Chapter 1

Introduction

THE TITLE for this book emerged from research data showing that during the three years following the attacks of September 11, 2001, a majority of Arab Muslim Americans reported feeling unsafe and insecure in the United States.[1] This sense of insecurity, which was not only articulated in narratives but was palpable, was an outcome of their treatment by the American government and some members of the American public and by portrayals of them in the mainstream American media, which proffered constructions of reality that repeatedly supported notions of the collective culpability of Arab and Muslim Americans for the attacks. Throughout the two-year period of interviews for this study—2003 to 2004—a majority of the persons interviewed said in various ways that they were not confident about their personal safety, that they felt vulnerable, and that they were uncertain about their ability to live freely in the United States, fearing that they might face expulsion from the country or incarceration en masse in camps. These fears of collective quarantine or banishment weakened as time passed, perhaps because Bush administration policies had shifted from the incarceration and expulsion of Arabs and Muslims to their registration and monitoring. But many remained fearful of their fate should another attack occur in the United States for which, while not of their doing and not under their control, they might be held responsible.[2]

This book provides an analysis of Arab Muslim American experiences after 9/11 as documented by a sociological and ethnographic study of Arab Muslim Americans in metropolitan Chicago. Its account of that critical period of American history is perhaps not as positive as some might wish, but also not as negative as others might expect. It is compiled neither from the observation of encouraging and heartening events nor from an inventory of discouraging and shocking incidents, but rather from the detailed accounts of a wide range of immigrant and native-born Arab Muslim Americans, who overwhelmingly felt that their experiences could only be understood in the larger context of Arab and Muslim American

history, a perspective shared by the author. Indeed, a principal argument of this book is that the negative treatment of Arabs and Muslims in the United States after 9/11 was caused not by the 9/11 attacks themselves, but by preexisting social constructions that configured them as people who would readily conduct and approve of such attacks. These social constructions did not emerge on 9/11 but were the culmination of processes of labeling and interpretation transmitted by interested actors through major American social institutions over the latter decades of the twentieth century. These interpretations, which sought to explain the reasons for violence and turmoil in the "Middle East" (itself a social construction) through the use of essentialized notions of human difference, set the stage for Arab and Muslim American communities to be held collectively culpable for the 9/11 attacks by the government, the media, and the citizenry. As I show in chapter 3, for decades prior to the attacks Arabs and Muslims had been represented in American culture as monolithic groups that had an inherent proclivity to violence, with "pathological cultures" (Abu-Lughod 2007) and a morally deviant religion that sanctions killing. They were socially constructed as "others," as people not like "us," an interpretation shown to be widely accepted in public opinion polls long before 9/11.

Notions of inherent human differences imply something akin to biology in American culture, and are often interpreted and acted upon as race. Sociologically and anthropologically speaking, Arab Americans had been racialized in American society—set off from the body of mainstream Americans as "others"—through social processes that bore many similarities to those experienced by other racialized groups, but also with significant differences (see chapter 3). The most important difference was that the racialization of Arab Americans inhered not from domestic interests but from the global political and economic interests of a rising American superpower. This difference explains not only the distinct timing of the racializing processes for Arab Americans (coming much later than for African, Native, Latino, and Asian Americans) but also the unusual circumstance that Arabs were once positioned in a structurally more favorable status in the United States as whites (and they are still officially considered white). With the end of the Cold War, and during a time of massive immigration to the United States, Arab Americans could easily be reinvented and reimagined as new immigrants and as people we really did not "know"—although hundreds of thousands of them had lived in the United States over the previous one hundred years.

For their part, long before 9/11 Muslims were widely represented in American culture not only as an inherently volatile group that threatened American global allies and interests but also as a group that potentially threatened American culture itself, in particular its core values of democracy and personal liberty. As shown in chapter 7, the content of these

charges against Muslims in the United States is strikingly similar to the claims of anti-Catholic nativists in the nineteenth-century United States (Higham 1955). After the 9/11 attacks, some Americans would latch on to these ideas about Islam's cultural threat to justify the harassment and assault of Muslim women in *hijab* (head scarves).[3] Overall, by the time the 9/11 attacks occurred, Arab and Muslim Americans were well positioned in both government group-think and the public's mind to be held culpable for them. Much the same had happened during the period following the Pearl Harbor attacks in 1941: the attacks alone did not explain why the government, the media, and much of the public supported the internment of Japanese Americans in camps; rather, it was the ways in which Japanese Americans had been socially constructed prior to the attacks that facilitated their representation as potential co-conspirators and produced social support for these collective measures. This treatment of Japanese Americans as the "threat within" has been widely acknowledged as unjustified and was the subject of a formal government apology in 1988.

Interviewees' sentiments about "homeland insecurity" referred to a collective status and were expressed to an equal degree by the American-born and foreign-born Arab Muslims interviewed in this study: whether the United States was a native or adopted homeland, it had ceased to be a place where members of these communities felt safe and protected. A majority of study participants described their citizenship as an inferior one that excluded guarantees and rights accorded to other citizens. A state of uncertainty and peril more common to refugees living on the borders of war zones and global migrants without documents was induced in citizen and resident Arabs and Muslims, largely because of post-9/11 federal government policies, which were deeply informed by notions of unvarying, monolithic, and threatening Arabs and Muslims. Thousands of Arab and Muslim noncitizens were deported from the country for visa violations, at least one thousand were jailed for extended periods of time without charge, tens of thousands of Arab and Muslim U.S. citizens and residents were interviewed by the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), and hundreds of thousands were watched. Arabs and Muslims in the United States lived with a lurking fear that any impropriety committed at any time in their lives might be brought forth to impugn them. Their behavior needed to meet a standard of perfection reserved for profiled groups: full stops at all stop signs, turn signals on all turns. Chapter 4 offers an inventory of many of the government's policies after 9/11 and shows their measurable impacts on Arabs and Muslims living in the United States. The American government alleged and then vigorously pursued efforts to find connections between Arabs and Muslims living in the United States and the 9/11 hijackers, but failed to do so. The attorney general argued that coercive policies were necessary to locate the terrorist sleeper cells

hiding within Arab and Muslim American ("their") communities, thereby threatening "our" communities. Despite the use of its full resources and aggressive tactics unlimited by the Constitution or rule of law, the government actually uncovered very little, as shown by the data presented in chapter 4. When the Nixon Center policy analyst Robert Leiken (2004, 136) argued for targeting the "haystack" if "the needle resists discovery," he used a metaphor that captures well the systematic criminalization of Arabs and Muslims that occurred during this period of American history.

While the grounding of Arabs and Muslims in the United States was destabilized by the collective targeting of federal government policies, "go back to your country" was a frequent exhortation of the American flag–wavers in their midst. "De-Americanization," according to Bill Ong Hing (2002), relies on the symphonic collaboration of citizenry and government, where the latter sets the stage for the former's outcasting work—public performances informed by notions of intrinsic group differences and differentiated rights of national belonging. In the first months after the 9/11 attacks, "I want to kill you" was often shouted by the more violently oriented, and angry neighbors and co-citizens yelled, "Osama!" as Arab and Muslim Americans were symbolically attached to the 9/11 hijackers. The status of outsider and its concomitant position of insecurity were reinforced at the everyday local level by egg-throwing, spitting, hijab-pulling, garbage-dumping, "bomb in your briefcase" jokes, ethnic slurs, religious affronts, hate graffiti, hand signals, removal from planes, and, in some cases, assault and murder. Battered in the grounded spaces of their daily lives, in the media, and in the fundamental arenas of rights and citizenship, listening to coworkers' tales of Arab and Muslim barbarism, asked to explain the reasons for the attacks or to apologize for them, facing discrimination in the workplace, at airports, and in schools and banks, it is no surprise that Arabs and Muslims felt the chill of homeland insecurity. "There was something in the air," said one interviewee—something that seemed to make it permissible to say or do anything to Arabs and Muslims in the United States. Chapter 5 provides a narrative account of many of these widely shared post-9/11 experiences as described by Arab Muslims living in metropolitan Chicago.

The aggressive and hostile public responses to Arabs and Muslims after 9/11 are often described in the literature in generalities; these accounts lack an analysis of perpetrators or local context, partly because the data collected focus on victims and narrow events. The writers often assume that the relevant explanatory social context is a national one—because the 9/11 attacks were interpreted as attacks on the nation, because the media's treatment of Arabs and Muslims was largely unvarying across the nation, and because the government policy context was national. The experiences related in chapters 4 and 5 did have this

general character: they occurred in a wide array of places, were perpetrated by a range of people, and were experienced by a broad variety of Arab Muslims. This study also found, however, that there were variations in Arab Muslim post-9/11 experiences by place. Chapter 6 examines these variations in detail and explains why one community with a significant Arab Muslim population experienced calm and solidarity within a few months of the attacks while another, similarly settled by a significant Arab Muslim population, was characterized by years of hate acts, aggression, and outcasting. The heightened and prolonged character of the attacks in the latter area is explained by preexisting sentiments that the growing Arab and Muslim population was becoming a cultural threat to the moral order of the area; these sentiments were ignited by the spark of the 9/11 attacks. The attacks provided a justification for the hatemongers who moved into action after 9/11, as if they were neighborhood defenders on a moral crusade (Levin and McDevitt 2002). A social geography of spaces of varying interpretation emerges from this comparative spatial analysis. Local-level social relationships are shown to have held the power to add a layer of noise between the dominant national discourses of Arab and Muslim American culpability for the 9/11 attacks and the public interpretation of these discourses; they also had the power to make these dominant discourses even noisier. This finding makes sense, because the post-9/11 treatment of Arab and Muslim Americans was not about the attacks themselves but about the *social construction of their relationship to the attacks.* As a social construction, alternative interpretations, grounded in local context, become possible. This study found that where positive intergroup relationships were well developed prior to the 9/11 attacks because of community-organizing efforts, Arab Muslims experienced relative safety at the neighborhood level.

Information about the type of threat that Arabs and Muslims were said to pose to American society was widely available in the United States, and it was used to guide perpetrators' selection of targets for hate acts and harassments after 9/11.[4] The notion that Muslims posed not only a security threat to American society but also a cultural one helps to explain why, as this study found, twice as many Arab Muslim women reported experiencing hate acts and harassment as Arab Muslim men. If fear of terrorists had been driving hate acts, then one would expect that men would have been the principal victims. As it turns out, post-9/11 repercussions for Arab and Muslim Americans were quite gendered, with men positioned as the security threat managed largely by the government and women as the cultural threat dealt with by the public.[5] While men took the brunt of government security measures, such as incarceration, registration, interrogation, and removal (chapter 4), women took the brunt of public rage, especially women in hijab (chapter 7). That women in hijab were interpreted as symbols of the foreign cultural threat posed

by Muslims explains why the overwhelming majority of women experiencing hate acts were either wearing hijab or in the company of a woman wearing hijab when victimized, as were many of the men. Hijab was imbued with meaning as a countersymbol to personal freedom, an interpretation that exposed its alleged threat to American culture. Hijab symbolized force—or perhaps even more threatening to American culture, the choice of American Muslim women to *reject American freedom.* As a representation of the foreign, the actual citizenship status of women in hijab had little bearing on their experiences. Men had the exact opposite experience: for them, citizenship status was key to their differential experiences with the federal government.

This symbolic meaning of hijab had been invested in for some time by a wide range of interested parties—mostly non-Muslims, but also a small proportion of Muslims—and was cashed in domestically to garner popular support for the U.S. invasion of Afghanistan after 9/11, when the connection between hijab and oppression was prime-time American culture talk (Abu-Lughod 2002). While some might argue that it was simply the visibility and easy identification of women in hijab that explained their victimization, this explanation is weakened upon contextualization of these acts: women in hijab were most likely to be assaulted and verbally abused in neighborhoods where Arab Muslim men were readily identifiable. These were the suburban neighborhoods where a substantial number of people held implicit understandings about the American way of life, symbolized not by diversity but by a white, middle-class, Christian culture that had motivated most residents to move to them in the first place. Chapter 7 describes the gendered repercussions of the 9/11 attacks on Arab Muslims, explores the cultural meaning of hijab that was grounded in nativist notions of the Muslim threat, and examines the popular war on difference fought by neighborhood "cultural snipers." This contextualization of the meaning of hijab helps to explain why the value of religious freedom strongly embraced in American society and by religious parties backing the Bush administration protects Muslim women's right to wear hijab and undergirds government support for this right, but does not protect Muslim women wearing hijab in public.[6]

The book concludes with an analysis of how Arab Muslims said the 9/11 attacks and their aftermath affected their religious faith. The study found that the majority of practicing Muslims reported a deepening of their religious faith and that many formerly nonpracticing or secular Muslims joined religious congregations and began practicing their religion during this period. Persons in both groups spoke of a thirst for greater knowledge about Islam, driven by both the use and abuse of religion by the 9/11 hijackers and the vilification of Islam in American culture, often referred to as "Islamophobia." Study participants said that they needed to understand Islam better—not only for their own sakes but

because they could not explain or defend Islam to others when their state of knowledge was inadequate. Chapter 8 also examines data on how Arab Muslims see their future in the United States. The majority of study participants saw the future in a positive light, framing their current predicament as similar to that experienced by other negatively racialized and persecuted religious groups in American society. They felt that, just as those other groups had been able to struggle and win the battle for social inclusion, so too would they. The post-9/11 challenge they faced was to carry on with their lives despite all the components of homeland insecurity and to assert agency to change this country into one more tolerant and less easily impelled by hatred. Recognizing that active efforts were required to produce positive outcomes, many were encouraged by the surge they saw in Muslim American activism and by the defense of their rights taken up by American civil society groups. Despite formidable resistance from certain quarters and a global context in which some would place them on the other side of a Manichaean divide, there is evidence of significant post-9/11 mainstream engagement of Arab and Muslim Americans and their domestic issues. Indeed, if religion could be disentangled from issues of foreign policy, American Muslims as a religious group might fare better in the battle for inclusion than Arab Americans, because American society is one in which religious freedom has proven more attainable than equal treatment for racialized groups.

The findings reported in chapters 4 through 7 point to the crucial importance of bridging social capital—the social ties that link people together across a cleavage—to "homeland security."[7] Organized social relationships with persons from outside the group offer protection from harassment and assault and from the excesses of an overbearing government, while they mitigate the power of those engaged in discourses of demonization. This formidable power, which is embedded in knowing others and being "known," holds true for defense in individual legal cases, for relationships within the neighborhood, and for the design of federal policies. Arab and Muslim Americans could not change their social conditions in the United States alone, a fact highlighted in chapter 3, which shows that Arab American invisibility and absence from the table of subordinated groups allowed their vilification and social and political exclusion to continue unfettered for decades. Without this preexisting condition of social exclusion, post-9/11 calls by members of the Bush administration and other American leaders for the American public to be watchful of all Arabs and Muslims living in the United States would have largely fallen flat.

Data presented in chapters 4 through 8 show that Arab and Muslim Americans recognized the challenge before them rather quickly after the 9/11 attacks and vigorously stepped up to the plate. The data also show that the excessive measures engaged in by the government and the

violence perpetrated by some members of the American public produced their own counterforce: mobilizations of non-Arabs and non-Muslims ready to join with Arab and Muslim Americans to challenge these actions. These joint mobilizations in turn launched social processes that would produce greater social and political integration of Arab and Muslim Americans.[8] Indeed, much has changed in the United States since the 9/11 attacks, and some of these changes, discussed further in the final chapter, have been positive for Arab and Muslim Americans. The mobilizations, coalitions, and solidarities that emerged after 9/11 to defend Arab and Muslim Americans, as well as the launch of local-level homeland security "community roundtables," effectively transformed their predominant social status in many U.S. locations from socially excluded "outsiders" or "unknown" communities to embraced, civically engaged, and known. Similarly, Arab and Muslim Americans have become more deeply woven into the fabric of an extensive range of American activist, policy, and watchdog organizations, and many of their own community and faith-based organizations have been strengthened. Philanthropists and foundations that were formerly reluctant to support Arab and Muslim American organizations came forward with financial support after 9/11 because the emergency circumstances outweighed normative pressures to hold back.[9] This material support, in turn, increased Arab and Muslim American institution-building and leadership development. All of these positive social changes make it now far more politically difficult than in the first few years after the 9/11 attacks for the American government to implement policies that openly and *visibly* target Arab and Muslim Americans en masse.

This study shows that when weighed against each other, the American people provoked much less fear among Arab and Muslim Americans than did the federal government—the Bush administration, to be precise. Although popular violence against Arab and Muslim Americans and persons perceived to be members of these groups surged after the attacks, it settled down in most areas within a few months. It nonetheless remains a persistent, if episodic, national problem, subject to varying levels of latency and manifest encouragement. As this study confirms, popular violence against Arab and Muslim Americans is indicative of and stimulated by far more complex matters than simple indiscriminate outbursts of post-9/11 revenge. Indeed, the 2008 U.S. presidential campaign showed that anti-Arab and anti-Muslim sentiments continued to hold enough currency in the United States to be easily ratcheted up for political benefit without any critical event taking place. Longtime U.S. representative Ray LaHood (R-Illinois) told the press on October 10, 2008, that while he supported the Republican presidential ticket, he was profoundly dismayed by crowds shouting "Terrorist!" and "Kill him!"—assumed to refer to Democratic presidential candidate Obama, whose biological father was a

Muslim—during rallies for Republican vice presidential candidate Sarah Palin. Republican presidential candidate John McCain took a step to subdue these emotions, which were intentionally incited by members of his own party, by responding to a supporter at an October McCain rally who claimed Obama was an Arab, "No, ma'am, no ma'am, he's a decent family man, citizen, that I just happen to have disagreements with on fundamental issues"—inadvertently implying that Arabs cannot be "decent" or perhaps even American.[10] Responses to McCain's comment were swift, revealing the other side of the post-9/11 sociopolitical environment for Arabs and Muslims in the United States as, for example, the prominent actor Ben Affleck noted on national television that " 'Arab' and 'good person' are not antithetical to each other."[11] Referring to the overall climate of anti-Arab and anti-Muslim baiting that had been whipped up for partisan benefit, former Secretary of State Colin Powell said on *Meet the Press:*

> Well, the correct answer is, he's not a Muslim. He's a Christian, and he's always been a Christian. But the really right answer is: What if he is? Is there something wrong with being a Muslim in this country? The answer is no, that's not America. Is there something wrong with some seven-year-old Muslim American kid believing that he or she could be president?[12]

The closing months of the 2008 presidential campaign evidenced a contemporaneous surge in anti-Muslim violence in Chicago's heavily Republican western suburbs. October reports included anti-Muslim graffiti spray-painted on a Muslim American woman's college locker (*Chicago Sun-Times,* October 10, 2008) and the vandalizing of the west suburban Villa Park mosque for the fourth time in two months (*Chicago Tribune,* October 10, 2008).[13] It is indeed notable that these hate crimes did *not* happen in the southwest suburbs, which are both heavily Arab and Muslim and heavily Democratic, lending support to my argument that local context matters profoundly. While hate activity against Arab and Muslim Americans still rises and falls, subject to interpretations of world events and intentional political manipulation, more subtle discrimination against Arab and Muslim men and Muslim women wearing hijab reveals a pattern of consistency.

The religion scholar Diana Eck (2002, xv) wrote in late 2001, "Statistically, one would have to say that benevolence outweighed the backlash." She notes, for example, that the murder of a Sikh man brought on donations of hundreds of flowers and that acts of vandalism and arson often unleashed streams of flowers, cards, and offers of support. Eck concludes: "Americans would not condone indiscriminate violence against neighbors of any faith or culture" because the "multireligious and multicultural fabric of the United States was already too strong." Since most Americans did not engage in physical violence against Arabs

and Muslims in the United States, perhaps Eck is correct. I argue, however, that it took the severe public backlash of murders, assaults, arsons, and vandalism to generate its counterforce, the social change that would see much of the American public embracing Arab and Muslim Americans as "fellow" Americans, quite a few for the first time. Such gestures of inclusion were few and far between in the years of stereotyping, harassment, and hate crimes prior to the 9/11 attacks. There may be a number of sociological explanations for this phenomenon, but it is certainly clear that the strong wave of popular violence against Arab and Muslim Americans and those perceived to be Arab or Muslim served as the spark that moved many Americans from inaction to action, including symbolic efforts that proclaimed their opposition to acts driven by hatred. This dramatic dialectic provoked by hate, stimulating its counterforce, may partly explain why poll data show that American attitudes toward American Muslims were more favorable in November 2001 than six months prior and four months later.[14] Although Eck's observation is meaningful for what it says about American society, it had little meaning at the time to the people about whom this book is written. To each individual Arab and Muslim, one murder was potentially *their* murder, or their spouse's or child's murder, and the ripple effect of each attack required a range of altered behaviors described in various chapters of this book.

Voices that had long before 9/11 connected all Arabs and Muslims to violence and terrorism and effected their social marginalization reached a crescendo after the 9/11 attacks; then their near-dominance was shattered, because these messages of intolerance proved utterly useless to Americans looking for ways to build cooperative social relationships in shared space.[15] Scholars have observed significant shifts in American popular culture and its representations of Arabs and Muslims in the years since the 9/11 attacks; their work offers further evidence that the cultural hegemony of anti-Arab, anti-Muslim essentialist discourses has been broken. Shifts have been observed, for example, in American television programs, including an increase—from a historic handful—in the number of Arab and Muslim *American* characters and the mainstreaming of sympathetic and humanizing portrayals of Arabs and Muslims, a rarity before 9/11 (Alsultany 2008). Some scholars argue, however, that the new discourses and representations are only slightly more complex than the old ones, in that they promote simplistic good Muslim–bad Muslim dichotomies (Mamdani 2004). Evelyn Alsultany (2008) argues that while more recent television plots evoke sympathy for the plight of Arab and Muslim Americans, they also reaffirm the right to be suspicious of them during times of national crisis.[16] Despite the changes we have seen for the better, Arab and Muslim stigmas remain in place in American culture. While there is much evidence of this stigma, it is perhaps best evidenced by the efforts noted earlier to smear Democratic presidential candidate

Barack Obama by calling him an Arab and a Muslim, by Republican presidential candidate John McCain's rejoinder that Obama was not an Arab but a good man and an American, and by Obama supporters' incessant assertion, "He is not a Muslim!" as if being either Muslim or Arab is still considered un-American.[17] Colin Powell was the first major American public figure after 9/11 to publicly make the statement that many Arab and Muslim Americans had been waiting for: going well beyond Bush administration requests that Americans not physically attack Arabs and Muslims, Powell suggested that their youth too could dream of moving out of the margins and into the mainstream of American society.

Study Methodology and Sampling

This book unpacks the "homeland insecurity" articulated by Arab Muslims using data collected in metropolitan Chicago between 2002 and 2005 for an ethnographic and sociological study of Arab/Muslim post-9/11 experiences. The study methodology included participant-observation that spanned this three-year period and interviews with 102 Arab Muslims—male and female, native-born and immigrant—from a range of social classes and countries of national origin and ancestry conducted in 2003 and 2004. In selecting interviewees, using purposive stratified and snowball sampling techniques, I was guided by my in-depth understanding of Arab American demographic patterns in metropolitan Chicago. All of the 102 interviews were conducted face to face using an extensive protocol of open-ended questions. Initially, interview notes were handwritten (thanks to Howard Becker for this skill) to enhance the interviewee's sense of safety—these were very difficult times characterized by seemingly arbitrary arrests—but over time a larger proportion of the interviews were recorded and then transcribed. I conducted about 80 percent of the interviews, all of which were in English. The remaining interviews were conducted in Arabic or English by research assistants. Table 1.1 provides a summary of study sample demographic characteristics.

Table 1.2 identifies the interview sample by location of residence in metropolitan Chicago. Interviews were conducted with Arab Muslims who resided throughout the city and its suburban areas. Care was taken to reflect the range of Arab American residential patterns while also sampling more heavily from areas of residential concentration. Arab Americans have two concentrated areas of residence in the southwest corridor of the Chicago metropolitan area: on the southwest side of the city, and in the nearby southwest suburbs. These areas are discussed in detail in chapters 6 and 7. Arab Americans also live in significant numbers on the north side of the city, although they are more broadly dispersed across a range of neighborhoods and are more likely to be Christian than

Table 1.1 Demographic Statistics of the Study Sample (N = 102)

	Percentage
Female	45
Income	
Poor or low-income	18
Middle-class	62
Upper-middle-class and wealthy	20
Age	
Nineteen to twenty-nine	30
Thirty to forty-nine	56
Fifty or older	14
Education	
High school or less	14
Some college or BA/BS degree	43
Postgraduate	42
Born in the United States[a]	30

Source: Author's calculations.

[a] Includes for sociological reasons persons who migrated to the United States before age ten.

Arab Americans on the southwest side. The majority of Iraqi refugees in Chicago were resettled in the 1990s on the north side, in the Albany Park neighborhood close to a large Assyrian community originally from Iraq. The Arab Americans dispersed throughout the north, northwest, and western suburbs are more likely to be Egyptian, Lebanese, and Syrian than Arab Americans on the southwest side and in the southwest sub-

Table 1.2 Interviewees by Residence in Chicago Metropolitan Area

	Number
City: north side	16
City: south side	2
City: southwest side	19
City: unspecified	14
Southwest suburbs	24
Northwest suburbs	11
Western suburbs	8
Northern suburbs	4
Other	4
Total	102

Source: Author's calculations.

Table 1.3 Interviewees by National Origin and Age at Migration or by Parents' National Origin if U.S.-Born

Country of National Origin	Total	Age Ten to Seventeen (1.5ers)	Under Ten	Foreign-Born Over Seventeen	U.S.-Born
Algeria	1			1	
Egypt	9		1	2	6
Iraq	7			7	
Jordan	7			6	1
Lebanon	2			2	
Lebanon-Syria	1			0	1
Libya	1		1	0	
Morocco	4			4	
Palestine[a]	44	7	7	20	10
Saudi Arabia	2			1	1
Somalia	5			5	
The Sudan	13			12	1
Syria	5	2		1	2
Yemen	1			1	
Total	102	9	9	62	22
Percentage of sample		9	9	61	22

Source: Author's calculations.

[a]See table 1.4 for countries of birth for Palestinians.

urbs; the latter are predominantly Palestinian, with smaller numbers of Jordanians (majority Christian), Yemenis, and members of other Arab nationalities.[18]

Arab Americans from thirteen countries of national origin are represented in the study, with a few of mixed national backgrounds. Table 1.3 identifies study participants by country of national origin, age at migration to the United States, and, for the U.S.-born, parents' national origin. Immigrants in the study most often came to the United States as adults, but slightly more than 10 percent of them were "1.5ers," defined as persons who migrated between the ages of ten and seventeen. This group is often highlighted in the immigration literature as a special type because its members were socialized in two cultures during their formative years (see Hurh 1998). Another group accounting for slightly less than 10 percent of all interviewees came to the United States as children under the age of ten, a group that sociologists have found to be more similar in perspective and life course to second-generation children of immigrants than to immigrants themselves. As I show here using immigration data,

Palestinians are the dominant Arab population in metropolitan Chicago, and have been so historically. Indeed, in my estimation, metropolitan Chicago may be home to the largest concentration of Palestinians in the United States. Owing to their large numbers and tendency to concentrate in enclave-like settings among other Palestinians, Palestinians are 43 percent of the study sample: 45 percent of the American-born and 42.5 percent of the foreign-born.

Persons familiar with Arab culture and history know that in the Arab world Arabs tend to identify with their ancestral place of origin regardless of where they were born and raised. Thus, Iraqis born in Yemen will most likely see themselves as Iraqi, regardless of their place of upbringing, passport, or citizenship. The same applies to Egyptians born in Saudi Arabia or Palestinians born in Kuwait. For this reason, I use the terminology and codify study participants by "country of national origin" rather than country of birth. Not understanding this sociological phenomenon results in flawed data analysis. For example, Palestinians—who live with this dualism more than any other Arab group because of their diasporic state—have been miscoded as Kuwaitis or Saudis by researchers who use country of birth or last permanent residence as indices of nationality. Country of citizenship or lack thereof further complicates this messy picture for Palestinians.[19] The U.S. Census Bureau has contributed its share to the problem of identifying Palestinians by recoding persons who indicate Palestine as place of birth and by doing so in a different way with every decennial census (see Cainkar 1988). These issues are quite salient for researchers of areas with large Palestinian populations. Table 1.4 indicates the countries of birth of the Palestinians interviewed in the study. Thirty-four percent were born in the West Bank or Jerusalem area, 20 percent in Jordan, 23 percent in the United States, and the remaining 23 percent in a range of countries.

Egyptians make up 9 percent of the study sample, followed by Iraqis and Jordanians at 7 percent each. Table 1.6 in the next section suggests that the proportion of Egyptian immigrants might be slightly low, but that the U.S.-born segment is probably about right. Sample proportions for Iraqis and Jordanians are adequate when one considers that the majority of these groups in the Chicago area are Christian and that this is a study of Muslims. Sudanese and Somalis were oversampled in this study (with reference to the immigration data in table 1.6) in an attempt to measure any differential impact of race or blackness. The study found, however, that their experiences were quite similar to those of the other Arabs interviewed.[20] Like other Arab groups, Sudanese and Somali men reported facing or fearing special measures by the American government because of their origin in Muslim-majority countries. Sudanese and Somali women who wore hijab reported harassing incidents similar to those experienced by other Arab Muslim women in hijab. The major distinction found in

Table 1.4 Palestinians in Sample by Place of Birth and Age at Migration (N = 44)

	Migrated to United States (Foreign-Born)				
Place of Birth	Over Age Seventeen	Under Age Ten	1.5er (Age Ten to Seventeen)	U.S.-Born	Total
West Bank/ Jerusalem	8	5	2		15
Israel	1				1
Jordan	7	1	1		9
Kuwait	3		3		6
Libya	1				1
Puerto Rico		1			1
United Arab Emirates			1		1
United States				10	10

Source: Author's calculations.

interviews with Sudanese and Somali men was in vulnerabilities related to the occupation of taxi driving.

The Sampling Context: Recent Arab Migration to the United States and Chicago's Arab American Communities

Between 1965 and 2000, more than 630,000 persons immigrated to the United States from the Arab world; most were Arabs, but some were Assyrian, Armenian, Chaldean, or Kurdish.[21] Six Arab countries—Lebanon, Jordan, Egypt, Iraq, Syria, and Yemen—and Palestine accounted for 81 percent of these immigrants (see table 1.5). Except for Egypt, these are the same places from which Arab immigrants came to the United States one hundred years ago. The remaining 19 percent came from a wide range of Arab countries, including the Sudan, Morocco, Libya, Bahrain, Oman, Tunisia, Algeria, Kuwait, and Saudi Arabia; much smaller numbers came from other Arab countries. Mirroring the Arab migration pattern of one hundred years ago, Lebanese were the largest Arab immigrant group in the post-1965 period, although Illinois is exceptional in this regard because it is one of only a few states in which persons of Lebanese and Syrian descent are outnumbered by other Arabs, notably Palestinians, Jordanians, and Iraqis (U.S. Bureau of the Census 2000). Table 1.5 provides immigration numbers and percentages for the major Arab immigrant groups over the thirty-five-year period since 1965. The problem of counting Palestinians affects this big picture; if they could be accurately counted, their numbers in table 1.5 would surely surpass those for Egyptians.

Table 1.5 Major Arab Immigrant Groups to the United States by Country of Birth, 1965 to 2000

Country of Birth	Number of Immigrants	Percentage of Major Arab Immigrant Groups
Lebanon	122,291	24
Egypt	114,812	22
Jordan and Palestine[a]	113,117	22
Iraq	87,499	17
Syria	62,610	12
Yemen	9,959	2
Total	510,288	100

Source: U.S. Immigration and Naturalization Service, country of birth data, 1965 to 2000.

[a]Jordan and Palestine are combined here for a number of reasons, the most important being that some 80 percent of Jordanians migrating to the United States are Palestinians. Other reasons have to do with passports and complications with regard to how Palestinians are counted. See Cainkar (1988) for a more detailed explanation.

The 2000 census counted about 1.2 million persons of Arab ancestry in the United States; the research and polling firm Zogby International estimates that the real number is closer to 3 million. According to 2000 census data for the United States as a whole, persons of Arab ancestry had higher levels of education than the overall American population. The proportion of persons of Arab ancestry age twenty-five or over with at least a high school diploma was 84 percent, as compared to 80 percent of the total U.S. population. The proportion of Arab Americans with at least a bachelor's degree was also higher than that of the total population (41 percent compared with 24 percent), and this was true for each individual Arab group. Some 42 percent of employed persons of Arab ancestry age sixteen or older worked in management, professional, and related occupations (compared with 34 percent of the total population), and another 30 percent worked in sales and office occupations (compared with 27 percent of the total population).

During the period 1965 to 1999, 44,633 immigrants from Arab countries declared to the Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) that Illinois was their place of intended residence. Eighty-five percent of these immigrants were from the major countries of Arab migration listed in table 1.5, including 15 percent of all combined Palestinian/Jordanian immigrants and 13 percent of all persons born in Iraq. Of those intending to reside in Illinois, 33 percent were Palestinian or Jordanian, and 25 percent were Iraqi, most of whom were Assyrian (see table 1.6).[22] During some years, 20 percent of all Palestinian/Jordanian immigrants to the United States and 25 percent of all Iraqis chose Illinois as their initial location.

Table 1.6 Cumulative Patterns for Arab Immigrants Intending to Settle in Illinois, 1972 to 1999

Country of Birth	Number of Immigrants to Illinois	Percentage of Group to Illinois	Group as Percentage of Main Arab Immigrants to Illinois	Group as Percentage of All Arab Immigrants to Illinois
Jordan and Palestine	14,701	15	39	33
Iraq	11,247	13	30	25
Syria	4,043	6	11	9
Lebanon	3,763	3	10	8
Egypt	3,626	3	10	8
Yemen	737	7	2	2
Total selected countries	38,117	7	100	85
Total all Arab countries	44,633	8		100

Source: U.S. Immigration and Naturalization Service, country of birth data, 1972 to 1999.

Table 1.7 shows that among Arab immigrants declaring their intention to settle in Illinois, Palestinians and Jordanians were the principal group throughout the entire post-1965 period, although in the early 1980s and, to a lesser degree, the mid-1990s they were followed relatively closely by Iraqis (including Assyrians, Arabs, and Kurds). During other periods, however, Palestinians/Jordanians stood alone in their dominance, accounting for some 39 to 45 percent of all immigrants from Arab countries intending to settle in Illinois. These figures are even larger when we add the 3 to 4 percent of "Kuwaitis" (largely Palestinians born in Kuwait) to the Palestinian numbers. Table 1.7 also indicates that Arab migration to Illinois has become more diverse since the 1990s: the five main Arab groups fell to 71 percent of all intended immigrants by 2000.

Arab Americans living in Illinois are largely an urban population connected to the greater Chicago economy, with the exception of the historic Lebanese communities in and around Peoria. Eighty-five percent of the persons of Arab ancestry in Illinois counted by the 2000 census lived in the nine-county Chicago primary metropolitan statistical area (PMSA) (Paral 2004). The Arab American Institute's report on persons of Arab ancestry in Illinois (which includes Assyrians from Arab countries), based on the 2000 census, places 72 percent in Chicago-centered Cook County and another 11 percent in bordering Lake and DuPage Counties. Table 1.8 shows that the median household incomes for persons who reported Lebanese, Syrian, or Egyptian ancestry in Illinois were above

Table 1.7 Arab Immigrants Intending to Resettle in Illinois, Selected Years (National Group as a Percentage of All Arab Immigrants Intending to Resettle in Illinois)

Country of Birth	1972	1980	1986	1995	2000
Jordan and Palestine	45%	36%	39%	31%	31%
Iraq	16	35	15	26	16
Egypt	15	10	12	9	6
Lebanon	10	8	11	8	5
Syria	6	6	9	5	10
Kuwait	—	2	3	4	4
Total	97	97	89	83	71

Source: U.S. Immigration and Naturalization Service, country of birth data, 1972, 1980, 1986, 1995, and 2000.

the state median and Iraqi-ancestry households were slightly below, followed by Palestinian, Arab/Arabic (mostly Palestinians), and Jordanian households. Poverty rates were highest among Iraqis, Palestinians, and Jordanians, with levels above the state norm. Palestinians and Jordanians in metropolitan Chicago were largely middle-class, with some very wealthy households and some very poor households. Non-Assyrian Iraqis, on the other hand, tended to be either wealthy professionals who had been in the United States for decades or low-income refugees.

Just how many Arabs live in metropolitan Chicago is a topic of much discussion among scholars, community members, and national organizations. The city of Chicago ranked fourth among "places with the largest Arab population" in the 2000 census, following New York; Dearborn, Michigan; and Los Angeles, with a count of 14,777. The 2000 census counted 40,196 persons of Arab ancestry in Cook and DuPage Counties. Zogby International has estimated that at least 182,000 people from Arabic-speaking countries live in Cook, DuPage, and Lake Counties, including Assyrians, Somalis, and Sudanese, whom the Census Bureau counts separately from Arabs (Arab American Institute Foundation 2003). In 1998 the Advisory Council on Arab Affairs of the Chicago Commission on Human Relations estimated the metropolitan Chicago Arab population at about 150,000, plus about 65,000 Assyrians (see Cainkar 1998). These large discrepancies between official data and community estimates are not new; the true number lies somewhere in between them. As indicated earlier, the problem of numbers in metropolitan Chicago is complicated by the large Palestinian presence.[23]

The problem of Arab American numbers beleaguers scholars—who identify issues of ambiguous categories, sampling error, and fear—as well as community organizers, who need numbers to obtain grants for com-

Table 1.8 Arabs and Assyrians in Illinois: Median Household Income and Poverty Rates

Group	Median Household Income	Percentage of Persons Below Poverty Level
All Arabs	$46,595	15.8
Lebanese	57,656	7.2
Syrians	57,422	9.2
Egyptians	56,944	7.9
Assyrians	49,027	8.3
Iraqi	45,991	19.9
Palestinians	39,804	18.3
"Arab/Arabic"	39,349	20.5
Jordanian	32,703	17.6
All Illinois	46,590	10.7

Source: The 2000 U.S. census, as tabulated by Rob Paral (2004).

munity services. On the U.S. census, Arabs are enumerated as whites, a category that many Arabs say they do not identify with given their experiences (see chapter 3). For community workers, official Arab whiteness has meant that schools, police departments, domestic violence and homeless shelters, and a slew of other agencies have no data to offer them to demonstrate need. Detailed profiles of Arab Americans are based on the census long form, sent to a sample of the U.S. population, and depend on responses to the open-ended ancestry question. These data have the issues associated with smaller populations. Finally, studies have shown that some Arabs in the United States—Palestinians in particular—are uncomfortable with government reporting mechanisms (see chapter 3; Suleiman 1999b; Cainkar 1999). To counteract both undercounting and fear, a large mobilization was undertaken in Arab American communities across the United States for the 2000 census. Community activists encouraged Arab Americans to perform their census duty and assured them that they had nothing to fear. A 2004 request by the Department of Homeland Security (DHS), however, for a Census Bureau report with Arab ancestry data organized by zip code only reaffirmed this fear among Arab Americans (Clemetson 2004). According to the Electronic Privacy Information Center (EPIC), a research center focused on civil liberties,

> The tabulations apparently include information about United States citizens, as well as individuals of Arab descent whose families have lived in the United States for generations. One tabulation (pdf) shows cities with populations of 10,000 or more and with 1,000 or more people who indicated

> they are of Arab ancestry. For each city, the tabulation provides total population, population of Arab ancestry, and percent of the total population which is of Arab ancestry. A second tabulation (zip), more than a thousand pages long, shows the number of census responses indicating Arab ancestry in certain zip codes throughout the country. The responses indicating Arab ancestry are subdivided into Egyptian, Iraqi, Jordanian, Lebanese, Moroccan, Palestinian, Syrian, Arab/Arabic, and Other Arab.

The data-sharing on Arabs between DHS and the Census Bureau was disclosed by a Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) request submitted by the EPIC.[24] According to documents it received from that request, EPIC reports on the government's communications regarding this matter as follows:

> The heavily redacted documents show that in April 2004, a Census Bureau analyst e-mailed a Department of Homeland Security official and said, "You got a file of Arab ancestry information by ZIP Code Tabulation Area from me last December (2003). My superiors are now asking questions about the usage of that data, given the sensitivity of different data requests we have received about the Arab population."

A DHS Customs and Border Protection (CBP) official sent an explanation the same day:

> At U.S. International airports, U.S. Customs posts signage informing various nationalities of the U.S. Customs regulations to report currency brought into the U.S. upon entry. . . . My reason for asking for U.S. demographic data is to aid the Outbound Passenger Program Officer in identifying which language of signage, based on U.S. ethnic nationality population, would be best to post at the major International airports.

The Decennial Census Advisory Committee called these actions by the Census Bureau and Homeland Security "the modern day equivalent of the pinpointing of Japanese-American communities when internment camps were opened during World War II" (Lipton 2004). The Census Bureau subsequently revised its policy on sharing statistical information about "sensitive populations" with law enforcement or intelligence agencies, as did the CBP regarding sensitive requests. The problem of census data and counting Arab Americans will probably continue into the future because of these actions.

The Social Context of the Study Interviews

At the time when the interviews were conducted for this study, between early 2003 and late 2004, a significant segment of Arabs and Muslims in the United States perceived that their social, political, and civil rights situation was unstable. This sentiment was discussed in meetings and con-

ferences attended by the author and in newspaper articles, magazines, newsletters, and blogs and on websites; it was the topic of casual conversation among members of these communities, and it comes through strongly in the data from this study. During this period, Arab and Muslim males who had entered the United States on a visitor's visa were being subjected to special registration, and many thousands whose immigration papers were out of order faced voluntary departure or deportation. Arab and Muslim Americans reported being visited at home and at work by FBI agents who "just wanted to talk," in the process stigmatizing them in the face of their neighbors and coworkers. Topics of daily conversation included reports of searches of homes and businesses that seemed to lack probable cause and arrests that appeared to lack legitimate charges. The cases of the L.A. Eight and of Mohammed Salah, a resident of Chicago's southwest suburbs, which had been pending from the late 1980s and the mid-1990s, respectively, were resurrected for prosecution by the federal government. James Yee, a Muslim military chaplain at the Guantánamo Bay detention center, had been falsely imprisoned as a spy. Six Muslim charities were shut down on allegations of terrorist support in the context of legislation that permitted the government to press charges against charitable donors whether or not they were aware of any alleged wrongdoing by the charity. The USA PATRIOT Act, a series of intelligence provisions that Arab and Muslim Americans felt were intended to target them, was passed by Congress. The FBI announced that it was focusing its intelligence work on mosques, and it was revealed that the Department of Homeland Security had requested the zip code list of areas of Arab concentration from Census Bureau staff. It seemed to many Arabs and Muslims at the time that simply being Arab or Muslim was enough to legitimate government actions against them that they believed ran counter to democratic practice. And then there was Guantánamo Bay, which loomed in the background as a potential nightmare world with its hundreds of orange-suited prisoners living incommunicado in wire cages.

These were tough times, compounded by media treatment that Arabs and Muslims found largely derogatory. There were also reports of job discrimination, removal from airplanes, delays in immigration processing, and sporadic hate crimes and harassment. Chapters 4 through 7 reconstruct this general climate based on interview data. Although this book is my best effort to create a readable narrative of that period as seen through the eyes of Arab Muslim Americans, I believe that no amount of writing can ever fully reconstruct the flavor of those times for Arabs and Muslims in the United States. We can look back at the period now and breathe a sigh of relief; we can be thankful that the worst fears of Arab and Muslim Americans were not realized. We can focus on the positive gains for Arabs and Muslims in American society, despite continued voices of intolerance, and on the generally better social and economic

status they enjoy compared to most Arabs and Muslims living in many European countries. But we have once again learned an old lesson: that social constructions applied to entire groups of people can be extremely damaging to them, especially when a government uses such ideas to guide its policies.

I wish to express my deepest gratitude to every single person who allowed me to interview him or her during this period. Most of the interviewees did not know me; I respect the bravery it took to talk with me, and I remain extremely thankful for the trust in me that inspired it. This book is written from the analytic perspective of a sociologist who has spent her career as a scholar of Arab American and Muslim American communities and as an ethnographic researcher in these communities. My perspective is informed by the body of findings of other scholars as well as by my own prior work. My attempts to distance myself from the poignant findings of this study and from the emotional impacts of this period of history are sometimes unsuccessful. I am no less a scholar because I am also human.