad" Muslim families with Western/Canadian "values" becomes apparent. The assumption underlying Sennel's

⁴⁹ There was significant media attention to Welner's analysis because the Public Safety Minister at the time, Vic Toews, requested the sealed interviews between Welner and Khadr before he would make a decision about Khadr's transfer to Canada. These interviews were subsequently leaked to the media.

analysis is that if Muslim families are not closely monitored, particularly through government organizations placing Muslim children in the care of “good” families, they will reproduce children that threaten the nation, and the Khadr family is an example of this.⁵⁰ As Sara Ahmed argues:

The nation must intervene to protect the second generation from the first, those who have failed to let go of their past attachments and who hence can only suffer and transmit their suffering, which easily gets turned into terror and race. The nation becomes the good family who can give the children the freedom to be happy in their own way. (*The Promise of Happiness* 148)

In one *CBC* article titled, “Peace-Loving Canadian or al-Qaeda Royalty,” where again Canadianness and Canadians are aligned with peace through the title, Dr. Welner and the defense’s psychiatrist, Dr. Stephen Xenakis, are interviewed. Dr. Welner states:

[Omar Khadr] is the dilemma of Michael Corleone, who even when directed to one way of life may not ultimately turn away from family pressures to lead their ambitions for him, and his own visceral identification. Omar Khadr is undisputed al-Qaeda royalty and undeniably has yet to renounce it.

...

Mr. Khadr remains in closest identification with his family. That family has publicly characterized itself as an al-Qaeda family. He aims to return to that

⁵⁰ An example of this is Omar going to live with his lawyer instead of a family member. There were also reports of the Children’s Aid Society launching an investigation for Karim Khadr over concerns about the effects that Ahmed Khadr and Elsamnah’s extremist views had on his psychological state (Friscolanti and Siri A5).

family and its inspiration when he returns to Canada and has specifically avoided repudiating jihadism in the slightest.

...

Omar Khadr co-operated with the hope that Canada would repatriate him (as it once did his father, when Ahmed Khadr had been incarcerated in Pakistan). The CSIS agent met with Khadr and found him to be the amiable and charming lad his father raised him to be. To Khadr's great dismay, the CSIS agent flatly extinguished Khadr's hopes of returning to Canada, and made note of Ahmed's terrorist legacy.

...

Omar Khadr will not be directly violent; his father was not, yet a leader in al-Qaeda.

Mr. Khadr does not need to be in order to promote the aims his father advanced. (Gollom, "Omar Khadr")

It is not the point of my analysis to pathologize Omar Khadr, or establish what effect his father had on his psychological state. The focus here is rather on how his psychological state, and his alleged act of violence are represented as resting clearly and *only* in his upbringing and his links to his father. Khadr's family history becomes the only evidence necessary to prove that Omar Khadr is violent (D'Angelo 627). In Welner's interview, Omar Khadr cannot be disaggregated from the actions of his father, and we are encouraged to see his violence as a product of his familial ties. The narrative even suggests that keeping Khadr in prison is what is best for him. Moreover, Welner

characterizes Omar Khadr's unwillingness to demonize his father as evidence that he shared his father's commitment to al-Qaeda (Razack, "The Manufacture" 65). The orientalist framings, however, move beyond Welner's evaluation in this article into the defense's analysis of Omar Khadr as well. Dr. Xenakis' interview still draws on Omar Khadr's violence as being linked to, and a result of, his father's circumstances:

No, I do not believe that he has done anything violent. Remember that this was a firefight and that our forces attacked the compound that he was placed in by his father. He was an adolescent.

...

This was a 15-year-old kid sent there by his father and doing what his father asked him to do. We as civilized democratic countries recognize that different standards should be applied socially and legally to people who are adolescents.

...

What [Welner's] doing is in fact characterizing this [then] teenage boy as if he's a small adult and absolutely ignores everything we know about neuro development for young people, in particular teenagers.

He did what his father asked him. In that culture, you do not disagree or defy your father. (Gollom, "Omar Khadr")

It is difficult to determine if Xenakis is being strategic in his explanation, but orientalist framings reemerge in this article as Xenakis encourages readers of Canadian media to see themselves as part of democratic nations who treat children differently.

Omar Khadr and his father are placed outside of that realm, and outside of the Canadian nation, where there is a “different standard for adolescents,” which begs the question: different how? In Xenakis’ response, in Omar Khadr’s “culture” (the suggestion is that this is not Canadian “culture” even though Khadr is a Canadian citizen who spent parts of his life in Canada) children cannot disagree with their father. By using the phrase “that culture,” Canada emerges as having a culture where children can disagree with their fathers who are not figured as authoritarian or patriarchs. This narrative relies on Canadians’ presumably “inherent civility” (as well as Xenakis’ overt naming of Canadian civility) where Canadians remain focused on saving “Third World Children” and do not need to consider how Canadians are complicit in Khadr’s mistreatment (Razack, “The Manufacture” 61). The Canadian state is configured as a saviour of adolescents, even as it refused to repatriate Khadr and remained complicit in his mistreatment (by sending CSIS agents to interrogate him while they knew he had been subjected to sleep deprivation). While normative Canadian citizens are able to feel as though they must save children of colour and protect themselves from the threat of racialized communities (Razack 61), in Canadian media, Omar Khadr’s circumstances and his alleged act of violence remain rooted in his upbringing and his father’s influence. There is little consideration of the Canadian state’s violence, or violence enacted by those who embody Canadianness.⁵¹ By placing blame squarely on the Khadr parents, Canadians are not encouraged to see how

⁵¹ Key historic examples of this in Canada are placing Indigenous children in residential schools, and the “Sixties Scoop.” Contemporarily, examples of this are most obvious for Indigenous children in Canada who are taken from their parents at alarmingly high rates by the Children’s Aid Society (Philpott, “AFN Special Chiefs Assembly on Federal Legislation”).

war (in which Canadians participate, even as peacekeepers) affects children.⁵²

Even media coverage that is sympathetic to Khadr frequently name him as a child soldier, and the arguments fall into a similar narrative, where Omar is a victim of his parents' radical teachings, rather than considering how he is also a victim of much wider systemic violence. Those who are critical of Western conceptions of child soldiers demonstrate that such concepts create distinctions between children in and outside the West, and the ways in which people in the West are able to be "humanitarians," while children outside the West are "victims." The relationship between humanitarians and victims relies on global inequalities, and the narrative of a universal childhood overwrites these inequalities (Schultheis 33). Western countries are able to make universal claims about childhood because middle-class children in the West often have the luxury and the privilege of growing up in an environment where their labour is not necessary for a family or community's survival (Pupavoc 101). Vanessa Pupavoc argues that the ideal that children are "entitled to special care and assistance" is a concept that grew out of a particular set of historical and cultural circumstances during the period of industrialization in northern developed countries (101). Childhood that is free from labour and (adult) responsibilities is a privilege that many in developing countries cannot access

⁵² There are also examples of how Canadian economic endeavors impact children. The Working Group on Mining and Human Rights in Latin America found in their study *The Impact of Canadian Mining in Latin America and Canada's Responsibility* that Canadian mining in Latin America has had a negative impact particularly on water resources (10), as well as displacing communities (12), often contributing to poverty and precarious work (15-16), and having adverse health consequences, such as respiratory illness in children specifically (18). Canadian mining in Canada, too, has had consequences for Indigenous communities in Canada such as the Mt. Polley disaster (Amnesty International, "Mining and Human Rights in BC").

(Pupavac 101). Without contextualizing how childhood comes to be conceptualized within a specific set of historical and economic circumstances, the experiences of middle-class children in the West are perceived as universal, an experience that is not shaped by social, economic, and cultural circumstances, but rather by parental upbringing.

Assuming the middle-class child in the West's experience is universal distorts any structural analysis of the daily violence children in the West face such as abuse, poverty, and neglect (Scott 102), which are compounded by systemic issues resulting from gender, race, class, and sexuality.

Discourses of children's rights place the plight of children as solely the responsibility of the adults in their communities, where adults are portrayed as at fault for treating children poorly because these children's experiences are different from the middle-class Western child (Pupavac 102). Vanessa Pupavac argues that "UNICEF and the campaigns of other international child organizations increasingly highlight the suffering of children as a moral failing of their society" (102). Child-rearing and other cultural practices are seen as the problem and international organizations must intervene (Pupavac 109). Child-protection policies developed in the nineteenth century as a result of concerns about deviancy and social disorder (Pupavac 104), but Western psychologists and anthropologists claim that non-Western child-rearing practices foster authoritarian personalities and violence (Pupavac 108). Instead of recognizing how Omar Khadr was caught in a warzone and acknowledging the social, economic, and global circumstances that might have contributed to Omar Khadr's position, the blame for Omar Khadr's alleged acts of violence remains in dominant framings as entirely the fault of his parents

and their decisions. The point here is not to exonerate Ahmed Khadr or Maha Elsamnah but it is rather to consider the broader forces that might have come to bear on a child in Afghanistan in a warzone. What the media interviews with Welner and Xenakis do is offer individual psychological readings of Khadr that focus on his family, his parents' actions and their religious ideology, and these readings absolve the West and Canadian citizens from taking any responsibility for the mistreatment of children both in Canada and in countries that experience war. What Pupavac encourages readers to consider instead is the negotiations children make in moments of extreme violence and the labour in which they may or may not have to participate.

Disturbed Muslim Families

Razack explores how Muslim communities are understood through blood narratives, where portrayals of “good” Muslims reify Canadians' tolerance, and portrayals of “bad” Muslims reproduce the idea that Muslims always carry the potential to be violent within their blood (“The Manufacture” 66). Razack argues that “blood narratives” are grounded in Arendt's concept of “race thinking” (*Casting Out* “Race Thinking” par. 1). Race thinking relies on the perception that character and culture are inheritable, and Razack argues that imperial nations are perceived to have an innate rationality that positions them as superior to those they conquer (“The Manufacture” 61-62). She argues that phrases such as “Canadian values” that are said to be protected through the War on Terror draw from a history of racial hierarchies that suggest “Northern peoples” are innately able to govern themselves because they are naturally more rational than others

(Razack, *Casting Out* “Race Thinking” par. 1). It is the state that claims that the fundamental differences of foreigners are a threat to its utopia (Razack, *Casting Out* “Race Thinking” par. 6). Razack makes the argument that in security-certificate cases in Canada, particular detainees (usually Muslim or Arab) are identified as possessing “Islamic extremist” ideology, not because they have committed a crime, but because of their *potential* to commit a crime. These detainees are viewed as though violence is in their “blood” (Razack, *Casting Out* “The Case of Hassan Almrei” par. 2). This logic implies that once these bodies are exposed to extremist ideology “there is no cure” (Razack, *Casting Out* “Al Qaeda—Inspired” par. 2).

Similarly, media frame Omar Khadr as a body that has been tainted with extremist ideology, and because he was accused of an act of violence at such a young age, he is a child that cannot be redeemed because his ability to be violent is somehow part of his pedigree. Blood narratives rely on a colonial logic where “natives” can only understand violence, and they “carry the seeds of violence in their blood, a latent capacity from which we must protect ourselves, and the danger is nowhere more acute than in the body of the child” (Razack, “The Manufacture” 61). As a result, the Muslim child becomes just as much of a threat as the adult, and in the case of Omar Khadr, he is figured as continuing to carry disloyalty to the West in his blood (Razack, “The Manufacture” 67). In a 2008 *National Post* article titled, “Tories Fear Khadr will Reunite with Family; MPs give Reasoning for not Seeking Canadian’s Release,” Conservative members state, “If returned to Canada, the government believes [Omar] Khadr would have no other recourse than to re-establish his ties with his family, a group of suspected terrorist sympathizers

espousing an extremist ideology” (Edwards A5). While dominant media already established Omar Khadr as a violent terrorist, the additional fear was that he might return to Canada and reunite with his family and engage in, or help to commit, acts of violence against the Canadian public. By repeatedly drawing connections to his family, media suggest that Omar Khadr’s violence is not just an act of violence committed by Omar Khadr as an individual, but that violence is somehow ingrained within him.

In 2015 Omar Khadr was released on bail from prison in Canada, and went to live with his lawyer, Dennis Edney. Shortly after his release, the CBC aired a new documentary, “Omar Khadr: Out of the Shadows,” where the Canadian public had the opportunity to hear from Omar Khadr himself. We see Dennis Edney at the beginning of the documentary in his home with his wife, Patricia Edney, as they discuss Omar Khadr’s case prior to his release. Dennis Edney lets reporters know that Omar Khadr will not have a “lengthy conversation” with them, but explains that Omar Khadr needs to address the Canadian public (Reed, “Out of the Shadows”). The Edneys’ home is situated on a “quiet cul-de-sac” where neighbours welcome Omar Khadr (Reed, “Out of the Shadows”). Omar Khadr stands outside the house and speaks to reporters; he is jovial at times as he jokes with reporters and Dennis Edney (Reed). Dennis and Patricia Edney appear as guardians to Omar Khadr, as he stays in their home and attempts to reestablish his life outside of detention. This documentary is in stark contrast to the images of the Khadr family to which the Canadian public were exposed in 2004, where we see the Khadr family members doing interviews in dark rooms and confined spaces; the Edney home, conversely, appears bright and airy. In “Out of the Shadows” the Edney home is quiet

with birds chirping in the background, and this differs significantly from the prison footage of Omar Khadr, and the images of Omar Khadr's father in Afghanistan. The title of the documentary, "Out of the Shadows," can have a double meaning: Omar Khadr is finally "out of the shadows" of media coverage, and able to address the public on his own, but in the footage he is also literally out of the shadowy spaces of the Khadr family and in the light of the loving embrace of the Edney home. It is here that he develops a new kinship relationship with the Edneys, represented as a move away from his biological family.

For Omar Khadr to reintegrate into Canadian society and exist as a Canadian citizen who is not perceived as a threat to the public, Canadian law demanded that he distance himself from his family. This is evident in some of his bail conditions which not only required Omar Khadr to live with the Edneys, but also indicated that he could only leave Alberta to go to the Edneys' vacation home in B.C., and that he could only speak to his family in English under Dennis Edney's supervision. For Omar Khadr to reinvent himself to the Canadian public as unthreatening and a respectable member of Canadian society, his family must also be reinvented: he must settle into a suburban life with his white lawyer, a life of vacation homes, two pet dogs, and bacon and eggs for breakfast (Reed, "Out of the Shadows"). Omar Khadr states when discussing his family:

My family is— they're very opinionated and that's not always a smart thing. They've said things that was (sic) not always smart and that they shouldn't have said...Here I live in Canada; my family is only one source of influence but I have a million other influence (sic). So, I don't think people should

worry about my family. If anyone is going to be affected I think they might be affected by me and not the other way around. I hope so anyways. (Reed, “Out of the Shadows”)

In this clip, Omar Khadr connects living in Canada to a place where there are various experiences. He has many influences, and in this country he can disconnect from the singular influence of his family.

Dennis Edney is absolutely a paternal figure in this documentary, and indeed a paternal figure in much of the media coverage of Omar Khadr in the few months leading up to, and after, Omar Khadr’s release. Patricia Edney explained in an interview that Dennis Edney, “has seen Omar grow from a young injured man—boy—to a tall confident, talented man” (“Patricia Edney Welcomes Omar Khadr to her Home”). Patricia Edney describes their life with Omar, including going bike riding, shopping, and buying clothes together (“Patricia Edney Welcomes Omar Khadr to her Home”). This media coverage of Omar Khadr being taken into the home of the Edneys and adjusting to a new lifestyle (that is, the Edneys’ lifestyle) brings Omar Khadr closer to Canadianness by demonstrating his ability to assimilate into a new life, and a new *family*. Taking on a new family is what the Canadian state legally demanded of Omar Khadr if he wanted to leave prison, but the Canadian state here also intervenes to “protect” Omar Khadr from his family. His childhood, we see, is fraught with violence, wars, and foreignness, inhabited by people wearing non-Western clothing and speaking foreign languages—this part of his life is portrayed as something other than Canadian. In “Out of the Shadows” Omar Khadr is not shown practicing Islam and he is always in Western garb. He speaks eloquently

about the employment and education that he wants to pursue, bringing him in closer proximity to the normative Canadian young adult. It is also noteworthy that Dennis Edney is originally from Scotland, and Omar Khadr from Canada, but it is Dennis Edney who brings Khadr closer to Canadianness. In this way Canadianness gets tied to whiteness and white bodies, as we witness benevolent white parents intervene when parents of colour are said to “fail” their children. For example, as Omar Khadr and Dennis Edney sit outside the Edneys’ home in the documentary, Dennis Edney states: “I was aware that every adult figure that you had come in touch with had misused you, including your father” (Reed, “Out of the Shadows”).

The documentary has an affective quality, where the Edneys’ bright home is frequently inhabited by smiling or laughing people. Sara Ahmed describes how the feeling of happiness becomes associated with particular objects (*The Promise of Happiness* 25), but she also argues that certain objects also “come to embody a good life” (33). Happiness teaches us to be affected by objects in the “right way” (Ahmed 36) and Omar Khadr’s proximity to the happy objects in the documentary make him appear as though he is also in close proximity to a “good life,” that is, a Canadian life. If family life is supposed to be a space of happiness (Ahmed 45), in media portrayals, the Edneys offer Omar Khadr the happiness that his own family did not. This happiness comes through the images of a happy *Canadian* family where children can make choices, and be free individuals. As Ahmed argues, in the West it is assumed that people are individuals who can be whoever they want (134). If audiences are to believe that Omar Khadr is no longer the terrorist other, and really is in the process of rehabilitation, viewers must see Omar

Khadr as being integrated into Canadian multicultural ethos where his racial and cultural differences are subdued.

Omar Khadr, in the documentary, seems to know that viewers will be skeptical of his happiness and states that he knows that the Canadian public will be suspicious of him for not being “bitter,” but he reassures viewers that he is not, and he thanks the Canadian public for “giving [him] a chance” (Reed, “Out of the Shadows”). In this documentary, Omar Khadr is surrounded by a middle-class life of comfort, choice, and consumption, where he is free to choose what he eats for breakfast, shop for the clothes that he likes to wear, or go on a hike or bike ride. While representations of Khadr once situated him within a family that forced him into a life of jihad, there is a shift in the documentary that reframes the Canadian state as providing him with the choice to pursue a life of happiness. Omar Khadr, in other words, in “Out of the Shadows,” can be an individual who is not influenced by his family’s religious ideology and hatred for the West; as Ahmed argues, “Freedom takes form as proximity to whiteness” (*The Promise of Happiness* 135). What remains unaccounted for are the political, social, and economic factors that produce the “happy” Canadian family, but that also produce the purportedly “bad” Muslim family.

Other Canadian media reproduced this narrative of rehabilitation through Omar Khadr’s association with the Edneys as well. Omar Khadr’s supporters often agreed with his separation from his family so that he could be rehabilitated and reintegrated into Canadian society, which reifies normative white Canadian identity and fails to challenge how these discourses draw on the systemic injustices that many “hyphenated” Canadians

experience every day (A. Mackey 120-121). For example, *Maclean's* ran a story titled, "Omar Khadr's Next Home" which includes an interview with Dennis Edney. The article states that Omar Khadr was "shuttled between Pakistan and Afghanistan" (but not Canada), where he once lived on a compound with Osama bin Laden (Friscolanti, "Omar Khadr's Next Home"). The article actually states that Omar Khadr has little connection at all to Canada: "Khadr will walk into a home—and a world, for that matter—he has never seen. Even before he was locked up, he had little connection to the West; though born in Canada, he lived here only a few weeks before 9/11, when an uncle took him to a Toronto Blue Jays game" (Friscolanti). The mention of 9/11 discursively links Omar Khadr to the attack, and there is no mention of Omar Khadr's grandparents who live in Toronto, nor is there mention of the Khadr family moving back and forth to Canada. Disconnecting Omar Khadr from Canada and the West implies that the Edney family will be what (re)connects him to Canada. Home for Omar Khadr now, the article tells us, will be "an upscale Edmonton neighbourhood, where he will share suppers with his lawyer's family and walk their dogs (Jasper and Molly, both labs) around the block" (Friscolanti). We see this emphasis on the Edneys' dogs in "Out of the Shadows" as well, where the camera frequently pans to the dogs. Pets, and dogs specifically, in Western homes are often viewed as members of the family, and these images of dogs in the Edney home help to illustrate the homeliness of the space where even the animals are happy. It is also noteworthy that permitting dogs in the home is a controversial topic in Islam, and

therefore, many Muslim households do not allow dogs inside the home.⁵³ Dogs, then, become a marker of a home that is not stereotypically a Muslim home, thus, shifting the portrayal of Omar Khadr away from Muslimness and bringing him closer to a home that is not depicted as “tainted” with Islamic ideology.

The *Maclean's* article quotes Dennis Edney: “He can look forward to a loving household and solid family...A family that has good values, a family that talks to each other, a family that hugs and kisses each other. I say it with a bit of pride: Our family is not a bad place to start” (Friscolanti, “Omar Khadr’s Next Home”). Including this quote marks the Edney family as everything the Khadr family is not: a family that loves, shows affection, but most importantly has *good* values; whatever “good” values are, the Khadr family does not possess them in this statement because it is the Edney family that is stated to be providing the “start” of this kind of family life for Omar Khadr. We do not see images of the Khadr family’s displays of affection toward each other, but we see Patricia Edney hug Omar, and Dennis gives him a kiss on the forehead in “Out of the Shadows.” There is an attempt in this scene to domesticate difference. In such representational frameworks, Omar Khadr’s integration into Canadian society, and his ability to be Canadian comes through the Canadian state’s and the Edney family’s redirection of Omar Khadr towards whiteness. Dennis Edney makes this clear when he says that Omar Khadr can sleep in any bedroom he chooses, but he will encourage him to sleep on the second floor so that he can better “integrate into [their] family” (Friscolanti, “Omar Khadr’s Next

⁵³ Although it is contested, dog ownership is not necessarily forbidden in Islam, but there are a number of Hadiths that discourage Muslims from keeping dogs in their houses (Subasi 42-56).

Home”). The article continues, “Khadr’s real family, long linked to al-Qaeda, will be allowed to phone but Edney is clear: ‘My home is open for Omar. It’s not for the Khadrs’” (Friscolanti, “Omar Khadr’s Next Home”). In this media framing, it is in this home where Omar Khadr will/can reestablish himself in a “good” Canadian family as a rehabilitated Canadian citizen, distanced from his family and Muslim ideology. That is, Omar Khadr can be allowed back into the Canadian public realm only after he has successfully and publicly replaced his Muslim birth parents with surrogate white parents.

The relationship between Omar Khadr and the Edneys appears genuine in the documentary, but there are colonial and imperial power relations between white parents and racialized children that inform Canadian media representations of families that emphasize racial hierarchies. Given the histories, and the racial differences between white adoptive parents and racialized children, it is difficult to analyze media narratives of Omar Khadr and the Edneys’ relationship outside the colonial encounter, as it reproduces some of the dangerous tropes where white parents “save” racialized children with the assistance of the Canadian state. David Eng analyzes how transnational and transracial adoption can involve loss but expressing loss is read as ingratitude to the white benevolent family that receives the racialized child (21). The question of loss for Omar Khadr does not arise as a negative repercussion of being placed in the Edneys’ home in media narratives. What Omar Khadr loses in terms of his kinship, religion, and culture is not framed as losses that should be mourned. In media representations it is implied that Omar Khadr should be grateful that the Edneys are willing to take him into their home, and thankful that the Canadian state (and public) “gave [him] a chance” and allowed him

to stay with the Edneys (Reed, “Out of the Shadows”). The arc of the narrative in “Out of the Shadows” seems to imply that Omar Khadr should be thankful for the opportunity to be incorporated into a white middle-class household, drawing on a long historical narrative of removing racialized children from their homes in order to facilitate processes of assimilation.

Removing children from racialized families in Canada is, and was, viewed as necessary for the project of empire. For example, the Canadian state frequently removes Indigenous children from their parents and places them in the custody of, often, white families. This was the case for the Adopt Indian and Metis Program of the 1960s where many Indigenous children were taken from their families and placed in white homes, even when other family members could have adopted them. These adoptions facilitated the erasure of Indigenous cultures, histories, and languages through processes of assimilation (Sinclair 9). In the case of Indigenous children specifically, Allyson Stevenson states that, “The Sixties Scoop and contemporary child welfare legislation continue to erode kinship as a way of eliminating Indigenous nationhood” (quoted in Longman 16). It is often through assimilating children (through loss of language, culture, religion, and kinship) that Canadian nationalist ideals can be reproduced. While the instances of non-Indigenous children of colour and Omar Khadr are absolutely different than the circumstances of Indigenous children in Canada, there remains an attempt to produce children that will continue the project of empire. In the case of non-Indigenous children of colour in Canada, who are encouraged to assimilate, they must only display aspects of their cultures and religions that can be depoliticized and coopted in the interest of the

multicultural state, in order to facilitate in continuing the colonial project of dispossessing Indigenous people of their land and resources. The relationship between the Edneys and Omar Khadr does not erase the colonial encounter. There are racial power imbalances because Omar Khadr will always be read as a marked body, and the circumstances that produce children like Omar Khadr remain intact.

Conclusion

The Khadr family is routinely represented as a family of Muslim fundamentalists, the “bad” Muslim family, who refuse to assimilate and pose a threat to the Canadian nation, the Canadian public, Canadian safety, and the “civilized” world. Ahmed Khadr as a father is differentiated from other Canadian fathers, as media and politicians represent him as the patriarch of a terrorist family who used the Canadian system to his advantage, starting with his call to Jean Chrétien in 1996. Elsamnah, too, falls outside the frames of normative Canadian motherhood by transmitting a culture and religion to her children that are deemed incompatible with Canadian lifestyles. Canadian media and politicians hold Elsamnah accountable for failing to socialize her children with normative Canadian values. The Khadr parents are seen to have forced their children into militancy and indoctrinated them with Islamic fundamentalist ideology, and now, the children too are seen as strains on Canada’s social services. The family, as a result, becomes portrayed as unworthy of Canadian citizenship. Representations of their unworthiness were acutely demonstrated in how the Canadian government treated Omar Khadr, and the ways in

which the allegations against him were routinely reduced to his family’s extremist beliefs, and his parent’s actions.

The media’s focus on Ahmed Khadr and Maha Elsamnah repeatedly implies that terrorist violence is rooted in disturbed Muslim families, and being raised in a purportedly “bad” Muslim home can have adverse effects on a child’s psyche. These narratives eclipse broader questions about what produces terrorism. Instead, acts of terrorist violence connected to unassimilable terrorist families lend themselves to anti-immigration policies and racist assumptions about Muslim families and Muslim parents. Representations of Ahmed Khadr and Elsamnah function as “proof” that Muslim fathers are violent and Muslim mothers complacent, and that they will invariably produce children who will become violent as well. Even narratives that are sympathetic to Omar Khadr still link his alleged act of violence to his parents’ supposed indoctrination. Focusing on Ahmed Khadr and Elsamnah’s parenting in media narratives exonerates the Canadian state and the Canadian public from their complicity in Omar Khadr’s mistreatment. Once Khadr was released from prison, the media represented the Canadian state as able to reassert itself as the protector of children by ensuring that Khadr would be distanced from his family, and placed in a home where he could be assimilated and reproduce the characteristics of normative Canadian citizenship.

Chapter Three: Framing the “Violent” Polygamous Family: The Case of Mohammed Shafia, Rona Mohammed, and Tooba Yahya

The polygamous family has reemerged in Canadian political and media narratives as an inherently patriarchal, violent, and “foreign” form of kinship, often tethered to purportedly “bad” Muslim and racialized immigrant families.⁵⁴ With monogamy linked to civility (and bound to whiteness), arguments against polygamy have been marshalled in order to close off Canadian borders (such as in the *Zero Tolerance for Barbaric Cultural Practices Act*). The Canadian state is inscribed in media and political debates as the saviour of Muslim and immigrant women from polygamy and other non-normative kinship formations. Political and media narratives draw on orientalist views of Muslim families to demonstrate how the acceptance of polygamous marriages in “Eastern” culture and Muslim and racialized immigrant communities results in violence against women and girls and negatively impact the quality of a marriage, particularly for women. Violence within the polygamous (immigrant) Muslim home is framed as a result of non-homo/heteronormative marital relationships.

Drawing on the Shafia family murders, in this chapter, I argue that the portrayals of the Shafia family in media and political debates reiterate to the Canadian public that “Canadian” ways, that is to say, non-polygamy, hetero/homonormativity, and the nuclear family are progressive, and importantly, are indicators of Canadian civility and Canada’s commitment to gender equality. The Canadian nation (and the hetero/homonormative

⁵⁴ “Polygamy” refers to simultaneously being married to more than one partner. “Polygyny” refers to a man simultaneously having more than one wife. While I use the term “polygamy” in this paper, I am almost always referring to “polygyny.”

families within it) tend to be associated with gender equality.⁵⁵ The focus on violence in the Shafia case in both media and political debates furthers anti-polygamist agendas and functions as a method of also furthering anti-immigration agendas, often under the guise of gender equality.

Sisters Zainab, Sahar, and Geeti Shafia are the biological daughters of Mohammed Shafia and Tooba Yahya, and the sisters of Hamed Shafia. Rona Mohammed is often named as Zainab, Sahar, and Geeti's "surrogate mother," and was married to their father. When Rona Mohammed and Mohammed Shafia were unable to have biological children, Mohammed Shafia and Tooba Yahya married in a polygamous marriage with Rona Mohammed in attendance. On 30 June 2009, the bodies of Rona Mohammed, and Zainab, Sahar, and Geeti Shafia, were found in a vehicle immersed in water in Kingston, Ontario. They were killed by their father, Mohammed Shafia, their biological mother, Tooba Yahya, and their brother Hamed Shafia, all found guilty of first-degree murder in 2012.⁵⁶ Canadian media broadly named this act of violence as an "honour killing" and the focus of analyses on the Shafia case has centered around honour killing and honour-based violence. This chapter seeks to analyze a different media narrative of the Shafia case:

⁵⁵ For example, in *Discover Canada* (the study guide for the Canadian citizenship test), the section "Rights and Responsibilities of Citizenship" has a subtitle, "The Equality of Women." The section reads: "In Canada, men and women are equal under the law. Canada's openness and generosity do not extend to barbaric cultural practices that tolerate spousal abuse, 'honour killings,' female genital mutilation, forced marriage or other gender-based violence. Those guilty of these crimes are severely punished under Canada's criminal laws."

⁵⁶ Because this paper focuses significantly on the polygamous aspects of the Shafia family, it is beyond the scope of this analysis to explore how Canadian news media portrayed Hamed who was often represented as a brother who reproduced Eastern patriarchal familial systems.

Shafia's polygamous relationship with Rona Mohammed and Tooba Yahya. The Shafia case has played a major role in recentering the polygamy debate around immigration in Canada; both media and political narratives demarcate East/West divides around kinship, marriage, and families through referencing Shafia's illicit polygamous relationship.

It is important to note that this study is not an analysis of the benefits or limitations of polygamous marriages, an argument for the institution of marriage generally, or a study of how to incorporate polygamous marriages into Canada's nation building through processes of legalization. Rather, I highlight how non-polygamous marriage in Canada is attached to (white) Canadian citizenship and narratives of belonging. These narratives tend to erase nonnormative marital and familial relationships of immigrants, Indigenous communities, and non-Indigenous people of colour in Canada and produce an image of these communities as threats to "good" non-violent (non-polygamous) Canadian family life. Racialized nonnormative family formations are menacing to the Canadian nation because they can threaten the white heteropatriarchal order.

This chapter explores the complicated media discussions of Shafia's immigrant status that portray him through the lens of the "good"/"bad" Muslim immigrant in the context of the contemporary denunciation of polygamy in Canada, which is rooted in Canada's settler-colonial history. While the post-September 11 framings of Muslim, Afghan, and racialized men as "barbarous" and inherently violent towards women set them apart from Western/white men, this chapter demonstrates how the Canadian state is implicated in the violence that Rona Mohammed, and Zainab, Sahar, and Geeti Shafia

experienced. I also examine how the Shafia family has factored into House of Commons debates about the *Zero Tolerance for Barbaric Cultural Practices Act* (Bill S-7). Their case was used as a justification for why polygamist immigrant families should not be allowed to immigrate to Canada. The Shafia case was a media spectacle. I predominantly draw on *Macleans*' "The Shafia Honour Killing Trial" covered by Michael Friscolanti, *The Star*'s "Inside the Shafia Murder Trial" covered by DiManno et. al., and *The Fifth Estate*'s documentary, "The House of Shafia" for the purpose of this analysis. *Macleans*' and *The Star* compiled much of their coverage of the Shafia case into short books which I analyze here. These books allow readers to follow the Shafias' narrative through *The Star*'s and *Macleans*' compilations, providing trial evidence and background stories of family members.

Settler-Colonialism, Ethnic Framing, and the Polygamy Reference

While homo/heteronormative contemporary marriages are based in monogamy (and until recently heterosexuality), how such unions became the only legally acceptable form of marriage is often left unquestioned in media and political debates. The development of sexual and marital norms in Canada and the *Civil Marriages Act* in particular is deeply rooted in Canada's history of settler-colonialism. Polygamy both historically and contemporarily is framed as connected to the ethnic body, rooted in supposed barbarism and the subjugation of women. This chapter seeks to address the ways that polygamy in the Shafia case has been used to reproduce the supposed superiority of Western familial relationships through anti-immigration agendas, which

relies on the reproduction of elements of contemporary colonialism. Sarah Carter's work on Aboriginal Plains communities in Canada prior to 1915, however, points to how the subjugation of diverse familial relationships is steeped in Canada's nationhood and statehood and a much longer history of the colonization of Indigenous familial and kinship formations. Though Canadian laws against polygamy were very much a reaction to the United States implementing laws against polygamy (Bailey et. al. 22-23), Carter's work illustrates that prohibiting polygamy in Canada occurred prior to the Canadian state establishing anti-polygamy laws in 1890. Carter also argues that though anti-polygamy laws in Canada were a response to members of the FLDS (Fundamentalist Church of the Latter Day Saints, or Mormons) seeking to immigrate to Canada from the United States and continue their polygamous families (44-45, 84-85),⁵⁷ there were also fears that polygamous FLDS members would encourage Indigenous communities of the Plains to continue customary polygamous marriages (Carter 204-205).⁵⁸ The Department of Indian Affairs would withhold rations or place second wives in residential schools in order to

⁵⁷ Canada could also deter non-FLDS racialized polygamous families from entering Canada through its immigration policies. Immigration policies in Canada were not legally "white only," but have at times been "white only" in effect (such as the continuous journey regulations, which required immigrants to come to Canada through a continuous journey).

⁵⁸ Carter argues in terms of the word "marriage:" "The marriage laws of Plains Aboriginal people were complex and flexible, permitting a variety of conjugal unions. There is debate among historians and anthropologists as to whether the various kinds of conjugal unions of Indigenous people can be called 'marriage.' My position is that they can, and that there is no single definition of marriage, as it changes over time and not all cultures share the same definitions" (10).

In the context of the United States, after the Mountain Meadows Massacre in 1857, where Mormon militia men and a group of Paiute people killed a group of immigrants passing through the area, John David Pulsipher argues that this event fuelled fears of alliances between Mormon and Indigenous communities (9).

deter Indigenous communities from participating in polygamous marriages (Bauman, par. 367). Indigenous parents would also arrange for their children to marry at young ages, sometimes in a polygamous marriage, because they would be ineligible to attend residential schools if they were married (Carter 201).

Monogamy was important to settlers who sought to establish a colonial government that would continue to fracture Indigenous familial relationships and kinship ties, and this included polygamous practices. Enforcing monogamous marriage practices in western Canada was an attempt to distance new settlers socially and sexually from Indigenous communities in order to establish a settler identity that consolidated the colonial state's power (Carter 6). In the context of the United States and Canada, Kim TallBear argues that “both the church and the state evangelized marriage, nuclear family, and monogamy” in order to assimilate Indigenous people into settler nations, and such organizations of family were made into an “aspirational model” for Indigenous peoples (147). Furthermore, Kim Anderson posits that, “European ‘family values’ were a keystone in the conquest strategy. From the outset, missionaries were instructed to change Aboriginal family structure as part of their project to convert Native peoples” with the intent to “break down extended family and clan systems” (83). Disrupting Indigenous familial relationships, particularly in terms of marriage, aimed to quell, disrupt, and deter Indigenous peoples from maintaining their own marital unions (Carter 10). Monogamy became part of Canada's statehood and the nationhood of white western European settlers through the subjugation of Indigenous kinship. In so doing, monogamy fortified who was able to access the privileges of the state, and whose familial, marital, and kinship

formations remained outside the confines of supposedly “civilized” families and marriages.

Outsiders targeted polygamy in Indigenous communities, specifically, as it allegedly made wives jealous and left them to be controlled, abused, and hoarded by elite men (Carter 10). Scholars argue, however, that heteronormative marriages actually eroded many Indigenous women’s autonomy and Indigenous kinship. Kim Anderson explores how, in many Indigenous societies, women could leave marriages without the fear of losing economic status because she would usually stay among her kin (82). Ann McGrath and Winona Stevenson argue that churches and the Canadian state saw Indigenous women’s autonomy in traditional marriages and mothering patterns, their right to divorce and remarry, and their right to sexual autonomy, as a threat to Christian patriarchy and therefore sought to disrupt such practices by withholding revenue monies from women who “deserted” their husband or lived common law with other men (45-46). Once land became tied to heterosexual, one-on-one, lifelong marriages, Indigenous women’s economic wellbeing became tethered to men who “legally controlled the property” (Tallbear 148). Carter states that similar to “saving” Afghan and Iraqi women through military intervention in the early 21st century, enforced monogamy was used during settlement as a rationale for purportedly “saving” Indigenous women from polygamous marriages that supposedly subjugated them (Carter 11).

Martha M. Ertman suggests that women’s and children’s rights were also said to be the reason for anti-polygamy laws in the United States, but Ertman argues that it was actually race that was at the heart of anti-polygamy laws when they were created. The

court ruling in *Reynolds vs. the United States* in 1879 upheld anti-polygamy laws and linked polygamy in Mormonism (Mormons had permitted polygamy at the religion's inception in 1830) to "Asiatic" and "African" people who were assumed to commonly practice polygamy; the ruling also stated that polygamy produced peoples who were prone to despotism (Ertman 288). Ertman draws on political cartoons to argue that, "Because marriage was deeply raced and gendered, and not coincidentally, defined citizenship, antipolygamists' equation of polygamy with Asian and Black foreignness reaffirmed the centrality of Whiteness to full citizenship" (292). Ertman, however, asks, in the context of the United States, how much race and racialization continue to play into anti-polygamy laws today. The Shafia case demonstrates that, in terms of immigration in Canada and who is *perceived* to be a violent patriarchal father of polygamist families, people of colour, particularly those who immigrate to Canada, are still the focus of this debate.

It is within a settler-colonial history of fracturing Indigenous families, immigration laws, and supposedly "saving" women and children in Canada that we must locate anti-polygamy debates today. Contemporarily, state and media discourses continue to draw on the idea that polygamy is inherently harmful to women who participate in these unions, and link polygamy to gender-based violence, child marriages, and even child abuse (such as the frenzy of media coverage of the 2008 raid on the Yearning for Zion polygamous ranch in Texas where many of the children were abused).⁵⁹ Similar

⁵⁹ There is some variation in media representations of polygamy, such as in the television show *Seeking Sister Wives*, which provides varying representations of plural marriage (mostly, but not limited to, Mormon communities in the United States, and no

justifications for upholding anti-polygamy laws in Canada were cited in a B.C. court ruling by Justice Bauman in response to the cases of Winston Blackmore and James Oler of Bountiful B.C. In 2009, Blackmore and Oler, the leaders of the Fundamentalist Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints in Bountiful, were each charged with polygamy, but the charges were stayed. The legality of anti-polygamy laws was called into question in a reference case, *Reference re: Section 293 of the Criminal Code of Canada* (the Polygamy Reference), where it was cited that anti-polygamy laws could infringe on the charter right to religious freedom. In 2011, Justice Bauman determined that anti-polygamy laws were constitutional, stating: “I have concluded that this case is essentially about harm; more specifically, Parliament’s reasoned apprehension of harm arising out of the practice of polygamy. This includes harm to women, to children, to society and to the institution of monogamous marriage” (par. 5). In his ruling he insisted that polygamy:

has negative impacts on society flowing from the high fertility rates, large family size and poverty associated with the practice. It generates a class of largely poor, unmarried men who are statistically predisposed to violence and other anti-social behaviour. Polygamy also institutionalizes gender inequality. Patriarchal hierarchy and authoritarian control are common features of polygamous communities. Individuals in polygynous societies tend to have fewer civil liberties than their counterparts in societies which prohibit the practice. (par. 13)

representation of racialized immigrants). Fictional portrayals were also popularized in television shows such as *Big Love*, which focused on a Mormon family.

Bauman cites fears of unbridled fecundity, gender-based violence, and authoritarianism as a reason to criminalize polygamy.

In Suzanne Lenon’s analysis of Justice Bauman’s ruling she argues that, “This court sided with the proposition that monogamous marriage suppresses men’s criminality. In other words, [monogamy] civilizes men” (86). Bauman’s statement, moreover, naturalizes heterosexuality, and completely ignores same-sex unions, queer relationships, nonnormative sexualities, and those who do not participate in the institution of marriage at all. It also leaves unquestioned the violence women experience in heteronormative monogamous marriages; Justice Bauman does not recognize that monogamous marriage is not a consistently positive experience for everyone (Lenon 86). Will the violence to which polygamous men are said to be “predisposed” simply disappear once they enter a heteronormative monogamous marriage? Furthermore, gender equality in monogamous marriage is the result of intense feminist legal, political, and social struggle, but in Bauman’s analysis gender equality is inherent to monogamous marriage (Lenon 86), which ignores the political, emotional and social activist work that has gone into, and that continues to go into, making marital and familial relationships more equitable and safe.

In the Polygamy Reference case, Bauman gestures to Canada’s inherent monogamy, grounded in the purported superiority of Western civilizations. Bauman draws on various academic works to track monogamy’s development in the Western world to early Christianity and Greco-Roman marital practices (par. 158). Bauman cites monogamy as a central component of Western values: “The classical civilizations of Greece and Rome are the source of many core Western values; liberty, democracy and the

rule of law among them. Monogamous marriage is another institution that finds its roots in this ancient world” (par. 170). Bauman threads monogamy into the superiority of Western civilizations where liberty, democracy, and law are staples of progressive societies. Though Bauman’s focus is mainly the FLDS community in Bountiful (a community that emerged in the West), and he did not hear oral evidence from any experts on Islam or from anyone who participated in Muslim polygyny (par. 239), he nevertheless makes a clear demarcation between the ideological and religious divisions of the East and the West by naming polygamy as an inherent characteristic of Islamic tradition:

The subsequent collapse of the Roman Empire coincided with an expansion of polygamous societies. Arab conquests in the Middle East, North Africa and Spain spread Islam, a belief system that accepted polygamy. Polygamy was also practiced by certain post-Roman Germanic peoples. For these groups, SIUM [Socially Imposed Universal Monogamy] was not an established practice in the same way it had been for the ancient Greeks and Romans. As a consequence, insistence on SIUM and the rejection of polygamy became more specifically associated with Christian doctrine. (par. 159)

Here, polygamy spreads with Islamic traditions, and, while Bauman stresses that monogamy is not related to Christianity per se since he traces its practice to pre-Christianity (par. 158), he nevertheless draws the line from Greco-Roman traditions of monogamy to the present *through* Christianity.⁶⁰ While Bauman traces monogamy’s

⁶⁰ Susan G. Drummond argues in regards to Canada’s *Civil Marriage Act* that, “[Hyde vs. Hyde] laid down for all Canadians the civil prohibition on the recognition of polygamous marriages by clearly enunciating the presumed ecclesiastical motif for all legitimate

history to Greco-Roman civilizations, how this history centers whiteness in Canada's nationhood, explicitly, is not mentioned. Monogamy, importantly, is named as a Western tradition, even though polygamy is not banned in the West alone, and was not the most accepted version of marriage in North America and western Europe until well into the nineteenth century (Carter 65). Working class communities in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries could escape the purview of SIUM in the United States, Canada, and in England, where marriage and divorce could be sanctioned by communities and could be informal affairs that only consisted of reciprocal agreements (Carter 65; Cott 32, 35-36).⁶¹ The constructed division between East and West connects monogamy to Christianity and polygamy to Islam even when such a division did not necessarily develop so rigidly (or at all). What Bauman does in this reference is grounds Canadianness in European traditions of monogamy and civilization in order to connect "our" present "greatness" to Greco-Roman civilizations (from whom "we" also inherited our rule of law and democracy). Bolstering the superiority of Canadian monogamy simultaneously diminishes the significance of Indigenous and Eastern traditions, kinship,

marriage: 'Marriage as understood in *Christendom* is the voluntary union for life of one man and one woman, to the exclusion of all others.' (Italics added). This definition prevailed in Canada from 1866-2005. The prohibition on plural unions for civil marriages is now embedded in the *Civil Marriage Act* of 2005, minus all reference to religiosity" (8-9).

⁶¹ Cott also explores the implications of enslaved Black communities in the U.S. being unable to legally marry. She explains that, though they could enter informal marriages through the church, couples could be separated at any point for indefinite amounts of time. If a member of the marital union took a new partner, some churches treated the forced separation as a death (35).

and marital unions, and centers monogamous marriages and kinship as an inherent part of Canadian marriages.

Bauman also acknowledges how European colonization and immigration as well as Christian missionaries made SIUM the dominant marital norm globally (although he uses the phrasing that they “gradually elevated” SIUM to the dominant marital norm), with the exception of the Middle East and sub-Saharan Africa (par. 161). His ruling, however, in effect, ignores the violence of Canada’s settler-colonial history and centers monogamy as a positive shift in marital unions in Canada, rather than focusing on how these marital traditions facilitated the subordination of Indigenous women, as research demonstrates. Monogamy, as an inherent settler Canadian value, becomes a marker of civilization that distinguishes the polygamous “them” from the civilized “us” (Beaman 2), and in so doing, nonnormative marital and kinship ties are erased. As Lori G. Beaman argues,

Multiple intimate relationships have always existed in this geographic space, among the First Nations, among traders who maintained families on both sides of the ocean, among immigrants of diverse origins, and among what surely must be the millions of people who, during the past 145 years of the colonial declaration of the birth of the nation, have engaged in short- and long-term sexually intimate relationships with more than one person at a time.

(13)

Indigenous kinship and marital ties, the FLDS, Muslim communities, and those who participate in nonnormative marital, sexual, and familial relationships are absent from Bauman’s ruling and the national fabric that makes up Canadian “values.”

I want to be clear here that I am not making an argument that these communities want to be, or should be, included in this national fabric. What I am instead arguing is that the political discourses that emerge in texts such as this reference case clearly indicate that these communities' marital and kinship ties are not included in this "civilized" normative Canadian history. Polygamy is often located outside of hetero/homonormativity, in ways that other non-monogamous practices such as adultery are not (Rambukkana 39). Those who commit acts of adultery (particularly white men) can maintain citizenship, legal status, and intimate privileges (Rambukkana 39). Even if adultery is non-monogamous, it is still folded into hetero/homonormativity. Racialized polygamous communities are, in effect, disciplined into conforming to hetero/homonormative marital practices and sexual relationships through criminalization and the threat of deportation. It is within a settler-colonial history that we must locate contemporary political and media conversations regarding polygamy and the framing of racialized and immigrant men as violent towards women.

Framing Immigration: The Limits of Canadian "Tolerance"

Many of the political and media debates regarding violence against women, polygamy, and immigration in Canada today reference the Shafia family murders. Mohammed Shafia and Rona Mohammed were married in 1978 in Kabul, Afghanistan. When they did not conceive a child, Rona began fertility treatments, and eventually went to India to receive further treatment. In journalist and author Rob Tripp's retelling of the Shafia family's lives, he explains that Shafia had been kind to Rona, but when she was

unable to have children, he began to mistreat her (““Give me away””).⁶² According to Rona’s diary (a line that is repeated in numerous news articles), she finally said, “Go and take another wife, what can I do?” (DiManno et. al. 32, 43, 44; Friscolanti, “The Shafia Honour Killing” 6, 75, 107). Shafia then married Tooba Yahya in 1988 in Kabul. The following year, Yahya gave birth to Zainab in India, where a doctor also told Rona that she would be able to have surgery to overcome infertility, but Shafia refused, concerned about post-surgery care upon their return to Afghanistan. Yahya then gave birth to Hamed in 1990, and in 1991, Yahya promised her next child, Sahar, to Rona to raise as her own. In 1992, the family fled Afghanistan to Pakistan because of the civil war, and in 1996, they moved to Dubai. They made their way to Canada in 2007, but Rona did not yet accompany the family. Because polygamy is illegal in Canada, Shafia only named Yahya on his immigration application as his wife and brought Rona to Canada later on a visitor’s visa as their nanny, and then applied for her permanent residency.

Originally, Shafia would have fallen into the framing of the “good” immigrant to Canada. The Shafia family immigrated to Canada on Quebec’s Immigrant Investor Program (a program that is no longer available for the rest of Canada). While Canada does not draw a significant number of immigrants from Quebec’s Immigrant Investor Program, immigration to Canada through the Economic Class is where Canada has drawn most immigrants since at least 2015, and where Canada projects it will continue to draw

⁶² I refer to Rona Mohammed by her first name so that she is not confused with Mohammed Shafia.

most immigrants in the next three years (Hussen 12-13).⁶³ The dichotomy between “good refugee/bad economic migrant” in the post-Cold war era has now transformed to “bad asylum seeker/good economic migrant” (Wright 258). Refugees during the Cold War were conceptualized as people fleeing the Soviet Union from communism, who had liberal politics, and valued Western liberal democracies (B. Anderson 55). According to Bridget Anderson, in the 1980s global conflicts intensified; there was an increase in state breakdowns in law and order, and international travel became more accessible (56). As the number of people seeking asylum increased, the figure of the white political refugee was replaced by the figure of the Black asylum seeker or eastern European criminal, both read as “bogus” and without liberal values (B. Anderson 56). In the globalized post-Cold War world, economic value has become a measure of worth, where economic migrants are seen as social contributors (B. Anderson 57). Refugees are now regularly suggested to be “bogus,” represented as coming to Canada illegally, prone to being burdens on the system, and are not “perceived as good potential neoliberal citizens” (Wright 258).⁶⁴ Refugees are often the focus of anti-immigration discourses in Canada because they are assumed to rely on the support of the Canadian state and tax-payers’ money.

Shafia embodied the trope of the “good” immigrant because of his access to wealth, and many media representations emphasized that he was a wealthy investor (perhaps a suggestion that he bought his way into Canada, as Tripp states [*Without*

⁶³ Economic immigrants include professional and skilled workers and those who participate in business and investment programs.

⁶⁴ There are some configurations of immigrants, however, that will always frame them as “bad,” such as those who say that economic immigrants take away employment opportunities from “legitimate” Canadians.

Honour 30]). Shafia invested two million dollars for a strip mall in Laval and \$200,000 for a piece of land on which to build a home. However, his inability to adapt to “Canadian” familial (non-polygamous) relationships and his use of violence in his household pulled him into the category of the “bad immigrant” in media depictions. For example, in an article Christie Blatchford wrote for *The Post* she states,

Though Mr. Shafia and Hamid [sic] may have appeared the picture of successful Westernized men—the father was wealthy, owned a shopping mall in Laval and had contracted to build an upscale home, and the family had lived in Pakistan, Australia and Dubai—behind closed doors, they might as well have been back in Afghanistan. (“I would do it again”)

Here, Westernization is attached to affluence, consumption, and globetrotting, but the Shafias’ actions in the domestic sphere are represented by the notoriously conservative Blatchford as offsetting their “Westernization” in a country that supposedly prioritizes gender equality. This framing suggests that violence within the home is not a characteristic of Westernized (or wealthy) men, as the article implies that acts of domestic violence and polygamy that occurred “behind closed doors” were part of Afghan, not Canadian, culture. Journalist Friscolanti also writes that,

On paper, at least, Mohammad Shafia was the ideal immigrant investor, anxious to funnel his fortune into Quebec’s economy... He settled on the upscale suburb of Brossard to build his \$900,000 mansion, with plenty of space for all 10 members of the clan: himself, two wives, and seven kids. (“The Shafia Honour Killing” 9)

In this article, based on Shafia's finances, one would assume that he would assimilate as a neoliberal citizen, but his family structure renders him into the "bad" immigrant: 10 members (unbridled fecundity), a clan (tribal), and two wives (polygamous). The media's representation of Shafia as a "bad" immigrant clearly, and squarely, relies on what occurs within the confines of his home.

The chain of meaning seems to link wealth with Westernization, and therefore an assumption of non-polygamous heterosexual kinship within the home. Even in political conversations, when Jason Kenney, then Minister of Citizenship, Immigration and Multiculturalism, was asked about the integration of new Canadians, and the Shafias as being on the "wrong end of integration," Kenney responded that "the best pathway to cultural and social integration is successful economic integration" (Canada Standing Committee, No. 45 1605). Wealth, for Kenney, is connected to being properly Canadian, and economic integration will help new immigrants to Canada to become socially and culturally Canadian. This is an odd response given that Shafia was economically advantaged yet his acts of violence are not framed as socially or culturally "Canadian."

Jasbir Puar argues in the context of the United States that patriotism and consumption operate together, where consumption is an indicator of one's belief in the "democratic machinery of the United States" ("Homonational Spending" par. 12). In Puar's analysis of homonationalism, she argues that

the nation benefits from the liberalization of the market, which proffers placebo rights to queer consumers who are hailed by capitalism but not by state legislation. Therefore, the familial—and kinship—delineating

heteronormativity of the nation and the ‘value-free’ homonationalism of the market are convivial and complicitous rather than oppositional entities. (par. 12)

Using Puar’s theoretical frame, Shafia’s access to the market economy aligned him with the heteronormative, particularly because his polygamous marriage was kept a secret. However, once Shafia’s polygamous marriage, acts of gender-based violence, and patriarchy more generally were popularized in media, they offset his economic contributions, which shifted the frame from Shafia being a “good” immigrant. That Shafia was a polygamist was a fact that was repeated in media (DiManno et. al. 5, 7, 8, 11, 15, 33, 63); Friscolanti refers to the Shafia family as a polygamous household (“The Shafia Honour Killing” 173), “polygamous clan” (134; 140), “polygamous Afghan clan” (179, 188), and a “polygamous Muslim clan” (167). Lenon argues that, although most of the news coverage of the Shafia case focused on “honour crimes,” many media used the fact that the Shafias were polygamous “to further pathologize the family as ‘outside’ of Canada and its values” and the fact that they had lied on their immigration application confirmed “discourses of deceit and betrayal that often animate Islamophobia” (Lenon 93). With the media linking Shafia’s acts of gender-based violence to his polygamous marriage, this wealthy immigrant to Canada emerged as a “bad” polygamous, and violent immigrant, in need of being disciplined by the state.

The Shafia case illustrates the limits of Canadian multiculturalism and tolerance. This is perhaps most salient in the naming of the *Zero Tolerance for Barbaric Cultural Practices Act*, where some politicians in the House of Commons debates referred to the

Shafia case as justification for the Bill. Shafia's wealth meant that he could initially be "tolerated" in Canada. His foreignness, even his acts of gender-based violence, to an extent, were permitted in Canada, as Canada continued to benefit from the wealth that he invested.⁶⁵ Wendy Brown argues that after September 11 "tolerance" was folded into civilizational discourses that located both tolerance and the tolerable within the West, while intolerance was located within nonliberal societies and practices (6). In terms of tolerance, she argues that, "In every lexicon, tolerance signifies the limits on what foreign, erroneous, objectionable or dangerous element can be allowed to cohabit with the host without destroying the host" (27). Brown traces "tolerance" through liberalism, rationality, and civilizational discourses, and stresses that it is only liberal societies that have the power to determine what is tolerable or intolerable (166). Most objects of tolerance are "marked as deviant, marginal, or undesirable" by those who have the power to tolerate them (Brown 14). Racialized immigrant bodies in Canada can be tolerated in so far as they do not significantly disrupt the norms of Canadianness and citizenship; polygamy conjures up the fear that polygamous racialized immigrant communities can pose a threat to "the host."⁶⁶ In media discourses, Shafia's polygamous marriage and

⁶⁵ As I discuss later in the chapter, the Shafia children and Rona repeatedly reached out for help when they experienced abuse in the Shafia home but various state barriers prevented them from being able to escape abuse.

⁶⁶ Drawing on the example of France permitting polygamous immigrants who came mostly from West Africa, Algeria, and Morocco (post-WWII until 1993), Bauman claims that if Canada did permit polygamy, it would become a desirable destination for immigrants who wish to practice this marital form, and the expert witness cautioned that these communities could expand quickly (par. 560-566). Bauman's ruling thus implies the undesirable nature of immigrant bodies and their ability to change or challenge Canada's national fabric (whiteness), and disrupt normative familial and kinship ties. Anxieties regarding the expansion of racialized and immigrant bodies in Canada becomes

domestic violence are represented as intolerable in Canada. Shafia's violence becomes a marker of his Muslim and immigrant identity, whereas similar violence enacted by white men is seen as an aberration, and an individual's act of violence rather than a marker of white patriarchy.

In critiquing Susan Okin's *Is Multiculturalism Bad for Women?* Brown explores how the patriarchy within Western culture, and that is embedded within liberalism itself, often goes unnoticed in comparison to Eastern cultures because the women in Western societies are said to have individual choice, rendering Western patriarchy less evident in media and state discourses (197-198). Shafia's patriarchy was not in line with normative acts of patriarchy within the West because state and media discourses disassociate polygamy from Canadian traditions, and his violence was named as an "honour killing," locating this violence outside of gender-based violence that occurs in Canada. The "honour killings" label was mostly associated with crimes that occurred outside of Canada prior to 2001, and the supposed "foreign nature" of this violence bolstered Western cultural difference and superiority, and reified notions of an inherently violent

a reason to continue to prohibit polygamy. As Lenon posits in response to Bauman's statement, "The biopolitical anxiety raised by the specter of contagion comes to be located in particular bodies so as to distinguish populations who might optimize the 'life' of the nation (Canada) and those who might endanger it. Here the trope of contagion becomes thoroughly racialized" (92). Stating that polygamous immigrant communities could expand quickly lays bare concerns that too many nonnormative racialized bodies pose a threat to the "host," reflecting a desire to maintain white and homo/heteronormative racialized bodies in Canada. Political and media narratives draw on these anxieties, and the threat of the racialized immigrant takes shape through a desire for the citizenry to reproduce homo/heteronormativity.

and barbaric Muslim East against the gender equality, democracy, and nonviolence of the secular West (Olwan 535). Brown argues:

Tolerance, the invocation of tolerance, and the attempt to instantiate tolerance are all signs of identity production and identity management in the context of orders of stratification or marginalization in which the production, the management, and the context themselves are disavowed. In short, they are signs of the buried order of politics. (14)

Maintaining patriarchal structures that are less visible, or perhaps obscured, labours in the way of identity production, where the patriarchy of the West continues, often going unchallenged, while the state simultaneously disciplines bodies into maintaining the Western heteropatriarchal state (such as through immigration policies that favour economic immigrants who are usually men). At the same time, Eastern family structures are said to be intolerable because they are too patriarchal, and they are considered in need of being replaced with normative Western patriarchal family structures. Shafia's patriarchy went unnoticed in so far as it aligned with the Western patriarchal family: his wealth made him an ideal immigrant, and media and Kenney associated wealth with liberal values. The concentration of that wealth, however, enabled Shafia to abuse those in his family who relied on him for economic support and their status in Canada. As scholars writing on citizenship and immigration have noted, the Canadian immigration system in and of itself positions immigrant women of colour as dependents through a process of gendered immigration (Thobani 134). Male immigrants of colour can consolidate their position as patriarchs in their homes as the Canadian state assumes them

to be breadwinners and independent economic immigrants who sponsor feminized dependent immigrants.

Framing Muslim/Afghan Patriarchy: The Father and the State

Portrayals of Shafia's visible disconnect from a "civilized Canadian" lifestyle emerge within the political and historical context of September 11. In the post-September 11 context, the Afghan male body (often associated with Muslim and Arab bodies) reemerged in state and media discourses as prone to patriarchy and violence against women. Placing Afghan men and violence against women in the same frame provides the context for the distinction between Canadians (supposed advocates for gender equality) and Shafia (as a polygamous, patriarchal, Muslim Afghan). Shafia's racialization as well as his non-heteronormative marriage and family formation operate together to relegate the violence that he inflicted on his daughters and Rona outside of Western civilization and violence that can be tolerated within Canada.

The polarization of Canadian "values" and Muslim "culture" or "religion," and their supposed incompatibility, becomes a justification for strict border controls, and supports the argument that Eastern culture, generally, is simply incongruent with the Canadian nationalist script. In the wake of the invasion of Afghanistan, Western feminists and the far right converged on particular political issues such as more stringent border controls (Razack, *Casting Out* "Racism in the name of Feminism" par. 1). Western feminists desire to root out "unassimilable" Muslim men who are overly patriarchal and violent towards women, while the far right wishes to keep out terrorists, immigrants, and

refugees who they understand to be plotting the West's destruction (Razack, par. 1). The polygamous home in the Shafia case emerges as a space that is framed as violent because it is polygamous *and* portrayed as foreign. This framing relies on a demarcation between spaces that are represented as violent and "foreign" such as the Shafia home, and non-violent Canadian homes. Because Shafia appears in media through the lens of "violent Muslim/Afghan patriarch," a polygamist, guilty of an "honour crime," his acts of violence are already severed from the patriarchal violence that occurs in Western homes. The "honour killing" label attached to Shafia appears within an orientalist continuum, where Shafia in Canadian media is a violent patriarch who holds on to Afghan culture and Muslim religion.

In Jasmin Zine's analysis of the case of Aqsa Parvez, a teenage girl killed in Ontario by her father and brother for wearing Western clothing, Zine notes that Parvez's death was not just a matter of religion or Pakistani culture, but that because her murder took place in Canada, there had to be consideration of how Canadian culture was implicated in her death ("Unsettling the Nation" 155). Zine outlines that Canadian media did not account for the national context in which the crime occurred, and rather portrayed Parvez's death as a matter of the benevolent Canadian nation being tainted by foreign cultures, which elides how racism and Islamophobia played a part in Parvez's death (155). While Parvez's home and community were depicted as religiously repressive, there was little media attention to how Canadian attitudes towards Islam can have negative repercussions on those who wear the hijab and how that can influence hijabi women's self-perception (155). Instead, culture and ethnicity are represented as the root of

violence, Zine argues, and patriarchy and misogyny are made to seem like foreign imports (155). Adding to Zine's analysis, media also framed the violence Rona, Zainab, Sahar, and Geeti experienced as attached to culture and ethnicity, making this violence appear imported to Canada. Rona's and the Shafia sisters' circumstances, however, also point to the limited options available to those who are victims of violence in Canada, specifically gender-based violence and domestic violence, in the way of prevention. Zainab, Sahar, and Geeti reached out for help on numerous occasions, speaking to teachers, police, and social workers. Zainab even ran away to a women's shelter, the police dispatched le directeur de la protection de la jeunesse (DPJ, Quebec's child welfare agency) to the Shafia home, and a Montreal detective as well as the DPJ even visited the children at school to interview them.

The Fifth Estate's documentary, "The House of Shafia," indicates that child welfare services advised the school that because Sahar was just under 18, almost an adult, that they would not handle her complaints of abuse, and that she should look elsewhere for help (Findlay). Such actions on the part of child welfare services in Canada and the social construction of adulthood as starting at the age of 18 put Sahar, a young adult, in a state of limbo when who constitutes an "adult" is a contested idea (Shepler 25). By all media, family, and friends' accounts, Zainab, Sahar, and Geeti had exhausted all their options. In "The House of Shafia," in an interview with Sahar's vice principal, Natalie Laramée, she states, "This was not an accident... Great frustrations, anger, I can almost say resentment towards the system... Could I have done more? Did I do everything I could have done? Did I handle it well?" (Findlay). Though "The House of Shafia"

emphasizes how Zainab, Sahar, and Geeti were also victims of systemic failures, in terms of the state's inability to intervene comprehensively to stop the abuse they experienced, there remains a demarcation between Canada as a safe place for women and children, and Afghanistan as violent in the documentary. After outlining the abuse Rona experienced before coming to Canada, the interviewer and narrator, Gillian Findlay, states, "After 20 years the move to Montreal might have been the start of something better for Rona. The Shafia family now lived in one of the most cosmopolitan and liberal cities in the world, but inside the apartment it was the worst of Afghan tradition" ("The House of Shafia). The documentary then pans to images inside the Shafia home with sparse furniture, and mattresses on the floor. Montreal discursively is a space where Rona would be free from violence and her polygamous marriage, but in the apartment, *foreign* violence manifests. The Shafia home appears as located outside of Canada, or represented as a foreign enclave, where polygamy and gender-based violence, imported to Canada, can thrive.

Other media too suggested that Shafia's acts of gender-based violence were foreign, particularly when Shafia, Tooba, and Hamed were sentenced. News media repeated Justice Maranger's words that "the four completely innocent victims offended your twisted notion of honour...that is founded on the domination and control of women [and] has absolutely no place in any civilized society" (Dalton, "Shafia Jury Finds all Guilty"; DiManno et. al. 61, 66; Friscolanti, "The Shafia Honour Killing" 38; Hughes, "Judge Condemns 'sick notion of honour'"). Maranger's words locate violence against women outside of "civilized" societies. In so doing, Shafia's, Tooba's, and Hamed's acts of gender-based violence are located outside of "civilized" Canadian society, which in

turn works to secure Canada as an inherently non-violent space that does not have honour-based violence and is not founded on the domination and control of women. The repetition of Justice Maranger's lines structures the Canadian state as the bringer of justice for women who experience violence, but does not account for how the state did not provide any of the women with the means to escape the violence when they reached out for help. While Rona and the Shafia sisters were alive, the violence they experienced *did* seem to have a "place in civilized society." It is only after they died that the Canadian state took seriously the violence that occurred within the Shafia home. Maranger's statements ensure that gender-based violence is made to seem like it is an issue that comes with immigration from uncivilized societies. Rona, Zainab, Sahar, and Geeti are used in Maranger's statement, and as I later discuss, in the *Zero Tolerance for Barbaric Cultural Practices Act*, to reproduce Canada's "myths of national and cultural superiority" (Olwan 549). As Dana Olwan points out, the "superiority" of Canadian culture is highlighted through committing over 2.8 million dollars to projects that focus on honour related violence, while also, in 2010, defunding Indigenous women's associations such as The Native Women's Association of Canada's Sisters in Spirit project, a project committed to putting an end to violence against Indigenous women (549).

The separation between Shafia's patriarchy and the Canadian state's patriarchy creates a distinction between Shafia's actions and Canadianness, yet both Shafia's and the state's actions and inactions are more interconnected than political debates and media suggest. In "The House of Shafia," Findlay states at the beginning, "The story of the

Shafias is a story about women’s desire for freedom and a father’s demand for control.” Friscolanti, too, states that in Shafia’s world, “men were the law, women were property” and that he “subscribed to an ancient unwritten (and very un-Canadian) honour code” (“The Shafia Honour Killing” 107). Canadian media focused their attention on Shafia as a polygamist Muslim father who abused Rona and his daughters, forced his daughters to wear the hijab, and kept his daughters from pursuing an education. For example, media highlighted that Shafia, Yahya, and Hamed kept the children from attending school if they misbehaved or did not adhere to cultural and religious standards of dress, and associated these actions with violence. In “The House of Shafia” Findlay states that Sahar was “chafing at her father’s insistence that she wear the hijab.” The documentary then moves to Sahar’s vice-principal who states, “Sahar missed school for a long period with absolutely no reason, and that’s when we started being worried. The day she came back to school she was veiled... she feared for her well-being. She had a lot of trouble accepting the veil. I think she really wanted to live in a Western lifestyle” (Findlay). *The Star* and *Maclean’s*, however, outline that the school sent the youngest daughter, Geeti, home for dressing “provocatively” (DiManno et. al. 20), and “wearing revealing” and “inappropriate” clothing (Friscolanti 88). Geeti being sent home from school for how she was dressed is not presented as a manifestation of the patriarchy of state institutions. Shafia’s violence is visible and framed as stemming from his culture and religion, but media narratives do not focus on how a state institution disciplined Geeti for how she was dressed and certainly did not connect those actions to Canadian “culture” disciplining difference. Severing Shafia’s patriarchy from the patriarchy of a state institution is not

only a matter of disassociating the imagined violent Afghan and Muslim male body from the imagined non-violent Canadian body, it is also a matter of eliding how the state disciplines women by highlighting immigrant and racialized men's acts of (gender-based) violence.

Even when it failed Rona, Zainab, Sahar, and Geeti, the patriarchy of the state displaces the patriarchy of the father/husband and emerges as the saviour of women. When Zainab, Sahar, and Geeti turned to the state when they experienced gender-based violence, however, the assistance they received was limited and the state did not deliver in its role as a patriarchal and colonial saviour. In Rona's case, she was subjected to heightened barriers when trying to access assistance because of her immigration status. All her avenues to escape domestic and gender-based violence in Canada were closed off. Rona was in Canada on a visitor's visa, making her immigration status precarious and dependent on Shafia's willingness to sponsor her. Importantly, she was a participant in a polygamous marriage, which is not only illegal in Canada, but would have disqualified the whole family from immigrating to Canada. Both Yahya and Rona, in Afghanistan and the United Arab Emirates where the Shafias had lived previously, were regarded as Shafia's legal wives, but in Canada, Rona could not be considered a member of the family. In this sense, Rona was at a disadvantage based on Canada's laws against polygamy and these laws contributed to her subjugation. Friscolanti does make a connection between Rona's immigration status and Shafia's abuse stating: "hovering over everything was her unsettled immigration status. Although her visitor visa had been extended numerous times—and a lawyer was working on her application for permanent

residency, at Shafia’s expense—Rona’s life in Canada was predicated on a lie, and could end at any time” (“The Shafia Honour Killing” 12). Moreover, the lawyer working on her file disclosed that Shafia allegedly offered her \$10,000 to close Rona’s file (Findlay, “The House of Shafia;” Friscolanti 12). While polygamy often dominated the media coverage of Rona’s abuse, what her case highlights, and what is largely unexplored, is how the Canadian state’s attempts to keep polygamous immigrants from entering Canada actually made Rona more vulnerable to domestic violence.

There is a broader understanding that polygamy is the *reason* women in plural families are subjected to abuse rather than the ways in which law and policy can enable their abuse(rs). Janet Bennion and Lisa Joffe carefully explore the harms and benefits of polygamous relationships. They argue that it is important to consider the conditions in which polygamy is practiced in North America (11). These conditions, they argue, may be conducive to facilitating domestic violence as abusers may seek out isolated and remote places to live so that domestic and intimate partner violence remains discreet, and they can maintain control over victims (Bennion and Joffe 11). Women in polygamous relationships who are isolated may have more difficulty leaving their communities and their abusers (Bennion and Joffe 11). Isolation and abuse, moreover, are not only correlated to polygamous families, but monogamous relationships as well (Bennion and Joffe 11). Rona was isolated, and feared for her life. She told family member and friend Fatima Vorgetts, who lives in the United States, that Shafia threatened to kill her if she left (Friscolanti, “The Shafia Honour Killing” 12). She could not only be deported, but if she was sent back to Afghanistan, Shafia threatened to have her killed. Rona explained to

friends and family that, while she requested a divorce, she was also concerned about her immigration status, particularly because it was illegal to be a part of a plural family in Canada (Friscolanti 12). She was concerned about what would happen if she reported Shafia's abuse, and, what is made clear by her diary entries is that she did not want to be separated from the children (Friscolanti 17). Rona states that while she awaited her visa to enter Canada: "I was so [emotionally close] to the children that it was really unbearable. I cried every day; I couldn't even read the Koran. This was the first time I had been separated from my [husband's] family.⁶⁷ I would feel better after talking to them on the phone or seeing them over the internet... I wish I hadn't [missed them] so much" (Friscolanti 80-81).

Maclean's, *The Star*, and *The Fifth Estate* all highlight how Rona had reached out for help, speaking to friends and family about Shafia's and Yahya's abuse, but the Canadian immigration system itself bound Rona to the abusive home. As Janet Mosher aptly states, "While without question individual men are responsible, and are to be held accountable for the violence they perpetrate against their intimate partners, a focus on individual men often obscures the ways in which social institutions, structures, and ideologies enable intimate violence" (41). Though Rona reached out to family members about the abuse she experienced, they too were limited in the assistance they could offer. Vorgetts states that Rona asked her to smuggle her across the border in "The House of

⁶⁷ It is difficult to decipher if the word "husband" here is an addition by Friscolanti or the translator. Without the word "husband" the sentence suggests that Rona sees Shafia's family as her own family, while the addition of the word "husband" suggests that Rona might see herself as an outsider to the family.

Shafia.” “I felt so guilty. I feel so guilty. I thought probably I should have gone to the border and brought her to the country. So it was illegal? So what? I should have done it. So many things I could have done, which I failed to do” (Findlay). Yahya held Rona’s passport, and without a passport, Rona who was in Canada on a visitor’s visa, could not legally escape the abuse and flee to the United States with Vorgetts. That Rona would have to consider “fleeing” Canada as a result of abuse, contradicts Canada’s framing of itself as a safe haven for women, where immigrant women can escape the abuse they experience in their countries of origin. That Canada’s immigration system actually helped to keep Rona with her abuser is not an idea that many media or political debates explored.

Mosher’s ethnographic work elucidates the barriers that someone in Rona’s circumstances might face as an immigrant woman in an abusive household. Mosher states that those without status in Canada are often ineligible for social assistance, so they are still financially bound to their partners (50). Moreover, someone on a visitor’s visa, like Rona, can be subjected to deportation at any time. Shafia brought Rona to Canada as the family’s nanny, and she relied on him as her sponsor. If Shafia was in the process of sponsoring Rona, he could withdraw his sponsorship before Rona would be granted permanent residency (Mosher 48). Mosher explains that the sponsorship program in Canada provides abusive men with power to further abuse their intimate partners (62), because even if Rona was able to escape Shafia’s abuse, “those without status in Canada, who have not initiated an application on humanitarian and compassionate grounds, nor made a refugee claim, are ineligible for assistance... For women in these categories, the unavailability of state assistance leaves them incredibly vulnerable to abuse and

exploitation within their abusive relationships” (50). In the case of Rona, she told Vorgetts that she was too afraid to speak to authorities because Shafia told her he would kill her if she did. Friscolanti reports that Vorgetts, however, “repeatedly told Rona that Canadian authorities would take her side” (“The Shafia Honour Killing” 156). Friscolanti quotes Vorgetts: “The police are there to protect you...Once you tell the police that you are his wife, they will know that he violated the immigration law. He lied to immigration and to the police. He’ll be in trouble, not you” (156). Mosher explains, however, that many immigrant women are fearful of going to police, because of the repercussions they might face if their partners find out, especially if they are without status in Canada. Mosher states, “While without a doubt some women are assisted by police intervention, for others the results of the intervention are decidedly harmful...Police intervention places women without status in a position of incredible jeopardy” (52). Mosher illustrates that in some cases men were able to manipulate the criminal justice system to not only avoid charges, but have charges placed on the battered woman (52-53). In the case of Rona, contacting authorities could have put her immigration status in jeopardy: she was not listed as Shafia’s wife in her visitor visa, and she was also a participant in what would be considered an illegal marital union in Canada. By streamlining women into the family class of immigrants as dependents of independent male immigrants, immigrant women often find themselves in positions of subordination where their access to Canadian citizenship relies on male sponsors (Thobani 135). Rona relied on Shafia for economic stability, was vulnerable to deportation, and had limited options to escape domestic

violence in Canada as a result of Canada’s immigration system—critical issues that media debates do not significantly consider.

In another instance, Rona’s sister, Diba, told Rona: “my dear sister, do not worry too much, you are not in Afghanistan or Dubai, you are in Canada and it is an advanced country, nothing will happen there” (Findlay, “The House of Shafia”). In this case, the perception of Canada as a safe place for women may have downplayed the severity of Rona’s circumstances to family members who assumed she would be safe based on her geographic location. Even after Rona’s death, Findlay in “The House of Shafia” poses the questions: “How, in a country where women are supposed to be free, did [the Shafia sisters and Rona] become targets?” and “Why were their calls for help answered with silence?” When the Shafia sisters and Rona disclosed that they experienced domestic violence in Canada, the avenues of escape were limited for the sisters, such as Zainab who was able to get to a women’s shelter, and non-existent for Rona because of her precarious immigration status. The Shafia sisters’ and Rona’s circumstances point to the limitations of governmental organizations to adequately address domestic violence, particularly in the way of prevention without separating families. Their case brings up the complicated circumstances domestic violence survivors experience when they do not want to be separated from family members, but want to address the violence they experience. All the help the Shafia children and Rona were offered was reactionary; that is, they had to wait to be subjected to physical violence before they would be assisted. In the case of Rona, she could not be assisted even in the wake of the violence she experienced. Even after Rona’s death, the *Zero Tolerance for Barbaric Cultural Practices*

Act still offered nothing in the way of funding for immigrant women trying to escape abuse. Rona and the Shafia sisters were repeatedly told that the Canadian state would save them from a violent father/husband, but when they turned to the state for assistance in addressing domestic violence, they received little support.

Rival Wives and Budding Romances: Rona, Yahya, and the Shafia Sisters

Ensuring that polygamy remains illicit reifies monogamy as the normative marital choice, foreclosing any conversation about how nonnormative marital and kinship ties can be made more equitable. It is not just that polygamous marriages are not legally performed by the state in Canada, it is also illegal for religious and spiritual institutions to perform such marriages even if they are not recognized by the state. My argument is that criminalizing polygamy leaves women within polygamous relationships vulnerable to abuse, not necessarily because the polygamous relationship is inherently violent—as Rambukkana states, “plural marriage cannot be characterized as either always harmful or always beneficial to women; it just is” (80)—but because there are no avenues available to (legally) discuss reforming such marriages as there have been for monogamous marriages. The Shafia case provided media along with anti-polygamy and anti-immigration advocates in government with “proof” of polygamy’s harms against women: Rona and Yahya were apparently rival wives in an arranged, polygamous marriage to a violent Muslim patriarch, while Zainab, Sahar, and Geeti desperately wanted to be able to choose their own clothes and their romantic partners.

Media emphasized the rivalry between Yahya and Rona and highlighted passages in Rona's diary where she details Yahya's abuse. Many media stories, as well as numerous books on the Shafia case, reproduced various excerpts of Rona's diary at length. Rona's diary was entered as evidence in the Shafia trial; both *Maclean's* and *The Toronto Star* provide lengthy excerpts of the diary, and passages of the diary are read throughout "The House of Shafia." *Maclean's*, *The Star*, and *The Fifth Estate* all draw on similar passages from Rona's diary where Rona explains her childhood, her marriage to Shafia, her infertility, and Shafia's marriage to Yahya. Her diary entries also explore Shafia and Yahya's mistreatment, such as her loss of status in the family as Shafia's wife, her inability to come to Canada with the family, Shafia and Yahya's physical, psychological, and verbal abuse, as well as Yahya holding her passport. According to Rona's diary entries, Yahya would say, "You might stay here on a visa for two years, three years, but finally you would have to go" (DiManno et. al. 45). Rona is often named the "servant" in media coverage. For example, in the *Toronto Star's* character analyses of the Shafia family, Rona's subtitle is, "The Shafias' 'servant'" (32), the analysis of her diary is subtitled, "Tales of a sad and lonely housewife" (42), and the emphasis is on Shafia sponsoring Rona as the family's nanny. Yahya, conversely, is subtitled "The dominant wife" (11). Lines from Rona's diary that were repeated throughout many media stories emphasize an image of Rona's servitude, such as Yahya reportedly stating: "You are not his wife you are my servant" (Friscolanti, "The Shafia Honour Killing" 82, 156; DiManno et. al. 33, 45). Under Rona's image in Friscolanti's coverage, the description reads: "More a servant than a wife: Rona's short time in her new country was pure hell,

rife with abuse and misery” (156), and he refers to her as a “borderline servant” (180). The emphasis on the triangular relationship between Rona, Yahya, and Shafia certainly serves anti-polygamy narratives in Canada: Rona was merely used for her domestic labour in a loveless marriage, which distances polygamous relationships from the supposed gender equality of non-polygamous and loving relationships in Canada.

Rona’s diary provided Canadian media with “evidence” that immigrant polygamous couples are, indeed, headed by abusive husbands and involve rivalries between wives. However, while writing this chapter I encountered the ethical problem of exploring Rona’s life and her circumstances when we only have her diary entries, some images, and what family and friends have said about her to delve into her experiences in a polygamous relationship. There are moments in Rona’s diary that disrupt the “servant” narratives that media highlight, where Rona discusses the shared distribution of labour in the Shafia household, and that she really did not want to be separated from the children (Friscolanti, “The Shafia Honour Killing” 80-81). Rona also discusses how she and Tooba divided childcare (Friscolanti 75, 76), and that they took turns performing household chores (Friscolanti 75, 76, 80). These points are not reproduced in any media articles that I have come across that do not include lengthy excerpts from Rona’s diary, and they are certainly not highlighted in the coverage. Rona’s diary entries complicate the rigid narratives of “servitude” that emerge out of anti-polygamy discourses, muddling how media and politicians discussed the case. There need not be a romanticization of polygamous marriage by any means, but there should be consideration for the redistribution of labour that might occur in such families as noted by Rona, particularly

because media emphasized an image of Rona's servitude and the tension between the two wives.

What is also unexplored in anti-polygamy discourse that emerges in media narratives and political debates about the Shafia case are the ways in which families cope with infertility. Friscolanti actually gestures towards this in an interjection when quoting from Rona's diary:

When Sahar was 40 days old, her mother gave her to me [a custom in some families with a barren and a fertile co-wife married to the same husband, by which the fertile wife gives (or consents to give) her new-born child for 'in-family adoption' to the barren co-wife for the latter to raise as her own in order for her to feel somewhat mollified for her inability to have children of her own] and said "She is yours and you will have charge of her." It was Tooba who [initiated] this and I was very happy. ("The Shafia Honour Killing" 76)

That Rona could not have children was reportedly a key reason that Shafia and Yahya married, and Rona was able to become a mother to Sahar as a result of the polygamous marriage. Rona's diary illustrates that she played an important role in childrearing, and that she had a strong connection to the children (Friscolanti 75, 76, 81). Even though Friscolanti acknowledges how polygamy offered Rona and the Shafia family a method of coping with infertility, there is either an inability or unwillingness on the part of media narratives to address the complexity of Rona's circumstances based on her diary entries. There is no recognition that biological reproduction and procreation hold varying

significance in different cultures (Inhorn 23) and for individuals.⁶⁸ For example, Tripp states that Shafia was insulted by others when he and Rona were unable to conceive a child (““Give me away”). After ten years without a child and Rona undergoing fertility treatments, Shafia married Yahya as a second wife. It is difficult to capture how individuals and families, including someone in Rona’s position, might negotiate such challenges. The ability of having children, too, in specific cultural contexts can be a marker of femininity and masculinity, which can hold varying degrees of importance.

In media reports Rona and Yahya’s marriages to Shafia are contrasted with representations of the Shafia sisters and their relationships with their partners. For example, when the *National Post* covered excerpts from Robb Tripp’s book *Without Honour*, he describes Rona as,

the bright young high school student who had just completed Grade 11...
betrothed to a stranger seven years her senior. In a country where girls as
young as two were offered up by their families as wives for men in their

⁶⁸ For example, in the West, couples often go through long and expensive fertility treatments to have biological children. One study on Afghanistan states that having children “increases one’s influence in society” (Emadi 43). In Deborah J. Smith’s study of marriage in Afghanistan she states that in the areas they conducted their research (Bamyan, Herat, Kabul, and Nangarhar), polygamy was not generally viewed positively, but respondents expressed unanimously that a man should marry again if his wife has yet to bear a child, with one respondent stating that it is necessary to have children so that they may care for their parents when they are older (50-51). Marcia C. Inhorn argues that in various geographic locations throughout Asia and Northern Africa, men are understood to be “giving life” in processes of procreation (23), and in Egypt, infertility might signal a lack of virility (12). Similarly, Shepler argues in Sierra Leone, having children can be understood as a marker into adulthood and a sign of prestige: “A man with a big fortune but no children will still be seen to be somehow poor” (27).

sixties and seventies, it was a reasonable arrangement viewed as a highly compatible match. (“Give me away”)

Tripp highlights the age difference between Rona and Shafia, but Zainab and her partner were also roughly the same ages as Rona and Shafia, and six years apart. I have yet to come across any emphasis on the age difference between Zainab and her partner or any connection to child marriage. Framed as Canadian rather than an Afghan immigrant like Rona, media discussions of Zainab’s relationship is cloaked in freedom and choice. In terms of Yahya’s marriage to Shafia, Friscolanti states, “Tooba wasn’t exactly thrilled, either. On the day of her arrest...an officer asked if she loved her husband. ‘I was not in love’ she answered in between sobs, ‘But I fell in love after we got married’” (6). Both Yahya and Rona’s arranged and polygamous marriage to Shafia is suggested to be devoid of love and connected to practicality (for example, Rona could not have children, so Shafia married Yahya). These characterizations draw on orientalist understandings of Muslim and Eastern marriages where social structures (polygamy, arranged marriage, kinship) take precedence over love and intimacy (Puar, “Genealogical Grids” par. 2). Because decisions about arranged marriage are left to the collective in orientalist framings, marriages of choice, such as those the Shafia sisters pursued, were viewed as consistent with Western individualism (Puar, par. 2), and therefore, ideals of love and choice.

The Shafia sisters’ purported desires to distance themselves from the polygamous and arranged marriage of their parents offers justification to Canada’s claims to multicultural superiority where women of colour can pursue marriages of choice based in

love and intimacy. Intimacy, according to Puar, establishes heteronormativity and forms the basis “on which the self is judged to have value, merit, and substance” (par. 2). When there were major shifts in production moving from the domestic to the public sphere, the family became an escape from public work, giving way to the fantasy of intimacy that is dis severed from “the specific capitalist relations and political conditions that make the liberal notion of intimacy imaginable in the first place” (Puar, par. 2). For orientalized Muslim/Afghan bodies, love is trumped by social structure; Puar lists “business, clan, tribe, totem, kinship” as “lend[ing] themselves to polygamy [and] arranged marriage” (par. 2). Without the proper functioning of noble love in orientalist framings, intimacy is absent (par. 2). In media and political conversations, Canada was represented as having provided an opportunity for immigrant women to pursue love, even though it could not protect them from the violence they experienced.

The Shafia sisters were said to be rejecting polygamous and arranged models of marriage, making choices about the men with whom they wanted to be romantically involved. Their stories of budding romances and love notes were the focus of many media narratives written about the Shafia family: Zainab and Sahar were two girls seeking romantic love. Yasmin Jiwani explores the media narratives of these young and forbidden love stories and how they suggest that the Shafia sisters’ only wish was to Westernize. Jiwani argues that the images circulated during the trial and disseminated by a number of media outlets make the daughters like “us” (“Posthumous rescue” 36), women who were not a part of Canada’s “white core” but wished to choose their romantic partners and be individuals. She argues that much of the coverage centered a heteronormative gaze that

emphasized Sahar and Zainab's dating behaviours, and their desire for freedom, making the daughters "worthy victims" (36). As Jiwani notes, *The Globe and Mail* (as well as *Maclean's*) published Sahar's boyfriend's romantic texts to her, which he read out during the trial. The texts illustrated that the Shafia sisters wanted to move away from their Afghan cultures (36). In "The House of Shafia," it is Zainab's love story with her partner, Ammar, that helps to create the "doomed" love story that Jiwani highlights in media coverage of Sahar's relationship. Findlay states in "The House of Shafia" that the documentary will include "interviews with young men who fell in love with the girls, but could not save them," focusing on Ammar's and Zainab's wedding day and Ammar remembering their wedding day "as the happiest of his life." Jiwani's analysis of the "doomed" love story demonstrates the generational and cultural break between the Shafia sisters who pursued monogamous relationships of choice, and their parents who were in a polygamous and arranged marriage that was said to be devoid of love and intimacy. Like Rona, Yahya, and Shafia's arranged marriage which became polygamous, abusive, and eventually murderous, arranged marriages are framed as relationships fraught with violence and lacking love. This coverage secures the Eastern arranged and polygamous marriage in the Western imaginary as violent, patriarchal, and backward, and the Western non-polygamous marriage of love and choice as non-violent, better for women, and progressive.

Rona, too, I would argue, was represented as a "worthy victim" in media coverage because of her purported desires to "Westernize." She was often aligned with the young women, and media narratives emphasized a clash between the two wives, in which Yahya

was the jealous wife who supported patriarchal ideals and accepted the subordination of herself (as second wife) and her daughters. Yahya is said to be cold towards her daughters, with the emphasis on Rona's diary entry when Sahar tries to commit suicide. Yahya is said to have responded "she can go to hell. Let her kill herself," while Rona, Sahar's surrogate mother, was concerned for her (Friscolanti, "The Shafia Honour Killing" 144). Yahya, like Monia Mazigh (Chapter One) and Maha Elsamnah (Chapter Two), defies the "imperiled Muslim woman" stereotype, but differently from Mazigh and Elsamnah. While Yahya is portrayed as being complicit in her own subordination (similar to Elsamnah), she is also the perpetrator of violence towards other women in the family. In this framing, both Yahya and Rona are represented as affected by patriarchy, but differently: Rona is represented as a victim, while Yahya is portrayed as facilitating patriarchy's reproduction, and even benefitting from it.

Yahya emerges in media coverage as an authoritarian figure who controls Rona's life. Rona, alternatively, is portrayed as the adventurous first wife of Shafia who was an ally of the young girls, and often spent time with them. What is more, during the trial, images of Rona in Western clothing and posing in front of the camera, as the Shafia sisters did in their photographs, align Rona with the sisters as well as a wish for Westernization in these depictions. Images of Rona with the sisters were reproduced in many media outlets. An image of Rona and Sahar in a hotel room in Niagara Falls was reproduced among many images of the sisters posing for the camera with their partners or in lingerie. Other images were also reproduced in Friscolanti's piece, showing Rona posing for the camera wearing makeup and jewelry (17, 40, 64, 105, 156, 172), and in

Robb Tripp's *Without Honour*, he includes images of Rona in a stylish thin strapped sleeveless top with a low neckline and black hat. Under the image the description reads: "A photo of Rona believed to have been taken inside the Shafia apartment in Montreal, likely in early 2008. This photo is one in a set of about two dozen in which she posed in different outfits wearing makeup—activities Shafia considered shameful" (104). There is a way that Rona is positioned as the liberal minded wife, a point that is actually made in a *Globe and Mail* article that states:

The portrait of Rona Amir Mohammad, long-suffering first wife of the Afghan-born killer Mohammad Shafia, that emerged from the evidence presented by trial prosecutors and from her diaries, a court exhibit, was of a tolerant, liberally inclined stepmother who cared passionately about the family's children. (Appleby, "Shafia Wife Killed")

Shafia here is the "Afghan-born killer" (foreignness again is associated with violence) and Rona is the wife that wished to have the freedoms of Westernization, such as dressing in Western clothing, as the images suggest, and freedom/divorce from her polygamous marriage. Representations of Rona as wishing to Westernize and being aligned with the sisters work to create a clear distinction between a liberal-minded immigrant woman and a patriarchal immigrant man. Rona can be read as displaying a desire to assimilate into Canada through her exercising her will to wear what she wants, and choose what marital relationships she wants to pursue. Different from Yahya, Rona is also portrayed as the sisters' ally. She might have even encouraged the girls to disconnect from a supposedly patriarchal Afghan and Muslim culture and religion and enjoy the freedoms of a Canadian

life. Though Rona is still framed as the “oppressed” Muslim woman in need of saving in these representations, she reflects the supposed freedom women wish to have that the patriarchal “bad” Muslim man seeks to destroy.

The Zero Tolerance for Barbaric Cultural Practices Act and the Shafia Case

The Shafia family murders heavily influenced Canadian policy in the years after the verdict. The murders were a talking point for numerous politicians and were used to justify the Canadian government introducing the *Zero Tolerance for Barbaric Cultural Practices Act* (Bill S-7) in 2015. The *Act* amends the *Immigration and Refugee Protection Act*, the *Civil Marriage Act*, and the Criminal Code, and targets foreign nationals and permanent residents, specifying that they are inadmissible to Canada if they practice polygamy. The Canadian state implementing the *Zero Tolerance for Barbaric Cultural Practices Act* connects polygamy to barbarity and frames it as a “foreign” or an “imported” phenomenon. The Bill was met with considerable criticism, such as the problematic naming of the Bill, which disassociates Canada from polygamy and forced marriage and categorizes immigrants from outside of Canada as from “barbaric cultures” (Canada, House of Commons Debates no. 173, 1040). It also, of course, infers that violence that occurs in Canada is something other than “barbaric” and is an anomaly to Canadian culture. The Bill was also criticized by witnesses because it did not provide funding to those fleeing domestic violence, polygamous relationships, and forced marriage (Canada, Standing Committee 45, 1035), and there were also those who were wary of whether criminalization actually helps to reduce acts of domestic and gender-

based violence (Canada, Standing Committee 45, 1025). The criticisms about not providing funding for women trying to escape domestic violence are pertinent to the Shafia case, where Rona could not escape Shafia as she relied on him for sponsorship and economic support. The *Zero Tolerance for Barbaric Cultural Practices Act* offers nothing for someone in Rona's position who is trying to flee an abusive polygamous marriage. There were no clear measures put in place to prevent gender-based violence and domestic violence more generally, and for immigrant women of colour specifically. The *Act* follows a history where women ask the state for protection but the state fails to address their concerns (Beaman 8). Beaman asks "why the state chooses to intervene in particular circumstances and whose interests are being served by that intervention" (8). In this case, the lack of funding provided to shelters, legal aid, and childcare, illustrate that this *Act* was not in the interest of women escaping violence.

Because of the gender-based violence and polygamy in the Shafia household, the Shafia family murders surface in many media and policy conversations as multiculturalism "gone wrong," often focusing on Canada's supposedly "relaxed" immigration policy. In the House of Commons debates by the MPs that introduced Bill S-7, they marshalled the threat of foreign cultures and violence to evoke the Bill's urgency. Former Conservative MP Chris Alexander drew on the Shafia family murders to build a case for the Bill, by claiming that Zainab fled home because of a forced marriage, reminding his audience that Shafia was a part of a polygamous marriage, and stating that they were under the threat of violence because they wanted a better life for themselves in

Canada (Canada, House of Commons Debates no. 173, 1020).⁶⁹ It was taken as a given that women in Canada have a “better” life, and Alexander continued to represent Shafia’s actions as imported when he stated:

Polygamy is an affront to our values. As such, it has been illegal in Canada since 1890. While it is against the law in Canada to practice polygamy or to enter into a polygamous union, we know that is not the case in every country in the world... However, we in Canada are adamant that this is not featured among our practices. It is antithetical to our values. While it has been on the books as a crime since 1890, it is only in more recent years that the first prosecutions have taken place under that law, so it is a current issue in the criminal justice system as well.

...

To ensure polygamy is not practised on Canadian soil, this bill proposes to ban foreign nationals who practise polygamy from entering Canada with any of their spouses, even on a temporary basis. It would also mean that permanent residents found to be in polygamous marriages would be removed on that basis alone. (Canada, House of Commons Debates no. 173, 1020)

⁶⁹ I have not come across this narrative explicitly in the media coverage. In most coverage of the case, Zainab is said to have fled home because she wanted more freedom. Though there is some evidence that at the time her parents were attempting to coax her into a marriage to a distant relative (whom she eventually said she would marry after her marriage to Ammar was annulled), I have not come across anything to indicate that her *reason* to leave home was based solely on her parents’ attempt to get her to marry this relative.

In this quote, polygamy is an import. Alexander was incorrect that the first prosecution for polygamy occurred recently, as it was Bear's Shin Bone, a Kainai man, who was first prosecuted for polygamy in Canada in 1899 (Carter 222). Bear's Shin Bone was charged for entering a polygamous marriage with two women in a customary marriage. He was released from custody on a suspended sentence on the condition that he gave up his second wife (Carter 222). The omission of Bear's Shin Bone's story, whether intentional or not, erases the Canadian government's subjugation of Indigenous familial and kinship formations in Western Canada. Alexander also failed to mention that the two men who were prosecuted recently were not immigrants to Canada, but were actually Canadians by birth from Bountiful. Communities such as Bountiful and other polygamous Canadians are not accounted for in Alexander's statements.⁷⁰ Canadian nationalism is mapped in such a way that excludes earlier histories and contemporary acts of polygamy that do not reproduce the imagined nation (Beaman 13). Polygamy in this *Act* is used as a tool to keep immigrants from entering Canada, by disconnecting polygamy from Canadianness and from whiteness, and reaffirming white monogamous families as purportedly "civilized" Canadian families.

By failing to mention Bountiful, white communities that practice polygamy in Canada escape the purview of criminalization in this *Act* (but not generally, since

⁷⁰ Drummond actually lays out how the vagueness in anti-polygamy laws mean that many Canadians participate in polygamy and may not even know it. She uses herself as an example to explain that while being separated from her previous partner for a number of years, she began cohabitation with her present partner before her divorce was finalized which would fall under the definition of polygamy. She explains that presently, she is not the target of anti-polygamy laws (she names religious minorities as the most vulnerable), and as a result will likely face no consequences for breaking the law (12-13).

Bountiful was the cause of the Polygamy Reference and has been under surveillance for years). Although historically there has been a racialization of Mormons, Lenon states that Bountiful might be “shielded by its whiteness” (94). Bountiful, in the *Zero Tolerance Act*, is protected by the norms of white Canadian citizenship which has allowed it to exist for decades (Lenon 94). Alexander seemed to skim over Bountiful (and the town’s controversy in Canadian media) as it did not assist Alexander’s argument that polygamy is not a “feature” of Canadian practices. It is perhaps the case that polygamy is tolerable in so far as it is not practiced by racialized immigrants or Muslims in Canada. What was also troubling was how Alexander suggested polygamy was widespread amongst immigrant communities when he stated, “The anecdotal evidence is considerable. The number of immigrants who have come to this country in polygamous unions but disguised that fact and misrepresented themselves as either not being married or not being in a polygamous union is substantial” (Canada, House of Commons Debates no. 173, 1025). Though the statements are made four years apart, Justice Bauman clearly states in the Polygamy Reference that, “In the absence of any empirical data it is not possible to determine the level of polygyny among Muslims in Canada. However, there is no evidence that it is a widespread or mainstream phenomenon” (par. 429), and Bauman hardly makes reference to any other communities other than the FLDS in Canada in the Polygamy Reference.⁷¹ This begs the question: to whom was Alexander referring?

⁷¹ He discusses Wicca (par. 461-467) and those who practice various forms of polyamoury (par. 433). Neither of these communities are generally associated with immigrants.

Alexander attempted to instill fear that “foreign” practices such as polygamy will threaten Canadian values and as a result, used polygamy in the Shafia family as a talking point to connect polygamy to foreignness, violence, and honour killing, and warn Canadians that polygamy (and therefore violence against women) is a foreign import that is widespread, and continuing to spread, in Canada. Of course, what Alexander failed to address was how domestic and gender-based violence were both already prevalent in Canada in monogamous relationships, and that domestic and gender-based violence are very much part of Canada’s national fabric, and are, at times, enabled by the Canadian state (Thobani 135; Mosher 41).

In the *Zero Tolerance Act*, the government reifies immigrant men as part of “barbaric” cultures if they practice polygamy. If, as Sherene Razack argues, Muslim women are framed as having to be saved from their societies, Western women are then perceived as already liberated (*Casting Out* “Modern Women as Imperialists” par. 4); marking immigrant polygamous men as violent patriarchs then marks men in hetero/homonormative Canadian households as “good” non-violent husbands and fathers. The *Zero Tolerance Act* reinscribes polygamy’s association with racialized immigrant traditions that subjugate women for the sake of the patriarch’s sexual satisfaction.⁷² Criticizing polygamy for its patriarchy assumes that monogamy is not patriarchal, shutting down conversations about the patriarchy within Canadian institutions and society

⁷² Though it is beyond the scope of this chapter, it also seems problematic to see polygamy as only serving a social function and being devoid of intimacy and (consensual) sexual gratifications. In orientalist framings the complexities of sexual relationships are reduced to sociopolitical conditions alone (Gosine 164).

in general that help to produce families, monogamous or otherwise, that can also be violent. Alexander drew on the Shafia case to make a truncated analysis that bound violence against women to non-hetero/homonormative family formations that are supposedly Eastern and imported.

The state dictates what constitutes “safe” legitimate kinship and marital relationships, which, in Alexander’s reference to the Shafia case, failed to recognize Rona as an integral part of the family unit. Rona’s relationship with the Shafia children had to be severed under Canadian immigration laws. This illustrates how the state is able to discipline citizens, particularly newcomers to Canada, into hetero/homonormative family formations through processes of immigration. Because newcomers to Canada who sponsor other family members are overwhelmingly men (Thobani 109), these sponsors must choose which spouse should accompany them. While there is an emphasis on Shafia only naming Yahya as his wife on his immigration application, there is little, if any, attention paid to how the immigration system actually facilitated in fracturing the Shafia family. Definitions of family used for immigration purposes are ethnocentric and hetero/homonormative, and focus on the nuclear family without attention to non-hetero/homonormative family formations and the broader definitions of who constitutes a “family member” in other cultures, sub-cultures, or by individuals themselves (Arat-Koç 210). The state here determines which relationships align with Canadian norms, that is, hetero/homonormative, monogamous, nuclear families. By drawing on the Shafia case, Alexander used the *Zero Tolerance Act* to reinscribe immigrant polygamous families as

dangerous and patriarchal, and they therefore must be disciplined into hetero/homonormativity if they immigrate to Canada.

Conclusion

This chapter is not making a case for the legalization of polygamous marriages, but it is necessary for the Canadian state to recognize non-hetero/homonormative familial and kinship formations to allow for participants in such relationships and family formations to access government assistance, social welfare, and in the case of immigrants generally, and immigrant women specifically, to not be in danger of deportation. This chapter interrogates the connection between the racialized body, familial violence, and polygamy made by state and media discourses, to expose how the state and media reproduce hetero/homonormative kinship, marital, and familial relationships that are grounded in western European notions of the family that bolster the supposed superiority of the Canadian nation. These notions of supposedly “superior” family formations reproduce a history of colonialism through which the state defines which families contribute to the purported “goodness” of the nation, and facilitate in disciplining bodies into heteronormativity where supposedly “good” immigrants and people of colour in Canada reproduce the familial norms of the nation that are said to be based in gender equality. The media coverage of the spectacularity of the Shafia case was far reaching and repeated a narrative that connects foreign Muslim male bodies to acts of gender-based and domestic violence in polygamous marriages.

Rona's circumstances in a polygamous relationship illustrate that the continued violence that she experienced at the hands of Shafia and Yahya was not simply a result of plural marriage, but also a result of the Canadian state's inability or unwillingness to comprehensively address domestic and gender-based violence, particularly in immigrant communities. State and media discourses reinscribed orientalist narratives of violent Muslim patriarchy and justified anti-immigration discourses. The media discussions of the Shafia case as well as the political discussions around the *Zero Tolerance for Barbaric Cultural Practices Act* drew on the Shafia case to continue to carve out differences between white Canadians and Westernized/assimilated immigrants, and Afghan/Muslim Canadian communities. These communities are represented as violent and patriarchal, and media and state discourses used the Shafia case to push the argument that polygamous Afghan/Muslim men in Canada are perpetrators of violence against women, and, therefore, should not be permitted into Canada.

Conclusion: Reimagining the Present

On 30 June 2020, Salma Lakhani was named the first Muslim lieutenant-governor in Canadian history. Her place as “The Queen’s representative” for Alberta was lauded in Canadian news media that repeated current Prime Minister Justin Trudeau’s words that Lakhani is a champion for the rights of women, families, and new immigrants to Canada, and media frequently mentioned her religious background (The Canadian Press, “Alberta Businesswoman”; “Alberta’s new Lieutenant-Governor”; “Edmonton Business Woman”; Haig, “Alberta Has a New Lieutenant-Governor”; National Post Staff, “Liberals Name Salma Lakhani”; Postmedia News, “Salma Lakhani named Lieutenant-Governor”). In all these accounts Lakhani is portrayed as an immigrant success story: A Muslim woman who now holds the “honour” of representing The Queen. She is also named as a business woman, which certainly connotes her connection to capital in a state that associates immigrant success with wealth. As this dissertation has explored, having access to wealth can make it possible for racialized communities to be recognized by the state as worthy of civil liberties.

What is troubling about the media narrative is the failure to critically engage with what it actually means for a person of colour to become a representative of The Queen in a settler-colonial state. The global history of British colonialism is completely absent in this media coverage and so are the current circumstances of continuing colonialism in Canada, stemming from a history of British and French colonialism. The media coverage of Lakhani encourages readers to see a Muslim woman as a representative for The Queen as a positive accomplishment for a woman of colour. In addition, within these stories

Canada emerges as a benevolent state where Muslim women have the *opportunity* to represent The Queen. Media discourses do not frame Lakhani as the representative of the head of a violent royal dynasty.

I draw attention to Lakhani's celebrated media image to alert us to how racialized Muslim bodies can be employed by the media to bolster or disrupt notions of Canadian diversity and multiculturalism. The image of Lakhani works in tandem with images of the "bad" Muslim discussed in the earlier chapters, as her "good" Muslim status concretizes images of Canadian benevolence, Canadian gender equality, as well as the promises of multiculturalism. In this dissertation I have drawn out in detail how Canadian news media can offer different and, at times, conflicting narratives of Muslim families. Though there are limitations to some of the "positive" representations that I explored, these varying representations were also important for shifting public opinions about some of the families and individual family members that I analyzed. Lakhani's image is a stark contrast to the figure of the "oppressed" Muslim woman that I examined in Chapter Three of the dissertation, but I am still left wondering about the kind of work her image does within the framework of settler-colonialism. While the portrayals of Lakhani certainly provide a counter image to stereotypical representations of Muslim women as oppressed (such as the coverage of Rona and the Shafia sisters in Chapter Three) or the fanatic mother (Elsannah in Chapter Two), the celebratory portrayals (similar to coverage of Mazigh in Chapter One) still work to uphold Canada's nationalist narrative of a country that welcomes religious and racialized immigrants, and it also effectively casts out those who do not fit neatly into the contours of proper Canadian identity. Variances in

representation matter in media and state discourses, but I am skeptical of representations where racialized people are placed into these state roles. I am also aware, however, of the important work racialized people in state roles can do when attempting to disrupt systems of oppression from within.

The media representations of Lakhani have reminded me that the questions around shifting media representations of Muslim bodies that underpin my study in this dissertation are far from answered. Lakhani's recent appointment as lieutenant-governor of Alberta has prompted me to grapple with the complicity of non-Indigenous people of colour in helping to sustain and reproduce the norms of a settler-colonial state that continues to displace and marginalize Indigenous people. As I think of the possibility of forming alliances between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people of colour, I am also alert to how non-Indigenous people of colour's existence in Canada is always already predicated on the displacement of Indigenous people. Is the presence of non-Indigenous people of colour in Canada always a threat to Indigenous sovereignty, and if that is the case, where do we go from here?

Bonita Lawrence and Enakshi Dua's foundational work, "Decolonizing Antiracism," explores how anti-racism discourse can be premised on the colonial project. Lawrence and Dua explore how non-Indigenous people of colour in Canada are implicated in settler-colonialism through their settlement on Indigenous land (134), and as Lakhani's case demonstrates, people of colour can become representatives of repressive states, often leaving the oppressive systems of the state intact. Lawrence and Dua argue that non-Indigenous people of colour in Canada need to examine how acceptance into the

Canadian nation through citizenship puts them into “colonial relationships with Aboriginal peoples” (134). It is also important to note that those with constitutional rights play a part in voting for governments who have not significantly prioritized the needs of Indigenous people. Dua and Lawrence explore this specifically in the case of the Charlottetown Accord (134), but their arguments are certainly applicable to Canada’s political systems more generally, because people of colour can and do help to vote in governments that do not consider the circumstances many Indigenous communities face in the wake of continuing colonization.

While in this dissertation I have drawn on scholarship that argues that multicultural policy in Canada is a tool that is used to further displace Indigenous people by a settler population (including a settler population of colour), Lawrence and Dua also point to the complicated nature of immigration policies in Canada where “opening borders” can have complex political repercussions for Indigenous people: if Indigenous people speak out against immigration, their arguments can easily be coopted by anti-immigrant racism. Conversely, if they support immigration they then may be, “support[ing] struggles of people of color that fail to take seriously the reality of ongoing colonization” (136). While I take Nandita Sharma and Cynthia Wright’s points (in response to Lawrence and Dua) that not all relationships between Indigenous people and non-Indigenous people of colour are necessarily colonial (132), I do not think this means that non-Indigenous people of colour are not *implicated* in the project of colonization in Canada. Malissa Phung points out that there needs to be more than the “recognition or acknowledgment that people of colour are complicit settlers” (292), and she brings up the

complicated nature of settlerhood by asking if “colonial settlerhood can be stratified” because of variances in access to power (292). Refugees, for example, and those fleeing violence and political prosecution, as Phung points out, are seeking a place to settle and are prioritizing their needs for survival (291). Their circumstances may be quite different from other people of colour in Canada who draw on the same narratives of hard work and upward class mobility that have been mobilized to justify settler-colonialism in order to also stake a claim to their place in Canada (294). Though these two experiences within the settler-colonial state can be quite different, they can surely overlap as well. Phung argues that there are limitations and risks in homogenizing all settlers in Canada, and it is more productive to think about how “settler privileges are anything but natural and well deserved,” which can “constitute a first step in supporting Indigenous activism against settler domination” (296).

I am thinking, here, beyond the question of who is a settler, to how settler privileges are doled out, to whom, and why. Furthermore, is there a way that non-Indigenous people of colour can reimagine their place in Canada through addressing colonial histories and the current settler privileges that have come to bear on the strained relationships between Indigenous people and non-Indigenous people of colour.

Considering reconciliation, Rinaldo Walcott states,

the politics of reconciliation ask us to come into the apology as the people Europe invented, not as people we once were. And one cannot be romantic about a past, given that how history has intervened to be a part of the conversation often means one must in some way work with Europe’s

violently profound re-ordering of the globe and the peoples within. (346)

Indigenous people and non-Indigenous people of colour cannot simply return to the “people we once were” (even my act of naming throughout this dissertation illustrates the difficulty of this feat), and are often forced to work within the “violent reorderings” of the world. Thinking about and with these histories, we might be able to “grapple with the brutalities that have brought us together in these new geo-political zones” (Walcott 346), and explore the past, present, and future attempts to resist the impacts of global capitalism (347). Walcott’s work leads me to think about the kinds of histories that have brought “us” here, in this moment, not just in terms of geographic location, but in how we interact with one another. For example, how are the histories of Muslims in Canada entangled with colonial projects as well as projects that might also resist ongoing colonialism? How can Muslim communities mobilize a resistance that can open up the possibility of decolonized futures?

Future research could examine how Muslim and Indigenous communities in Canada can have meaningful conversations that both address colonial histories and colonial presents, and political endeavors that can disrupt current colonial practices, even if they favour certain sections of the Muslim community in Canada. While histories of racism are intricately connected to Canada’s nation building, at times, the nation has favoured some racialized bodies over others, depending on how these bodies could help the forward march of the colonial nation. Muslims could consider how and why the Canadian government might prioritize their political needs at some moments, and turn them into threats at other moments, and how their recognition by the state relies on the

abjection of those that the state deems “others.” I find Coleman’s work helpful in thinking about how Indigenous people and people of colour can be put into conversation with each other without these conversations being mediated by the white nation (“Indigenous Place” 63). Coleman emphasizes the importance of difference between Indigeneity and diaspora, and I think that it is within these differences that conversations can begin, but they cannot just be conversations. Muslim communities in Canada must take active steps to disrupt colonial power relations because disrupting, resisting, and dismantling the “model minority” image and the impetus to be incorporated into what is considered a “good” immigrant/person of colour, can create a space of solidarity with those who are deemed “uncivil” (Chakraborty 212).

Racialized non-Indigenous people, in the context of this study—Muslim communities, must recognize their place within the settler-colonial state as implicated in dispossessing Indigenous people of their land and resources, and participating in cultural genocide, even if Muslims too are victims of Canadian state policies. So many in Muslim communities are encouraged to aspire to own land and participate in employment opportunities that are often (directly) connected to resource extraction, the exploitation of land, or turning land into property, and they are also encouraged to seek acceptance into the Canadian nation through citizenship. What would it mean if, for example, non-Indigenous people of colour did not see a Muslim woman as a representative for The Queen as positive, and instead saw the position of lieutenant-governor as being the representative of a violent and colonial monarch? In writing about settler-colonialism in education, Eve Tuck and Wayne Yang argue that “solidarity is an uneasy, reserved, and

unsettled matter that neither reconciles present grievances nor forecloses future conflict. There are parts of the decolonization project that are not easily absorbed by human rights or civil rights based approaches to educational equity” (3). Tuck and Yang remind us that solidarity is not easy, and it does not prevent future conflict. The *potential* for solidarity, however, can only come through disrupting our (Muslim settlers’) comfort within the colonial state and this discomfort must encompass concrete actions that include relinquishing privileges, land, and resources. If we are to truly think about the violent histories that have brought “us” here, and the violence of the present, we must also think about how we are participants in those violent systems, and how we can work to dismantle them.

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