

Title - Overt Symbols of Faith: 9/11 and the Muslim American Experience

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Abstract:

This paper examines the impact of 9/11 on both Western and Muslim American communities in the United States. September 11, 2001 is one of the most formative days in contemporary American history in regard to domestic security, global policy, foreign affairs, and national economy. Studies reveal that 90 percent of polled American adults exhibited at least one symptom of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and 44 percent showed substantial symptoms of stress, caused by the attacks. However, for Muslim Americans, the terrorist attacks on September 11, ignited a wave of public outrage against Islam and separated Muslim communities from the rest of the nation. This paper seeks to understand why statistical studies reveal a 1700 percent increase in violence against Muslim Americans in the first six months following the event while portraying the evidence through a balanced and nuanced approach. This paper argues that due to ideologies such as Orientalism, that perpetuated religious and racial stereotypes, people who resembled Middle Eastern coloration were homogenized with the terrorists and othered from Western identity. This study supplements existing materials by combining Muslim American experiences, sociological surveys, FBI statistical publications, global news articles, historical contextual analysis, and Presidential documents in order to provide a comprehensive overview of the events that happened on September 11, 2001 and the public response in the aftermath of the event.