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Limits of Panethnicity: An Alternative Model of Group Formation

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Abstract

Existing theories of panethnicity in the United States concentrate on Asian Americans and Latinos, two umbrella groups that originally coalesced during the 1960s Civil Rights era. Although the role played by the state is recognized as a central factor in panethnic development, we argue that this pivotal variable is heavily dependent on historical context. Through a case study of newly emerging ethnic minorities (Middle Eastern and South Asian Americans in the post-9/11 era), we reexamine existing theories of panethnicity at a time when the state plays a narrowly-targeted punitive role. Using an innovative methodology which draws on a wide range of novel sources, we document the way in which the ethnic "Arab" and religious "Muslim" labels have been reinforced at the expense of panethnic labels like "Middle Eastern" and "South Asian." Accordingly, we develop an alternative model of group formation which prioritizes historical context and the role of the state.

Keywords: Panethnicity; ethnic boundaries; Middle Eastern; South Asian; Arab; Muslim.

Introduction

The study of panethnicity, or the grouping of various nationalities and ethnicities under a single label, has made critically important conceptual and empirical contributions to our understanding of the social construction of group boundaries and racial formation (Omi and Winant 1986,

Espiritu 1992). The existing theories, however, are largely based on empirical studies of Asian

Americans and Latinos, panethnic groups which were consolidated in the immediate post-Civil

Rights era, and hence may have limitations when applied to other groups in a different historical

context. Consequently, the field suffers from sample-selection bias that weakens the ability to

determine the relative importance of the purported factors associated with panethnic formation.

Moving beyond this methodological bias helps to clarify which factors are necessary and/or

sufficient.

Post-9/11 research on Middle Easterners and South Asians, potential contemporary

panethnic groups in the United States, indicate that we are not merely witnessing a replay of the

formation of previous panethnic groups (Bakalian and Bozorgmehr 2009, 2011). Using the

existing models of panethnicity, one would anticipate the emergence of a panethnic category

among Middle Easterners and a panethnic category among South Asian Americans, or even a

large social construction encompassing both groups. Not only does each of these groups share

internal commonalities which can foster panethnicity, they have also been frequently

marginalized (stereotyped as being outside society's mainstream religious groups), racialized

(turbaned Sikh men mistaken for Muslims), and demonized (perceived as enemies of the state),

especially after 9/11. Within this hostile climate, both groups have had incentives to mobilize and

act collectively, with the advantage of borrowing successful political strategies and tactics

pioneered by Asian Americans and Latinos, and tapping into group-oriented legal opportunities

and protection created decades earlier during the Civil-Rights era. Despite these contributing

factors and a decade of targeting and profiling, the Middle Eastern and South Asian categories

have failed to crystalize across national, ethnic, and religious lines (see also Love 2009). In this

paper, we pose the question: Why have these panethnic categories not developed in the

traditional sense, either together, or independently, even after 9/11? Through case studies of these groups, we hope to address the broader theoretical questions around panethnic group formation.

Background of Groups Under Study
Middle Eastern and North African (MENA) immigrants to the United States are diverse, representing many nationalities, ethnicities and religions. MENA consists of the twenty-two nations that make up the Arab League as well as the three non-Arab countries of Iran, Israel, and Turkey. While the turn of the twentieth century Arab and Armenian immigrant pioneers in the United States were predominantly Christian, the post-1965 newcomers are predominantly Muslim. Although Muslim South Asian immigrants from Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Pakistan, and India are officially classified under the Asian American category, they share cultural and religious traditions among themselves, and have more in common culturally (religion, language, food, and music) with Middle Easterners than with East and Southeast Asians (Leonard 1997, Shankar and Srikanth 1998, Kibria 2006). Furthermore, both Middle Eastern and South Asian Americans experienced substantial post-9/11 backlash, and the protracted wars in Afghanistan and Iraq have aggravated the situation, feeding stereotypes, prejudice and discrimination against these groups (Gold and Bozorgmehr 2007; Jamal and Naber 2008; Bakalian and Bozorgmehr 2009; Maira 2009; Abraham, Howell and Shryock 2011).

Middle Eastern immigrants are one of the most ethnically and religiously diverse panethnic groups in America, yet they share cultural, linguistic and religious identities that cut across national boundaries. Generally, these immigrants identify themselves along national (e.g., Iranian, Israeli, Turkey), supranational or ethnic (e.g., Arab), or ethno-religious (e.g., Armenian, Jewish) categories. Most of the Arab immigrants who originate from Arab countries accept the supranational ethnic label of "Arab American," defined as people who share the Arabic language and culture (Bozorgmehr and Bakalian 2013, www.mearo.org). "Arab" is not a panethnic label.

Rather, it is an ethnic label like "Chinese" within the panethic label of "Asian American." In the same vein, while Muslims are increasingly treated as a panethnic group, they are in reality a mutli-national religious group, like Christians.

South Asians in the United States are a diverse and even more rapidly growing group (Kibria 2006), further contributing to their national-origin diversity. They are religiously, linguistically, and ethnically heterogeneous, but the predominance of Muslim religion among Afghans, Bangladeshis, and Pakistanis is an important additional source of group identification. While Asian Indians comprise the largest segment of the South Asian American population (Kibria 2006), the small Muslim component of this very heterogeneous national-origin group identifies with the other Muslim countries in the region (Leonard 1997).

Literature Review and Application to the Case Study
Lopez and Espiritu (1990: 200) were the first to formally define the concept of panethnicity, referring to it as "the development of bridging organizations and solidarities among subgroups of ethnic collectivities that are often seen as homogenous by outsiders." They make a distinction between cultural and structural characteristics that affect panethnicity (Lopez and Espiritu 1990: Table 1). They argue that while Asian Americans are diverse culturally (language and religion), their structural commonalities (class, race, and geographical dispersion) override this in the creation of panethnicity. Furthermore, external factors that were instrumental in developing Asian American panethnicity include violence against the group, outsiders' perceptions of Asians as "foreigners," racial lumping as an official legal minority by the government, and eventual eligibility for affirmative action and other set-aside programs (see also Espiritu 1992, Espiritu and Ong 1994, Min 2006). Generation (first, second, third) is the only identified structural characteristic that they do not share (Lopez and Espiritu 1990). Although Lopez and Espiritu assert that both internal cultural factors and structural factors are important, they conclude that

the structural factors are more salient in the development and success of panethnic groupings (e.g., race for Asian Americans).

Espiritu (1992) extends this argument by isolating the root causes of panethnicity among Asian Americans as (1) racialization by dominant groups, and (2) subsequent ethnic mobilization and social constructions by Asian Americans themselves. According to Omi and Winant (1994: 55) racialization is "the sociohistorical process by which racial categories are created, inhabited, transformed, and destroyed." It is through this process that racial categories, and the stigma often associated with them, change over time. Hence, some historically non-white groups can become white, and vice versa. For instance, previously-racialized groups in America, like Italians and Jews, are now racially considered a part of the dominant white mainstream, while Middle Eastern and South Asian groups have become increasingly racialized since 9/11. As is the case with most socially constructed categories, panethnicity is inherently unstable and fluid. Therefore, it can be forged or dismantled depending on historical circumstances. However, it is important to note that panethnicity is most contested and fragile in the initial stages of group formation. After panethnicity is established, it can become institutionalized through codified norms, repetitive daily use, and protection by vested interests. Studies of Asian American panethnicity have shown that panethnic groups are continuously in flux, often due to internal conflicts (e.g., the ambiguous status of Pacific Islanders within the Asian American category) (Espiritu 2013). However, these more nuanced formulations still begin with the existing panethnic categories.

Omi and Winant (1986) further suggest that panethnic organizations made up of marginalized minorities have successfully mobilized to make claims on the state and combat racial discrimination. For instance, Asian American umbrella organizations have been particularly instrumental in spearheading the group's panethnic agenda through their

involvement in electoral politics, activism, and the establishment of social service organizations (Espiritu 1992). More specifically, Okamoto (2003: 813) defines panethnic mobilization as "the public action of people from two or more national-origin groups to express grievances or claims on behalf of the collective, pan-national group." This claims-making can be directed at the host society at a variety of different levels (Wei 1993). Okamoto points to the shifting and layered nature of panethnicity, which she attributes to external and structural factors. This reflects new theorizing about groups and boundaries, a cutting-edge topic in sociology (Alba and Nee 2003, Brubaker 2004, Wimmer 2013). The multiplicity of possible affiliations and identities thus allows for the contraction and expansion of the ethnic boundaries in efforts toward mobilization. This approach allows for a more dynamic and nuanced understanding of panethnic group formation.

In a recent synthesis of the panethnicity literature, Espiritu (2012) makes a clear distinction between institutional and individual panethnicity. While panethnicity does not necessarily occur on a subjective individual basis (even members of second- and subsequent generations often identify by national-origin), panethnicity is more likely to occur along organizational lines which cut across various ethnic groups within the broader umbrella group. Like earlier studies of panethnicity, Espiritu's recent publication focuses on the classic cases of panethnicity (Asian Americans and Latinos), though she is attentive to the variation within these groups. The discussion still leaves out groups, such as Middle Easterners and South Asians, who are increasingly visible after 9/11, yet among whom panethnicity has not even emerged on an intragroup level.

Like Asian Americans and Latinos, both Middle Easterners and South Asians have some cultural commonalities (language, religion, geographical origin) and structural similarities (immigration history, geographical concentration in the United States, relatively high

socioeconomic status, generation, Census classification). More significantly, both groups have

been subjected to severe external pressures such as stereotyping, prejudice and discrimination,

hate crimes and bias incidents, and a string of post-9/11 government initiatives (see Bakalian and

Bozorgmehr 2009: Chapter 5 and Appendix).

The hate crimes and bias incidents committed against members of the targeted groups are

well-documented (see Jamal and Naber 2008; Maira 2009; Tehranian 2009; Bakalian and

Bozorgmehr 2009, 2011; Abraham, Howell and Shryock 2011). These and other studies have

also catalogued the devastating state policies and initiatives that have singled out Middle Eastern,

South Asian and Muslim men since 9/11. If we disaggregate the post-9/11 backlash into its

components (scapegoating, bias incidents and hate crimes, and government initiatives), non-

Arabs and non-Muslims (e.g., Sikhs, Iranians, Turks, Armenians), have also suffered the

consequences of targeting and profiling. Specifically, two government initiatives targeted non-

Arabs: the National Security Entry-Exit Registration System (NSEERS) and the required

registration with the former Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS). The NSEERS dragnet

included non-Arab countries such as Afghanistan, Eritrea, Indonesia, Iran, and Pakistan.

Similarly, the INS registration program's coverage was also extended to include Iranians.

While there are no probability surveys of all Middle Eastern and South Asian groups in

the United States, many of these populations are covered by 2007 and 2011 Pew nationally

representative surveys of Muslim Americans. The results of both surveys indicate that over half

of the respondents consistently reported that it has become more difficult for Muslims living in

the United States since 9/11. Furthermore, only a negligible percentage (1-2%) reported life

getting easier since 9/11. Almost half (40% in 2007 and 43% in 2011) reported personal

experiences with discrimination or prejudice within the year before they were surveyed (Pew

Research Center 2007, 2011).

Like the Asian American example used by Lopez and Espiritu (1990), Middle Easterners in the United States are also culturally heterogeneous in that they speak a variety of languages (e.g., Arabic, Persian, Turkish, Armenian, Hebrew) and practice a wide range of religions and denominations (e.g., Shiite and Sunni Islam, Christianity, Judaism). Similarly, South Asian Americans use a variety of languages (e.g., Hindi, Urdu, Bengali) and practice many religions (e.g., Hinduism, Buddhism, Sikhism, Islam). As noted above, however, cultural similarities and differences figure more prominently in the identificational dimension of panethnicity, rather than the organizational dimension. Thus, this diversity is not necessarily detrimental to the emergence of panethnic solidarities (see also Love 2009). Critics of panethnicity often confuse these two important analytical dimensions, and accuse researchers of lumping diverse groups together.

Middle Eastern Americans also have similar structural commonalities to Asians, with the important exception of race (Lopez and Espiritu 1990). In terms of social class or socioeconomic status, Middle Easterners have generally high levels of education, very high self-employment rates, and largely hold professional specialty occupations, partly because many arrived as foreign college students and elite exiles (Gold and Bozorgmehr 2007). Entrepreneurship and managerial/professional occupations are widely considered as the two most successful modes of economic adaptation for immigrants groups (Portes and Rumbaut 2006), and therefore Middle Eastern Americans have high socioeconomic status overall. Middle Easterners are also highly concentrated in a few states (California, New York, Michigan, Washington, Maryland/Virginia, Illinois) and converge in metropolitan areas (Los Angeles, New York, Detroit, Washington, D.C., Chicago). In terms of generation, only Armenians and Arabs have been in the United States long enough to have more than three generations represented. The rest of the Middle Eastern groups (Iranians, Turks, Egyptians, etc.) are relative newcomers whose second generation is coming of age. Concerning racial breakdown, while Middle Eastern groups are officially classified as white

by the U.S. government, there is a wide range of phenotypes among this population. However, there are similarities in physical appearance that characterize most Middle Eastern groups (www.mearo.org).

Lopez and Espiritu (1990) distinguish Indo-Americans from Asian Americans, and as such, do not subsume South Asians under the Asian American category. However, increasingly, this group has been subsumed under the Asian American category (e.g., the U.S. Census). Yet, just as South Asian Americans have their own cultural commonalities, they have distinct structural commonalities which set them apart from other Asians (e.g., geographical concentration on the east coast, newer generational status, relatively low rates of self-employment) (Kibria 2006).

Besides cultural and structural commonalities within panethnic groups, racialization is another key factor identified in the theories of panethnic group formation reviewed above. Interestingly, racialization of Arabs, Muslims, and South Asians is a popular topic among the new generation of scholars (Jamal and Naber 2008, Maira 2009). Drawing on the experiences of other minority groups, Arab and Muslim American activist-scholars have used the concept of racialization to discuss the discrepancy between official categorization and actual treatment of Arabs and Muslims after 9/11 (reviewed in Shryock 2008, Bakalian and Bozorgmehr 2011). However, Arabs and Muslims are not the only Middle Eastern or South Asian groups who have been racialized since 9/11 (groups that are neither Muslim nor Arab have felt the brunt of racialization as well). Furthermore, the new studies have not been couched in the "racial formation perspective" to address how Arabs and especially Muslims, as supranational ethnic and panreligious groups, respectively, differ from other panethnic groups such as Asian Americans (for an exception, see Rana 2011).

In sum, despite the presence of many of the causal determinants of panethnicity identified in the literature, we have not yet witnessed the emergence of Middle Eastern or South Asian

panethnic labels. Moreover, if 9/11, and the extreme backlash which ensued, did not result in this panethnic formation, it is unlikely that normative processes will do so on their own. Further challenging the theoretical expectations, instead of new panethnic group formations, we have witnessed the reinforcement of the ethnic label of Arab American and the religious label of Muslim American, as will be documented in the following section. Through the exploration of the reasons behind this distinctive trajectory, we plan to test the existing theory of panethnicity and offer an alternative model.

Methods and Findings

In order to document the range of labels and categories applied to this complex population, we utilized four different methods and sources: (1) a list of tax-exempt, non-profit organizations using Urban Institute's National Center for Charitable Statistics' database; (2) a ProQuest National Newspapers Premier search of articles published in three major national newspapers (*The New York Times*, *The Los Angeles Times*, and *The Washington Post*) in the decades before and after 9/11; (3) a GoogleBooks search of scholarly books published in the decades before and after 9/11; and (4) a GoogleTrends enumeration of Web search volume over time. By drawing from this broad and novel range of sources, we are able to assess how different labels applied to the groups under study have become accepted and reified by community-based organizations (CBOs), print media, the scholarly community, and the public at large.

Omi and Winant (1986), and subsequently, Espiritu (1992) emphasize the emergence of ethnic umbrella organizations as a major indicator of panethnic group formation. Following this approach, we conducted a search of ethnic and religious non-profit organizations that cover the full spectrum of groups under study. The National Center for Charitable Statistics (NCCS), compiled by the renowned Urban Institute, is the most comprehensive database of tax-exempt non-profit organizations in the United States. NCCS works closely with the Internal Revenue

Service (IRS) to include all local and national organizations which file for tax-exempt status. The

database provides a variety of useful data on these organizations (including year of founding,

financial information, geographic location, etc.). The search engine provided by NCCS is widely

used by researchers in the academic community (see www.nccs.urban.org).

Using the NCCS database, we conducted a search using unhyphenated labels (e.g., Arab,

Muslim, Iranian, Pakistani). After extracting only the organizations based in the United States,

our results correspond to the categories under study, even if all included organizations do not use

the word "American" in their titles. Furthermore, we omitted organizations which were clearly

not related to the populations under study. Finally, we divided the resultant list by rule date (i.e.,

the date each organization received its recognition of exemption from the IRS).

There are many more Muslim organizations than any of the other categories (N=394,

Figure 1). This is partially due to the fact that many mosques in the United States file as tax-

exempt non-profits with the IRS. The next largest number of organizations were Arab (N=118).

National-origin categories like Iranian and Turkish also had surprisingly numerous organizations

(N=101 and 104, respectively), but many of these are locally-based professional associations

given the high socioeconomic characteristics of these groups. There are only 58 South Asian

organizations, and even fewer Middle Eastern ones (N=18). The combined Arab and Muslim

category is not listed in because there were no organizations in the database with this label in

their title (Figure 1).

FIGURE 1 HERE

By dividing our list of organizations between those with rule dates of 2000 and before

and 2001 and after, we see that even a decade after 9/11 there has been little organizational

development for the Middle Eastern category, and only slightly more along South Asian lines

(Figure 1). On the other hand, Muslim American organizations, which were already quite

numerous before 9/11, proliferated afterwards. Surprisingly, the number of Arab American

organizations did not grow nearly as much as Muslim ones. The number of national origin

organizations (i.e., Iranian, Turkish, Afghan, Pakistani) also grew. After conducting a chi-square (

$x^2 ¿$ test, we found that the percentage of organizations that were established before or after

9/11 differ significantly by ethnic and religious categories. In sum, when the populations under

study form organizations, they do so along more narrow ethnic and religious lines (Arab and

Muslim, respectively), much more so than South Asian and especially Middle Eastern panethnic

lines (Figure 1). Part of the reason for this is that non-Arab Middle Easterners (i.e. Iranian,

Turkish) are still more likely to form nationality-based associations, rather than join others to

form panethnic Middle Eastern organizations. The same applies to Afghans, and to a lesser

extent, to Pakistanis in relation to the South Asian category. Therefore, groups subsumed under

Middle Eastern and South Asian categories are opting for religious, ethnic and national

organizations over these panethnic ones to a large degree, even after 9/11.
        For our newspaper search, we considered two major databases, LexisNexis and ProQuest.

While LexisNexis has traditionally been used as the key source for print media analyses,

ProQuest has more recently emerged as a leading newspaper database. ProQuest National

Newspapers Premier has full searchable text from the 1980s to the present of over twenty-five

local, regional and national newspapers. By using ProQuest, we gained full access to archives of

the *New York Times*, *Los Angeles Times* and *Washington Post*, for the two periods under

investigation. All three are widely considered to be the top national newspapers in the United

States, and the inclusion of the *New York Times* and *Los Angeles Times* are vital to our research

because these two metropolitan areas are home to the largest and most diverse Middle Eastern,

South Asian, and Muslim American populations in the country. ProQuest is the exclusive

provider of *Los Angeles Times* archives (this newspaper restricts LexisNexis searches to the last

six months only), further accounting for our decision to use this comprehensive database.

Choosing specific search terms presented some challenges. When we used general labels

like "Middle Eastern," "Arab," and "Muslim," we came up with an inordinate number of articles,

many of which dealt with the Middle East and the Muslim world, two geographical areas which

dominate international news. In order to avoid this problem, we tried using more specific terms

such as "Arab American(s)," "Muslim American(s)," etc. These searches resulted in more

manageable numbers and correspond to our topic far more directly and accurately. We divided

our search between the time since 9/11 and an equivalent time period before. We used 11 April

2013 as the endpoint for the post-9/11 period, in order to avoid the deluge of articles using the

Muslim American label after the Boston Marathon Bombings (15 April 2013). Since this

endpoint fell eleven years and seven months after 9/11, we used the same time period for the pre-

9/11 phase.

The total numbers of articles using specified ethnic and religious labels in the *New York*

Times (NYT), the *Los Angeles Times* (LA Times) and the *Washington Post* (The Post) in each

time period are reported in Figure 2. Results and trends indicate substantial increases in the use

of Arab, Muslim, and national-origin categories after 9/11. While use of the "South Asian

American" and "Middle Eastern American" labels also increased, their growth was small and

their numbers remained relatively negligible. Again, a Chi-Square (x^2) test showed that the

percentage of articles that were published before or after 9/11 differ significantly by ethnic and

religious categories.

FIGURE 2 HERE

Next, we examined the use and reification of these ethnic and religious labels and

categories in scholarly book titles published before and after 9/11 (1989-2000 and 2001-2012).

Although we would have liked to include numbers of both books and articles on these

populations, there is no central database that covers all scholarly journal articles. Furthermore,

many journals are not searchable electronically, and even for those that are searchable, not all are

identifiable through platforms like GoogleScholar. Therefore, we chose to limit our search to

books published by university and scholarly presses. Using GoogleBooks

(www.books.google.com), one of the most comprehensive searchable compilations of book titles

available on the Internet, we looked for all book titles and subtitles about the groups under study.
　　　We charted the number of major scholarly books for selected ethnic, religious, and

combined categories from 1989-2000 and 2001-2012 (see Figure 3). It shows that the number of

books using the Arab American and Muslim American labels in their titles, was higher than other

categories before 9/11, but noticeably increased after. Furthermore, after 9/11, the most book

titles fall under the Arab American category and Muslim American category. A negligible

number of books use the Middle Eastern American category in their title, both before and after

9/11. The panethnic South Asian American category is also underrepresented, when compared

with the religious Muslim label and ethnic Arab label. While the pre- and post- 9/11 numbers did

not vary in this category, the books published after 9/11 were more focused on South Asian

Muslims than those published before. These data indicate the relative prevalence of the Arab

American and Muslim American labels, as well as the coinage of the combined Arab and Muslim

American label, in scholarly production since 9/11. The pre- and post-9/11 differences within

each category, however, have to be interpreted more cautiously, because the differences were not

found to be statistically significant, most likely due to the very small Ns.
                              FIGURE 3 HERE
　　　In order to gauge the use of these labels by the general public, we employed the new and

innovative tools provided by GoogleTrends (www.google.com/trends/). This platform provides

the average Web volume for all terms searched through Google since 2004. Through

GoogleTrends, users are able to view graphs showing search trends over time in various cities

and countries around the world. We narrowed our own search to the United States. The results

are reported numerically on a scale of 0-100, with 100 representing the peak search volume.
FIGURE 4 HERE
From 2004-2012, the "Arab American" and "Muslim American" labels have the highest

average Web search volume (Figure 4). These are followed by the "Iranian American" and

"Turkish American" national-origin labels. Once again, the "South Asian American" and

"Middle Eastern American" labels were used least frequently. This indicator is generally

consistent with our other findings, as well as our overarching argument, indicating that the

"Arab" and "Muslim" labels and categories have become ingrained in and reified by a variety of

segments of American society.

An Alternative Model of Group Formation
In order to understand the lack of emergence of the Middle Eastern and South Asian panethnic

categories, we must revisit the existing model of panethnicity and highlight the role played by

the state in different historical contexts. By only looking at panethnic groups that formed during

the post-Civil Rights era, the existing models of panethnicity inadvertently treat the role of the

state of a constant. While major panethnic categories (e.g., Asian Americans, Latinos) emerged

from the post-Civil Rights era, the Middle Eastern and South Asian cases are evolving in a time

of international war, terrorism, and crisis. These two different contexts are important in

determining the different roles played by the state, and the resulting group formation and

mobilization by impacted populations. At a time when the state does not single out groups

punitively, but instead compensates disadvantaged minority groups more generally, umbrella

groups can more actively determine their own boundaries, and national-origin groups have more

incentive to be subsumed under these broad panethnic groupings. When the state targets specific

groups along ethnic (Arab) and religious (Muslim) lines, it becomes much more difficult for

groups to challenge these imposed categories and boundaries, and national-origin groups have a

disincentive to enlist in broad panethnic groupings.

In our alternative model of group formation, historical events and their resulting political

contexts are the independent variables, the role of the state vis-à-vis minority groups is the

intervening variable, and group formation and mobilization are the dependent variables (Figure

5). Different historical contexts (i.e., post-Civil Rights movement vs. Post-9/11 era) result in

different state responses toward minority groups. In the Civil Rights case, the state engaged in a

compensatory role, by passing Civil Rights laws and creating set-aside programs, affirmative

action, and entitlements for disadvantaged minorities. In the post-9/11 era, the state has played a

punitive role through the passage of discriminatory policies and initiatives which target

scapegoated minorities. In response, in the post-Civil Rights era, minority groups such as Asian

Americans and Latinos, engaged in instrumental mobilization and solidarity along broad

panethnic group lines, following in the footsteps of African Americans. In the post-9/11 era, the

impacted groups have engaged in what we refer to as defensive mobilization based on narrowly

defined ethnic and religious categories imposed by the state (i.e., Arabs and Muslims). Ironically,

even this defensive mobilization owes its existence to the opportunity structures put in place by

the Civil Rights movement, hence the broken arrow between these two outcomes (Figure 5). Our

model is dynamic in the sense that both the role of the state and mobilization and group

formation have a recursive relationship, hence the two-way solid arrows (Figure 5).
                                    FIGURE 5 HERE
The panethnicity literature has dealt with the "lumping" role played by the state and

society in the creation of group labels (e.g., Asian Americans, Latinos). However, it is important

to make a distinction between the role of government and the role of society-at-large. These two

are not always the same, especially in times of crisis, when minorities frequently become

scapegoats. While governmental targeting usually singles out specific groups for reprisals

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through legislative initiatives and policies, members of the host society are more likely to engage in indiscriminate stereotyping and scapegoating. For instance, the mistaken association between turban-wearing Sikhs and Osama Bin Laden led to societal scapegoating of this group immediately after 9/11. In fact, Balbir Singh Sodhi, a Sikh man, was the first person murdered in a 9/11-related hate crime. Despite ongoing profiling and discrimination, the Sikhs were not specifically targeted by post-9/11 government initiatives, since they are neither Arab nor Muslim. Through mobilization, Sikhs themselves have worked tirelessly to challenge misguided associations with terrorism by clarifying their distinctive religion and culture. At the same time, they have forged partnerships and coalitions to show support for targeted groups, especially Muslims, another religious minority. Although societal discrimination has failed to make a distinction between Muslims and Sikhs, governmental targeting has been more focused. Thus, while Arabs and Muslims have also mobilized after 9/11, and continue to do so, they have not managed to challenge these two labels so starkly defined by punitive government initiatives.

Conversely, in the post-Civil Rights era, some groups mobilized to be included in official categories conferred by the government, because of the advantages entailed. Asian Indians are a case in point. Classified as white in the 1970 Census, this highly-diverse group organized to be counted as a distinct racial category. In response, the Census Bureau placed them under the Asian American category in the 1980 Census. Subsequently, other South Asian groups (Bangladeshis, Pakistanis, Sri Lankans) were also subsumed under the label of Asian American, but as write-in options under the "Other Asian" category on the census. In the post-Civil Rights era, newly available programs designated for official minorities served as an incentive for marginalized groups to proactively and instrumentally mobilize for inclusion in governmentally-designated panethnic minority categories. However, in the current context of crisis, the same groups can be forced to defensively mobilize along lines created by negative government targeting (see

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Appendix in Bakalian and Bozorgmehr, 2009 for "A Time Line of Government Initiatives and Actions"). Therefore, in the post-9/11 era, when South Asian groups are targeted as Muslims, they have come to protectively mobilize along religious lines, bringing them closer to Middle Eastern Muslims, a group that they culturally and religiously have more in common with (Leonard 1997, Maira 2009). The ethnic and religious positioning of South Asians, according to the demands of different historical epochs, reflects the role of instrumental versus defensive mobilization in determining broad versus narrow group boundaries and formations (see Figure 5).

A conducive opportunity structure is a necessary, if not sufficient, condition for ethnic mobilization (Bakalian and Bozorgmehr 2009). The opportunity structure put in place by the Civil Rights era has partially made it possible for groups to mobilize and engage in claims making against the state, a context that was not available to maligned groups prior to the 1960s. Not only did the Civil Rights movement create a basis for making demands for equal rights and entitlements, but it also created a conducive structure for protective mobilization in times of crisis. Despite the devastating effects of internment on Japanese Americans during World War II, large-scale mobilization by this ethnic group was hampered by the risk of being seen as un-American, and did not fully mature until the Redress Movement of the 1970s. However, after 9/11, Arabs and Muslims immediately mobilized. In response to punitive targeting by the state, narrow group formations (i.e., Arabs and Muslims) were used as the bases of defensive ethnic and religious mobilization, which in turn further crystalized these ethnic and religious boundaries.

Conclusion and Discussion

Given the existing theoretical formulations of the panethnicity literature, we would expect

Middle Eastern and/or South Asian panethnic categories to have arisen, especially after severe

post-9/11 backlash against these populations. Not only do these groups share similar cultural

traits and are subjected to similar structural pressures as other major panethnic groups such as

Asian Americans, but given the relatively smaller population size of these groups in the United

States, they should have even more of an impetus to organize collectively.

In the absence of external lumping by the state and host society prior to 9/11, national

(e.g., Iranian, Turkish, Bangladeshi, Pakistani) and supranational (e.g., Arab) categories were the

main ethnic labels used to describe major Middle Eastern and South Asian groups in America.

Although the Muslim label was often invoked, it did not dominate the earlier discourse about

these populations. The post-9/11 backlash has served to reify "Arab and Muslim" as an

awkwardly conflated category, combining two groups that are neither mutually exclusive nor

exhaustive. These designations can most likely be attributed to the fact that all nineteen of the

September 11th hijackers were Muslim Arabs. Although there is overlap between these two

groups, all Arabs are not Muslim, especially in America. While the post-1965 immigrants from

the Arab world have been predominantly Muslim, the pioneers who came to this country at the

turn of the twentieth century were mostly Christian. As a result, the current Arab American

population is religiously diverse. The conflation of Arabs and Muslims in the post-9/11 era is

further problematic because it implies that all targeted non-Arabs (e.g., Iranians, Turks, and

South Asians) are Muslims, which is not necessarily the case. Some Christian Arab groups (e.g.,

Assyrians, Chaldeans) have even mobilized to disassociate from the Muslim Arab label and its

associated liabilities.

Muslims in the United States are an even more heterogeneous group than Arabs, yet

Muslim American and "American Islam" have come to be treated as a monolithic entity and

mistaken for an ethnic category after 9/11. American Muslims hail from countries all over the world, though mainly from the Middle East, Southeast and South Asia, and Africa. Furthermore, African American Muslims and other American converts (i.e., whites and Latinos) to Islam are conspicuously absent from the "Arab and Muslim" terminology. Although these indigenous Muslim groups were spared much of the immediate post-9/11 backlash, they are increasingly impacted with the threat of so-called "homegrown terrorism," and thereby their exclusion from the putative Muslim category is problematic. Furthermore, the essentialized use of this religious label implies that all American Muslims are devout and observant, and hence privilege this identity over their nationality. In fact, many Muslims in the United States are secular, cultural, or nominal Muslims, and identify more strongly with their national origin than with their religion. There is also the assumption that immigrants from predominantly-Muslim countries are all Muslim. Given their origins as political refugees and exiles, there are many non-Muslim ethno-religious minorities (most prominently Christians and Jews, but also other smaller groups) from predominantly-Muslim countries who have emigrated to the United States.

In accordance with the existing literature on panethnicity, this paper takes an institutional approach (e.g., organizational) to the subject, rather than the more subjective identificational one (e.g., ethnic identity-based). When the state, the most powerful institution in the land, defines the boundaries of group formation (in this case Arab and Muslim), it creates a set of potential commonalities and shared opportunities and/or liabilities for emergent minority groups. Panethnic organizations emerge as the result of successful collective action by members of these populations. This does not require that every member buy into the panethnic designation, which certainly is evident in the history of Asian Americans and Latinos, where enduring ethnic solidarities continually contest the broader group identification. The ambiguity inherent in

panethnic labels serves as an important reminder that these are externally-imposed legal-political constructs that do not necessarily correspond to individual identification.

Our empirical research provides an analytic innovation by broadening the scope of institutional panethnicity with our inclusion of non-profit organizations, media coverage, academia, and general public Web use in an assessment of the emergence of Middle Eastern and South Asian panethnic labels. It incorporates metrics that capture modern informational practices anchored in the Internet, something that did not exist as a mass medium in previous decades. Using cutting-edge data sources such as ProQuest and GoogleTrends, this study documents the post-9/11 escalation in salience of the two most widely-used categories of "Arab American" and "Muslim American," in lieu of the rarely-used "Middle Eastern American" and "South Asian American" categories. Critics may argue that Middle Easterners and South Asians are relative newcomers to America, as compared to Latinos and Asians, and generational change might foster panethnic formation among these groups. However, we believe that if the onslaught of post-9/11 backlash did not give rise to either Middle Eastern or South Asian panethnicity, it is doubtful that either will emerge in the near future.

The existing model of panethnicity draws on extant case studies of groups who went through this process in the Civil Rights era, and continue to take shape today. We propose an alternative model of panethnic group formation which pays close attention to varying roles played by the state in different historical contexts. When the state targets selected minorities during a time of international crisis or war, the impacted groups at best can engage in defensive mobilization based on the categories imposed by punitive state policy. Therefore, groups which emerge in such an era do so on different terms than those which arose in the Civil Rights era, a time when the state engaged in compensation for disadvantaged official minority groups.

Although the current opportunity structure continues to be conducive to ethnic mobilization and claims making, this is a necessary, but not sufficient condition for panethnic group formation. There are other factors that preclude the rise and success of panethnicity which are undertheorized in the literature. For example, immigrant groups that originate from a specific world region invariably have vivid memories of historical conflict with other groups from that region, especially if the conflicts are ongoing. Such tensions are generally attenuated over length of residence and generations in the United States. Asian Americans worked to suppress these conflicts for the greater good of panethnic group interests during the post-Civil Rights era. In these cases, intergroup conflicts were in the distant past (e.g., between Koreans and Japanese), so it is easier to overcome these differences, especially among the native-born. However, in the case of Middle Eastern and South Asian Americans, ethnic, religious, and national conflicts are ongoing. In fact, what distinguishes these groups from other panethnic groups is their ubiquitous preoccupation with politics in their regions of origin. This is exemplified in the dual mission of Middle Eastern and South Asian CBOs of dealing with both foreign policy and domestic civil rights issues. The current climate of war, terrorism, and international crisis further exacerbates conflicts among these groups (e.g., Shiite and Sunni Muslims, Arabs and Israelis, Pakistanis and Indians). Intergroup conflicts can also be construed theoretically as an aspect of historical context, in which the home and host states play a decisive role. In this case, conflicts between groups in the Middle East and South Asia are inextricably linked with current U.S. foreign policy. As a superpower, the United States is actively involved in the aggravation or resolution of some of these conflicts (e.g., the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq, the Arab-Israeli conflict). This is an important area for future research on panethnicity, especially in the current globalized and transnational context.

In terms of generalizability of our case study, the post-9/11 Middle Eastern and South Asian American experiences are reminiscent of the experiences of German Americans during World War I and Japanese Americans during World War II. As the United States plays an increasingly engaged role in international affairs as a global superpower, other diaspora populations might follow in the footsteps of scapegoated groups like Germans, Japanese, and Middle Easterners/South Asians. Furthermore, beyond the United States, other neoliberal Western immigration states are even more likely to play a hostile role in singling out minority groups, who are increasingly making claims on such states. Therefore, we believe that our theorizing on the effects of punitive state policy on group formation can contribute important insight into the ability of a variety of groups to mobilize under difficult conditions. As such, our alternative framework may in fact be more exportable than the existing theories of panethnicity.

Figure 1. *Number of US-Based Non-Profit Organizations*, by Ethnic and Religious Categories and Rule Date***

■ 2001 and After   ■ 2000 and Before

Figure 2. *Numbers of Articles Using Selected Ethnic and Religious Labels in Major National Newspapers, Before 9/11(February 10, 1990-September 10, 2001) and After 9/11 (September 11, 2001-April 11, 2013)*

■ Before 9/11   ■ After 9/11

Note: The difference in the percentage of articles that were published before or after 9/11 by ethnic/religious categories is statistically significant, x^2 (8 df, N = 6389) = 506.30, p <.0001.

Source: ProQuest National Newspapers Premier, accessible at New York Public Library.
See <http://www.nypl.org/collections/articles-databases/national-newspapers-proquest>

Figure 3. *Numbers of Scholarly Books on Selected Ethnic and Religious Categories**
by Period of Publication (1989-2000 and 2001-2012)

■ 1989-2000   ■ 2001-2012
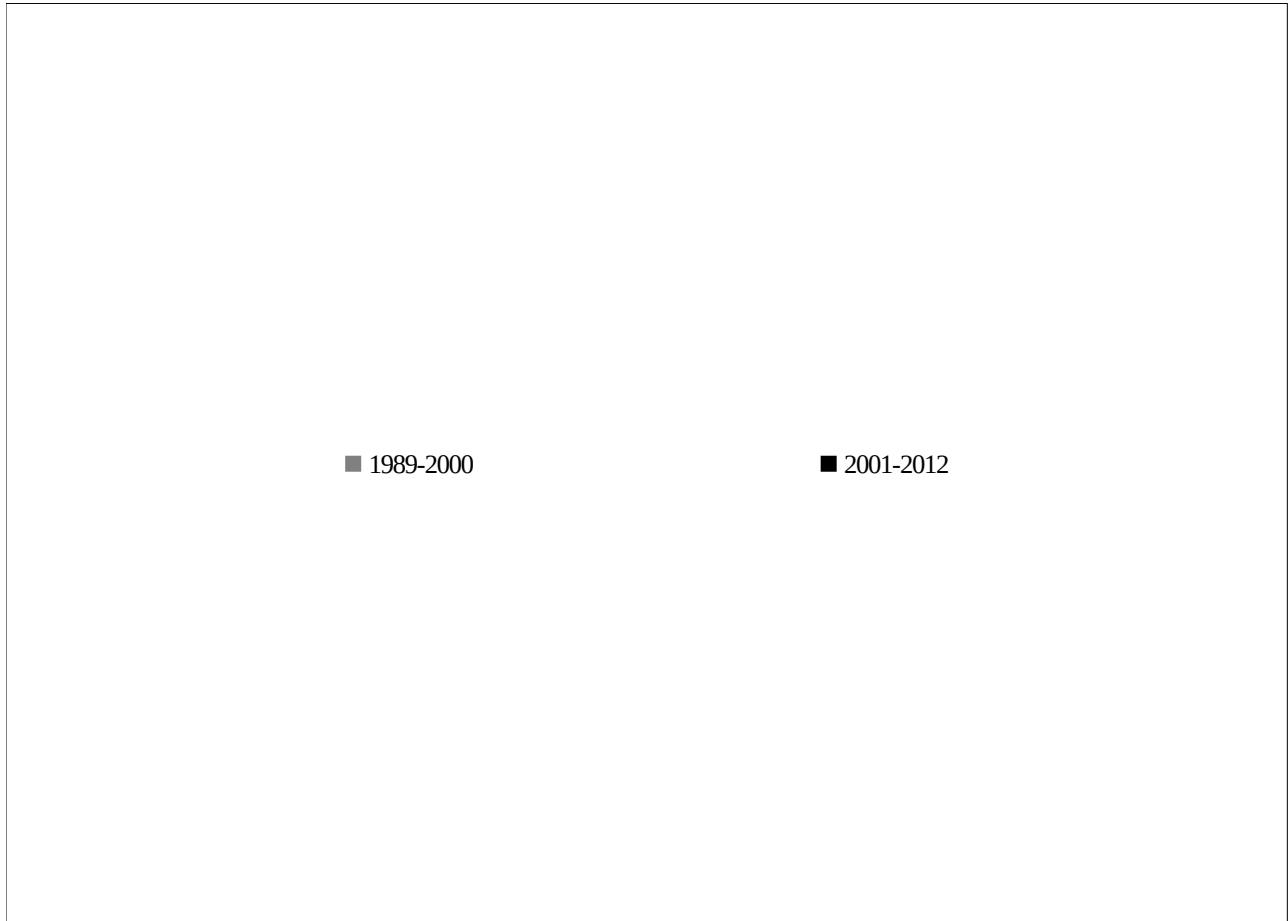
Notes: The difference in the percentage of scholarly books that were published before or after 9/11 by ethnic/religious categories
is not statistically significant, Chi-Square (6 df, N = 65) = 4.9081, p =.5557.
*The Turkish American category, and specific South Asian American categories (Afghan, Pakistani)
are not listed because there were no scholarly books published on these groups.

Source: GoogleBooks <http://www.books.google.com>

Figure 4. *Average Web Search Volume of Selected Ethnic and Religious Labels, United States, 2004-2012* (0-100 range)***
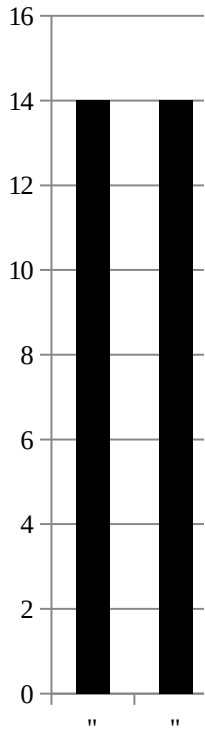
Notes: *Data are only available since 2004.
**100 would signify peak search volume.

Source: GoogleTrends <http://www.google.com/trends/>

Figure 5. *An Alternative Model of Group Formation*

Historical Events/ Political Context	Role of State vis-a-vis minority groups	Group Formation and Mobilization
Post-Civil Rights Era (1960s)	**Compensatory** (Civil Rights laws, set-aside programs, affirmative action, entitlements for minorities)	**Instrumental and Broad** Panethnic grouping of disadvantaged minorities (Asian Americans)
Post-9/11 Era (2001-present)	**Punitive** (backlash against specific minorities, USA PATRIOT Act, government initiatives)	**Defensive and Narrow** Specific grouping of targeted minorities (Arabs and Muslims)

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