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Let's Build A Community: "See Something, Say Something," Decentering Whiteness, and Digital Muslim Public Life

Groups of people, typically strangers, who intentionally coalesce around an idea or publication without being in the same place are a unique feature of modern public life, first emerging around historically novel forms of information dissemination such as newspapers, newsletters, and other serializations. Digital technologies have built on these foundations. Facebook and Twitter have become ubiquitous platforms for digital public life: spaces for circulating content and engaging with others around what we click, like, read, and share. As is all too clear, content and engagement on these and other platforms of digital public life often reinforce dominant conditions of concrete forms of public life. Yet, they can also make it possible for non-majority communities to generate, circulate, and engage content—to create publics—in ways that are not otherwise possible. Drawing on Michael Warner's theorization of publics and counterpublics, this paper examines "See Something, Say Something," a podcast focusing on Muslim lives and voices in North America, as an instance of Muslim digital public life. I argue that it flips the conditions of corporeal or concrete forms of public life in the United States today, decentering whiteness and creating new possibilities within and between Muslim and non-Muslim communities alike.