CASIM Second Biannual Conference
St. Mary's University, Halifax
May 23-24, 2024 // Rooms TBD

Day 1: May 23, 2024
Registration, coffee, light breakfast

9:15-9:30 Opening comments and welcome
- Natasha Bakht (CASIM President)
- Syed Adnan Hussain (CASIM conference host)

9:30-11 Panel 1: Extremism in Question
Moderator: Shobhana Xavier
- Md Nazmul Arefin (graduate student, Department of Sociology, University of Alberta), "Deradicalisation, Regulations, and Human Rights Violations against Muslims in China and Sri Lanka"
- Reza Khodarahmi (graduate student, Department of Political Science, University of Alberta), "The Rise of Right Extremism and Rethinking Nationalist Rhetoric"
- Aida Al-Thayabeh (graduate student, Ontario Institute for Studies in Education, University of Toronto), "Blinded by White Supremacy: A Critical Exploration of Anti-Black Racism in the Arab World"

11-11:15 Coffee break

11:15-12:45 Panel 2: Digital Islam
Moderator: Amelie Barras
- Hassan Asif (graduate student, Faculty of Information, University of Toronto), "Technological Transcendence: The Transformation of Na'at in Pakistan's Digital Islamic Landscape"
- Asmaa Jisri (graduate student, York University), "Online Social Movements and Religion: How Islam is Constituted on the Popular Social Media Platform TikTok"
- Samira Torabi (graduate student, University of Alberta), "Piously Naughty Iranian Women Reimagining Sexuality in Cyberspace"

12:45-2 Lunch

2-3:30 Panel 3: Islamophobia: Distinctions and Convergences
Moderator: Natasha Bakht
- Malak El-Outa (graduate student, Carleton University), "Imagining Solidarity and Co-Resistance: The 9/11 Generation's Understandings of the War on Terror and American War Resisters of the Iraq War"
- Amelie Barras (faculty, York University) and Jennifer Selby (faculty, Memorial University), "Subtle Islamophobia?: Freedom of Expression vs. Freedom of Religion Frameworks in the Canadian Anglophone Press"
- Sharifa Patel (post doc/other): "Locating Islamophobia in Ontario's Child Welfare System"

3:45-5:45 Film screening: *Wajd: Songs of Separation* (2018)
- Zoom Q&A with director Amar Chebib, moderated by Shobhana Xavier

6:30 Dinner (TBD)

Day 2: May 24, 2024
Coffee, light breakfast

9-10:30 Panel 4: Focalizing the Present
Moderator:
- Aly Rattansi (post doc/other, Muslims in Canada Archives, University of Toronto), "Learnings from the Muslims in Canada Archives and possible contributions to the study of Islam in Canada"
- Nakita Valerio (graduate student, University of Alberta), "Remembering the Departure of Moroccan Jews"

10:30-10:45 coffee break

10:45-12:15 Panel 5: Islamic Concepts and Conceptualizing Islam
Moderator:
- Uthman Khan (graduate student, University of Alberta), "Androcentrism and Iconoclasm"
- Sara Hamed (post doc/other, Institute of Islamic Studies, University of Toronto), "Islam is a Comprehensive Way of Life: Ambiguity, Shifts, and Tensions in a Contemporary Muslim Axiom"
- Ayesha Mian Akram (faculty, University of Calgary), "Politics of Resistance: On Muslim Women Advancing a Collective Critical Faith-Based Epistemic"

12:15-1:30 Lunch

1:30-3 Panel 6: Recognitions and Representations
Moderator:
- Natasha Bakht (faculty, Faculty of Law, University of Ottawa), "786: Complicating Muslim Representations Through Dance"
- Nadiya N. Ali (faculty, Trent University), "Producing Producers: The Love Politics of الجماعة Jama'ah as Sacred Grid to Self-Recognition"
- Nooreen Hussain (graduate student, York University), "Exploring Muslimness through Liberatory/Critical Research Paradigms and Methods"

3:15-4:15: Closing mentorship/ roundtable
- Natasha Bakht
- Colin Mitchell
- Syed Adnan Hussain
- Shobhana Xavier

Full Abstracts (in order of schedule)

Day 1: May 23, 2024

Md Nazmul Arefin (graduate student, Department of Sociology, University of Alberta): Deradicalisation Regulations and Human Rights Violations against Muslims in China and Sri Lanka

Given the gravity of crimes of violent extremism and the heightened securitization associated with it, preventive or counter-terrorism measures have often led to the abuse of power, infringement of justice, and polarization in society. In order to effectively counter terrorism, it is crucial that 'deradicalization' programs and practices prioritize the safeguarding and advancement of human rights. Despite being consistently proposed by the United Nations (UN), many nations have neglected to effectively implement human rights monitoring in their designated 'deradicalization' regulations. Against this background, this paper aims to discuss that irrespective of the General Assembly Resolution on the prevention of terrorism in compliance with international human rights frameworks and international humanitarian law, many states apply deradicalization regulations, which are often politically instrumentalized and consequently violate the fundamental human rights of the targeted Muslims. The paper has a special focus on some examples using China and Sri Lanka as case studies. The objective of the article is to highlight how the Muslim 'Uyghurs', an indigenous group and ethnic majority of the Xinjiang region of China, are often subject to violence in the name of deradicalization programs. It also discusses the contemporary uprising of Sinhala Buddhist nationalism, ethnic conflict, and religious violence, and how the new politics of 'Us vs Them' targeting Muslims and other minorities have altogether fueled up new political tensions in Sri Lanka. The paper also critically examines how a lack of human rights theorization in deradicalization may lead to politically motivated 'deradicalization' frameworks that violate the UN mandate and other national and international human rights safeguards.

Reza Khodarahmi (graduate student, Department of Political Science, University of Alberta): The Rise of Right Extremism and Rethinking Nationalist Rhetoric

Today, the world is so imbued with nationalist sentiments that these feelings appear to be an integral part of human existence. This may be why some believe the idea of 'nation' has existed since the earliest days of human life. Thinking through the framework of the nation-state is not only a fundamental presumption for ordinary people in dealing with various everyday issues but also the object of research in most social and political studies is ultimately a human society concreted in the form of a people of this or that country. Even any narrative of world history from the eighteenth century onwards must acknowledge the reality of states and nations as one of the main players on the global stage. In theory, there are ideological and speculative attempts to go beyond this reality in the form of generalizations and to outline the future as a utopia in which cultural and geographical boundaries have not created any divisions and rifts in the bubble glass of humanity. Liberalism, appealing to the law of reason or Common Sense, and Marxism, committed to historical materialism, presented their cosmopolitanism as alternatives to the 'nation-state' and other forms of localism. The expansion of the capitalist mode of production was expected to bring these alternatives into reality in the former by globalization leading to the emergence of a unified global culture, and in the latter by the solidarity of the proletariats destroying nationalism as a bourgeois category serving the justification of class interests in the name of people. However, the rise and triumph of extremist right-wing parties in the world, which always use nationalist rhetoric to mobilize people and justify their policies, is an indication of the failure of abstract and hollow unity between peoples beyond any borders and distinctions. The annihilation of internationalism is not just a sign of institutional sterility of left-wing and communist parties; rather, it simultaneously indicates the gradual disappearance of any commonalities and connections between societies within political language. It also has resulted in the concealment of real connections under the disguise of identity politics or uncritical, essentialist, and hypocritical glorification of cultural differences in today's world. Researching nationalism without considering how it has shaped our perception of politics in the form of a priori and tacit knowledge can be reducible to a mere understanding of its past or current dis/advantages or to the denial of its discursive presence by making a distinction between nationalism as the terminated past phenomenon and patriotism as its present mild version. The purpose of this paper is an initial attempt to answer this fundamental question: Which approach to nationalism can provide us with theoretical tools for a better understanding of it not as an ended historical event but rather as a phenomenon that has a hegemonic presence in our political sphere?

Aida Al-Thayabeh (graduate student, Ontario Institute for Studies in Education, University of Toronto): Blinded by White Supremacy: A Critical Exploration of Anti-Black Racism in the Arab World

In the Arab world, a pervasive denial of racism often takes the form of asserting, "How can we be racist? We're not white." This denialism is deeply rooted in the enduring impact of colonialism, imperialism, and Orientalism that Arabs have faced (Said, 1979; Fanon, 1963; Wa Thiong'o, 2011). This paper confronts this denial by critically examining colour prejudice in the

Arab world, particularly directed at Afro-Arabs and Black Africans. By exploring the connections between this denial and the enduring legacies of colonialism, white supremacy, and Orientalism, the research aims to unravel the intricacies of anti-Blackness in the region. In addition, this paper challenges the Western-centric definition of "racism" in the Arab context, emphasizing that the Arab world did not create racial hierarchies or implement racist laws akin to the "one-drop rule" (Mills, 1997; Pateman & Mills, 2007). Many Arabs view the concept of "racism" as an imported Western colonial ideology (Downing & Gamil, 2021; El-Geressi, 2020). Instead, these concepts originated in white Euro-Christianity regions. Drawing from seminal works by Said and Fanon, the paper delves into the psychological impact of colonialism, investigating how colour prejudice is perpetuated. It contends that while Arab society is more colour-conscious and class-conscious than race-conscious, the ideologies of white supremacy have been inadvertently reproduced in the region. This reproduction has fostered complacency and silence concerning discrimination and violence against Black Africans and Afro-Arabs. The paper examines several reasons for the manifestations of anti-Blackness and colourism in the Arab world. The first being the emergence of anti-Muslim racism/Islamophobia from white Euro-Christianity around the 11th to 13th century that embedded a seed of fear, hatred, and resentment for Islam, Black Africans, and dark-skinned peoples, ultimately leading to the Crusades and Holy Wars (Allahar, 1993; Briggs, 2022). It is here that the seed of inferiority, lesser than 'other,' was embedded into the psyche of the Black and dark-skinned peoples. Another significant factor contributing to the manifestations of anti-Blackness and colorism in the Arab world is the emergence of the "other," which materialized into uqdat al-Khawajah (Jazz, 2013; El Amrani, 2011). Initially rooted in notions of economic superiority, these negative and racist attitudes evolved over time into deeply ingrained narratives of good versus evil, white versus Black, and an "us versus them" mentality (this concept will be further discussed in the subsequent section) (Said, 1979; 1993). The paper concludes by emphasizing the urgent need for the region to acknowledge and address anti-Blackness, bigotry, and discrimination, advocating for internal reform that rejects external forces perpetuating racist Orientalist narratives. It sheds light on the growing youth and feminist movement in the Arab world, illustrating that transformative progress is achievable through internal change.

Hassan Asif (graduate student, Faculty of Information, University of Toronto): Technological Transcendence: The Transformation of Na'at in Pakistan's Digital Islamic Landscape

This paper investigates the impact of digital technology on na'at, a revered form of devotional poetry in honor of Prophet Muhammad, within Pakistan's religious media landscape. It focuses on the ways digital advancements have influenced the creation, performance, and distribution of na'at, emphasizing the new avenues of self-expression now available to na'at artists. The study adopts a multi-modal approach to analyze the digital ecosystem of na'at in Pakistan, incorporating participant observations. It presents detailed case studies of renowned studios in Lahore and distinguished na'at performers from Karachi, while also examining the role of influential Islamic organizations in shaping the na'at community's digital footprint. One of the key findings of this research is the extent to which digital platforms have enabled collaboration and interaction among na'at artists, leading to novel media practices in the production of na'at. This paper also investigates the critical role of informal networks and piracy in sustaining the na'at community, highlighting how these elements intertwine with Islamic values and ethics in a digital context. The study probes into the socio-technical dynamics at play, offering insights into the complex balancing act na'at artists must perform between adhering to religious devotion, local cultural norms, and embracing technological change. In conclusion, the research provides valuable perspectives for scholars interested in the ongoing digital transformation of religious practices and modes of expression.

Asmaa Jisri (graduate student, York University): Online Social Movements and Religion: How Islam is Constituted on the Popular Social Media Platform TikTok

Since October 7th, 2023, social media influencers have become curious about the resistance and strength of the Palestinian people and their faith and commitment to the teachings of Islam. The very concept of resistance has become intertwined with ideas about Muslim identity. With the prevalence of information about the Quran and Islam, more and more people are choosing to learn about the religion, and many have chosen to accept Islam as a result. Social media personality Megan Rice, who adopted Islam live on TikTok, uses her platform to demystify the religion and talks about the Quran in the vernacular language. Rice and others are taking this as an opportunity to talk about the role the U.S. plays in the war against Muslims and in the narratives that the U.S. has spread about Islam and Muslims. However, critics of this movement claim that such movements on social media can create a platform for radicalization and extremists to spread their ideologies and that many of these converts are susceptible to such forms of radicalization because they are on a quest for identity and are deemed vulnerable. Perhaps the questions would not be raised if the religion in question was Christianity, but the conversation about Islam and Muslim activism somehow seems to make its way back to the threat of radicalization and extremism. The discourse of radicalization and extremism cannot be ignored as it is also part of the problem and contributes to the perpetuation of Islamophobia. What does it mean when people attempt to define their identity through the adoption of religion, in a time and space that is becoming very highly political, and to what extent does this constitute political participation versus just extremism and radicalization? This paper will also explore the question of how online movements can challenge the hegemonic

dominant narrative about Islam despite the strong presence of islamophobia on social media and will examine the implications of this kind of activism on similar social movements both online and offline.

Samira Torabi (graduate student, University of Alberta): Piously Naughty Iranian Women Reimagining Sexuality in Cyberspace

Khanoomhaye Gheri—or "Naughty women"—is a phenomenon in Iranian cyberspace that has put both Islamists and feminists in an awkward position. These women self-identify as married, pious and successful wives. They reject extramarital physical and sexual intimacy, yet they push the boundaries of accepted sexual expression. The phenomenon began in a publicly accessible channel on Telegram, a popular messaging app, that quickly drew over 10,000 users. This channel primarily offered women explicit advice and ideas on how to master the "art" of sexual pleasure. "Naughty women" discussions have since emerged in other online fora, including Instagram, Facebook, and X. Most studies examining the impact of online social networks on transforming religious communities and intimate relationships have treated these two as separate or and even antithetical. In this presentation, I explore how explicit sexual expression overlaps with a notion of piety. I intend to challenge dichotomies of modern discourse by examining the mutually transformative intersection of Islamic piety and public sexuality. This research complicates the notion of piety in order to understand how women conceptualize it not solely based on Islamic discourse but in dynamic connection to their everyday life realities, which in turn are shaped by many other forces of economy, state, popular trends, etc., which can take on many forms. Drawing on the notion of performativity (Butler 1988, 99), I approach piety not as a static norm to be conformed to or avoided, but as something that people perform, rework, and reconfigure to present new phenomena in line with tradition despite apparent deviations. Hence, I ask, how do women involved reconcile these performances with a pious persona, and to what extent are these new performances "felicitous" (Austin 1962)—or socially accepted and effective. My goal is to extend the definition of piety beyond "technologies of the self" (Foucault 1997; Mahmood 2005) to see it as an everyday practice to make meaningful connections. For these women, to be a pious woman while being sexually expressive is not a failure to attain an "ideal" or a mixture of incompatibles, but a creative act of connecting nodes in the web of life.

Malak El-Outa (graduate student, Carleton University): Imagining Solidarity and Co-Resistance: The 9/11 Generation's Understandings of the War on Terror and American War Resisters of the Iraq War

This research examines the intricate dynamics and experiences of the 9/11 generation in Canada, a cohort comprising of Muslim and/or Arab individuals who came of age during the aftermath of the 9/11 attacks – the War on Terror and the post-9/11 era of heightened Islamophobia, anti-Arab racism, and imperial/state violence. Through qualitative semi-structured interviews with members of the 9/11 generation, this study examines how this generation interprets the narratives of American war resisters from the 2003-2011 US-Iraq War – former soldiers who, in opposition to the illegality and immorality of this conflict, left their positions in the American military and spoke out against the US conduct in Iraq, and their broader militaristic and imperial agenda. Specifically, this research focuses on how this generation imagines solidarity and co-resistance with American war resisters, a perception based on their own experiences and understandings of the enduring post-9/11 era. In doing so, this study raises pivotal questions about lived experiences, refusal, forgiveness, and the potential for collaboration between these two distinct communities. Furthermore, this research provides valuable insights into how a generation profoundly influenced by the immediate and persistent post-9/11 landscape imagines collaboration with individuals who, at one point, contributed to the challenges faced by the 9/11 generation. Moreover, this study holds broader implications, particularly in the context of the ongoing atrocities in Palestine. Specifically, it underscores the urgent need to refocus discussions on the enduring impacts of post-9/11's heightened Islamophobia and anti-Arab racism, evident in the current public portrayal of Palestinians, and the escalating acts of discrimination and violence against the Muslim and Arab community. Through re-centering these discussions, this research contributes important insights on how these acts of racism persist, how Muslim and/or Arab individuals challenge these facets, and the ways in which society can actively address and support those victimized by such acts. Lastly, this research's exploration of how the 9/11 generation envisions movements of solidarity and co-resistance with American war resisters is more crucial than ever, given the widespread acts of support occurring globally for the Palestinian cause, and by extension the Muslim and/or Arab community who once again is being subjected to heightened Islamophobia and anti-Arab racism reminiscent of the immediate post-9/11 era.

Amelie Barras (faculty, York University) and Jennifer Selby (faculty, Memorial University): Subtle Islamophobia?: Freedom of Expression vs. Freedom of Religion Frameworks in the Canadian Anglophone Press

This paper aims to complexify a widely circulated binary in Canada that considers the regulation of religious diversity to be diametrically different between "Anglo-Saxon" multicultural Canada, and its more "tolerant" approach, and French-speaking Québec, and its more restrictive response. The paper analyses over 200 opinion pieces published in eight English-language newspapers on the Federal Motion 103 (2017), Quebec's Law 21 (2019), and the nomination of the Special Representative on

Combatting Islamophobia in Canada (2023). Our analysis captures ironies in the way proposed protections against Islamophobia (in M-103 and in the nomination of the Special Representative) and against religious visibility in positions of public authority (with Law 21) are characterized in these opinion pieces. We show that, despite criticizing arguments put forward by the CAQ for Law 21 as a violation of religious freedom (79% of English-language opinion pieces in Canada opposed it), several English language opinion pieces position themselves against initiatives to combat Islamophobia, framing their arguments around protecting freedom of expression. This paper discusses how, as a framework, freedom of expression authorizes certain forms of Islamophobic discourse in Anglophone newspapers - the same discourses that these newspapers denounce in their coverage of Law 21. We also consider how these discursive processes work to "other" Quebec, and in so doing, invisibilise Islamophobia in Anglophone Canada.

Sharifa Patel (postdoc/other): Locating Islamophobia in Ontario's Child Welfare System

This paper addresses the absence of data on Muslim children in Ontario's child welfare system. The Ontario Association for Children's Aid Societies (OACAS) does not track the number of Muslim children in Ontario's child welfare system which hinders our ability to assess the movement of Muslim children in and out of care, the reasons they are taken into care, how long they remain in care, track their wellbeing while in care, and address barriers that Muslim adoptive and foster parents face. Keeping empirical data on the movement of Muslim children in and out of care is necessary to track the wellbeing of Muslim children and assess the structural and unconscious biases within Ontario's child welfare system. Drawing on the research that has been done in other cultural contexts such as in the cases of Indigenous and Black children in care in Ontario, maintaining empirical data facilitates a better understanding of the scope of structural and unconscious biases ("Interrupted Childhoods"). Failure to track Muslim children's movement in and out of care facilitates the reproduction and proliferation of Islamophobia within Ontario's child welfare institutions since the nuances of Muslim families' and Muslim children's needs may not consistently be met. There are strong suggestions from case studies undertaken in the UK that tracking data on Muslim children in care and their experiences is necessary in order to meet the needs of Muslim families and Muslim children. Research from the UK indicates that the number of Muslim children in care in the UK is increasing (Al Jawdah 62). Though Muslim children are taken into care for the same reasons as non-Muslim children such as abuse, neglect, and extreme poverty, Muslim children are among those who wait the longest for permanent placements (Cheruvallil-Contractor et. al. "Amongst the Last to Leave"). Elizabeth Miller and Imran Butt note too that in the UK, a growing number of Muslim teenage girls have been taken into care because of differences of opinion between the child and the family, and a small number of Muslim children have been taken into care because parents were unable to communicate with hospitals and social workers about children's minor injuries from accidents (10). What the research from the UK suggests is that Muslim children, Muslim families, and Muslim adoptive and foster parents face a unique set of obstacles within the child welfare system. Failing to maintain data on the movement of Muslim children in and out of care obstructs our ability to address these unique sets of obstacles in the context of Ontario and leaves systemic Islamophobia intact.

Day 2: May 24, 2024

Aly Rattansi (post doc/ other, Muslims in Canada Archives, University of Toronto): Learnings from the Muslims in Canada Archives and possible contributions to the study of Islam in Canada

The Muslims in Canada Archives was established in 2020 to fill a gap in Canada's memory institutions related to the documentary heritage of Muslims in Canada. Although there is evidence of Muslims on Turtle Island in the fifteenth century and Muslims are recorded in Canadian census tracts in the mid-1800s, this history is not well known and has hardly been studied. In this paper, we discuss several collections or fonds housed at the Archives that offer some insight, and projects currently underway at the Archives aimed at contributing to a better understanding of Muslim life and the study of Islam in Canada.

Nakita Valerio (graduate student, University of Alberta): Remembering the Departure of Moroccan Jews

Before the end of the Second World War, Morocco's Jewish community numbered 240,000 people and was one of the largest and oldest populations of Jews in the Arab-Muslim world. Between 1948 and 1968, the vast majority of the Jewish population left the country. As a narrative, the plotline of departure seems straight-forward: a large group of people who came to see themselves as belonging to one another lived in Morocco and then, over a period of two decades, almost all of them left. It is the question of why they left which gives rise to competing memories, expressed in three main theatres: the historiography, the testimonies of émigrés themselves, and popular performative media. How is the causality of the departure of Moroccan Jews remembered in these three domains? How do they reference and respond to one another? And why this is the case? This paper shows that there are seven main narrative forms about the departure and that each of these forms is accompanied by a

prelude and a post-script which inform the basic narrative of the cause of the departure in different ways. By examining who remembers what, according to the discursive, ideological environments in which these memories are formed, as well as what is diminished or silenced in each of these memories, this study contributes to understanding how individuals interact with, shape, and are shaped by their societies, as well as informing a growing body of research on the effect of the contemporary moment on historical memory.

Uthman Khan (graduate student, University of Alberta): Androcentrism and Iconoclasm

In this Anthropological exploration, I will delve into the notion of "metaphorical Iconoclasm" embodied by the headscarf, emphasizing that while it is impossible to physically remove the head of a living human without ethical implications, it can be symbolically covered. This concept invites a multifaceted examination of the symbolism of the headscarf within the context of Islamic culture and its far-reaching implications. To elucidate this theme, I will adopt a dual perspective, that of a theologian and a cultural anthropologist, as I explore three distinct levels of iconoclasm. These levels will encompass their motivations and the historical trajectory of Muslim iconoclasm, shedding light on the evolution of this intricate concept. Within this examination, the human head emerges as a central locus of iconoclasm, serving as a canvas for diverse symbolic expressions. Within the multifaceted landscape of iconoclasm, I will probe into the underlying motivations that drive individuals and societies to engage in this practice, particularly within the Islamic context. Drawing upon the Qur'ān as a foundational text, I will also interweave findings from anthropological, historical, and archaeological sources, as documented by academic researchers. These sources will serve as critical reference points in exploring the iconoclastic journey. A significant aspect of this discourse will revolve around the head as a symbol in Islamic and Arab culture. The resultant iconoclasm is closely associated with patriarchy and the veil. Through this examination, I will endeavour to unravel the complex web of cultural and religious narratives that intersect with the concept of iconoclasm. Ultimately, I will contend that iconoclasm, whether manifested within religion, art, or gender, functions as a vital social mechanism. It plays a role in upholding balance within the larger cosmological order, shaping and reflecting the intricate dynamics of societies and their evolving cultural landscapes. In its symbolic capacity, the headscarf represents an eloquent manifestation of this nuanced and enduring concept of "metaphorical Iconoclasm" within the tapestry of human civilization.

Sara Hamed (post doc/other, Institute of Islamic Studies, University of Toronto): Islam is a Comprehensive Way of Life: Ambiguity, Shifts, and Tensions in a Contemporary Muslim Axiom

The idea that Islam is a comprehensive way of life (or shumuliyyat al-islam) has the ring of an axiomatic truth to many contemporary Muslims. This paper will explore how this claim has come to fuel particular kinds of work within the Canadian Islamic civil sector through an ethnographic engagement with two organizational case studies: the Islamic Society of North America (ISNA) and the Muslim Association of Canada (MAC). To contextualize its impact at ISNA and MAC, this paper will also trace the reformist history of the contention of shumuliyyat al-islam, demonstrating that despite its current taken for grantedness, historically (as well as today, it had a plethora of significations and thus also implications for how to live Islam in the everyday. Ultimately, this paper puts the Canadian case in conversation with the historical plurality, ambiguity and fluidity of the concept to argue that contemporary Muslim anxieties about the possibility of living Islam in the modern world are in part shaped by tensions born out of aspiration for comprehensiveness.

Ayesha Mian Akram (faculty, University of Calgary): Politics of Resistance: On Muslim Women Advancing a Collective Critical Faith-Based Epistemic

Hegemonic anti-Muslim rhetoric, entangled with global structures of white supremacy, imperialism, and colonialism, constructs Islam as culturally and civilizationally critical to the instability of supposedly peaceful secular western societies. Muslim women's bodies, specifically, become sites where the Muslim is socio-politically constructed as Other, disconnected from her religiosity and constituted as a racialized Other. This presentation contributes to the nuanced and intersectional body of scholarship examining the complexities of the Muslim experience in Canada today by analyzing the creation and power of a group of Muslim women engaged in impactful resistances as they seek to create change within and for their communities. This presentation summarizes my dissertation which analyzed a community-based project in which I invited four Muslim women activists in Windsor-Essex to together plan, implement, and evaluate a social action to address anti-Muslim racism. Component One comprised of the community project, where the women decided to create a wellness-centered space for Muslim women to unburden the challenges in their lives, compounded by the COVID-19 pandemic, global racist and antiracist movements, and their various intersecting responsibilities. This group, Circles of Wisdom, was to be a safe space of support, care, and feminist community. Component Two comprised of the research project, in which, as a researcher, I thematically analyzed secondary data from Component One in addition to scheduling follow-up individual interviews with the community members who participated in Component One. This research component explored the following research question: How do Muslim women activists in Windsor-Essex develop a collective political consciousness to resist the

challenges they face as gendered religious subjects in Canada? In this dissertation, I theorize that Circles of Wisdom constitutes a collective critical faith-based epistemic resistance (Zine, 2004), a novel strategy for engaging in resistance founded on shared faith, shared social justice values, and shared longing for community, created by and for Muslim women. Through the women's simultaneous embrace and refusal of various power relations that externally sought to construct their subjectivities, I theorize how the participants navigate and strategize to create a new collective subjectivity that reclaims their sense of self and more authentically reflects who they are and who they want to be as Muslim women. This resistance was characterized by three primary components: (1) constructing an alternative collective subjectivity based on a new set of social relations rooted in wellness; (2) meeting in a transcendental digital space; and, (3) demonstrating responsibility to community. Circles of Wisdom demonstrates that prioritization of community and reclamation of Self are foundational for Muslim women as they navigate a world dominated by neoliberal anti-Muslim racism. In addition to contributing to the fields of political sociology and social movements, transnational feminism, community-engaged methodologies, and critical Muslim studies, this project inspires the creation of additional community-centred spaces for Muslim women focused on care, community, and wellness.

Natasha Bakht (faculty, Faculty of Law, University of Ottawa) 786: Complicating Muslim Representations Through Dance

Taking the movements theme of the conference literally, this presentation will consider the intersection of contemporary dance and Muslim identity. In the context of creating and performing a dance piece about an urban Muslim contemplating the sacred in the everyday, this personal reflection examines the taking of deliberate steps to create a positive representation of Muslims amid the circulation of multiple mostly negative stories about this minority group.

Nadiya N. Ali (faculty, Trent University): Producing Producers: The Love Politics of الجماعة Jama'ah as Sacred Grid to Self-Recognition

Actively listening to the formations, operations and movements of a Muslim creative counterpublic called the Muslim Writers Collective (MWC), this paper demonstrates that the analytics of self/social transformation available to racialized actors cannot simply be reduced to 'resistance', understood as antagonist-oppositionality, and 'transformation', understood through the frame of recognition politics. The study of MWC draws on an ethnographic full-participant observation of two chapters - located in Toronto and New York City. Through communal storytelling, improvisation, and congregational experimentation, MWC regulars enact analytics of interiority and worldmaking that sets-up grounds for the hazardous horizontal terrain of radical mutuality as the prioritized site for self/social transformation. In this paper, I closely engage with Glen Coulthard's, a Decolonial Yellowknives Dene scholar, concept of "self-recognition", and Jennifer Nash's illumination of the Black Feminist "love-politics tradition" - to think through the generative openings and mobilities of scene-space formation made available in the congregating acts of MWC. I argue that the collective bearing witness a love-politics praxis calls for not only sets up grounds for radical mutuality, but in this turn also generates an affective grid that "tosses you onto new terrain[s]" (Davidson 2016:526) making way for renewed openings and flights. I name this affective grid الجماعةJama'ah, following the Islamicate tradition on the ever-generative force of the congregating act. The الجماعةJama'ah activates allowances for (re)newed forms of assemblage, both at the collective and the subjective level. The الجماعةJama'ah then emerges as a sacred energy grid "tossing" congregants into fields primed for the interior labour of self-recognition, as the site in which vitality, and thus subjectivity, can be enacted. In short, the love-politics of the الجماعة Jama'ah, as my interlocutors put it, cultivates "an energy highway" patiently laboring to "produce producers" - activated subjects able to forge "otherwise worlds" (King, Navarro, Smith 2020) in the uneven terrain of radical mutuality.

Nooreen Hussain (graduate student, York University): Exploring Muslimness through Liberatory/Critical Research Paradigms and Methods

Positivist research paradigms are commonplace in many academic and social settings and often evade serious interrogation for the epistemological and ontological presumptions they bring to the knowledge creation process. These dominant research paradigms presuppose the idea that there is such a thing as objective knowledge and truth and perpetuate a form of detachment between the researcher and subject. My presentation will explore the role that other non-dominant research paradigms and methods can offer to challenge the dominance of certain research traditions and practices. Specifically, my presentation will focus on autoethnography as a critical method that can disrupt hegemonic approaches to knowledge production, due to its reliance on the subjective dimension of human experience, as explored through personal narrative or autoethnographic moments. My presentation will further explore how I have been using autoethnography as a way of understanding various dimensions and experiences of Muslimness, beginning with my own life as a racialized South Asian Muslim woman living in Canada. I will explore specific autoethnographic moments that speak to critical junctures and experiences in my identity formation process. I will address themes relating to contemplation, self-transformation and grief,

while considering postcolonial theory, in addition to theories on race and racialization of religion to make sense of my life journey. Importantly, this presentation will unpack the process and experience of writing creatively and autobiographically and the possibilities this presents for subaltern or racialized scholars to bring to the forefront much ignored critical knowledge on wide-ranging topics.