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National (in)security: Asian American Women's Disenfranchisement 1875-1945

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Abstract

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My thesis takes a feminist security studies approach to analyze the historical exclusion and disenfranchisement of Asian American women. I investigate how national security measures were employed to justify or conceal oppressive US domestic policies targeting Asian American women. Specifically, I focus on the Page Act of 1875, Cable Act of 1922, and Japanese American internment in the 1940s. Along with the existing feminist security studies scholarship, I introduce the reproduction of colonial dynamics as an analytical tool to expose the state's active role in prescribing insecurity for vulnerable populations.

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Introduction

Laura Sjoberg suggests that “the purpose of doing research in Feminist Security Studies is to raise problems, not to solve them.”¹ My contribution to FSS will be to add another perspective and approach to critiquing dominant narratives of security by investigating the reproduction of colonial dynamics in the United States. I take a feminist security approach to unearth the “state” from its neutral, unexamined role and highlight its generative role in prescribing violence and insecurity. I will examine how US legislation targeting Asian American women, in the name of security or protection, reinscribed colonial conditions of an inferior Other and their subsequent disenfranchisement and exclusion. Even though the US officially disavows colonialism, the state’s reproduction of colonial dynamics contributes to the fundamental issues of traditional security studies that FSS addresses. The combination of post-colonial and feminist theories provides a new way to analyze Asian American women’s disenfranchisement through the Page Act, Cable Act, and Executive Order (EO) 9066. Under the guise of national security concerns, these federal, domestic policies were a form of population management to maintain a particular national identity and remove any deviance.

My research spans from the late nineteenth century to the mid twentieth century, focusing Asian women and Asian American women’s experiences with discriminatory domestic policies. In 1875, the Page Act was the first restrictive federal immigration act that severely limited the immigration of all Chinese women to the US. The Page Act assumed all Chinese women immigrants were immoral, contagious prostitutes until proven otherwise. After the turn of the century, the Expatriation Act of 1907 tied women’s citizenship status to their husband’s status;

¹ Laura Sjoberg, “Looking Forward, Conceptualizing Feminist Security Studies.” *Politics & Gender* 7, no. 4 (2011): 600–604. doi:10.1017/S1743923X11000420.

American women lost their US citizenship if they married a man from any other country. In response to the Expatriation Act, the Cable Act was ostensibly implemented in 1922 to grant women more independence from their husbands. However, the Cable Act continued the effects of the Expatriation Act for women who married “aliens ineligible for citizenship,” which essentially referred to Asian men. Then in 1941, EO 9066 caused the mass removal and internment of 120,000 Japanese Americans after Pearl Harbor. The US government presumed all Japanese Americans on the West Coast were enemy spies, calling for extreme measures to address this supposedly imminent threat to national security.

The Page Act, Cable Act, EO 9066, were portrayed as a defensive type of security strategy because the federal policies were supposedly responding to pre-existing threats. Before the Page Act was enacted, a sizable portion of Chinese women immigrants were prostitutes in California. The Cable Act emerged when there was already established fear of Asian men and state-level laws regulating interracial relations. The EO9066 followed intense fears about Japanese Americans being “enemy” spies for the Axis power during World War II. From this defensive standpoint, the state's security measures — detainment, disfranchisement, exclusion — were viewed as rational, natural reactions to dangerous threats already present and intruding on the nation’s wellbeing. I do not necessarily counter that these policies were defensive strategies, but instead, I critique how the label security induces an assumption about the state’s protective, altruistic intentions. Since the state was operating under a pretense of security against impeding dangerous forces, the state’s violent response towards Asian American, specifically Asian American women, was concealed through seemingly benevolent motives. The US government disguised restrictive legislation as protecting the nation from tainted populations. The Page Act prevented more unclean, immoral women from entering the US. The Cable Act protected White

women from predatory Asian men, while simultaneously bestowing (some) women with independent citizenship. The EO 9066 removed and contained the potential traitors to the American nation.

The “benevolent” motives of the legislation were not an inevitable or natural reaction to perceived external phenomena; there were calculated moves embedded in these policies to produce a desired national image. While not merely reverting to traditional security studies frameworks to say these policies were completely offensive, I claim there were offensive urges or compulsions functioning under a defensive cover. Colonialism is traditionally examined within a particular geography and time period, usually outside of the US in the distant past. Colonial dynamics from historical settings that I analyze include the construction of an Other, the desire for complete knowledge over their subjects, binaries distinguishing the colonizer's superiority from its subjects, the exclusion of colonial subjects from full democratic participation, and benevolent justifications for colonial dominance. The reproduction of colonial dynamics considers how mechanisms upholding colonial domination from the past operate in the present. Since the element of race was fundamental to colonial domination, my discussion of colonialism is inherently a conversation about racism. Yet, rather than simply identifying how historical policies were racist, the lens of colonial dynamics uncovers more nuanced functions of race—how racial categories, produced through public discourse and formal legislation, inscribed bodies with inferior socio-political statuses that set a foundation for exclusion. While racialization was a predominant feature of colonialism, I also consider its intersections with gender in colonial times and in relation to Asian women’s experiences in the late 19th century and early 20th century. Within the context of US federal policies targeting Asian American women, I examine how power through a colonial lens was deployed on the terrain of family and

marital relations. Colonial dynamics provide a strong tool to expose how security was not merely a natural consequence in response to perceived threats but an active process authorizing disfranchisement.

The reproduction of colonial dynamics exposes the coercive nature of these domestic policies by revealing how power and domination exclude undesirable bodies to enhance an overall population. Each of the colonial dynamics I identify as reproduced in these act (as I outline in the security studies chapter)—Othering, disfranchisement and exclusion, desire for knowledge, discourses of care—worked in tandem to achieve a desired ideal. As Dipesh Chakrabarty explains, colonized subjects were positioned further back on a Western timeline of civilization as backward, primitive, and closer to nature (i.e. their society, culture, ways of being were not yet civilized).² From this inferior standpoint, the colonial subjects were denied full participation in democracy or equal status in society until they developed to reach a more superior Western standard. For example, the prominent liberal thinker John Stuart Mill claimed self-ruled government was the highest form of government in his essays “On Liberty” and “On Representative Government.” Yet, Mill believed Indians and Africans were not civilized enough to self-rule and must be excluded from their own politics until colonial rule and education “improved” their capacity to govern.³ Therefore, the West was the culmination of all development and colonized subjects were “not yet” there.

Just as colonizers set Western standards for all of society to eventually subscribe to, the US government imposed a superior, ideal family structure for Asian American women through these domestic policies. The policies designated undesirable groups and bodies that are “not yet”

² Dipesh Chakrabarty, *Provincializing Europe: Postcolonial Thought and Historical Difference* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2008), 8.

³ John Stuart Mill, *Three Essays* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1975), 409–423.

meeting this superior, more “civilized” standard—which varied according to the context of each policy but generally maintains a propensity for patriarchal, heterosexual, racially homogeneous families. Under the Page Act, immigration officials viewed Chinese women with spouses or children as less likely to be prostitutes. The Cable Act discouraged marriages with Asian men for White and Asian American women. During Japanese American internment, the mixed marriage policy favored families with white men married to Asian women over Asian men married to white women, and the camp authorities praised married women with traditional family roles. These regulations promulgated racist and sexist assumptions about who were desirable members of the national imaginary. The nation-state extended or denied a certain status and protection—whether it was immigration, human, or citizenship rights—to women based on their race or relationship to a man. The women who failed to meet these standards were identified for exclusion and disfranchisement, similar to how colonial subjects were subordinated. In the Page Act, most Chinese women immigrants were denied immigration to prevent the spread of Chinese families and mixed-race children. In the Cable Act, Asian American women were disproportionately barred from their citizenship rights. During Japanese American internment the entire Japanese American population was removed and detained. Thus, although the domestic laws were portrayed as defensive reactions, they actively regulated the makeup of which populations could gain and retain in the US.

At the same time, this overt form of power—imperial might via legislation—was inherently flawed or broken. The complexity of identity, which many feminist scholars have emphasized, makes the practice of completely denying rights to entire populations more complicated than it seems on the surface. These cracks in total domination appeared during the Page Act when immigration officials struggled to identify which Chinese women were

prostitutes, during the Cable Act when multi-racial women defied the established system for stripping away citizenship, and during Japanese American Internment when officials were unsure of where to place mixed families and when Japanese women began breaking away from their traditional roles in the family. The conventional way of viewing power in security studies as a complete top-down framework, could not persist on its own. While these legislations did impose large state-sponsored violations of rights, the pockets of broken domination revealed how security measures were incomplete and had to be constantly re-configured and adapted to carry out the state's objective.

Overview of Traditional Security Studies

Security studies is a branch of International Relations, and the foundation of traditional security studies was built on realism. Realism has three main characteristics: groupism, egoism, and power-centrism, and the main claim of realist security studies is to reduce anarchy. Neorealist thought is divided into two sub-schools: defensive realists, who view more potential for peace, and offensive realists, who are conflict driven. Critical security studies emerged in the early 1990s as a reaction to the limitations of previous neorealist theories on security studies. However, critical security studies maintained the original form of neorealist security narratives and merely broadened and deepened the content covered.

The traditional narratives of security studies are rooted in realism (also known as political realism), which is a varied, long theoretical tradition that examines international relations' conflictual and competitive side. The founding fathers of realism include Thucydides, Machiavelli, and Hobbes. Thucydides (c. 460–c. 400 B.C.E.) recounts the armed conflict between Athens and Sparta that took place from 431 to 404 B.C.E in *History of the Peloponnesian War*. *History* set the foundation for key realist principles such as egoism,

anarchy, and security. The Athenians prioritized self-interest over morality, and in the absence of an inter-state authority, anarchy caused each state to fend for themselves by trying to gain the most power. When Athenian power grew, the Spartans feared for their security, spurring a war between the states. In the late fifteenth century, Machiavelli (1469–1527) critiqued the moral tradition of classical Western political thought, which promoted virtuous state relations and ethical standards in warfare. Machiavelli divides politics from ethics and searches for “the effectual truth of the matter rather than the imagined one.” His theory was a radical form of realism that prioritized the state’s success, justifying moral and immoral means to reach a political goal. Thomas Hobbes (1588–1683) describes an anarchic state of nature without government, without any constraints on individuals’ actions. Since anyone can use force at any time, people become fearful of one another and invade others for their own safety. This dilemma between individuals translates to state relations; the struggle for power becomes the basis for states’ behavior. Hobbes thought, states, “for their own security, enlarge their dominions upon all pretenses of danger and fear of invasion or assistance that may be given to invaders, [and] endeavor as much as they can, to subdue and weaken their neighbors.” Hobbes suggests individuals subject themselves to a sovereignty’s authority to escape this state of anarchy and inevitable war. Since the international realm does not have a sovereignty overseeing inter-state relations, states, while not constantly in battle, maintain a “disposition to fight.”⁴

In *the Routledge Handbook of Security Studies*, William C. Wohlforth outlines the main characteristics of realism, sub-schools of realist thought, and their prominent theories--as each relates to the field of security studies. According to Wohlforth there are three main assumptions

⁴Julian W. Korab-Karpowicz,, "Political Realism in International Relations", *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Summer 2018 Edition), Edward N. Zalta (ed.), URL = <<https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/sum2018/entries/realism-intl-relations/>>.

realism makes about the nature of the world: groupism, egoism, and power-centrism. Groupism suggests politics occurs between and within groups; group solidarity is essential to cohesion within a group while also creating the potential for conflict between groups. This characteristic of groupism can apply to any social interaction but realist security studies primarily locate groupism within nation-states, or states.⁵ Egoism refers to the narrow self-interest motivating individuals or groups to act. Realism proposes this self-interest is embedded in human nature and that it ultimately trumps altruism. Finally, power-centrism implies "human affairs are always marked by great inequalities of power," both socially through large political influence and materially through disproportionate resource allocations. The central argument of realism builds off these three assumptions; the existence of groupism, egoism, and power-centrism will likely produce conflict, which means a central authority must establish order. Without an authority, anarchy will allow anyone to use force to get what they want, causing deep uncertainty and making escalations to war more likely. Realist security studies claims, "to be secure, people need to overcome anarchy."⁶

The two main sub-schools of neorealism are defensive and offensive realism. Neorealism emerged in the 1980s with Kent Waltz's *Theory of International Politics*, which took a more scientific approach to clarify earlier realist ideas about how the system of states impacts security affairs.⁷ Neorealism "suggests that states seek security in an anarchic international system – the main threat to their well-being comes from other states."⁸ The defensive sub-school builds off Waltz's neorealist theory to analyze how the war-causing element of anarchy is reduced. The

⁵ Myriam Dunn Cavelty and Victor Mauer, eds. *The Routledge Handbook of Security Studies*. (Florence: Taylor & Francis Group, 2009) 9, ProQuest Ebook Central.

⁶ Myriam Dunn Cavelty and Victor Mauer, eds. *The Routledge Handbook of Security Studies*, 10.

⁷ Myriam Dunn Cavelty and Victor Mauer, eds, 11.

⁸ Colin Elman, *Realism Reader* (London: Routledge, 2010), 20.

defensive school of thought claims strong group identity and technology, such as nuclear weapons, make the conquest of other states more difficult to imagine. Subsequently, this enhances security since "the harder the conquest is, the more secure all states can be." Defensive realists conclude that states can find ways to defend themselves under certain conditions without threatening others, revealing a more "built-in potential for peace." In contrast, offensive realists are focused on the conflict-generating potential of anarchy. Without a central authority to enforce agreements in the international system, offensive theory views peace as unstable. Even if defensive realists are correct and conquest appears hard today because of geography, technology, or group identity, offensive realists believe states could develop methods to surmount these obstacles. Thus, offensive realists can "rarely be confident of their security" and are highly suspicious of the power of other states, causing a desire to strengthen themselves and weaken other states in order to survive.⁹

The development of critical security studies (CSS) did not alter the basic form of neorealist security studies. The main elements of dominant security narratives include: "(1) threats that locate danger; (2) referents to be secured; (3) agents charged with being charged with providing security; (4) means by which threats are contained and, so the tale is told, security provided."¹⁰ In traditional neorealist security studies, the referent is the state, the threat is the military force of other states, and the responses are strategic policy. CSS broadens this scope to include new types of threats, such as economic, environmental, or human rights issues. CSS also deepens security studies to consider referents and agents beyond the state.¹¹ Therefore, CSS

⁹ Myriam Dunn Cavelty and Victor Mauer, eds, 13.

¹⁰ Annick T R. Wibben, *Feminist Security Studies: a Narrative Approach* (New York, New York: Routledge, 2011), 7.

¹¹ Keith Krause, and Michael C. Williams, "Broadening the Agenda of Security Studies: Politics and Methods." *Mershon International Studies Review* 40, no. 2 (1996): 230. Accessed March 10, 2021. doi:10.2307/222776.

broadened and deepened the range of security studies issues, switching one actor or threat for another, but left the fundamental structure of traditional security narratives intact.

Feminist Security Studies

Feminist Security Studies (FSS) is a relatively recent field that first arose in the 1990s to critique the patriarchal atmosphere dominating traditional security studies. The early FSS scholars exposed how realism and traditional security studies were controlled by elite, white males and "seemingly devoid of women and an interest in issues of concern to women" In response, FSS scholars have emphasized women's experiences in their research, but FSS is not limited to only "adding and stirring in" women to the pre-existing structures of security studies. Simply adding in women to the field of security studies is problematic because their insights are still filtered through the dominant framework of traditional security studies. The realist priorities of egoism, groupism, and power-centrism remain undisturbed when women are only stirred in. The state continues to be the primary actor granting security to certain populations, while overlooking the nation-state's potential to produce violence and harm. Moreover, security is still viewed as a cohesive object that can be completely owned, lost, or stolen, and political leaders could continue to use security concerns as a discursive tool to justify war and oppression. Rather than merely broadening or deepening security studies, FSS creates an "opening" that provides a more transformative approach to security studies. The major FSS themes that I draw on in my research include contesting the stable concept of security, problematizing the state's role, and linking identity to security.

FSS critiques how traditional security studies views security and insecurity, such as violence, as a stable *thing* one entirely possesses or loses during war. In traditional security studies, states either already "have" security and aim to preserve it and enhance through further

gains in power, or relatively more powerful enemy states threaten a state's security, causing a fear of potentially losing their "possession" of security. During either scenario, the desire to build a greater sense of security can officially justify a state's political—and often violent—actions, such as entering or provoking war. In contrast to this "illusion of total security, feminists contest the possibility of a perfectly controlled, coherent security policy."¹² For FSS scholars, the illusion of security as a stable entity is problematic because it suggests that security, war, and violence are all natural phenomena. For example, in *A Different Kind of War Story*, Carolyn Nordstrom explores the various forms of securities and insecurities through her ethnographic research on everyday life during civil war in Mozambique. Nordstrom critiques how "too often, especially in the West, violence is seen as something that can be simply employed to achieve a purpose; something that is set, enduring, concrete."¹³ The purpose of inflicting violence in traditional security studies is often to achieve security for a nation. However, this perception of security as pre-established and concrete "posits a naturalness" to security, as a "given" thing to strive for complete control over.¹⁴ Then, since complete security is considered a realistic, practical objective, war, and other harmful security measures, appear to be justifiable measures to acquire further security.

FSS also challenges the assumption that the state is an objective actor attempting to establish security for every member of its nation. Traditional, realist security studies places the fate of (in)security solely in the state-nation's control, through the enforcement of combative and preemptive strategies to gain power and mitigate external danger. This framework establishes a

¹² Blanchard, Eric M. "Gender, International Relations, and the Development of Feminist Security Theory." *Signs* 28, no. 4 (2003): 1289. doi:10.1086/368328.

¹³ Annick T R. Wibben, *Feminist Security Studies: a Narrative Approach*, 96.

¹⁴ Carolyn Nordstrom, *A Different Kind of War Story* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1997), 130.

top-down version of power in which a states' government and military achieve or conquer a state of "security," and disperse safety to all its members. Yet, at the same time, the state is "under-theorized and privileged" in traditional security narrative, overlooking its role in producing insecurity, especially within its own borders. Instead of viewing the state as an ultimate protector, FSS reverses a critical lens onto the state. The security of a state is "often built on the insecurity of its most vulnerable populations."¹⁵ FSS recognizes the state's hierarchical structure that privileges certain groups at the expense of others—or possibly *relies* on the subjugation of those deemed abnormal or threatening. Even the stability of a sovereignty, which is supposed to resolve the anarchic nature Hobbes describes, "specifies the relationship [between states and members] by prioritizing citizenship and instituting the principle of spatial exclusion."¹⁶ Citizenship status, and other destinations such as immigration status, define who belongs and who does not belong within a nation and whose security must be prioritized. For example, in *Sex Among Allies*, Katherine Moon critiques the Korean government's clean up of prostitution camps nearby U.S. military bases in the Republic of Korea during the early 1970s. Moon claims the Korean government-imposed health guidelines to improve the environment for American troops. The policy was not implemented out of concern for the prostitute's working or living conditions, and the clean-up caused further monitoring and inspection of prostitutes. Moon's research reveals how policies implemented for national security can often cause insecurity for certain citizens, especially those who are already marginalized or vulnerable.

¹⁵ J. Ann Tickner, "What Is Your Research Program? Some Feminist Answers to International Relations Methodological Questions," *International Studies Quarterly* 49, no. 1 (2005): pp. 1-22, <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.0020-8833.2005.00332.x>.

¹⁶ Wibben, 71.

A major FSS priority is to link security with identity by focusing on women's particular experiences. When FSS scholars bring identity "into the political arena," they challenge basic tenet of liberalism since "liberalism's universal citizen has no identity: he is abstract, eschewing the particularity of identity."¹⁷ Unlike this abstract universal subject, the referent of security in FSS is a complex person or community with distinct needs and desires. The shift to considering women's experiences also advances both objectives of destabilizing security and critiquing state-sponsored violence and insecurity. When women struggle with everyday patriarchy—compounded with other systematic oppressions such as racism, classism, and heteronormativity, security "is always partial . . . elusive and mundane"¹⁸ Security becomes survival method under these oppressive forces, finding moment of security in a system that denies your existence and protection. As Sara Ahmed articulates in conversation with Audre Lorde's *A Burst of Light*:

When you are not supposed to live, as you are, where you are, with whom you are with, then survival is a radical action; a refusal not to exist until the very end; a refusal not to exist until you do not exist. We have to work out how to survive in a system that decides life for some requires the death or removal of others. Sometimes: to survive in a system is to survive a system. Some of us have to be inventive, Audre Lorde suggests, to survive.¹⁹

Although Ahmed does not specifically mention FSS, she describes the insecurity and violence some women, particularly women of color, consistently face under oppressive systems.

Women's insecurity is often intertwined with their identity and relationships, whether they are being targeted based on their race, gender, nationality, or sexuality ("as you are, where you are, with whom you are with"). Far from being a simple, guaranteed *thing* passed down to them, women's survival becomes a "radical action," or perhaps a series of actions, that forge their own

¹⁷ Dianna Taylor, Karen Vintges, and S J Hekman, "Feminist Identity Politics," in *Feminism and the Final Foucault* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2004), pp. 179-203.

¹⁸ Christine Sylvester, 'Empathetic cooperation— A feminist method for IR', (Millennium: Journal of International, 1994), Studies, 23(2), 39.

¹⁹ Sara Ahmed, *Living a Feminist Life* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2017) 237.

sense of security within an insecure setting. Instead of viewing security as a coherent thing, FSS fundamentally rethinks security as practice that is made and remade through everyday experiences. FSS builds a tolerance for uncertainty and attunement for the most vulnerable populations.

A New FSS Critique: The Reproduction of Colonial Dynamics

The first step in shaping a nation's composition involves identifying who does not meet the criteria for an ideal member—or who threatens the established characteristics of an ideal member. The colonial dynamic of constructing an Other complements and expands on the problematic identification of threats in traditional security studies, which FSS is invested in undoing. FSS complicates the realist belief that governmental attempts can achieve total security from external threats, highlighting the problematic logic of groupism. As Annick Wibben addresses, traditional security narratives "emerge in a world dominated by two superpowers divided into 'us' and 'them,' where dissent is seen as unpatriotic and where multiplicity is suppressed until no grey remains in between."²⁰ The stark binaries between external threats and the nation-state in need of protection reflect how colonizers distinguished themselves from their colonial subjects - or the "Other." Postcolonial theory suggests these contrasting categories were based on assumptions about human nature that upheld white, Western superiority and dominance. From the conquering nation's perspective, the colonizers were rational, civilized, and moral, while their colonized subjects were irrational, barbaric, and immoral. I will analyze how these colonial dynamics were replicated in the US government's construction of threats through race and gender. Specifically, I will examine how the inferior position of Asian men under the

²⁰ Wibben, 67.

Cable Act, Japanese Americans under EO 9066, and Chinese women under the Page Act replicated an "Other."

In traditional security studies, the state supposedly offers universal protection and safety to anyone within its borders. However, FSS identifies how traditional security studies places an emphasis on an "identification of the exception in security narratives" and how "the security of some is deeply implicated in, and even predicated upon, insecurity for others."²¹ When a state identifies an "exception," a population who was supposed to be a part of the nation or afforded certain rights is denied the protection of the state. Similarly, after colonizers conquered their colonial subjects, the colonized were excluded from full freedom, protection, or participation in democracy. This colonial exclusion was reproduced in the situations I examined through the loss of both citizenship and human rights. In the Cable Act, Japanese American women were disfranchised from their birthright citizenship. Through the EO 9066, Japanese Americans lost the US government's protection when they were treated as enemies who were forcibly removed from their homes and placed in detention camps. Under the Page Act, Chinese women were not offered the same rights as other immigrants applying to enter the US since they were presumed to be criminal prostitutes. These exclusions were naturalized through bloodlines and codified in formal legislation or policies. Moreover, the domestic policies I consider excluded and disfranchised Asian women primarily based on their marital status or position within the family.

Along with these two main colonial dynamics of othering and exclusion, I examined the different colonial dynamics that appeared within each domestic policy, including the quest for knowledge, discourses of care, and holistic categories of women. The quest for knowledge

²¹ Wibben, 72.

allowed government officials to establish and re-establish who was a dangerous threat. In traditional security studies, security is connected to certainty, and certainty is achieved through acquiring more knowledge. When identifying a threat, the state is compelled to gather more and more information on the subject. Wibben claims "the desire for mastery, which underlies the quest to become all-knowing, is revealed to be typically male."²² I argue this "quest" for knowledge also replicates a colonial epistemology, in which colonizers objectify the colonized and assume to have complete knowledge about their culture. This colonial dynamic was most evident in the Page Act, when Chinese women were interrogated by immigration officials about their sexuality (which was presumed to be deviant and linked to prostitution). Even if the criteria government officials used to classify which Chinese women was arbitrary, the officials produced a certain standard for proper, morally upright women who could enter the US.

After excluding certain populations from immigration or citizenship or basic human rights, the US government justified their regulations through benevolent motives. The traditional security studies propose the state is a force for good, protecting its members from external war and anarchy threatening to encroach on their territory. Yet, Peterson compares the state's provision of security for women to a "protection racket," "implicated in the reproduction of hierarchies and in the structural violence against which they claim to offer protection."²³ This "protection racket" reflects how colonizers who believed their dominance of colonizers was for their own good or in their best interests. As Uma Narayan explains, when colonizers viewed their violent actions as selfless and for the benefit of their subjects, domination was made "morally

²² Wibben, 68.

²³ Spike Peterson, "Security and Sovereign States: What Is at Stake in Taking Feminism Seriously?," in *Gendered States: Feminist (Re)Visions of International Relations Theory* (Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner, 1992): 51.

palatable to those engaged in the infliction of domination. For instance, colonizers believed they were granting their subjects improved spiritual welfare through religious conversion, material benefits from western science and technologies, and cultural benefits from western education and ethics.²⁴ This colonial dynamic was prevalent in the Japanese American internment camps when government officials controlled Japanese American women's sexuality to conform to traditional standards of the family.

In contrast to traditional security studies, FSS is attentive to the nuances of women's experiences and concerned with contextualizing specific times and places. However, Laura Shepard critiques the failure of FSS to adequately acknowledge their own position—dominated by Western, white voices. She even claims FSS "appears surgically modified, with diversities and differences airbrushed out of the picture as this particular practice of power prevails to construct FSS in the image of White Western femininity."²⁵ In my discussion of the Cable Act, I examine how post-colonial theory critiques White, Western women's holistic categories of women. My research has limitations since it is mainly US-centric, but a central theme throughout my work is emphasizing the intersections of race and gender more clearly in FSS.

The domestic policies I examine, and the past discourses surrounding their implementation, all fall within the traditional framework of security studies. These acts perpetuate problematic national security patterns including binary logic, hierarchies, and exclusion. Throughout each of the following chapters on the Page Act, Cable Act, and Japanese American Internment, I investigate the reproduction of colonial dynamics in these policies to

²⁴ Uma Narayan, "Colonialism and Its Others: Considerations on Rights and Care Discourses." *Hypatia* 10, no. 2 (1995): 134. Accessed March 9, 2021. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/3810285>.

²⁵ Shepherd, Laura J. "The State of Feminist Security Studies: Continuing the Conversation." *International Studies Perspectives* 14, no. 4 (2013): 436-39. Accessed March 10, 2021. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/44214626>.

unearth their underlying racist and sexist intentions. Although the acts were framed in neutral language and presented as protective security measures, the US government enforced race and gender based standards that determined who could belong and participate fully in the nation. This FSS post-colonial lens contributes the existing FSS scholarship by emphasizing the historic state-sponsored insecurities Asian American women have experienced and pointing towards an alternative feminist vision of security.

The reproduction of colonial dynamics emphasizes the overt power the state inflicted on marginalized populations during the Page Act, Cable Act, and Japanese American Internment. Instead of viewing the state as the ultimate source of security, this FSS post-colonial approach exposes how the state produces insecurities for Asian women based on their racial ancestry or relationship to men. In the domestic policies that I consider, the state's dominance was enforced via legislation that demarcated entire racialized and gendered groups. The Page Act heavily restricted the immigration of all Chinese women to the US. The Cable Act maintained that all women who married Asian men would lose their citizenship. The EO9066 mandated the mass removal and detention of all Japanese Americans on the West Coast. Throughout each of these acts, I examine how the exclusion and disfranchisement replicated a type of overt colonial power from the past.

At the same time, the breaks within this top-down exercise of power offer a glimpse at an alternative form of security from a feminist perspective. The Asian American women's complex experiences navigating these restrictions reveal the malleable, situational nature of security as a practice. For instance, during Japanese American internment, Japanese American women forged new lifestyles outside the home, gaining new financial and personal opportunities within an overall oppressive setting. Moreover, in the Cable Act, multi-racial women attempted to maneuver

around boundaries and developed survival methods for insecurity. My project begins to “open” a new understanding of security, but further research is needed to discover ways security as a practice can be actualized, both on the personal and collective scale, to achieve feminist objectives.

1. The Page Act of 1875

The Page Act emerged as a defensive national security measure against the substantial number of Chinese women prostitutes already in the US, especially in San Francisco, California. In 1870, census reports suggested that over two thousand Chinese women lived in San Francisco and that about seventy percent of the women were prostitutes. There have been more recent reports by historians who argue census takers exaggerated this number and estimate a more accurate prediction was fifty percent.²⁶ Nevertheless, a sizeable population of Chinese prostitutes were located in the US. However, even this lower report may be exaggerated to some extent due to the failure of US officials to comprehend the distinct Chinese family and marriage structures. The American monogamous marriage was more rigid with a divide between proper wives and prostitutes, while the Chinese system was more like a continuum with various sexual relationships. Chinese wives had the highest status followed by second wives and concubines, which were followed by prostitutes.²⁷ Census takers could have overestimated the total number of prostitutes living in the US because they collapsed polygamy with prostitution and categorized all second wives, concubines, and prostitutes as prostitutes. In addition, many Chinese women immigrants did not come to the border as prostitutes but as wives or laborers (Poly 656). Despite the noticeable number of Chinese prostitutes in the US, the numbers could have been distorted and did not account for all Chinese women immigrants.

The Page Act was the first restrictive US federal immigration law, which effectively prohibited Chinese women's entry to the US. This statute stated, "that the importation into the

²⁶ Kerry Abrams, "Polygamy, Prostitution, and the Federalization of Immigration Law" *Columbia Law Review*, 105, no. 3, (November 2005): 653.

²⁷ Abrams, "Polygamy, Prostitution, and the Federalization of Immigration Law," 653.

United States of women for the purposes of prostitution is hereby forbidden.”²⁸ This act was the first restrictive US federal immigration law, which effectively prohibited Chinese women’s entry to the US. The Page Act reproduced colonial dynamics through the construction of Chinese women as a sexually perverse Other, who the US government deemed a threat to national security since Chinese women could influence the biopolitical landscape of future generations and weaken the superior white race. Although the Page Act was intended to “protect” the nation from sexual and racial impurity, the legislation produced insecurities for most Chinese women at the border, denying their immigration through arbitrary colonial aesthetics and an imperial desire for knowledge.

The traffic of Chinese women into US prostitution during the late 19th century was dominated by tongs, which were secret criminal gangs. The tongs sent representatives to China, and many families sold their daughters to these representatives to ease their economic hardships. Yet, the sales were often fraudulent because families would believe their girls were sold as indentured servants or brides, only for them to end being sold as prostitutes. Furthermore, other Chinese women were lured into US prostitution through false marriages or kidnapping.²⁹ Despite these schemes, Chinese women who were forced into prostitution did not receive the same sympathetic sentiments from the American public as white women in prostitution. US public discourses assumed white, European women were “tricked or seduced” into prostitution. In contrast, Gardner explains how, “Asian women who became prostitutes were not victims of male sexual debauchery or economic destitution, but ‘wayward’ girls who spurned the protection of

²⁸ 18 U.S.C. § 141 (1875).

²⁹ Abrams, 654.

the home and sought unwarranted independence from their families.”³⁰ Asian women were viewed as choosing prostitution out of their own free will instead of being victims to an unjust system. The Page Act specifically lumped Chinese women into this category of sexual “debauchery,” regardless of whether they genuinely engaged in sex work.

Before the Page Act was enacted, Chinese women were identified as a threat to the US nation in a way that replicated colonial characteristics of a savage Other. During late British colonial rule in India, prostitution was a “vice” that was heavily monitored. Prostitutes were perceived as immoral, public health threats, and male colonists feared “excessive sex” would emasculate them. The Contagious Diseases Act was passed in India to protect British soldiers from sexually transmitted diseases (STDs), and the imperial government restrained prostitutes in hospitals, where they were “subjected to indignities of invasive medical examinations under the pretext of treatment.”³¹ Therefore, regulating prostitution provided multiple forms of protection for colonists: preserving their masculinity, morality, and health. Before the Page Act, public discourse depicted the Chinese—and Chinese women specifically—as a sexualized other, much like colonized women. *The New York Tribune* from 1854 alleged, “[the Chinese] are uncivilized, unclean and filthy beyond all conception...lustful and sensual in their dispositions; every female is a prostitute and of the basest order.”³² This article reproduces the savage characteristics of colonial subjects by describing the Chinese, as uncivilized, immoral, and impure. The article also viewed prostitution in a similar manner as colonists, portraying “every” Chinese woman as sexually depraved. Furthermore, Republican President Ulysses S. Grant implored the 43rd

³⁰ Martha Mabie Gardner, “Seeing Difference,” *The Qualities of a Citizen: Women, Immigration, and Citizenship, 1870-1965* (2005): 56. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctt7rhd8.6>

³¹ Shweta M. Adur, “Sexuality and Migration,” *Companion to Sexuality Studies*, (John Wiley & Sons Ltd, 2020), 361, <https://doi.org/10.1002/9781119315049.ch19>.

³² “Chinese Immigration to California,” *The New York Tribune* Sept. 28, 1854, 4.

Congress, “I invite the attention to Congress of another...evil—the importation of Chinese women, but few of whom are brought to our shores to pursue honorable or useful occupations.”³³

The security measures in Page Act, namely banning prostitutes, operated as a form of biopower. According to Michel Foucault, biopower diverges from a sovereignties’ absolute power to “take life or let live,” and rather has the power to “*make* live or let die.” Biopower involves enhancing life on a population level, through statistical and scientific regulatory mechanisms, while other groups are discarded or “left to die.”³⁴ The Page Act was intended to enhance the life/progeny of the US population by excluding immoral, sexually perverse Chinese women. Sexuality is a connection point between discipline individuals and the biopower regulating a whole population. For instance, Foucault describes how a child who masturbates excessively becomes a “lifelong invalid” and experiences “disciplinary sanctions at the level of the body.”³⁵ In the case of the Page Act, prostitution was a sexual perversion, similar to childhood masturbation, that caused immigration officials to police women’s bodies at US borders. During this time, the American Medical Association believed a racist germ theory that Chinese immigrants carried specific germs that could kill white Americans. These fears were centralized on the bodies of Chinese women in prostitution; their sexual labor was thought to be “the nexus through which germs and disease could most easily be transmitted to white men” The AMA even conducted studies into whether the Chinese prostitutes were “poisoning the nation’s bloodstream.”³⁶ Yet, this “debauched, perverted” sexuality simultaneously affects the whole

³³ United States Congress, *Proceedings and Debates of the 44th Congress*, (1875), 180-181.

³⁴ Michel Foucault, *Society Must Be Defended: Lectures at the College de France 1975-1976*, (Picador Press, 1997), 241.

³⁵ Foucault, *Society Must Be Defended*, 252.

³⁶ Eithne Luibhéid, "A Blueprint for Exclusion: The Page Law, Prostitution, and Discrimination against Chinese Women." In *Entry Denied: Controlling Sexuality at the Border*, 37, Minneapolis; London: University of Minnesota Press, 2002. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/10.5749/j.ctttvqx.6>.

population because sexual perversion is assumed to be hereditary, threatening all subsequent generations with contamination.³⁷ The US government's fear of Chinese migration and proliferation was evident during Democratic Representative Orestes Cleveland's of New Jersey warnings to Congress before the Page Act. Representative Orestes expressed deep concerns about how the future Chinese population - "the immense numbers to be had [of Chinese generations]" - will impact the entire US state, producing a "demoralized" nation.³⁸ Through the regulation of both bodies and population, biopower functioned during Page Act to protect the US nation from the assumed degradation Chinese women posed.

The biopower exercised during the Page Act was also a type of racial warfare against the uncivilized Chinese population. According to Foucault, modern war is "not simply about destroying a political adversary, but of destroying the enemy race, destroying that [sort] of biological threat that those people over there represent to our race."³⁹ Since Foucault begins with refuting that war is "simply about destroying political adversary," he clearly diverges from the realist background of traditional security studies that focuses on competition between adversarial states. The modern bio-political war goes beyond the conventional meaning of war as armed conflict and applies to the immigration regulations of the Page Act. During the Page Act, the sexual perversion of Chinese women was not the only factor threatening future generations of American populations. The US government was deeply concerned with the "biological threat" the Chinese race posed to the "superior" white race in America and attempted to control their population growth within US borders. In a committee report, Congress proclaimed, the Pacific

³⁷ Foucault, 252.

³⁸ Orestes Cleveland, "Naturalization – Value of Immigration," *Congressional Globe*, 41st Cong., 2d Sess., 512 (1870).

³⁹ Foucault, 257.

coast, "must in time become either American or Mongolian," implying the two races were competing forces with only one victor.⁴⁰ Yet, this war scenario was not about killing on a battlefield, but rather about the perseverance and dominance of a "superior" racial group in the US.

This bio-political war between races in the Page Act reinscribed the conditions of colonial exclusion that Edward Said describes. Said explains how during the British colonization of Egypt, the British viewed the "Oriental" as historically incapable of self-government, which was an inherent feature of Western civilization. Specifically, he examines the speeches of Arthur James Balfour, who was a British parliamentary member during the early twentieth century. Balfour stated, "Western nations as soon as they emerge into history show the beginnings of those capacities for self-government" while all the centuries of Orientals in the East "have been passed under despotism, under absolute government."⁴¹ (said 33). The colonizers used this logic to justify their occupation of Egypt because imposing their Western form of government supposedly "brought [Egypt] out of the wretchedness of their decline." However, the "rehabilitation" of colonial subjects was not immediate and for a while the colonized were excluded from participating in democracy due to the same "backward" nature the West was determined to rectify. During the Page Act, the US government reproduced this colonial dynamic through the unfavorable depictions of Chinese government as uncivilized. In the same immigration committee report that identified "American" and Mongolian races as opposing forces, the US congress stated that the "American race is progressive and in favor of a responsible representative government," while the "Mongolian race seems to have no desire for

⁴⁰ United States Congress, Joint Special Committee to Investigate Chinese Immigration. *Report of the Joint Special Committee to Investigate Chinese Immigration: February 27, 1877*, (Washington: G.P.O, 1877), 11.

⁴¹ Edward W. Said, "Knowing the Oriental," in *Orientalism* (London: Penguin, 2003), 33.

progress, and to have no conception of representative and free institutions."⁴² Congress's statement clearly (re)produces the dynamic between Britain's civilized self-government and Egypt's uncivilized despotism by portraying American government as progressive and free in contrast to the Chinese. Thus, the Chinese were barred from immigration under the Page Act in part because of their lack of civilized self-governance.

However, Foucault's biopower theory does not fully capture the central role of gender in nation-building and regulating population growth. This absence of gender reflects a larger dilemma within security studies; traditional narratives in security studies overlook the relevance of race, gender, and sexuality in forming and maintaining a nation. As Shweta Adur acknowledges, "the imperative of controlling and managing the population and shaping the demographic contours of the modern nation-state makes sexuality a locus of power and a site of contentious politics."⁴³ Within this realm of sexuality as a "locus of power and site of contentious politics," women occupy a primary position in assembling the "contours" of a nation-state. Specifically, women's ability to conceive children allows them to shape the nation's composition, and, as a result, the government has a special interest in monitoring which women can enter the US. Nira Yuval-Davis explains that "as the biological 'producers' of children/people, women are also, therefore, 'bearers of the collective.'"⁴⁴ When the Page Act was drafted, the US government was aware of women's role in nation-building. In an 1870 San Francisco Chronicle, Senator Cornelius Cole expressed that "When I look upon a certain class of Chinese who come to this land-I mean the females-who are the most undesirable of population,

⁴² United States Congress, Joint Special Committee to Investigate Chinese Immigration, 11.

⁴³ Adur, "Sexuality and Migration," 359.

⁴⁴ Nira Yuval-Davis, "Women and the Biological Reproduction of the Nation." *Gender & Nation*, (London: SAGE Publications Ltd,1997), 26. <http://dx.doi.org.proxy.library.emory.edu/10.4135/9781446222201.n2>.

who spread disease and moral death among our white population, I ask myself the question, whether or not there is a limit to this class of immigrants?”⁴⁵ Many politicians such as Senator Cole, who desired to “limit” Chinese women immigrants, were horrified at the potential for Chinese women immigrants to build families in the US, especially since their children would gain US citizenship from being born on US soil. Senator Cole was also fearful of potential “disease moral death among our white population” because, while there were US state law banning interracial marriages, these laws did not protect against Chinese prostitutes bearing children fathered by their white customers. The ability to procreate with white customers was especially threatening because they could “infect the white population by producing weak, hybrid progeny.”⁴⁶ The Page Act mitigated this threat because all Chinese women who attempted to enter the US were assumed to be prostitute and, thus denied entry, until proven otherwise. The policy essentially prevented Chinese women from reproducing Chinese families or mixed children diluting the white race the US.⁴⁷ Therefore, women’s role in nation-building was essential to the biopower operating under the Page Act, influencing which populations could proliferate in the US.

The construction of Chinese women as a savage Other, who threatened the future generations in the US, justified their exclusion from the security found through immigration and citizenship. Chinese women were viewed as sexually perverse, unclean individuals who would transmit their immorality through bloodlines, infecting and corrupting the US nation’s demographics. Thus, in the Page Act, sexuality was “deployed to make and mark boundaries in

⁴⁵ Abrams, 663.

⁴⁶ Abrams, 663.

⁴⁷ Ming M. Zhu, “The Page Act of 1875: In the Name of Morality,” *SSRN Electronic Journal*, March 3, 2010, <https://doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.1577213>.

order to separate the ‘desirable and good’ subjects – citizens and denizens – from the ‘undesirable and bad’ ones.”⁴⁸ The Page Act’s presumption that all Chinese women engaged in prostitution marked Chinese women immigrants as undesirable, which inhibited their access to US protection, prosperity, or citizenship. The distinction between acceptable immigrants clearly reflects the binary logic of traditional security studies. Traditional security studies demarcates insiders and outsiders from a nation-state to produce an easily identifiable danger (them) and provide internal cohesion (us). Moreover, this binary reinforces ideas about the “good life” found within US borders, diverting attention away from the state as a source of insecurity and largely ignoring the security of outsiders.⁴⁹ The Page Act replicated this traditional security studies framework by identifying Chinese women as dangerous outsiders and locating the US nation-state as a source of security—protecting future US generations from perversion and contamination—instead of an instigator of insecurity—denying safety to Chinese women.

During the Page Act implementation, immigration officials determined who qualified for US entry based on visual characteristics that indicated a woman’s moral respectability. When immigration officials judged Chinese women’s (lack of) respectability, they reproduced a Western, colonialist aesthetic as described by Mickaella Perina. Perina examines how “issues of taste are related to culture and to race,” particularly the division between Western and non-Western aesthetics.⁵⁰ For instance, through her analysis of the poem “Hiccup” (Hocquet) by Léon-Gontran Damas, Perina identifies a “specific [Western] conception of beauty and taste” and how the French colonial context produced a set of “legitimate knowledge” according to

⁴⁸ Adur, “Sexuality and Migration,” 359.

⁴⁹ Annick T R. Wibben, *Feminist Security Studies: A Narrative Approach* (New York: Routledge, 2011), 69.

⁵⁰ Mickaella Perina, “Encountering the Other: Aesthetics, Race and Relationality,” *Contemporary Aesthetics*, Special Volume, no. 2 (2009): 1. <http://hdl.handle.net/2027/spo.7523862.spec.206>

Western standards and values. Perina claims Western colonialist aesthetics were defined in opposition to Non-Western aesthetics. Yet, on-Western aesthetics refers to “not only what is simply not the same [compared to Western aesthetics] but what is different in a threatening or disturbing way.”⁵¹ Although Perina discusses colonialist aesthetics within art forms such as poetry, her theories apply to the visual process immigration officials employed while examining and differentiating Chinese women at the border.

Perina’s theory colonial aesthetics were replicated during the Page Act when immigration officials attempted to distinguish which Chinese women were prostitutes through physical traits such as clothing and bound feet. The Chinese women were visually scrutinized according to Western standards about beauty from the late 1800s, and women’s “deviations” represented not only difference from the but, as Perina claims, a “threatening or disturbing” characteristic that had to be excluded. For example, Gook Chun was denied US immigration based on her attire: “a single girl with too many clothes, found herself outside the confines of respectability.” The immigration officials searched Chun’s luggage, and she had more clothing than thought “proper for a girl of her age and station in life,” as well as a few articles of clothing deemed “strange.”⁵² These immigration official’s evidence for prostitution was based on Western assumptions about women’s acceptable appearance or “aesthetics.” Chun’s abundance of clothing diverged from the established standard of a proper, respectable immigrant woman and she was denied entry without a strong connection to prostitution. Another indicator for respectability that immigration officials relied on was women’s bound feet; the officials assumed Chinese women with bound feet were upper class women with moral integrity. One immigration official reported, “There has never

⁵¹ Perina, “Encountering the Other,” 4.

⁵² Gardner, “Seeing Difference,” 54.

come to this port, I believe, a bound footed woman who was found to be of immoral character, this condition of affairs being due, it is stated, to the fact that such women, and especially those in the interior, are necessarily confined to their home and seldom frequent the city districts.”⁵³ While there is some truth in US immigration officials’ observations—women with bound feet were unable to perform lower-class labor—their interpretations were not completely accurate. For instance, courtesans in Shanghai, who were prostitutes with wealthy or upper-class clients, sometimes had bound feet. Similar to the arbitrary standards for women’s clothing, official’s conceptions of bound feet produced a set of “legitimate knowledge” to distinguish “real” wives from prostitutes, regardless of the inaccuracies. Therefore, immigration officials reproduced a type of “colonial aesthetics” during their inspection of Chinese women’s appearance because their criteria was based on Western assumptions of beauty, class, and morality.

Moreover, a colonial dynamic for power through knowledge manifested when immigration officials interrogated Chinese women to distinguish proper women from prostitutes. The desire for knowledge about Chinese women immigrating to the US during the Page Act replicated a colonial quest for knowledge, mastery, and power. In his chapter “Knowing the Oriental,” Edward Said highlights two principal themes in the British’s colonial rule over Egypt: knowledge and power. During British colonization, supremacy was associated with “[the colonizer’s] knowledge of Egypt and not principally with military or economic power.”⁵⁴ The US asserted dominance over Chinese women through a similar method of acquiring knowledge during multiple steps of the immigration process. This security tactic reflected a core feature of traditional security studies, threat identification. Threat identification “is an impulse born of

⁵³ Eithne Luibhéid, “A Blueprint for Exclusion,” 49.

⁵⁴ Said, “Knowing the Oriental,” 32.

fear,” and the state manages fear through “externalization and containment.”⁵⁵ Under the Page Act, danger was located externally in the “Other,” Chinese women immigrants, and there was a deep fear about the unknown or uncertainty presented by these external threats. The desire for more and more knowledge subsided this fear while also establishing authority over Chinese women. In dominant security studies, “a safe life requires safe truths” rather than dealing the complicated realities. The construction of all Chinese women as dangerous prostitutes was a “safe truth” that officials reinforced through the knowledge they extracted during various stages of Chinese women’s immigration.

Before emigration from China, every Chinese woman had to send “an official declaration of purpose in emigration and personal morality” to the American Consul in Hong Kong. The day before their ship left, each woman answered questions, such as the following, to consul:

Have you entered into contract or agreement with any person or persons whomsoever, for a term of service within the United States for lewd and immoral purposes? Do you wish of your own free and voluntary will to go to the United States? Do you go to the United States for the purposes of prostitution? Are you married or single? What are you going to the United States for? What is to be your occupation there? Have you lived in a house of prostitution in Hong Kong, Macao, or China? Have you engaged in prostitution in either of the above places? Are you a virtuous woman? Do you intend to live a virtuous life in the United States?⁵⁶

Then at the US border, immigration officials conducted intense interrogations to acquire information about Chinese women’s background and decide whether they were eligible for entry under the Page Act. The typical interviews investigated how unaccompanied Chinese women paid for their travel, whether they had US visitors in China (presumably to coordinate

⁵⁵ Wibben 68.

⁵⁶ Abrams, 42.

prostitution), and if they had communication with anyone before their hearings. For example, the young woman Chong Kwai, who was born in San Francisco, California but raised in China, was asked the following questions when she tried to return to San Francisco:

Q: Has anyone, man or woman, from San Francisco been to see you in China?

A: Yes. Somebody has been to China but I do not know who it was.

Q: When? A: 1890.

Q: Did you see him often? A: Only once.

Q: Was it a man or a woman? A: A woman.

Q: Did she come from San Francisco?

A: She lived in Canton City. No. She did not come from San Francisco.

Q: Did anyone from San Francisco come to see you in China? A: No.

Q: No one at all? A: No.⁵⁷

The extensive collection of information on Chinese women allowed the US officials to gain control not necessarily through a genuine understanding about women's sexual activity but by controlling a narrative about who the Chinese women were. The frame in which immigration officials considered Chinese women was already distorted since the women, especially single women, were presumed to be prostitutes. For instance, Chan Ching was investigated ten different times in the four months after her arrival to the U.S. Chinese women were frequently investigated during the first few months after their arrival while they were temporarily paroled to their "alleged" husbands. The investigators attempted to determine whether the couple "actually cohabited and consummated the marriage." However, the inspectors often saw the women's situation as they wanted to see it—as improper and signaling prostitution. In the inspectors notes of Chan Ching, he found apparent "evidence" of prostitution; Chan's "general appearance indicated that she had dressed hurriedly, and she had a very dissipated look" and general appearance of the room was such as is generally found in Chinese houses of prostitution."

⁵⁷ Gardner, 53.

⁵⁸Moreover, Chan's husband had to commute to work in another city, and the inspectors used his absence as proof that their marriage was fraudulent. As a result, Chan was deported after facing circumstantial evidence and the inspector's judgments during her court trial. Thus, US officials accumulated knowledge about Chinese women, even months after their arrival, not to discover a complete "truth" about their sexual activity but to impose their version of events, denying autonomy to women and asserting their dominance. As Said says, "To have such knowledge of such a thing is to dominate it, to have authority over it. An authority here means for 'us' to deny autonomy to 'it'—the Oriental country—since we know it and it exists, in a sense, *as* we know it."⁵⁹ The questioning of Chinese women immigrants denied the women's true intentions or backstories for seeking immigration and manipulated their answers/situation to accommodate preconceived notions about prostitution "as [the US] knew it."

The Page Act was presented as a defensive security measure in response to Chinese women prostitutes already inside the US borders, particularly in California. However, this sweeping immigration law was deliberately enacted to regulate which populations were allowed to enter and flourish in the US. The Page Act reproduced the colonial dynamic of Chinese women as a sexually perverse Other, who threatened US national security on several levels. Chinese women could alter the biopolitical landscape in the US by passing on sexual impurities to their offspring, expanding "undesirable" Chinese families in the US, diluting the dominant white race via racially mixed children. When the Page Act was implemented, immigration officials identified which women were improper prostitutes through visual characteristics that replicated a "colonial aesthetic" Pernia described. Chinese women could be denied entry to the US for simply

⁵⁸ Gardner, 56.

⁵⁹ Said, 32.

having too many clothes or not having bound feet since these traits signaled a deviance from Western standards of respectability. Furthermore, an imperial desire for knowledge was reproduced during the repeated interrogations of Chinese women immigrants. Similar to the authority British colonist asserted over Egypt, US immigration officials exercised their power through knowledge, shaping women's answers and situations as proof for dismissal. Thus, the reproduction of colonial dynamics, including the savage Other, colonial aesthetics, and a quest for knowledge exposed how the Page Act served as an active type of population management to deny Chinese women.

2. The Cable Act of 1922

Progressive leaders, including national feminist organizations, lobbied Congress during the early twentieth century to implement the Cable Act because they wanted to separate women's citizenship status from their husband's nationality. American women's citizenship status was precarious at this time due to the Expatriation Act of 1907. The Expatriation Act established that any woman who married a foreigner would take on the nationality of her husband, essentially losing her citizenship status. After white women gained suffrage through the 19th amendment on August 18th, 1920, women's organizations began advocating for the Cable Act to restore citizenship to U.S born women who lost their rights under the Expatriation Act. Congress ultimately passed the Cable Act on September 22, 1922. The Cable Act excluded its protections for women who married "aliens ineligible for citizenship," which targeted men born in Asian countries since only those with white or black were eligible for naturalized citizenship in 1920. The Cable Act appeared to be a benevolent security measure on the surface, providing liberal ideals to (some white) women. However, the deliberate disenfranchisement of Asian Americans is evident through the colonial attitude that pervaded the construction of Asian men as an "unruly" Other and the power dynamics between White and Asian women. In contrast to the colonial boundaries and binaries of the Cable Act, multi-racial women embodied the post-colonial resistive subject—a multifaceted subject who challenges coercive restraints—as they navigated the Cable Act.

The Cable Act was hailed as a progressive achievement for early feminists, ostensibly granting them greater security through increased freedom and independence. An Oregon newspaper article from 1922 claimed this federal law "certainly recognizes the entity and

individualism of women as has never been done heretofore.”⁶⁰ Since the Cable Act revoked the Expatriation Act and—on the surface appeared to—establish women’s citizenship status as separate from their husband, the Oregon newspaper suggests the act grants women an unprecedented amount of individualism. This logic aligns with Martha Nussbaum’s liberal feminism framework in which she claims the legal system can rectify traditions that “have denied the separateness of persons.”⁶¹ For instance, she highlights the Bangladesh case *Nelly Zaman v. Ghiyasuddin*, which allowed a woman to obtain a divorce from her abusive partner after the High Court recognized her distinct rights under law. As a result of this case and other “small victories,” Nussbaum claims women were “winning the right to be recognized as separate beings, beings whose well-being is distinct from that of a husband's, and who have a life of their own to live”⁶² For Nussbaum, laws are an emancipatory tool that can restore individual autonomy to women, not an exclusionary system. Her reasoning reflects the discourse surrounding the Cable Act in the 1920s. Since the Cable Act reversed the tradition of confining women to the family unit, the press praised this law for extending more liberal ideals of equality, independence, and autonomy to women.⁶³ Thus, by granting women citizenship on their own terms and not tied to their husband, the Cable Act appeared to be a great liberal achievement.

⁶⁰ "Injustice is Removed. Married Women's Status under Act Bettered. Alien Wife May." *Oregonian* (Portland, Oregon) LXI, no. 19304, October 3, 1922: 16. *NewsBank: Access World News – Historical and Current*. <https://infoweb-newsbank-com.proxy.library.emory.edu/apps/news/document-view?p=WORLDNEWS&docref=image/v2%3A11A73E5827618330%40WHNPX-11D6432B9D387030%402423331-11D6432C5F377C50%4015-11D6432F32D53AB8%40Injustice%2Bis%2BRemoved.%2BMarried%2BWomen%2527s%2BStauts%2Bunder%2BAct%2BBettered.%2BAlien%2BWife%2BMay>.

⁶¹ Martha C. Nussbaum, “The Feminist Critique of Liberalism,” *The Lindley Lecture*, March 4, 1997, pp. 1-45, <https://doi.org/10.1093/acprof:oso/9780195112108.003.0003>.

⁶² Nussbaum, “The Feminist Critique of Liberalism,” 17.

⁶³ “What the New Alien Law Does Hereafter a Married Woman Neither Gains nor Loses Citizenship,” *The Bellingham Herald* 32, no. 306 (November 16, 1922): 14. <http://infoweb.newsbank.com>.

Nussbaum's liberal framework that appears to promote liberation does not adequately deal with the problematic history of liberalism. The traditional family models of prominent liberal thinkers, such as John Rawls and Gary Becker, featured an altruistic male as the head of household, who supposedly acted in the interests of the entire family. Nussbaum does acknowledge how this patriarchal model was flawed and ignored issues within the family, including hunger, domestic violence, marital rape, and unequal education. Yet, she claims these problems are not "intrinsic" to liberalism and can be fixed through court cases such as *Nelly Zaman* or legislation such as the Cable Act.⁶⁴ Nussbaum concludes contemporary court cases like *Nelly Zaman*, which allowed a divorce for a domestic violence survivor, demonstrate a more genuine actualization of liberal ideals. To her, the long history of liberal thinkers who denied independence to women is inconsequential, merely reflecting the failure of particular people and not revealing any foundational flaws about liberalism.⁶⁵ Although Nussbaum believes legal measures can restore a "pure" form of liberalism, "the problem is not that liberalism fails to live up to its own practice, but rather that failure is constitutive of the tradition."⁶⁶ Liberalism has continued to operate through the denial of its universal rights to large subsets of the population. The same pieces of legislation which claim to promote equality or freedom can reinforce differential treatment based on race and/or gender. Although the Cable Act was portrayed as progressive achievement for women, the positive praise in the press for this act completely overlooked the racial caveat in the act. The Cable Act was not a purely benevolent domestic policy for the security of all American women. Under the Cable Act, the liberal ideals granted to

⁶⁴ Nussbaum, 17.

⁶⁵ Nussbaum, 18.

⁶⁶ Ratna Kapur, "New Cosmologies: Mapping the Postcolonial Feminist Legal Project," in *Erotic Justice: Law and the New Politics of Postcolonialism* (London: GlassHouse, 2005), 17.

“women” were predicated on the exclusion of Asian men and the restrictions placed on Asian American women.

The technology of race functioned within the Cable Act to reproduce Asian men as colonized subjects, who were categorized as an inferior “Other” and excluded from the promises of liberalism. According to Falguni Sheth, the technology of race refers to an instrument of production, in which the sovereign power, or the ultimate authority of a state, manages collective, threatening populations to maintain order and justify exceptions liberalism.⁶⁷ The “unruly” element of race “is intuited or perceived as threatening to political order, to a collectively disciplined society.”⁶⁸ Whereas Chinese women were disparaged as a dangerous, immoral prostitutes during the Page Act in 1875, fifty years later the Cable act vilified the sexuality of Asian men. During the early twentieth century in the US, depictions of Asian men as perverse, menacing characters in popular culture reflected the broader assumptions during this time that Asian men were preying on white women. In 1920, a California newspaper claimed, “Japanese boys are taught by their elders to look upon ... American girls with a view to future sex relations.”⁶⁹ The potential for “future sex relations” between Asian men and white women indicates an “unruly” element of race because those intimate interracial relations would disrupt the socio-political order of anti-miscegenation laws in the 1920s. Since 1660 anti-miscegenation laws operated on the state level to prevent white and Black Americans from marrying. In the early twentieth century, anti-miscegenation laws expanded to include a wider set of prohibitions, including the ban on white and Asian American marriages. These laws contributed to a 1920s

⁶⁷ Falguni A. Sheth, “The Technology of Race: Enframing, Violence, and Taming the Unruly,” in *Toward a Political Philosophy of Race* (Albany: SUNY Press, 2009), 78.

⁶⁸ Sheth, “The Technology of Race,” 81.

⁶⁹ Gary Y. Okihiro, “Heterosexual and Homosexual.” In *Common Ground: Reimagining American History*, (Princeton Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2001), 105, doi: <https://www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctv15r57rk.8>.

socio-political order devoted to maintaining “white purity,” which white women only married other white men.⁷⁰ Specifically, Asian men were viewed as a dangerous, sexually corrupt threat to purity of white women. For example, films such as *Broken Blossoms* and *The Cheat* exacerbated the trope of Asian men as sexual predators. In 1919, *Broken Blossoms* featured a foreign Chinese man who lured a young white virgin into his opium den. The 1915 film *The Cheat* also portrayed a villainous, wealthy Japanese man who exchanged cash for sex with a married white woman. Since Asian men were perceived as sexual threats to the purity of white women during the early twentieth century, this “unruly” element of race facilitated the identification and exclusion of Asian American men as an “Other.”

Asian men were not merely stereotyped as sexual deviants in society; these characterizations replicated the colonial dynamics of the “Other” as described by Ratna Kapur. Kapur analyzes the construction of the Other during the colonization of India in the 19th century. British political thinkers such as James Mill thought Indians were so “infantile and childlike” that they did not have the capacity to consent or reason and, therefore, must be excluded from participating in democratic society. Mill also viewed India as “chaotic, unfathomable and inscrutable,” and far removed from civilization.⁷¹ In opposition to white, Western countries, the Other was constructed to be irrational, barbaric, and uncivilized. These colonial characteristics were reproduced within the descriptions of Asian men during the early twentieth century in the US. White women symbolized “holiest possession” of European civilization who were “threatened with destruction by heathenism and barbarism” of Asian men.⁷² For instance, in

⁷⁰Peggy Pascoe, "Miscegenation Law, Court Cases, and Ideologies of "Race" in Twentieth-Century America." *The Journal of American History* 83, no. 1 (1996): 49. doi:10.2307/2945474.

⁷¹ Kapur, “New Cosmologies,” 24.

⁷² Okihiro, “Heterosexual and Homosexual,” 105.

1909, the California politician Grove Johnson expressed deep concerns about the potential threat of Japanese men in Sacramento County schools. Johnson “shuddered to think of such a condition” in which Japanese men “with their base minds, their lascivious thoughts, multiplied by their race and strengthened by their mode of life” sat “in the seats next to the pure maids of California.”⁷³ Johnson contrasts Japanese men with their “base minds” and “lascivious thoughts” to the White “pure maids,” reproducing a binary between the barbaric and civilized races. The description of “base minds,” or the lowest intellectual level, also reinscribes the condition of colonial subjects as irrational and inferior. Asian men were constructed as a racialized “Other,” replicating how Indians were characterized by the British in the 19th century.

Since Asian men were perceived to be a threatening “Other” reminiscent of colonial subjects, the government took deliberate legislative actions to tame the unruly element of Asian men and preserve the social order of anti-miscegenation – at the expense of Asian American’s security. The government’s urge to protect White women from foreign men is evident in the congressional records preceding the Cable Act. During a 1912 hearing concerning the Expatriation Act, Congressman N.E. Kendell declared, “we do not want our girls to marry foreigners.”⁷⁴ Kendell’s statement, taking a possessive stance towards “our girls,” reveals the State’s interests in regulating relationships between white women and foreigners. Through the “aliens ineligible for citizenship” exception, the Cable Act maintained this paternalistic motivation of the Expatriation Act but specified that Asian men were the undesirable foreigners. Although the language of “aliens ineligible for citizen” appears race neutral on the surface, this exception to the Cable Act identifies Asian men because Asians were the one racial group

⁷³ Okihiro, 105.

⁷⁴ Ann Marie Nicolosi, “We Do Not Want Our Girls to Marry Foreigners: Gender, Race, and American Citizenship,” *NWSA Journal* 13, no. 3 (2001): 14.

ineligible for naturalized citizenship in 1922. The Naturalization Act of 1790 codified the right to naturalization for “free white persons,” and the statute was amended in 1870 to include “persons of African descent.”⁷⁵ The “unruly” element of Asian men was tamed through legal practices that barred Asians from naturalized citizenship, categorizing them as “aliens ineligible for citizenship.”

Along with taming the “unruly” through legal practices, the category of “aliens ineligible for citizenship” was naturalized through bloodlines, which allowed Asians to be barred from the liberal promises of the Cable Act. Asian ancestry was defined according to blood under the Cable Act; more than 50% of nonwhite or nonblack ‘blood’ provided grounds for exclusion from citizenship.⁷⁶ Thus, race became a “vehicle by which to draw and redraw the boundaries by which select populations are assured the protection of the law.” The abstract categories of race were “infused with meaning” that allowed the sovereign power to delineate who was worthy of universal protections under the law.⁷⁷ Just as James Mill reasoned Indians in the 18th century were naturally too infantile and uncivilized to self-govern, Asian men were deemed evil, irrational, and immoral—and, therefore, incapable of accessing full benefits of US citizenship. The Cable Act functioned as a technology of race, excluding Asian men and their wives from the promise of liberalism, which placed them in the “waiting room of history,” previously occupied by colonial subjects but now refurbished to accommodate Asian Americans.⁷⁸

⁷⁵ Roger Daniels, “Aspects of the Asian American Experience—Rights Denied and Attained,” *American Studies Journal*, November 21, 2018, <http://www.asjournal.org/51-2008/aspects-of-the-asian-american-experience/>.

⁷⁶ Martha Gardner, *The Qualities of a Citizen: Women, Immigration, and Citizenship, 1870-1965* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2009), 142.

⁷⁷ Sheth, 91.

⁷⁸ Dipesh Chakrabarty, *Provincializing Europe: Postcolonial Thought and Historical Difference* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2008), 9.

The holistic category of “women” that appears in the praise of the Cable Act overlooks the distinct implications of the law for White women versus Asian women. The progress for “women” in the Cable Act functions similar to the colonial logic Chandra Mohanty describes between Western women and third-world women. Mohanty examines how Western feminists viewed women across cultures as a single group “identifiable prior to the process of analysis.” According to Mohanty, Western feminists analyze third world women as a homogeneous, powerless group, but this assumption of shared oppression collapses the distinction between “‘women’ as a discursively constructed group and ‘women’ as material subjects of their own history.”⁷⁹ While the Western feminist discourses Mohanty critiques ignore the historical context of third world women, the discourses on the Cable Act fail to consider the uneven power dynamics and disparate histories of White women and Asian women. In October 1922, a North Dakota article that claimed the Cable Act “wiped out the most important discrimination against women” suggests all women were in an equal state of powerlessness before the Cable Act and are all liberated now⁸⁰. However, Asian American women were more likely than White women to marry Asian men and have their citizenship revoked, which means women did not share a collective experience of freedom after the Cable Act.⁸¹ The focus of this article also reveals whose liberation counted. When the publication overlooks distinction between white and Asian women, it implies that the default category of “women” only includes white women.

Moreover, the single category of women in these discourses denies any historical specificity, obscuring the different trajectories of enfranchisement for White women and Asian

⁷⁹ Chandra Talpade Mohanty, “Under Western Eyes: Feminist Scholarship and Colonial Discourses,” *Gender*, 2000, 65.

⁸⁰ “Legal Status of Women in Minnesota at Present Recently Investigated by Committee of State League of Women Voters With Splendid Results,” *Duluth News Tribune* 54, no. 162 (October 22, 1922): 1, <http://infoweb.newsbank.com>.

⁸¹ Nicolosi, “We Do Not Want Our Girls to Marry Foreigners,” 16.

women. Their distinct histories are significant to understanding how the Cable Act benefited white women at the expense of Asian women. As Kapur explains, liberals must “embrace the history of liberalism, not excavate some supposedly pure form of it” because liberalism has consistently operated on the denial of rights to entire populations.⁸² White women possessed a greater initial number of privileges, including greater opportunities for US citizenship and suffrage, which set them up to maneuver the Cable Act more easily. White women always possessed the right to birthright and naturalized citizenship in the US. Then, after white women gained voting rights with the 19th amendment in 1920, their citizenship status gained more value, propelling major feminist organizations, including the League of Women Voters, to lobby for the Cable Act. Meanwhile, Asian American women did not benefit from the 19th amendment, which only granted suffrage to White women, and they were barred from naturalized citizenship until the late 1940s.⁸³ However, the Cable Act only allowed women who lost their birthright citizenship under the Expatriation Act to reinstate their citizenship status through the naturalization process, resulting in more severe implications for Asian women because they were displaced from US citizenship without the same means to regain their status as white women (the naturalization process). While Asian American women were not eligible for voting rights under the 19th Amendment, their citizenship still provided a valuable sense of social status, freedom to choose their partner, and belonging to a nation.⁸⁴ Asian American women with ties to foreign countries were also invested in maintain their because without citizenship, traveling internationally would be more difficult and they would encounter additional hurdles to re-enter the US. Therefore, there was not a uniform state of oppression or freedom that “women”

⁸² Kapur, 17.

⁸³ Gardner, *The Qualities of a Citizen*, 139.

⁸⁴ Sarah A. Sadlier, ““That’s Leaving It Pretty Much up to Jane,”” *Vanderbilt Historical Review* 2016, no. Summer (2016): pp. 16-24, <https://doi.org/10.15695/vhr.2016summer.16>.

experienced with the Cable Act, but rather White women occupied privileged position of power relative to Asian women.

The multi-racial women who tried to regain citizenship after the Cable Act embody Kapur's theory on the resistive post-colonial subject. Kapur explains the post-colonial resistive subject is "one who produces resistance in coercive circumstances" is "deeply layered and multifaceted"⁸⁵ For instance, Seattle officials struggled at first to determine if an American born multi-racial Chinese and Spanish woman could apply to be naturalized in 1923. The woman lost her US citizenship under the Expatriation Act when she married a Mexican man in 1917 and became a Mexican citizen. She attempted to apply for US citizenship as a Mexican citizen, but the Seattle officials ultimately determined the question did not concern her Mexican citizenship. The officials decided she could not regain US citizenship because "she is a Chinese half-blood" which disqualified her from naturalization.⁸⁶ This woman tried to use one of the facets of her multilayered identity to maneuver around the restrictions of the Cable Act but was recategorized within the boundaries of an "alien ineligible for citizenship." Her attempt to redefine her identity in the face of restrictive policies reflects Gloria Anzaldúa's concept of the *mestiza*. The *mestiza* subject "straddles" multiple cultures and aims to break down the "subject-object duality that keeps her a prisoner."⁸⁷ The *mestiza* counters the dynamics of colonialism, which rely on a binary understanding of subjectivity and power—either the colonizer or the Other, rational or irrational, civilized or uncivilized, etc.

⁸⁵ Kapur, 26.

⁸⁶ Gardner, 142.

⁸⁷ Gloria Anzaldúa, "La Conciencia De La Mestiza," in *Borderlands/La Frontera: the New Mestiza* (San Francisco: Aunt Lute Books, 2012), 102.

The experiences of multi-racial women navigating the Cable Act provide new directions for theorizing security from feminist perspective. Scholars in feminist security studies “tend to recognize safety as an illusion and place stress on strategies for dealing with vulnerability”⁸⁸ For the multi-racial women encountering the Cable Act, security was not a stable “thing” that the state was easily going to grant to them. Their multiracial identity placed them in a vulnerable position because the state could potentially exclude them from citizenship based on their Asian heritage. Since the US did not include their multifaceted identity within the boundaries for protection, these women attempted to circumvent the system by presenting an acceptable version of themselves. This strategy for dealing with vulnerability connects to Anzaldúa’s concept of “la facultad.” According to Anzaldúa, la facultad is “an instant ‘sensing,’ a quick perception without conscious reasoning,” which is latent in all of us, but is a skill more likely to be possessed by “those pushed out of the tribe for being different [. . .] those who do not feel psychologically or physically safe in the world.”⁸⁹ The most marginalized groups who face intersecting oppressions subconsciously develop “la facultad” to survive state sponsored violence and everyday insecurities. The multi-racial women unknowingly cultivated this survival tactic to deal with Cable Act, which demonstrates how women employed security as a practice within a system that denied their safety. Through this concept of the “la facultad” security takes on a different meaning than in the context of traditional security studies. Instead of being a concrete thing the state bestow to its accepted members, the security is developed on an individual and the strongest among those who are deemed outsiders.

⁸⁸ Annick T R. Wibben, *Feminist Security Studies: A Narrative Approach* (New York: Routledge, 2011), 68.

⁸⁹ Anzaldúa, *Borderlands/La Frontera*, 60.

On the surface, the Cable Act appeared to be a significant achievement for women during the early twentieth century. The discourses in newspapers depicted the Cable Act as a law that extended liberal promises of independence and equality to all women. However, the exception clause of the Cable Act functioned to tame the “unruly” element of Asian men who threatened the social order in the US. The exclusion of Asian men and women who marry them from the protections of the Cable Act (i.e., the right to marry without losing birthright citizenship) positions them in a similar external, inferior state as colonized subjects. Moreover, the holistic category of “women” in discourses about the Cable Act blurs the distinct experiences of White women, Asian women, and multi-racial women. The different history of citizenship allows White women to have more power and ease when circumventing the restrictions of the Cable Act. Multi-racial women who sought citizenship under the Cable Act represented a post-colonial resistive, or *mestiza*, subject that defied the boundaries set to exclude or manage them.

3. Japanese American Internment: 1941-1945

After Japan attacked Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941, President Franklin D. Roosevelt signed Executive Order 9066 (EO 9066), which initiated the forced removal and internment of 120,000 Japanese Americans. Although the internment was justified through misleading national security narratives, a feminist security studies approach that incorporates Patricia Hill Collin's theory on the US national family reveals how Japanese Americans were constructed as threats and disenfranchised through their inferior position in a US social order. The traditional family structure in the imagined US nation-state was also maintained on the micro-level in internment camps; deviations in the nuclear family, arising from increased gender equity or sexual freedoms, were regulated by authorities through domestication measures that replicated colonial discourses of care.

The shift towards a mass evacuation of Japanese Americans followed increasing anti-Japanese sentiments among nativist organizations, the press, and politicians. Pearl Harbor emboldened the pre-existing anti-Japanese rhetoric of white supremacist organizations on the West Coast. In January 1942, the Native Sons of the Golden West, which was a white nationalist organization formed in 1875, highlighted their previous anti-Japanese activism, claiming "had the warnings been heeded...the treacherous Japs probably would not have attacked Pearl Harbor."⁹⁰ The nativist Joint Immigration Committee also declared, "this is our time to get

⁹⁰ Alice Yang Murray, "The 'History of Military Necessity' and the Justification of Internment," in *Historical Memories of Japanese American Internment and the Struggle for Redress*, ed. Alice Yang Murray (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2008), 22.

things done that we have been trying to get done for a quarter of a century.”⁹¹ The objective of these organizations after Pearl Harbor was to advocate for the mass evacuation and imprisonment of Japanese Americans on the West Coast. The Native Sons of the Golden West and the Joint Immigration Committee both passed their own resolutions to remove Japanese Americans from the state of California. Similarly, the business federation Los Angeles Chamber of Commerce petitioned General John DeWitt for mass evacuation, and the California Department of American Legion called for all Japanese Americans to be “placed in concentration camps.”⁹²

Beginning mid-January 1942, West Coast newspapers and magazines, especially historically anti-Japanese columns, began publishing sensationalized and misleading stories about Japanese Americans. The Hearst newspaper featured stories about dangerous items discovered on Japanese American property, without mentioning the context of their occupations, and spread false information about Japanese sympathizers with radio transmitters.⁹³ The newspaper columnist Henry McLemore even called for “the immediate removal of every Japanese on the West Coast to a point deep in the interior.”⁹⁴ These anti-Japanese sentiments in the press later reached a national audience. On February 13, the distinguished columnist Walter Lippmann claimed the West coast was in “immediate danger of Japanese attack” and urged all Japanese Americans to be moved inland. Although Assistant Attorney General Tom Clark discredited Lippman’s claims, the columnist’s “great prestige furnished authoritative backing for advocates of exclusion.” Two days later, the nation’s most prominent newspaper, the New York

⁹¹ Greg Robinson, *A Tragedy of Democracy: Japanese Confinement in North America* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2011), 72.

⁹² Murray, “The ‘History of Military Necessity’ and the Justification of Internment,” 23.

⁹³ Robinson, *A Tragedy of Democracy*, 72.

⁹⁴ Murray, 23.

Times said the West Coast's fears of Japanese American fifth columnists, or people who undermine a nation from within, were justified. Similar to the Hearst newspaper, the New York Times published an exaggerated story about an FBI raid on Japanese property in one area that discovered dangerous weapons, without disclosing that these materials belonged to a sporting goods store.⁹⁵ These public discourses contributed to a long history of skewed narratives about Asian Americans, as evident in the Page Act and Cable Act. In the 1875 Page Act, politicians depicted all Chinese women as immoral, unclean prostitutes. Then in the 1920s, newspapers praised the Cable Act as progressive despite its restrictions for Asian American women, and popular culture portrayed Asian men as villainous predators of young white women. Once again, Asian Americans were vilified as dangerous outsiders preceding the mass removal of all Japanese Americans from the West coast in the 1940s.

The deep fears about Japanese Americans expressed by the press after Pearl Harbor were not based on legitimate threats to US national security. As Saito points out, there is a difference between "war hysteria" and "racial hysteria."⁹⁶ War hysteria refers to the widespread panic about an impending war created by propaganda. Racial hysteria involves a similar level of fear as war hysteria and is also socially constructed through circulating public discourse, but the hysteria centers on the perceived threat of an enemy race. The war hysteria was present during WWII, but the fears surrounding Japanese Americans were evidently connected to racial hysteria and not legitimate security threats. FBI and ONI reported almost no evidence of espionage or sabotage among Japanese Americans leading up to and throughout the war. US and British intelligence

⁹⁵ Robinson 85.

⁹⁶ Natsu Taylor Saito, "Silencing the Constitution: Japanese American Internment and Redress," in *From Chinese Exclusion to Guantánamo Bay: Plenary Power and the Prerogative State* (Boulder, CO: Univ. Press of Colorado, 2007), 74.

agencies concluded Japan was more likely to employ "Occidentals" rather than "its own people" because, unlike their white counterparts, Japanese Americans could be easily identified by their physical features, making it difficult to go unnoticed while spying or committing sabotage.⁹⁷ During Late January 1942, Lieutenant Commander K. D. Ringle of the ONI in southern California said many Nisei (first-generation Japanese immigrants) leaders voluntarily contributed information on activities subversive to US interests. Ringle estimated only 3% of Japanese American citizens and aliens could act as saboteurs or espionage agents for Japan. He saw no national security need for mass removal or detainment of Japanese Americans.⁹⁸ After the ABC list's initial arrests, the US FBI director J. Edgar Hoover reasoned the calls for mass evacuation were based on political pressure, not factual evidence. Therefore, the FBI opinion provided to the Justice Department shortly before EO 9066 was signed did not find sufficient justification for implementing mass action on security grounds.⁹⁹ The ONI and FBI intelligence agencies found little evidence of Anti-American activity among Japanese Americans, disputing the claims that they were significant threats to national security.

In contrast to this national narrative of military necessity leading up to EO 9066, scholars within Feminist Security Studies have critiqued how dominant security narratives legitimize state violence. The state itself remains undertheorized and privileged, while multiple, coexisting meanings of security are removed by authorized narratives.¹⁰⁰ During the implementation of EO 9066, the mass expulsion and detention of Japanese Americans were justified through narratives of "Military Necessity" and "National Security concerns," which follows a securitization logic

⁹⁷ Saito, "Silencing the Constitution: Japanese American Internment and Redress," 68.

⁹⁸ United States Commission on Wartime Relocation and Internment of Civilians, *Personal Justice Denied* (U.S. Government Printing Office, 1982), 54.

⁹⁹ United States Commission on Wartime Relocation and Internment of Civilians, *Personal Justice Denied*, 55.

¹⁰⁰ Annick T. R. Wibben, *Feminist Security Studies: a Narrative Approach* (Routledge, 2011), 70.

that Edkins outlines. Edkins says "securitization" is a political act within a specific historical situation, but it is also an act that depoliticizes; "by saying 'security,' a state representative declares an emergency condition, thus claiming a right to use whatever means are necessary."¹⁰¹ When states employ "securitization," they can exercise broad, dangerous powers; since their actions are "depoliticized" the state can inflict violence without concern for the damage caused, especially for vulnerable communities. The calls for national security measures following Pearl Harbor shifted the focus away from the state, allowing for extreme, state-sponsored acts of violence without sufficient responsibility.

Patricia Hill Collins's analysis of the nation through family structures in "It's All in the Family: Intersections of Gender, Race, and Nation" can provide a more critical lens of the state's role in Japanese American Internment. According to Collins, there is "an imagined traditional family ideal" of heterosexual couples that produce their own biological children, and this traditional family "articulates with governmental structures" to function as a "fundamental principle of social organization."¹⁰² Blood ties hold a significant role within the traditional family, defining kinship structures between "real" family members who are expected to resemble each other and share similar attributes. While this logic clearly applies to some nations that emphasize common ethnicity and shared cultural expressions, the United States represents a group of mixed ethnic backgrounds. The US constitution is supposed to offer equality to all American citizens despite race, national origin, or color. However, Collins claims ethnic nationalism is more central to the US than may appear on the surface, describing the United

¹⁰¹ Alan Finlayson, Jeremy Valentine, and Jenny Edkins, "After the Subject of International Security," in *Politics and Post-Structuralism: an Introduction* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2002), 78.

¹⁰² Patricia Hill Collins, "It's All in the Family: Intersections of Gender, Race, and Nation," *Hypatia* 13, no. 3 (1998): 63, <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1527-2001.1998.tb01370.x>.

States as a "large national family with racial families hierarchically arranged within it." In this racialized nation-state, White citizens are the "most valuable," and groups that are not White "lack appropriate blood ties" and "are deemed to be less-worthy actual and potential U.S. citizens."¹⁰³

Collin's conception of the US state-nation as a hierarchical family rooted in bloodlines reflects Japanese Americans' inferior position and treatment during internment. This racial dynamic occurred during Japanese American internment since anyone with 1/16th or more Japanese blood was forcibly removed through EO 9066. In contrast, Americans of white, European descent connected to the axis powers were not targeted with the same broad manner—even though they potentially posed a greater threat to US national security. The US government never considered the *mass* removal and imprisonment of German or Italians. The US did detain 11,500 people of German ancestry and 3,000 people of Italian ancestry.¹⁰⁴ However, these measures pale in comparison to the treatment of the Japanese American population; 120,000 of the 130,000 Japanese Americans in the US in the 1940s were interned. Meanwhile, there were about 6 million German Americans and 4.3 million Italian Americans in the US at this time.¹⁰⁵ Moreover, while there was not a single verified incident of Japanese Americans committing espionage, there were several instances of German Americans collaborating with Nazi Germany and Italian Americans committing acts of sabotage for Italy.¹⁰⁶ Therefore, relative to white Americans, Japanese Americans occupied a subordinate position in the hierarchy of a national United States "family," and they were denied the full range of citizenship and human rights

¹⁰³ Collins, "It's All in the Family," 70.

¹⁰⁴ Alan Rosenfeld, "German and Italian detainees," *Densho Encyclopedia* <https://encyclopedia.densho.org/German%20and%20Italian%20detainees> (accessed Apr 9 2021).

¹⁰⁵ Saito, 68.

¹⁰⁶ Saito, 71.

during internment. Collins explains the national family "fosters differential patterns of enforcement" of citizenship rights, in which "some racial families receive full benefits of membership while others encounter inferior treatment."¹⁰⁷ Japanese Americans received second-class treatment through an extensive list of injustices throughout internment, including the presumption of guilt during mass excavation, the devastating financial losses from leaving homes and businesses behind, and the inadequate healthcare and housing at internment camps.

The disenfranchisement of Japanese Americans replicates the exclusion of colonized subjects from the democratic freedoms colonizers espoused. Colonizers used binaries about human nature to differentiate white colonizers from their colonized subjects and justify their subjects' inferior treatment. For instance, when discussing the British's colonization of Egypt, Edward Said explains the "Oriental is irrational, depraved (fallen), childlike, different; thus, the European is rational, virtuous, mature, normal."¹⁰⁸ Since the Europeans were everything the oriental is not, the two categories reinforce each other, upholding the white civilization's superiority. From the colonizers' perspective, these backward subjects were incapable of fully participating in democracy or self-government.¹⁰⁹ This colonial logic resurfaced in the demands for Japanese American internment. Representative John Rankin of Mississippi declared, "This is a race war . . . the white man's civilization has come in conflict with Japanese barbarism... I say it is of vital importance that we get rid of every Japanese, whether in Hawaii or on the mainland. . . Damn them! Let's get rid of them now!"¹¹⁰ Rankin employs colonial dynamics to distinguish Japanese Americans and their "barbarism" as an extreme threat to "the white man's civilization."

¹⁰⁷ Collins, 73.

¹⁰⁸ Edward W. Said, "Knowing the Oriental," in *Orientalism* (London: Penguin, 2003), 30.

¹⁰⁹ Said, "Knowing the Oriental," 33.

¹¹⁰ Robinson, *A Tragedy of Democracy*, 84.

Consequently, he urged the immediate mass removal of all Japanese Americans, trampling on their citizenship and human rights.

The reproduction of Japanese Americans as a colonial subjects aligns with the framework of traditional security studies. The dominant logic of security studies involves a subject that is "contained, nameable, with contours dividing the included from the excluded and borders marking that which is to be made secure from the dangerous Other."¹¹¹ Through the production of binaries, the subject of security—which was white Americans at the top of the national US family hierarchy—was clearly defined from the threat to security—Japanese Americans. Specifically, the "discursive moves" of this logic include imbuing the subject of security with a certain identity that is constructed as "stable and certain throughout time." These security narratives "reassure us that order and safety are seemingly re-established" and set a foundation for employing certain security measures or strategies.¹¹² The categorization of Japanese Americans as a dangerous Other provided a sense of security to the US during mass war hysteria since they could easily identify a "problem" and begin implementing solutions. This set the grounds for the extreme measures taken in the name of national security.

However, interracial couples who could not be separated along clear racial divisions threatened to disrupt these binaries in dominant security studies. Mixed families revealed the flawed assumption that all Japanese American families can be easily targeted solely by racial characteristics. The desire for completeness in identifying security threats is "fundamental" to dominant security studies, but "discourses that construct certain subjects as threats or enemies

¹¹¹ Maria Stern, "'We' the Subject: The Power and Failure of (In)Security," *Security Dialogue* 37, no. 2 (2006): 192, <https://doi.org/10.1177/0967010606066171>.

¹¹² Stern, "'We' the Subject," 194.

function as fantasies concealing the impossibility of security."¹¹³ The US quickly tried to remedy the discrepancy interracial families posed to constructing all Japanese families as threats. When the Japanese Americans were still in the temporary assembly centers, the US government expressed an early desire to release racially mixed families. Ostensibly, the Mixed Marriage Policy aimed to protect national security by identifying loyal citizens who could return home. However, the policy's eligibility criteria had little to do with individual loyalties and more to do with protecting the ideal nuclear family and its hierarchical racial and gender dimensions. The Mixed Marriage Policy was mostly limited to interracial couples with children. The government did not want children who grew up in "Caucasian environments" to be tainted by the Japanese influences in the camps. A memo from the Army's Western Defense Command (WDC) said the policy's objective was to protect mixed children who had previously been raised in white settings from the contamination of "infectious Japanese thought" in the Japanese environments at camps. Presumably, the Mixed Marriage Policy would return these children to their pre-war "healthy," "Caucasian" environments.¹¹⁴ The WDC's distinction between Japanese and Caucasian environments emphasized how they were not concerned with legitimate security threats. Instead, the government was preoccupied with identifying threats based on racial assumptions. The notion that children must be protected from Japanese culture replicates a colonial attitude that Japanese Americans are a dangerous, immoral Other who must be excluded.

The Mixed Marriage Policy also exemplified the nuclear family's patriarchal structure. The WDC determined if children had a "Caucasian" environment through the racial and gender

¹¹³ Alan Finlayson, Jeremy Valentine, and Jenny Edkins, "After the Subject of International Security," 71.

¹¹⁴ Paul R. Spickard, "Injustice Compounded: Amerasians and Non-Japanese Americans in World War II Concentration Camps." *Journal of American Ethnic History* 5, no. 2 (1986): 8.
<http://www.jstor.org/stable/27500450>.

make-up of a family. Mixed children with white fathers and Japanese mothers could leave the camps and return home to the West Coast. Presumably, the white fathers were able to provide a Caucasian, Americanized environment for their families. The US government's reasoning aligns with the power distribution of the traditional family, in which the father is the authority figure.¹¹⁵ In contrast, Japanese fathers caused their household to be "more than half Japanese," disqualifying them and their family from returning directly home. This regulation reproduces a patriarchal security pattern that was evident in the Page Act and Cable Act. During the Page Act, women's immigration status was heavily influenced by their relationship to a man; if they were unmarried or unaccompanied, immigration officials assumed this was confirmation that they were prostitutes. During the Cable Act, women who married Asian men continued to face the citizenship restrictions of the Expatriation Act. Once again, men had the absolute power to determine their family's freedom under the Mixed Marriage Policy, while women maintained their traditional submissive role. At the same time, men's influence over being released was predicated on their racial ancestry. Thus, the state reconfigured a set of gendered and racialized regulations to demarcate which interracial families could be released.

For those Japanese American women who were not released through the Mixed Marriage Policy, they experienced many devastating conditions in internment. However, camp life structure presented some new opportunities for Japanese American women. A feminist approach to security studies recognizes security and identity are inextricably linked, and that security narratives are multiple, contradictory, and always shifting from "temporal resting places."¹¹⁶ Although women never fully secure in the camps, they were also not completely insecure.

¹¹⁵ Collins, 62.

¹¹⁶ Wibben, *Feminist Security Studies*, 114.

Japanese American women found "temporal resting places of security through their changing gender roles. The women in internment camps found momentary spaces of security within an overall insecure situation. In contrast to traditional security studies, which contends that security is a stable achievable entity, feminist security studies considers security as an uneven practice. In the detention centers, women were responsible for less domestic labor. The small, cramped apartments required less cleaning, and since they had no household kitchens, meals were collectively prepared in the dining hall for multiple families.¹¹⁷ Mothers also had decreased childcare responsibilities since school was mandatory in the camps and the school year was longer to offset the time lost during the eviction process.¹¹⁸ The communities in camps altered the traditional structure of families because women no longer had to allocate as much time to household duties or childcare. Therefore, Japanese women experienced a complicated form of security, gaining the ability to pursue new personal and professional goals outside the home while simultaneously confined within the barbwire of a detention facility.

Furthermore, Japanese American women experienced a greater range of employment opportunities while at the camps, which upset the traditional power dynamics in families. In camps, women were able to obtain jobs in clerical, administrative, and professional positions. Although men still dominated in certain professions, women had the same WRA page scale as men; when women were employed in the same job as men, they earned equal wages. Moreover, women were able to gain work experience in higher-level positions, which encouraged them to continue participating in the labor market after the war. The expanded possibilities for women in the labor market disrupted the traditional family structure since women moved beyond the private,

¹¹⁷ John Howard, *Concentration Camps on the Home Front: Japanese Americans in the House of Jim Crow* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2008), 99.

¹¹⁸ Howard, *Concentration Camps on the Home Front*, 100.

domestic sphere and entered the public realm. As a result, men were no longer the sole breadwinner or authority figure head that directed the families' financials. A husband's power within the family was directly undermined; he no longer had as much control over his wives' and daughters' "whereabouts, work routines, or potential earnings."¹¹⁹ The women's increased economic freedoms enabled them to gain greater security within the camps than their restrictive roles within the family they held before internment.

Along with the shifts in heterosexual families, the greater economic freedoms for Japanese American women may have also spurred queer relations in the camps. The historian John Howard documents one young woman's reaction to the increased employment opportunities in the camp. One the "special night" Haru Miyazki received her first paycheck, she wrote her (white) friend Virginia Tidall, a Jerome camp teacher, "I doubt if I'll ever liven with my folks again." The life of a single woman also had "erotic possibilities," since Haru's letter to Virginia concluded, "Good night, pleasant dreams. Take care of yourself. I think you have the most beautiful wavy hair and blue eyes I've ever seen. Haru."¹²⁰ Not only did Haru's financial gains empower her to break away from her home and forge an independent lifestyle, but she also began to explore new desires that defied heterosexual norms. The written exchange between Haru and Virginia exemplified "erotic possibilities" because their admiration is palatable, but there is no direct evidence of a romantic relationship beyond these words found in the limited archives. Haru's independent lifestyle represents the breakdown of the traditional family through multiple dimensions; she gains new employment opportunities, leaves her parent's household as a single woman, and even explores romantic possibilities with another woman.

¹¹⁹ Howard, 101.

¹²⁰ Ibid, 103.

Camp authorities, scholars, and other leaders viewed these transformations in the traditional family structure as a threatening deterioration. This shift caused great concern among sociologists and anthropologists who called it "a family breakdown." The Arkansas camp newspaper, the *Denson Tribune*, claimed: "the effect of the community dining halls, toilets has tended to accelerate the breakdown of family unity."¹²¹ The camp officials attempted to restore the ideal family structure by controlling Japanese American women's sexuality. Since the traditional family structure was considered an ideal model, the control of women was presumed to be in their own best interest, reproducing colonial discourses of care.

The camp authorities' control over unmarried women's newborn deliveries replicated Uma Narayan's theory on how colonizers justified their domination through care discourses. Narayan explains that paternalistic caring "can be wielded as a form of control and domination by the powerful and privileged [colonizers]."¹²² The highest-level camp authorities presumed to know unmarried Japanese American women's best interests and often intervened when children were born out of wedlock. At the Rowher internment camp, after one unmarried mother had a baby, the baby was immediately transferred to another center and placed under the care of Welfare until the mother "more time to make a definite decision as to permanent plans" for the child. The camp authorities pressured her to put the baby up for adoption, but its final placement was unrecorded.¹²³ The camp authorities believed they were doing what was best for the mother

¹²¹ "Parents Have A Great Responsibility." *Denson Tribune* (Denson, Arkansas) I, no. 31, June 15, 1943: 2. *NewsBank: Access World News – Historical and Current*. <https://infoweb-newsbank-com.proxy.library.emory.edu/apps/news/document-view?p=WORLDNEWS&docref=image/v2%3A14D8A25B8ADFDED5%40WHNPX-151AE1329B83BB50%402430891-151AD6130563F1A0%401-15266C733412DA8F%40Parents%2BHave%2BA%2BGreat%2BResponsibility>.

¹²² Uma Narayan, "Colonialism and Its Others: Considerations on Rights and Care Discourses." *Hypatia* 10, no. 2 (1995): 135. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/3810285>.

¹²³ Howard, 103.

and child. They assumed an unmarried woman could not handle the newborn alone and that the baby should be placed with a traditional married couple. This reasoning justified the removal of a child from a mother's care similarly to how colonizers justified their dominance over the colonized: they both believed their actions were "in the interests of, for the good of, or promoting the welfare" of their subjects.¹²⁴ Since the camp authorities deemed unmarried women unfit for motherhood, the infant's removal—a form of dominance and control—became "morally palatable" to the camp authorities.¹²⁵

The camp authorities also forcibly intervened in the private life of an unconventional woman at the Jerome camp, rationalizing their actions through discourses of care that were reminiscent of colonialism. The Jerome officers interrogated an unmarried woman who "insisted on living alone" and "admitted prostitution." Her solitary, promiscuous life exemplified, to camp officials, the danger of women departing from their traditional familial roles. Even more concerning to officials, her relationships crossed racial boundaries since "she was visited by [white] soldiers from the Military Police barracks." As a result, the WRA authorities forced her to relocate and move in with a family.¹²⁶ The camp attempted to remedy the threat that a single woman posed by relocating her into a secure domestic space. The alternative family environment controlled both the woman's unconventional lifestyle and mitigated the risk of interracial relations. Yet, even if the woman preferred being single and causally having sexual encounters, her input was dismissed. The camp officials determined that her marital status disqualified her autonomy and forcibly removed her, for her own "betterment," to a safer location. As Narayan explains, women can be constructed as a "'weaker sex' in need of the care, support, and guidance

¹²⁴ Narayan, "Colonialism and Its Others," 133.

¹²⁵ Narayan, 134.

¹²⁶ Howard, 109.

of Western men, not unlike the colonized."¹²⁷ Within her new "family," the camp authorities believed she could improve and overcome her past discrepancies, molding her back to a traditional role in the family. This notion that a new family can "fix" the single woman at the Jerome camp replicates how colonizers believed their dominance and control operated to enhance their subjects' welfare.

In a broader campaign, the camp officials promoted heterosexual marriages at an early age through lectures and courses, which recreated colonial discourses of care. The WRA camp authorities and leaders used camp organizations to "forward an agenda of social and sexual stability via marriage." At the Jerome camp, youth groups attended "Sex and Hygiene" talks, which linked premarital sexual restraint to cleanliness, and an officer lectured young women on "Boy-Girl Relations." At Rower, the "Forum on Our Families" was advertised to "all newlyweds [sic], all nearly weds, all would be weds, all will be weds-in short, all younger persons."¹²⁸ These various lectures on correct sexual and marital relations served as a proactive form of security, regulating the students' impulses and desires before they disrupted the desired family structure. When the "Sex and Hygiene" talks equated premarital sexual restraint to "cleanliness," the implication for young students was that sexual activity was immoral, unhealthy, or damaging. Similarly, the repetition of the phrase "newlyweds" in the "Forum on Our Families" advertisement emphasized that the optimal, or even inevitable, cure to the students' sexual desires was marriage. The camp authorities purposely spread these messages about sexuality and marriage to compel younger Japanese Americans to follow a better, purer path: heterosexual, married life with a Japanese American spouse. This desire for a more pure or clean path reflects

¹²⁷ Narayan, 134.

¹²⁸ Howard, 105.

the objectives of the previous Page Act and Cable Act. During the Page Act, the government expressed a strong urge to prevent any more “filthy” and “contagious” Chinese prostitutes from entering the US. The state’s removal of the undesirable Chinese women reconfigured the population composition to adhere to an “ideal” standard of white dominance and purity among families growing in the borders. Similarly, the Cable Act attempted to mitigate the threatening presence of Asian men “preying” on white women and uphold the standard of anti-miscegenation. Within the confines of internment camps, authorities continued to regulate Asian women’s bodies and relationships by cleansing the camp of unrestrained sexual desires through marriage.

However, the authorities' assumption that marriage was an ideal that must be imposed on younger Japanese Americans replicated colonial discourses of care. The camp authorities orchestrated and promoted this "ideal" path without considering the students' aspirations or goals. From the camp authorities' perspective, these lessons on marriage would potentially repair the perceived "family breakdown" in the camps and protect younger Japanese American women from transgressing, like the unmarried pregnant woman from Rowher or the sexually active single woman in Jerome. Thus, their exercise of power—influencing young students' sexual relations—was concealed through a "paternalistic caring" similar to colonizer's sense of duty to restore their barbaric subjects through Western civilization.¹²⁹

Although EO 9066, which caused the mass removal and internment of Japanese Americans, was portrayed as defensive national security measure amid the war hysteria of WWII, a critical feminist security perspective reveals the coercive, racist nature of the domestic

¹²⁹ Narayan, 134.

policy. Despite the lack of evidence that Japanese Americans were enemy spies, white nationalist organizations and newspapers spread racist propaganda calling for their removal. Consequently, the extreme measures of EO9066 were justified under a guise of military necessity and national security concerns. However, through Patricia Hill Collin's theory of the national family, it is evident how Japanese Americans occupied an inferior position within imagined national family structure, which replicated the colonial dynamics of a subjugated "Other." Colonial dynamics expose the deliberate exclusion and disfranchisement of Japanese Americans during internment. Yet, racially mixed families disrupted these oppressive traditional security measures because the families embodied both white American and Japanese American cultures. The Mixed Marriage Policy, which relied on racist and sexist assumptions about families, was implemented to deal with multi-racial families and preserve Caucasian environment for mixed children. Within the internment camps, Japanese American women experienced a complex form of security--finding freedom from domestic labor and new opportunities for employment within the oppressive circumstances of detention. The new possibilities for women in the camp caused concerns about the breakdown of the traditional family structure, and camp authorities regulated women's sexuality to reinforce the Western, ideal family. The authorities replicated colonial discourses of care by controlling women's reproduction, sexual activity, relationships, and education to "improve" their lifestyle for their own good. Overall, an ideal American family structure was imposed on the macro and micro level of Japanese American internment, and the reproduction of colonial dynamics reveal how those who deviated from these standards were excluded and regulated.

Conclusion

My research on past discriminatory federal policies towards Asian women immigrants and Asian Americans contributes to multiple dialogues, including feminist theory, and security studies and historical research. In general, there has been limited scholarship on the particular acts I chose to investigate and even less awareness of these past regulations outside the exclusive ivory towers. As I began my research project, I soon realized the Page Act and Cable Act had a relatively scarce amount of historical and legal research already completed on the subjects. Japanese American internment has attracted more attention on the scholarly realm, but less research on women's particular experience or analysis from a feminist perspective. Within the specific discipline of feminist security studies, which my research contributes to, I also noticed a gap. The FSS literature predominantly focuses on women's experiences through a gendered analysis but does not adequately examine women of color's specific position in security narratives.

Through a FSS approach, I examine how security was deployed during the Page Act, Cable Act, and EO9066 to conceal the exclusion and disenfranchisement of Asian American women. All the acts were officially presented as a necessary response to dangerous threats the US government identified. The Page Act was supposedly protecting the US from a greater influx of "filthy" and "diseased" Chinese women. The Cable Act was intended to protect (some, white) women's citizenship status while also preserving the purity of the "superior" white race. Perhaps, most prominently, national security concerns were proclaimed to advance the mass removal of all Japanese Americans, who were viewed as enemy spies during World War II.

The long history of systemic race and gender-based violence towards Asian American women and immigrants continues to today—and continues to be concealed and denied. Recently,

on March 16th, 2021, Robert Aaron Long went on a rampage at three spas in Atlanta, killing eight people. Six of the eight people Long murdered were women of Asian descent. The white 21 year old gunman killed Xiaojie Tan, 49; and Daoyou Feng, 44; Delaina Ashley Yaun, 33; and Paul Andre Michels, 54, at the Young's Asian Massage parlor in Cherokee County. Then, he later shot Yong Ae Yue, 63; Soon Chung Park, 74; Suncha Kim, 69; and Hyun Jung Grant, 51 at two other Atlanta spas in Buckhead.¹³⁰ These crimes were part of a larger rise in Anti-Asian violence during the pandemic; the nonprofit organization Stop A.A.P.I. Hate recorded almost 4,000 reports of verbal and physical assaults towards Asian-Americans and Pacific Islanders in the US since March (and they indicate this is only a small fraction of total incidents).¹³¹

However, the spokesman for the sheriff's office in Cherokee County, Captain Jay Baker, ignored Long's racist or sexist motives and instead offered sympathy sentiments for the killer. Baker explained Long "was pretty much fed up and kind of at the end of his rope. Yesterday was a really bad day for him and this is what he did."¹³² The officer describes the violent incident from Long's perspective and attempts to justify Long's cruel actions by simply claiming he was "fed up" and had a "bad day." Moreover, Baker says Long had a sex addiction, adding that Long viewed the massage parlors "as a temptation for him that he wanted to eliminate."¹³³ Instead of identifying Long's shooting rampage as a targeted attack against Asian Americans, and specifically Asian American women, Baker suggests Long's violence was rooted in a personal

¹³⁰ Joshua Sharpe, "What We Know about the Spa Shooting Victims," *ajc* (The Atlanta Journal-Constitution, March 23, 2021), <https://www.ajc.com/news/atlanta-news/what-we-know-about-the-spa-shooting-victims/OVPCGHAFZVGNRCUY3YUYM2ZQVI/>.

¹³¹ Jiayang Fan, Hua Hsu, and Ed Park, "The Atlanta Shooting and the Dehumanizing of Asian Women," *The New Yorker*, March 19, 2021, <https://www.newyorker.com/news/daily-comment/the-atlanta-shooting-and-the-dehumanizing-of-asian-women>.

¹³² Bill Chappell and Dustin Jones, "Enough Is Enough': Atlanta-Area Spa Shootings Spur Debate Over Hate Crime Label," *NPR* (NPR, March 18, 2021), <https://www.npr.org/2021/03/18/978680316/atlanta-spa-shootings-expose-frustration-and-debate-over-hate-crime-label>.

¹³³ Bill Chappell and Dustin Jones, "Enough Is Enough."

pathology. The white man was supposedly acting out of his own unrestrained sexual desires, but not out of hatred or misogyny. Baker's narrative frames the Atlanta shootings as race-neutral individualized concern, displacing Long's crime from the broader systemic violence Asian Americans have faced and continue to face.

Yet, the racism and sexism prevalent in the Atlanta shootings becomes undeniable after understanding inheritance of racism and sexism throughout the Page Act, Cable Act, and Japanese American Internment. The recent act was not merely an aberration but part of a larger, deeply ingrained, pattern of perceiving Asian women as dangerous others whose sexuality must be regulated. As Michelle Au, a Chinese American state senator in Georgia, notes, the recent Atlanta shootings are only "a new chapter in a very old story."¹³⁴ In the 1875 Page Act, all Chinese women immigrants were presumed to be immoral, contagious prostitutes and denied entry to the US. The 1922 Cable Act influenced Asian American women's marriages and made their citizenship status precarious. During Japanese American internment in the 1940s, Japanese American women's, release from camps relied on the race of their husband, and within the camps, authorities heavily monitored their sexuality and family status.

The Page Act resonates with the tragedy of the Atlanta shootings this year. In both the Page Act of 1875 and the 2021 Atlanta shootings, Asian American women and immigrants were condemned because of their presumed sexuality. Although authorities have not stated if sex work occurred at the businesses Long attacked, reports indicated law enforcement has carried out prostitution stings at these spas and online reviews suggest these places do offer sex work. Regardless, Yves Nguyen, an organizer for Red Canary Song, a New York City organization for

¹³⁴ "'A New Chapter in an Old Story': What the Atlanta Shootings Reveal about the US," The Guardian (Guardian News and Media, March 21, 2021), <https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2021/mar/20/asian-americans-racism-atlanta-shootings>.

Asian sex workers and allies, says deliberating about whether the Asian women were actually sex workers misses the point. The white gunman Long assumed they were sex workers. Nguyen explains that the misconceptions about women of Asian descent, especially immigrant Asian women involved in low-wage work, "make it so that people think that they're sex workers anyways."¹³⁵ These racist and sexist assumptions about Asian women replicate how the Page Act characterized all Chinese women immigrants as threatening prostitutes in 1875. While the Page Act was carried out as an immigration measure on the national level, the racist and fetishistic perceptions about Asian women persist today and contributed to the shooting rampage in Atlanta this year.

Through my analysis of the Page Act, Cable Act, and Japanese American internment, consistent security patterns emerge. As previously mentioned, these domestic policies deployed security discourses to conceal and justify their extreme, oppressive objectives. The US government repeatedly framed these domestic policies in race-neutral terms, similar to the recent Atlanta shootings. I introduce the reproduction of colonial dynamics as an analytical within FSS to reveal the explicit function of both race and gender throughout these policies. The Page Act, Cable Act, and Japanese American internment each involved the reproduction of colonial conditions of an inferior "Other" who is imbued with certain characteristics such as being immoral, irrational, dangerous, or backwards. Once a group was deemed an "Other," their subsequent exclusion or disfranchisement was based on these uncivilized perceptions. The state exercised colonialist domination by portraying Asian Americans as not yet acceptable for the US national imaginary. These boundaries of insiders and outsiders were often drawn according to

¹³⁵ Emma Bowman, "Atlanta Killings: Sex Worker Advocate Sees Deadly Consequences Of Overlapping Hatreds," NPR (NPR, March 21, 2021), <https://www.npr.org/2021/03/21/979811779/atlanta-killings-sex-worker-advocate-sees-deadly-consequences-of-overlapping-hat>.

race and gender. Ultimately, at the center of my research, questions arise about who belongs and who is secure within a nation. As the *New Yorker* reporter Jiayang Fan described in response to the Atlanta shootings, the Asian American experience often “is to feel trapped in an American tragedy while being denied the legitimacy of being an American.” The racism and sexism Asian American women continue to endure today are not merely small, random occurrences but rather part of long legacy of institutional subordination.

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